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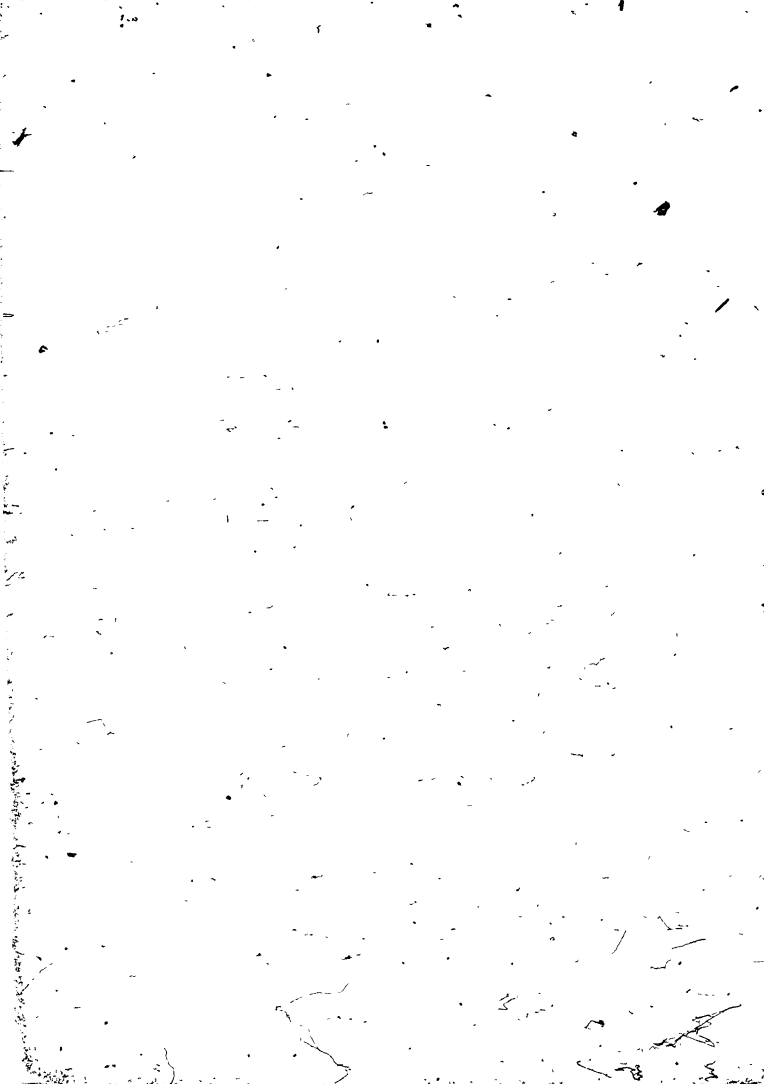
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# Notes from Our Log in South Africa;

AND

## ON FOOT THROUGH THE COLONIES

AT THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

BY

HARRIET A. BOOMER,

*Author of "ON TREK IN THE TRANSVAAL."*

London, Ont.:

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I cannot launch my tiny barque upon Canadian waters without a few introductory words to explain why I am venturesome enough to launch it at all. First and foremost, then, must come my excuse. I want money; indeed, I want a good deal, to enable me to carry out an object very dear to my heart, and one in which many friends in England; and in this, our London, have already shown much kindly interest, viz.: the foundation of a Divinity Scholarship in our own Huron College here. The long vacation is close at hand, and in the few intervening months which must elapse before the next term opens, I hope by strenuous effort, and through the continued help of generous friends, to have so added to our little nest-egg of somewhat over \$600 that a fitting candidate may be selected to receive some measure of assistance from it, awaiting the better time when the egg shall have pro-

duced its full-grown chick, and the Huron Scholarship shall have become an established fact and worthy of its name.

When my "Notes" were published in *The Colonies and India*, a valuable paper only too scantily circulated in Canada, people knew comparatively little of South African travelling, nor is much more now known of that far away settlement of the Transvaal, the Haupt Busch Berg. I venture to think, then, that although a few years have elapsed since my scribble was written, it may have some measure of interest for those who may care to read it for the first time now. Nor can I believe that while the rocky kopjes of South Africa still resound with the horrible din of that terrible war, and the dying cries of our own dear countrymen are yet echoing over Berg and Veldt, or while that sad-hearted woman, the widowed mother of the late Prince Imperial, is absent there upon her self-imposed, most melancholy pilgrimage, there are many who would to-day, as they might have done before all these things came to pass, throw aside as unreadable even so modest a little record as this of travel in the Transvaal.

One word more and I have done.

To my South African jottings, I cannot resist this opportunity of adding a few more made while in Paris at the Exhibition of 1878. I choose, naturally, those entered in my note-book whilst in the Canadian Department of that great World's Show—a Department arranged and filled so creditably that it carried off the palm from those of all other colonies.

Perhaps this last entry may have a value for some of my friends who, although they might not care much for far-away, poor, distracted South Africa, may yet buy my little book for the sake of giving my small vessel a friendly shove off the docks into smooth waters, and thus help me and the object so dear to me, *i. e.*, the foundation of the Huron Scholarship.

HARRIET A. BOOMER.





# NOTES FROM OUR LOG IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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A TRIP TO THE HAUPT BUSCH BERG.

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## CHAPTER I.

**T**HERE were five of us, all told, when the Captain of our little party counted heads before starting : Browne senior, who is my brother, Browne junior, who is his son and my nephew, Hetty Browne, who is myself, and an old college chum of my brother's, who has knocked about with him in many lands, and whose most undeserved nickname of "Grim" will serve our purpose as well as his paternal one, which it does not in the least resemble. Lastly, the Captain, an old campaigner in fields of peace as well as war, whose geniality, fund of general and practical information, and never-failing flow of good humour, render him a charming companion anywhere, but more especially when, as now, he forms one of a free-and-easy party all bent upon taking the largest amount of pleasure from, and making

as light as possible of, any little drawback which may arise to mar the perfect enjoyment of the trip we had long promised ourselves to the Government forests of the Transvaal. These forests, we had been told, were well worth visiting, and that having already seen so much of South Africa under other aspects, we certainly ought not to turn our faces homewards without beholding her under just one aspect more.

“Let me pioneer you to the Haupt Busch Berg,” had said our Captain, “and your log shall tell of other things than bare flats and treeless wastes, dry river-beds and stony ascents. Of the last the least said the better certainly; your river-beds will be full enough and to spare when you return to Natal a little later in the year; the bare flats only need the magic of man’s labour, blessed as such labour is sure to be, especially on this fruitful soil, by bounteous old Mother Nature, to blossom as a garden; and when you have seen one of our forest scenes you will retract what you remarked in page dash of your log—(you see I know all about it, Mis Hetty) that she was “niggardly” in this one good gift, so needful to man’s comfort and well-being in any clime. Wood, yes, plenty of it. Come, and judge for yourselves.”

This, and talk kindred to it had led us to decide upon taking one more trip before we left the Transvaal, the promise of our Captain’s

guidance and companionship having turned the scale in favour of our doing so.

See us, then, ready for our start from the little mining settlement of Eersteling, in the township of Marabastadt, about 150 miles from Pretoria, which had been for a while our temporary home. Our camp had been pitched not far from the shadow of the grand old Iron Mountain, around which the thunder had growled so often and so threateningly, before rolling away to grumble elsewhere, to return anon to bestow upon us another touch of its spleen, yet not having hurt us one whit after all.

"Good-bye, old growler!" cried Geoff, our boy, shaking his fist at it by way of parting salute. "I should just about like to have one more dive into your caves and hiding holes, to unearth some of the mysteries of which you hold the key. What about those bones and skulls; old chap, those signs and symbols indented upon your cavern walls? What about——"

"Geoff, don't rhapsodise," I exclaim from inside our 18-foot-long canvas-covered house on wheels, "but hand me the bag of tea, the rusks, the butter, (I wish we could get more of it!) the six tins of preserved milk, and the Brand's essence of beef."

My brother and Grim, his dear familiar, as we call him, have gone on with the dogs and our two surviving horses, hoping to have some-

thing in their game-bags for us, even if they do not come across a buck, before we overtake them at our first outspan at Marabastadt proper. I say "their game-bags," but if dear old Grim's bag is full it is certain he will not have filled it himself, except he has done so with the precious bulbs of which he is so untiring a grubber. We have a pleasant fiction that Grim could shoot anything he liked if he chose, but that he does not choose, he being tender of heart. Once in the stew-pan, Grim ceases to commiserate its victims, and blessed as we all are, with a good appetite, enjoys his meal as heartily as if their fate had never cost him a thought.

It was a lovely morning late in August, 1875, when we heard the last puff, puff of the engine as it crushed the golden specks out of the quartz which the Kafirs were ceaselessly shovelling into the greedy old mill as we passed it on our way out of the settlement. We rumbled by the shafts, with their busy workers above and below ground, and the stone-laden carts on their way to the works; and we startled the group of tame ostriches placidly feeding around the last of the Kafir-built huts, occupied by the *employés* on the estate, nothing coming amiss to their palate or injuring their powers of digestion. The sky was almost of a royal blue—not a cloud flecked it; but as we rounded the kopje (kopyy, or small hill), clouds we saw which arose from the earth, and warned us that

we were nearing a grass fire, or rather the scene of where that element had been holding high carnival just before. Enough remained to have done us a mischief if the road had been less beaten, or had the wind brought the remaining flames straight towards us, instead of only crosswise, leaving us but a narrow belt at a time to get over. The oxen plodded on with undisturbed tramp over the burning ground, whilst the Kafir forelooper simply changed his action from the noiseless pad, pad of his naked feet upon the sandy track, to an almost graceful dance, as he, never losing his hold of the trek-tow, every now and again avoided by a bound a more angry-looking patch of blaze than any which had hitherto checked his course. "What jolly fellows those Kafirs are!" remarks Geoff, who admires pluck heartily wherever he sees it, and who had before been struck with their seeming indifference to pain. "Why, the red-hot plough-share of the old trial by ordeal would be a joke to them!"

The Captain, who has been busily employed meanwhile giving an extra touch of polish to his faithful old rifle in the half of the waggon devoted to the use of the gentlemen by day, and partitioned off from my sanctum by a canvas curtain removable at will, bids us draw it now and look over the heads of our oxen for the first peep at Marabastadt. "Do not expect too much, good folks; it is early times for the

Transvaal, and the so-called towns are each but a nucleus of the cities they will certainly become by-and-by, especially if the longed-for annexation brings from England that best of wealth—people—to cultivate her fruitful soil.” Marabastadt certainly did not look very imposing as we entered it. Some six or eight houses—only one or two of any pretension whatever, one belonging to the landrost, or magistrate, and the other to a gentlemen from the Cape, who had settled there as merchant, land-owner, &c.—two or three stores, and a kind of round house or jail, form the whole town. Here a tent and there a waggon, here a group of Kafir women thrashing out the corn after their primitive fashion upon the ground by the roadside, and there a herd of oxen and horses grazing under the side of the hill. These gave the life and colouring to it which otherwise as a picture it would have sorely needed.

“Is it climate or people,” I inquire, “which one should blame for the sleepiness which pervades every little Dutch ‘Dorp’ one sees?”

“A little of both,” I am told, “with the stagnation which naturally ensues from isolation and want of the stir excited by competition. Why, even our little cavalcade (our two riders having meanwhile joined us) will probably be the last, as it has been the first, to arrive for a whole week at least!”

My brother gives the order to outspan—*i.e.*,

unyoke our trusty oxen for a two hours' graze and rest, for we have been fully three hours on trek since we left our quarters in the morning. Dick, our driver, with the aid of the young "Oomfan," a small Kafir who acts as odd jobber and general servant, proceeds to the usual business of "cooking the kettle." I hunt out our stores from the large canvas pockets which line the waggon on either side, and what we do not dignify by the name of a meal, but what is recognised amongst us as "a little feed," is in process of preparation. We are to have a feast bye-and-bye, for one game bag has a corpulence which compensates for the leanness of its fellow, giving promise of a savoury mess, whilst the other has a rattle of ominous sound which might mean potatoes, but it is far more likely that it means bulbs.

We call upon the magistrate, who receives us very courteously, giving us some splendid oranges. This is all the more generous of him, as they are now very nearly out of season. One or two specimens of the cotton plant and a branch of a twisted thorn creeper are added to my hoard of curiosities. So substantial is this creeper, and so large are the thorns which it bears, that the Dutch use it as we do hat-pegs in our halls. This one has a polish which I considered due to art, until assured it was nature's own handiwork.

One more trek brings us to our camping-place

for the night at an early hour. The tent is pitched, the fire lighted, and the three-legged pot simmers on the fire; toothsome is the smell it wafts towards us. We do not stop to think whether the contents might have become a trifle more tender by longer hanging; we are in no great hurry, so we let the fire have its way with them, assured that its way will be a good one, and that the three brace of partridges and the Koorhaan will have a sorry look about them presently. Our pot deserves mention, for it is an improvement upon the usual thing of its kind in use by travellers in South Africa. Our Captain has fashioned his "digester" (a much more sounding name than its original of Kafir pot) so that the lid fits just tightly enough to exclude dust, whilst it admits air. It hangs underneath the waggon, where it would, lidless, be speedily full of sand and dirt; therefore, this improvement is of great value. After a meal, if the stew be not consumed, the remainder is left for next time, all and sundry being added thereto. "Dishing up" is a refinement of life we dispense with on trek, a large ladle supplying each plate as its hungry owner cries out for "more." Side by side or very near to it, is usually slung the water-barrel. . . . "Missus," says Dick just at this juncture, "I think we forgot the water-barrel! or else we must have dropped it in that nasty spruit we came through this morning." One would think



the "boy" knew that I was writing in my log about that barrel! Yes, sure enough, there is no barrel, and Dick might almost as well have come away without his head as without that most indispensable article. The oxen often have to go a weary while without a drink; but bipeds who need water equally and can more easily provide for its supply, have only themselves to blame if they go thirsty. The water may frequently be hot and muddy, but it is better than none, and when presented to the parched lips in the shape of refreshing tea—warm or cold—or fragrant coffee, one thinks very little of its original shade, or of what horrible things the inquisitive microscope would surely reveal if permitted to meddle with it undiluted. A barrel is lent us at the farm close by, so to-morrow we can go on our way rejoicing.

WEDNESDAY.—A black paw hands me in through the waggon curtain my early cup of delicious coffee while the oxen are being in-spanned. Geoff has shouted out to me "Good-bye, Aunt Hetty, you can have another snooze in the waggon till breakfast time. We are off with our guns. I dare say we shall have the fire lighted and all ready for you by the time those fourteen old snails reach the camping-ground." And so they had; for they had not wandered far afield, and they had chosen for our resting-place a very lovely spot, close by a

farm, with its garden and orange grove, picturesquely situated beneath a large irregular "boss" or kopje, a hill, all boulders of dazzlingly-white clear quartz. Between these boulders grow lovely plants and heaths of every description, many like the tree trained over wire in our old home garden, bearing a red berry, when the flower, a small lavender one, has died away. Grim brings several specimens of flower and leaf. Geoff, who fancies he sees gold in every stone, deposits about a small wheelbarrow-full, or thereabouts, of them, by my side in a heap, expecting me "to stow them away somewhere;" the Captain brings a contribution of oranges and some large lemons; and my brother unslings his game-bag with an air of triumph, for it contains a medley of victims which had fallen to his gun and the Captain's during their two hours' tramp soon after day-break. "We came upon them down by the Vlei (pronounced Flay), so it was almost a case of wholesale slaughter. We must not expect such luck every day. Those dogs are first-rate, and Bruno is learning his lessons splendidly. He'll beat his elders before long!" Bruno wags his tail furiously at the praise his master gives him, and there is not much doubt that if it was a hard time to-day for the poor, bonnie wild birds, whose lovely plumage he has somewhat mauled in his youthful eagerness, it will be a still harder time to-morrow.

## CHAPTER II.

Our journey for many hours has alternated between hills and flats. We saw constantly smoke and flames in the distance, the high winds of the previous week having spread them farther than the hand which started them had originally intended. This is one of the usual seasons for grass burning, the object of it being to procure good crops for the coming year. A wasteful enough plan it seems to be, but, under the present condition of things in this thinly populated country, the only one feasible. A great many burnings are occasioned by carelessness, and even wilfulness, a Kafir loving a blaze, and not being particular how near he may be to cultivated lands or homesteads when he creates one. His own hut, constructed as it is of such light materials, just twisted twigs and long coarse grass, often not even daubed over with mud, may burn down and he does not waste a sigh over its ashes. His wives will soon fetch him material for another, and his share of the reconstruction thereof will probably consist of a lazy watching of their labour when he is not either sleeping or snuffing.

“House-building made easy, with a vengeance,” says my brother. “What a first-rate

climate this is, when you are nearly as comfortable without a roof over your head as with one. Better, I think, for this roughing it and these constant draughts of Heaven's own pure air. . . ."

"So long as you keep clear of the fever districts, old fellow," unexpectedly puts in Grim, who, with his pickaxe by his side and his puggaree-covered old felt tilted over his nose, lay at full length seemingly asleep, but wide enough awake to hear what we were saying.

"I beg your pardon, Jack; you were going to remind Miss Hetty how much the open-air life and this temperate climate have, thanks to their Giver, done for herself and Geoff, strengthening their lungs (people at home shook their heads over them both, asserting prematurely that they had not a pair between them), and giving them a new lease of life as it were. When I get back to England I shall advise every one I may meet having that premonitory symptom usually called a 'hacking cough,' to bring it out here and leave it here also. 'When found, make a note of,' so, put that in the log, Miss Hetty."

At 2 p. m. we outspanned by the farm of a Dutch Boer. We had planned a short stay only, but the fires around us, which seemed at a safe distance, came on at a gallop, making it evident that we must take precautions to save ourselves, our animals and waggon without

delay. Grim had as usual started off to explore, and it was while we were watching for his reappearance at the foot of the Kopje, from behind which the fire was advancing, that we perceived at what a startling pace it travelled us-ward. Our men rushed off to collect the oxen, which were peacefully grazing on the flat, so soon to become a blackened mass. The Dutchman's son and Kafirs went out to drive in their live stock, the horses coming at a canter, with their colts careering playfully after their manner by their sides, Grim, with his little dog "Bo," bringing up the rear.

A conscience prick reminds me that I have not introduced "Bo" to you before, an omission for which I cannot readily forgive myself. "Bo" is everybody's dog and pet, with his long ears, softly speaking eyes, and ostrich feather of a tail, which curls somewhat saucily over his back, and to touch which he considers an impertinence.

Picture us grouped around our temporary home, all who are classed under the head of able-bodied being actively employed. I am snuffed out as one not knowing her place on offering my services, so I retire in dudgeon to the shelter of the waggon, and console myself with telling you all about it. Some have sacks, some have boughs and bushes, indeed anything they can lay hold of, wherewith to beat down the flames they themselves have kindled within

a safe circle about our camp, so as to island us off from the big red-flaring sea whose fire waves threaten us on nearly every side. The birds are wheeling overhead, disturbed from their haunts, uttering weird cries, which have in them more of rejoicing than of lament, for this is a rare harvest-time for them. As the snakes, lizards, and other creeping things flee from before the element they dread, the fowls of the air pounce upon them and make them their prey. Oh! it is a grand sight! Except just close to us, but near enough for their hot breath to fan our cheeks, we are surrounded by flames. They come at a gallop, they come at a crawl; now in a straight line, now in single file, as the inequalities of the ground and the growth which covers it may determine, but wind-driven, eddy-chased ever. Some huge boulder, some thread of a running spruit, some small hillock checks them for a brief space, and then more flames "to the rescue," the boulder is leaped, the spruit laughed to scorn, the hillock surrounded, and the fire-demon reigns supreme.

"Has it not reminded you of a cavalry charge, Miss Hetty?" asks the Captain, as, panting with his exertion and grubby as any sweep, he joins me, followed by Jack and Grim.

"Gentlemen," I respond, "it does, and of many other things besides; but I really can

discuss nothing with becoming gravity with either of you until—until—well, until you have washed yourselves! Allow me to hand you the pewter basin and the soap and the towel. The kettle boiled without an effort on my part, and I have taken the liberty to add a little washing soda as an aid to cleanliness.”

My “chaff” is taken in good part by the trio, Jack only saying, as they carry off the kettle and basin, “Let those laugh who win, child. If we had become less black, you might have been a very burnt and shrivelled-up Hetty indeed, by now.”

Whilst we had been surrounded by it the smoke had been hardly bearable; our eyes had watered, and it was with difficulty that we avoided inhaling the particles of burnt grass which were whisked about furiously by the wind. Poor little Bo had looked up at me with his pretty speaking eyes, streaming with tears, as were my own, and with a reproachful expression, as much as to say, “How could you be so unkind as to give me this extremely unpleasant sensation.” Up to the last possible moment he had been enjoying great sport, chasing the escaping frog, lizard, &c.; but his romps had been ruthlessly cut short at his first personal contact with the fire itself. His bark had died away into a dismal howl as he limped to me for protection, with damaged paw, singed tail, and the depressed and dejected air of a

dog who had certainly got the worst of it.

We inspanned when the road was sufficiently clear to admit of our making a start, and travelled for hours over the burnt ground, frequently crossing still burning patches; which seemed to have been set alight as by an afterthought when the more pressing business of the fire-king's messengers had been accomplished. For miles and miles we could see flames, the horizon aglow, everywhere. The grass is so dry that it catches fire instantaneously, but burns itself out so rapidly that mimosa trees and even much smaller shrubs escape with only a scorching.

Two of the party rode on to select a camping place, and we found all ready for us as we lumbered up to our quarters for the night. The bare broad track separated us from the enemy's broadsides; the wind favored our position, and their ammunition was, so to speak, well nigh spent, but enough remained to keep both sides on the alert. "How hobgoblinish we look, don't we?" enquires Geoff of the party generally, and indeed not only do we look weird and uncanny, but so do our surroundings. The very oxen, as they lie each in its place, fastened as usual to the trek-tow (or chain), taking no notice of wind-howls or flame, and placidly chewing the cud before dropping off to sleep, seem twice their size, and their horns, as they clatter them together every now and again,



appear almost menacing. The grim and gaunt Euphorbias, with their odd ghostlike arms, have a come-near-me-if-you-dare air enough to daunt the timid soul, but they have for Geoff and me a kind of fascination of which neither is ashamed, as we confide to one another the fancies which possess us, and tell one another of what we have seen with our mental eyes during the fitful silences into which we lapse.

“Good night, Geoff,” I say. “My thoughts have travelled back to the dear old home. Don’t break the spell, old boy, I want to carry it to roost with me, that I may have happy dreams, and forget that I am in South Africa for just one little while.”

“That is odd, Auntie; I have been at home too for full five minutes, and I want to stop there as much as you do. I’ll just help you to tumble up into your perch and hand you the lantern, and then I’ll turn in, as I see Dad and Grim have done already. The men have done so long ago, and the Captain, I know, only wants to see all safe to follow their example. Good night.”

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### CHAPTER III.

THURSDAY.—Who does not know the chill feeling which creeps over the senses on visiting at day dawn the scene of a last night’s merry-

making, whether of ball or of banquet, or of the mistletoe-crowned, holly-decked hall of the large family gathering? What a glamour had come from the lights alone! Half of the fun and the rippling laughter it gave birth to had been owing to the warm encouragement they gave, as they made bright eyes brighter, and merry hearts merrier. . . . .

"At it already, you dear old scribbler?" cries my boy, peeping over my shoulder. "Well, it *is* hard to come down from the clouds to this work-a-day world again, I must confess, and such a black and cindery wilderness of a world as this is, too. I believe we really were in Wonderland last night, Auntie, and that this is some sort of a penalty for trespassing there; but Dick must hurry up those lazy cattle, to get us out of this dismal old hole, and into something more worth looking at. Hullooah! what is he up to? we're off the track;" and he leaps over the tail-board of the waggon, Bo after him, to join the beckoning figures in the distance, whose signals had caused our driver to change his course. .

Grim had, as usual, started off for what is termed amongst us his "preliminary canter," and the Captain and Jack had gone with horses, dogs and guns in search of game, yesterday's fire having been a sad spoil-sport. One of them had just shot a fine "riet-bok," or reed buck, and the waggon was wanted to come and fetch

it. It was an animal of fair size, weighing about 85 or 90 lbs., fawn coloured, and about 34 inches high. Its horns were ringed at their base with a circular curve towards their tip. The Captain told us that it was not so swift as many of its near relations, and that it had an absurd habit of squatting until the hunter gets so near that it becomes an easy prey.

"What a duffer!" says Geoff; "but it is good for us that this specimen was no wiser than its fellows, for I have a notion that the Digester had nothing to speak of left in it when I took my last dip last night, and unless I get those two pheasants Bruno and Turk are putting up at this very moment, we'll be on short commons ere long."

The Captain's shot had brought down the birds before Geoff could get near them, though he was off like an arrow from the bow; but it was with full hands he joined us at our next outspan, under the lee of a grand rugged-looking kopje, overgrown between its massive boulders with vegetation of every kind, from huge trees to the tiniest fern. Opposite it, with a large plain between, was its twin brother, of the same granite formation, and clothed by mother Nature in garments of the same shade of colouring, and after the same bountiful manner. Altogether, the scenery through which we have passed for the last two or three hours has been very lovely, tropical as it is bound to

be, and therefore quaint and unhomelike. Aloes are plentiful, and so are the euphorbias, with their fleshy branches turned upwards, bearing an odd resemblance to candelabras, the candles of which it would certainly puzzle any one to light, so fenced around are the sockets (to carry out the metaphor) with what has the appearance of bristles. A milky-white poisonous juice exudes from the euphorbia tribe generally, which it is ascertained can be turned to useful account, as it takes the consistence of an india-rubber-like gum. The Kafir-boom, with a scarlet bloom on its leafless boughs, caught my eyes every here and there, the foliage following, instead of preceding, the flower, as do other trees and flowering shrubs in South Africa. At first I imagined some large red bird had settled on the gnarled-looking, dark-barked tree, or that some balloon of crimson silk had, all ribanded and torn, weary with its long flight from other lands, come to a pitiful ending in these wilds; but, as we neared first one and then another, I could almost count the large, long flowers which formed the clusters, and recognized that it was only another wonder upon which my eyes had lighted, and which it required but a little longer experience to make me thoroughly and heartily admire. The sugar-busch, fig, mimosa, cacti, orchids on the ground and up in the trees, flower after flower, tree after tree, shrub after shrub. Grim brings me speci-

mens, seeds, bulbs, &c., some of which will reach England safely, I hope. How gay our shrubberies would look if even some few of these productions which grow so profusely here could be prevailed upon to live under our cloudy skies at home!

“Do you see that gorgeous plant yonder, Grim?” says the Captain. “That is the *Greya-Sutherlandi*, so called after Sir George Grey and Dr. Sutherland, of Natal, which has only just bloomed in England at the Duke of Sutherland’s, oddly enough after having failed at Kew.”

Grim started on his hobby, carries off the Captain with him, and the pair get soon beyond our reach. I try to follow at a humble distance, hoping to glean a crumb or two of real knowledge about the natural products of the country worth transcribing in my log. When they speak of the *Arduinia grandiflora*, I have not at first the least notion that they mean the Natal plum, with its shining, polished leaves, and large white stars of fragrant blossoms, or that it belongs to the Apocynaceous family of plants.

(“I defy you to spell that,” whispers Geoff.)

“All succulent plants which yield a milky juice are called by the Dutch Milkbosch, and the Cinchonaceous family, which comprises over 2,000 species, is largely represented in South Africa.”

“*What* kind of family may that be with the long surname?” I modestly ask.

"A vast variety, amongst them—ipecacuanha, quinine, Jesuit's bark, and coffee—claim it as theirs, many of them bearing flowers of great beauty. Then there are the scarlet Loranthus or the South African mistletoe, the repulsive Stapelia or Carrion flower, which attracts flies by its most disagreeable odour, and which is looked upon with intense disgust and almost loathing, and yet which has great interest for the true lover and learner of Nature, and the cucurbitaceæ (gourds, Miss Hetty,) are in many varieties likewise. You are not likely to forget the thorned mimosa, Grim." . . . Here Bo, who had been lazily snapping at flies and basking in the sun, set up a howl of such appealing pathos that we all gazed at him in terror, Geoff's being of a quality so exaggerated that I, who knew him so well, scented mischief, the others crediting Bo with a rarer intelligence and instinct than dog ever possessed before. "Nor is Bo likely to forget it either," said Grim. "The very name inspires him with terror, you see, ever since he was so cruelly impaled on that terrible 'wait-a-bit' or 'wagt ein beetji,' as the Dutch have it; he gives a wide berth to any of its kind, as, indeed, do bigger beasts than himself. We who rescued him have scars to show now, and Miss Hetty had a hard time of it with her needle and thread that day."

"Besides the mimosa trees with spikes, with hooks, and with straight spear-like thorns,

there is the sickle thorn," continued the Captain, "which actually cuts sharply as any knife into the animal's very skin."

At this juncture Dick's voice announces that our meal awaits us, and an uncommonly good one it is, though Mrs. Glasse, Mrs. Rundell, or even Soyer himself would have been aghast had they seen the variety which formed its component parts. "I believe," said Grim, with the serio-comic look which improves him so much, "if we did not keep a sharp look-out when Dick and Oomfan are preparing our stew they would pop in fur, feathers, and all; and what is more, that we should eat them too with our ever-ready appetites. I must say they have outshone themselves to-day, or is it that I am even hungrier than usual? Vegetables also. What a large onion!" A ghastly pallor overspread his face, as after a second's contemplation of the seeming vegetable he gasped, "Not another mouthful, for your lives. It is my *Hæmanthus*, a bulb of deadly poison. How could it—however could it have got into the pot?" "Calm yourself, Grim, and go on with your dinners," quoth the Captain. "Blame your near sight for the unnecessary alarm. It is not the poison bulb you take it for, but that of the *true* lily, which is perfectly innocuous, though I should be sorry to recommend it as a pot-flavourer to any one."

Grim looked so disconcerted and Geoff so

repentant that I rejoiced when Jack—whose thoughts had been elsewhere and thus had fortunately taken no note of what had passed—started a subject of conversation without any touch of *apropos* to it, *i.e.*, some of the odd customs of the Dutch of South Africa. “Dick has been telling me,” he remarked, “of a curious proof of filial affection shown by a son to his father, with which the latter was highly pleased, *viz.*, the gift of the planks needful for his coffin whenever the old gentleman should require one. The idea seems ghastly!” “At first sight I grant it does,” answered our Captain, “but it is not without some reason and excuse, and after all, ‘Evil be to him that evil thinketh.’” We are now nearing the large forests of the Transvaal, and find it more difficult to realize the many inconveniences occasioned by lack of timber, than when we were traversing those long weary miles of veldt with its far-apart homesteads and treeless wastes. The Dutch nearly always keep coffin planks ready for the emergency which comes to all alike, and I do not think their equal spirits are in the least affected, nor their appetites lessened by the knowledge that the solid rafters overhead of their “fore-huis” or living room, support the wherewithal to build them that other house they will certainly need some day. The gift is no mean one either, for distance and the difficulties of transit make



wood very costly. To offer to purchase of a Boer any of these specially reserved planks is almost deemed an insult, which only your ignorance of the customs of his people could excuse; but here come the cattle, and Dick will want to inspan, so I vote we lend a hand to Miss Hetty and then take to our saddles, that we may more speedily seek out a good camping ground at the Haupt Busch Berg, which we shall reach at our next outspan."

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#### CHAPTER IV.

At 2 p. m. we reach the Wood Bush Village, the last settlement in the Transvaal, in which, except for a short time in each year, it is safe for the white man to live. It verges closely on the tsetse-fly region so destructive to cattle. I had heard so much of the death-dealing power of this insect pest, that I was astonished when the Captain told me how small it was as to actual size. "Hardly more than half an inch long, Miss Hetty, but almost always fatal to the beast, however large it may be, which it attacks. I have seen its poor victim with drooping ears, watering eyes, and swelled throat, pining away gradually, succumbing to the poison in its system at last, even if a certain tenacity of life which some animals, like some people, possess

in greater degree than others, enables it to continue the struggle from weeks into months. At first it eats ravenously, but only for a while. Appetite once gone, kindly death soon comes to its rescue. Its very skin is found punctured if removed from its fleshless bones afterwards. Horses and oxen which have survived this blood poisoning, as well as those which have survived the other diseases of the country, are called 'salted,' and rise immensely in value in consequence. We are on the 'safe side' where we are now, but a little farther on we should assuredly lose every animal we have. The hunting grounds of the tsetse are well known fortunately, and the increase of population will do much towards their extinction hereabouts, for they follow the larger game mostly, and as civilization drives the latter farther afield, so will their foes go with them. There is one peculiarity by which this fly can be recognised. It folds its wings one over the other, making the two look like one. The Delagoa Bay route is closed, for the present at least, by the prevalence of these obnoxious little creatures, for man is too dependent upon his animals on trek to risk bringing them through a belt of country infested by them, however little power they may have to injure himself."

The village is beautifully situated on a well-wooded hill, the valley and surrounding hills being dotted about by the huts, tents, waggons,

and houses of the residents, temporary or otherwise. The sun is too hot for me to venture out of the shade, so I scribble lazily with my back against the waggon-wheel, while Dick lights the fire, puts up the tent, and Oomfan busies himself over minor preparations for our coming meal, submitting without audible remonstrance to what sounds a trifle like bullying on Dick's part. There is in the daily intercourse of our "boys" such an odd mixture of quarrelling and playfulness, downright anger and practical joking, jocular thumps and sounding "whacks," that I am often at a loss to separate the meaning of the one from the other. "Fun and fisticuffs," Geoff calls it; adding, "whichever they begin with, we may be sure they will end with its *vice versa*." The quieter Oomfan is at the moment, the more sure is he to be planning a retaliation in kind, so I have a notion some mischief is brewing now. My men folk are off exploring, following their several bents. My brother and the Captain have a notion of looking at some of the farms hereabouts; whether with a view to purchase or only to form a completer judgment of the capabilities of this grand country, I know not; but farm-hunting they are. Grim is botanizing, and Geoff, with his gun and dogs, will bring a pot contribution presently.

"Ah! here they come!" Grim, with Bo at his heels, and Geoff with crest somewhat less

erect than usual. "Just my luck," he cried; "I should have bagged such a big paauw but for that little wretch of a Bo starting up when he wasn't wanted." Now the paauw is by no means bad eating even when one is not on trek, and I must confess that I am angry with Bo too, and share in Geoff's disappointment. This bird, which is commonly called the wild turkey, is really the bustard. It has been termed the "wild peacock" also, but not correctly so, I fancy, unless, like Bo-peep's sheep, those we have seen have "left their tails behind them." From tip to tip of the extended wings the paauw has been known to measure seven feet, whilst its proportionate height has been five feet. The feathers are white, soft, and downy, and its flesh, which is perhaps a little coarse and much too dry, reminds one of an elderly pheasant which had commenced life as a wild duck. The meat of the breast being brown and that of the limbs white, favours this fancy, and, as Geoff has it, "at least gives some colour to the notion." The koorhaan is a bird much smaller, of the same species, and one which oftener finds its way into our pot than the paauw, which is more coy, and "takes more shooting."

Dick has busied himself with the preliminary process of cleaning the horns of the reed-buck for which I have asked, not from their being especially beautiful, but in memory of

the place and day of their being procured.

The Captain and Jack have returned, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Pickhardt, a "real Hollander," who in the short time he had been their pastor has done wonders amongst the inhabitants of the Wood Busch Village, giving the parents some sense of the beauty and comfort of cleanliness, and the children a taste for knowledge. His school is well attended, and it gave us quite a home feeling to hear the merry voices of the youngsters laughingly echoed to us on the hill-side as they scattered to their homes below. Not the least of the benefits conferred by their minister must be this somewhat new element in Dutch family life in South Africa, which seems, as a rule, to have too much of gravity and decorum for the ease of true happiness. I cannot think the Dutch have no sense of humour whatever, but I am sure they have no synonym for the word "fun." The children apparently know no "games." They do not "play" as do the little ones of other lands. A boy is rarely seen without the long whip in his hand, which he cracks at intervals. This is his one notion of amusement, and it has the further merit of being good training for the waggon driving he will take to in due time as a fish does to water.

There is variety in our camp scene to-night, for there is more of human life around and about us; the kindly blink of lamp and candle

from the small mud cottage, round hut-tents, the temporary home of frail construction with its bamboo sides and canvas roof, and the buck-wagon of travellers like ourselves, all contribute to the sense of good comradeship each in turn imparts. The light has died out almost suddenly as is its wont. My brother's interest is great in all our visitor can tell of this fine country, whose praises the latter evidently likes to sound, and to whose shortcomings he is indulgently blind; so the candles nearly die away, and subside into the necks of the two black bottles which serve as our candlesticks, before Jack can part with our guest, of whom we hope to see more on our return from the forests which we expect to reach to-morrow.

13TH.—We agree to breakfast comfortably before starting, and during, as well as after, our meal are variously "interviewed" after a kindly fashion enough. Dick interprets readily any little interchange of civility which falls to my share, but dumb-show does the rest, and although as a rule I object to being gazed at stolidly or otherwise, it seems surly to show signs of disapproval, and I do not now, as at first, nervously put the salt into the sugar-bag and the rusks where the cartridges ought to be, but I look up at intervals with a little nod or smile as if on the whole I was as well entertained as my visitors.

A young Yorkshireman, a member of the

only English Family in the place, undertakes to guide us up the Berg, adding six more oxen to our ten, which, as we are travelling light, suffice for our usual needs. The ascent of the Berg will commence almost at once after we have crossed the noisy, rocky little spruit at the base of the hill, so I am left alone in the waggon—the men-folk going on ahead, as they usually do. “Lazy Hetty,” they call me; but, indeed, it is the sun which makes me so, if lazy I am, the tilt of the waggon being a most welcome shelter, and one which I am loth to leave until the fierce rays have done their worst, and the rare shadows fall invitingly across the sandy, boulder-studded track.

The *Haupt Busch Berg*.—The scenery of this day's trek has been grand and beautiful. The Berg once passed—our borrowed oxen being sent back in charge of a Kafir—we had still severe climbing before us. The ascent was more gradual, indeed; but it was ever up, up, until we reached our destination some 3,500 feet above the sea. Mountains before, mountains behind us; peaks here, peaks there; then table-lands; then kloofs and ravines, thickly wooded, and now, at all events, well watered.

“Miss Hetty,” had said Dick, once on coming to a standstill, “the master is beckoning. I expect he wants you to look down into the hollow yonder.”

Dick had guessed rightly; for, on my joining

Jack about 100 yards in advance of the waggon, where he was standing by what *seemed* only a little cleft in the hill-side, he took me by the hand and silently pointed into the depths beneath. What a solemn hush was there! broken only by the faint trickle of the fall into the stream below, which to us looked just like a little silver thread instead of the broad belt of running, leaping water it really was. The chasm was of great width and depth, and noble trees lined its inaccessible sides. Where possible, trees had been felled, and some lay ready for carting away near what with difficulty we could discern as a waggon track at the base.

"Still as it is, there is life in plenty there, we may be sure—both vegetable and animal," said my brother, "and I should not wonder if the old lion which has eluded the hunters for so long until he deserves to elude them altogether now, does not own a lair hereabouts."

At the farthest drift or ford of the "Brothers" Rivers, so called from twelve brothers and brothers-in-law having made it a meeting-place, we had seen the tree-fern for the first time. It is astonishing to what a size this fern grows, the trunk being as large as many an oak or elm. We passed over one wide foot-bridge constructed entirely of its wood. It is not the season now for this fern, so we can form no just appreciation of its beauty; but we are told that



it is beautiful and graceful too when in full leaf. Now it looks almost grotesque.

Our tent being pitched, and what I dignify by the somewhat anomalous name of my "household duties" being performed to my satisfaction, I, pending the return of my companions, strolled down to the verge of the forest and crossed its belt, a little irregular streamlet of the clearest water. The sun had lost somewhat of its power; but even had it not, the bit of open glade I had to cross was of no extent, and the brisk healthful mountain breeze which fanned my cheek under the wide flap of my faithful old broad-brim, almost tempted me, as it triumphantly tempted Bo to a regular scamper, to "let off" our high spirits. I came back with my hands full of specimens of the most lonely ferns, flowers, and plants which grow luxuriantly everywhere, and which I had obtained in spite of brambles and thorns, to say nothing of snakes.

Some small nephews of mine, and cousins of Geoff's write us, "Do have some adventures," but it seems as if nothing worthy of that sounding name would come in our way: but who knows what may be in store for us? The men followed the spoor of a tiger a day or two ago; the old lion cannot be very far off; the hyæna Jack wounded so near to its hole that it ran to earth to die in peace; and "Who thinks anything of a jackal or a snake?" ask Geoff.

"Jules Verne, Kingston, Ballantyne, &c., spoil these youngsters. Nothing short of a life and death encounter serves their turn; but we'll astonish them yet; Auntie, see if we don't. This is no end of a place, is it not?" he ran on. "We—that is, Pater, Grim, and I—have had a glorious dip, and, as I had the prospecting basin with me, I had a try for gold." "Did you find any?" I inquire. "Well, not much. I found 'the colour,' and that counts for something. I think if you look *very hard* into this scrap of paper you may see just a speck; but if *I* got even that you may be sure a fellow who understands indications, and has double my patience, would find something worth keeping. I'll turn out a nugget for you some day yet, Hetty. Meanwhile here is a contribution to our curiosity-box;" and my boy handed me a perfect specimen of a small cast-off snake skin from which its owner must have glided with ease, for it was quite uninjured. That it will be as flawless when it reaches its intended nook in the old home cabinet is more than I dare hope for.

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## CHAPTER V.

AUGUST 14.—We had a rare treat last night, all the more delightful from being unexpected, and we owed it to the thoughtful kindness of

our Captain. "Every morn, as true as the clock, somebody hears the postman's knock!" sang Geoff, as he gave upon the tail-board of the waggon with the head of Grim's little pick-axe a famous imitation of the two raps with the door-knocker to which English ears are so accustomed. "Look sharp, Aunt Hetty," he cried, "the postman is in a great hurry; he has not half done his rounds yet, so take your share, for I want to enjoy old Grim's delight when I hand him his budget!" Yes; letters from home! Of how welcome, you who wrote them can hardly form a conception, nor of the stir and commotion they produced in our little camp, when, after each had devoured his (or her) own in secret, we all met around the fire to discuss the various items of our news which might become public property.

But not even glad home-tidings, such as for the most part ours happily had been, could lessen our impatience to penetrate into the mysterious depths of the grand forests around us. I use the plural number advisedly, for the one grand whole was formed of a series linked each to the other with an occasional break every here and there—hilly grazing ground, boulder-strewn, filling up gaps, disturbing uniformity, but adding the variety which so enhanced its beauty. Each rocky krantz was so densely covered as to be impenetrable, and no eye could see what chasms yawned beneath where kloof

met kloof. Even skilled experience could form no judgment as to which kind of tree grew more abundantly than another; whether there were more of the stink wood with its dark-walnut grain, so valuable for furniture and carriage-building, than of the sneeze wood, which is so called from its power to tickle the nose of him who works it into beams and lintels now, and who will, by-and-bye, turn it into the railway-sleepers and telegraph-posts, a call for which will assuredly come in the train of the thousands which ere long must people the Transvaal. That the still more valuable iron-wood, which could be turned to like account, abounded, we knew; and that our forests held a boundless store of the assegai-wood dear to the Kafir heart and highly prized by the wheelwright, we doubted not, although amidst the wealth of branch and leaf we could not positively identify it. The lordly yellow-wood, with its twenty-one feet or thereabouts in circumference, and forty feet from base to crown, we were sure would outnumber other kinds; and we surmised that the Cape cedar would be fairly represented, too. "So imperishable is this wood that no visible decay was shown by posts of it which must have been in the ground over a century," said our Captain; "but, alas! it is less abundant than formerly. Few countries can boast of a greater variety of really useful trees than that part of South Africa;

but until there is a more thorough organization for forest management we must be content to be in ignorance of even the amount of treasure store we have." "Some plan exists, does it not?" queries Jack. "Yes, to some extent, certainly; but under existing circumstances, one of which is that fatal bar to all progress—a low exchequer—not much can be done. The forests are Government property, and you or I or any one who likes may pay a small fee, per axe, per annum, for permission to cut and carry away what timber we like. But here we are, Miss Hetty. There seems something like an opening and signs of labour, marking that we are not the only human beings here to-day."

Before crossing the "Tree-Fern Bridge" we had observed a round mud hut and a small Kafir herding goats close to it, and therefore felt less surprise at being greeted by a "Good morning" as we, blinking from the glare outside, stepped, half-blinded until our eyes got more used to the dimmer light, into the grateful shelter of the noble trees. The voice came from the depths of a saw-pit, and a second sufficed to bring first a head, then a pair of arms, and then the whole body of its owner to a level with ourselves. Mr. D——, whom life's vicissitudes—"dropping money" at the Diamond Fields, misfortune, &c.—had converted into a sawyer, although the first step in his career was, I was told, something very different,

kindly constituted himself our guide, and showed us where we might enter and follow up an opening without losing ourselves, where the loveliest ferns grew below and the orchids above us, what was the girth of such a tree, what the height of another, answering all Grim's questions with a good-natured patience worthy of all praise. Had I paid more attention to their talk, I might have more to tell you now—more of real information, I mean—but my whole heart seemed filled by the gorgeous yet almost solemn beauty around and about me. I had felt something like it before upon first stepping into the stillness of some grand old cathedral, or when alone on a sea-shore with its monster rocks towering above and its mysterious caves behind me, and the longing was (a selfish one enough) to be alone with it all just till I could realize it. That thought passed, and soon Geoff and I, and even the Captain and Grim, were scrambling about treasure-collecting, to the evident amazement of the Kafir, who, having delivered his mail-bags, was now to remain with us, and who himself formed no mean feature in our forest scene, as, with the gun slung over his bare shoulder he stood erect and majestic, his lithe, well-formed limbs motionless, as if sculptured in polished black marble. He was a fine specimen of the noble savage, a man of many inches, but yet a very pigmy, for his proportions, like our own, were

dwarfed by the lordly stature of the forest monarchs whose domain we had so unceremoniously invaded.

"Oh! if only old Turle were here!" cried Grim. "Wouldn't Grey revel in it?" asked Jack, and "and how our fellows from Busby's would astonish the apes!" cried Geoff, as he swung himself from coil to coil of the "ape's tow" or monkey rope, which festooned the lower as well as the higher branches to entanglement—a very Paradise of swings for children. Even I, Hetty, had my Somebody whom I just longed for, one little while, to share in the exhilaration of spirits and intense delight which had succeeded to that first hush of almost solemn enjoyment with which I had been inspired. I wish I could describe it all faithfully; but my pen angers me by its incapacity to convey the picture to others which must ever remain photographed in my memory. Nature had been so lavish, and yet had shaded, softened, and toned down with such a minute perfection that the smallest leaf, reed, or feathery grass was as lovely and complete of its kind as the seven or eight-foot high fern, or the monster tree whose orchid-graced crown towered so loftily above us! Then the sun, which would not be shut out, gave such tints and warmth of colouring, such teeming life to everything, that nothing of detail was wanting to that glorious whole. I have seen pictures of tropical forests

which in my ignorance I have deemed over drawn ; but no painter's wildest flight of imagination could overstep Nature's own beautiful bestowments in a tropical clime.

The catalogue would be too long to write even did I know the names of all we saw, as we sat by the clear little stream which bubbled and danced over the pebbles, some of which had tiny golden specks, or what looked wondrously like them, as they sparkled under the busy waters ; or of all we heard as we listened to the "bird talk"—the occasional scream of the gaudy parrots, which cleverly hid themselves amongst the greenery around, the chatter of the monkeys, the buzz-buzz of the winged insects, the whirr and hum of the green, sober-coated, but gay waistcoated grasshopper, and of the faint rustle of the long grasses as *something* glided by which had a sound so suggestive that it was not all fun which made Geoff say warningly, "'Ware snakes! Look where you go, good people!"

On our return to camp we called upon Mrs. D——, and met with that hearty welcome which can only be accorded in its fullest sense by those to whom such visits as ours are very rare. Her life was one of such utter isolation that it was no wonder she should express so much joy at clasping hands with one of her own womankind once more. She spoke of her privations and lonely life in no tone of complaint,



but as being the common lot of settlers in a far-away part of the country. Meat they seldom tasted ; coffee and tea were " indulgences," for opportunities were scarce to replenish a failing stock ; so potatoes and mealies formed their staple food. Pointing to her youngest little one, she said, " When baby came to me I was alone in my hut, my husband being absent on business. I had nothing but mealies in my store, and no means of procuring anything else. The wife of a gentleman in charge at Eersteling, hearing of my need, sent me coffee, tea, and a few little comforts. But for her I think my heart would almost have failed me ; as it was, I wonder I lived through that terrible time till help reached me ; but I have, you see, and indeed in this climate one can bear and do what ' at home ' would be thought impossible." I had heard Mrs. D—— spoken of as a most " capable woman," and never was that adjective better applied. She had pluck and endurance, and that power of making the best of everything so needful to the happiness of any wife who has cast in her lot with one of the pioneers of civilization in a new land. " That there are many like her—aye, even amongst some of England's more softly nurtured daughters—I am sure," said our Captain ; " but unless very certain that that latent power to bear lurks within, and that there is a loving heart to warm it into life and foster its strength and growth,

a man had better make somewhat of a home in the wilderness before he chooses a mate to share one with him. No woman so endowed need fear to venture, for her compensations are many and her power to cheer and hearten boundless. . . .”

It was with real regret that we parted from cheery-hearted Mrs. D—— at the door of her small mud cabin; her babies clinging to her apron, their shy eyes lighting up their sun-browned faces as they looked their reluctant last at us all, but more especially at Geoff, whose antics had delighted them. “Unaccustomed to amusement in any shape, they found me as good fun as a hurdy-gurdy or a penny peep-show. I never enjoyed making a fool of myself so thoroughly in all my life,” said my boy, who could not resist the pleading for a romp which the tinies had manifested without the help of words. The group—that brave mother and her little ones—the Kafir herd-boy with his goats, the cattle grazing near, &c., and the grand forest behind, will form another of my unpainted pictures which I shall recall with the vividness of reality whenever my memory in coming years may travel back to this 14th of August, 1875, upon which I write.

Word was passed to inspan at 3 p. m., for we are to get back as far as the Wood Busch Village to-night, intending to pass a quiet Sunday there, the plan being to diverge from our

original course soon after leaving it ; thus, if you care to follow me, you will have a few more pages of my note-book to read, and I a few more to transcribe, before I close my tale of this section of our experience of life on trek in South Africa.

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## CHAPTER VI.

AUGUST 14—I write at odd intervals and under difficulties, so if my scrawl is somewhat rigmoroly and scrappy, remember that I am not without my excuse. That very clever essayist the “Country Parson” chose for an impromptu writing-table his pet horse’s nose. Now I do not choose the enamelled hand-basin turned upside down or the water-barrel on end for mine, but each serves its turn as such on occasion. I am now writing on my knee in the very remotest corner of the waggon, against the tailboard, of which I have been hurled without ceremony as the vehicle was literally tilted upon end in the midst of the river, the “Brothers’ Drift,” and there left, the trek-tow or chain having broken, and set the oxen free. The only use the creatures have made of their freedom has been to walk gravely forward, double file, and, missing their load, to stand perfectly still in the track, blinking their eyes, twirling their little stumpy tails, while lazily wondering what has happened.

I am almost on a level with the clear stream into which I long to plunge, but cannot, so I must content myself with a dabble in it only. The soap hit me in the eye as it leapt from its pocket, and the towel, with a due sense of the fitness of things, followed it shortly after, so I have made the most of my opportunities. "Ah! I thought we should not find you very seriously discomposed after all your experiences," says the Captain, who, with the others, had ridden back to see what caused our halt. A very little tinkering has mended our breakage, and in a few moments we are to start once more. . . .

Before inspanning, Dick and Oomfan came to the tent door, and showed me how the Kafirs make a fire. Oomfan gathered together a heap of light, dry grass. Dick took two pieces of a fig-tree branch, separated at the joints. Selecting a smaller section and one considerably larger, he inserted the lesser into the greater, and rubbing the former vigorously between the palms of his hands (sherry-cobbler fashion), friction produced sparks, which, dropping upon the heap beneath, soon produced a blaze.

SUNDAY, 15TH.—Arose later, luxuriating in a less hasty toilet than usual, having plenty of water from a stream running close by, the murmuring of which had lulled us to sleep last night. Our tent and waggon are fixed under the shelter of trees and rocks overlooking the village; the hill opposite, which we shall skirt

to-morrow, frowning down upon us with its face blackened by the fires of the last week. Mimosa and other trees cover this hill, except where the rock appears, relieving its otherwise funereal blackness.

Jack attended the Dutch morning service, not a word of which he could understand, and returned nearly deafened by the very hearty, but most unmusical, singing of parson and people. The rest of our party had a short service in our tent, and another in the evening, with a sermon at Kay's Cottage, *i. e.* the village store. The Kays are the only English family here. A much larger congregation assembled than the room would hold, including the Dutch minister, who, with his elder, arrived, from a clock mistake, somewhat late. Grim could not see to read, from the dimness of the lights, so I found to my horror that my voice was the sole one to respond during the reading of the Psalms. I was clerk and people in one, until the reinforcement arrived, when hymns and responses were warmly joined in and seemingly enjoyed. All around the room on shelves and pegs were the goods offered for sale in the store—flannels, calicos, prints, saucepans, tobacco, beads, &c. I misbehaved on coming out, treating my friends to a fainting-fit. The heat and closeness of the room, the smell of fustian and corduroy, being rather trying to one's olfactory nerves after breathing the pure air of

Heaven night and day for so long. I was laid down on the grass in the moonlight, and, by means of the combined influences of a thorn-bush scraping my neck, my comb, which had had several fractures already, being driven into my head, the furious barking of the big dogs, which started up from everywhere, the little dog Bo licking my face, and the "perfect cure" of Geoff's own invention, namely, literally tweaking my nose (an unfailing remedy, safe to cure a fainting person, whose first sensation on "coming to" is that of being all nose, and that a swelled and aching one), I was quickly myself again.

MONDAY, 16TH.—To-day the trio are off to visit a farm, partly the object of our trip. The captain has borrowed a second horse to enable himself and Grim to travel "ride and tie." They are to return about two or three o'clock, and we are to have the tent struck ready for a start soon after. Meanwhile I am all alone in my glory writing in the tent, using the large canteen as a table. Jack wanted me to have one of the Kay girls as a companion in case I should be afraid of the Kafirs! A kind offer, which I declined with thanks, for I luxuriate in a quiet time, especially when my diary has got into arrears. The big pot with some excellent buck stew stands by me ready for my dinner; and talking of dinner makes me think I had better have some, which I do!

A Kafir flourishing his assegai (or spear) has just passed by the tent door. I watch the blankets, lest he should take a fancy to have one, as they are temptingly spread out to air on the grass; but my watchfulness knows no other cause. Moreover, I have Carlo, too lame to go a-hunting with his master, and plucky little Bo, to protect me and my belongings also. Now in watching that Kafir I did him woeful injustice. No doubt he would have liked hugely one of our gay-coloured rugs; but I *think* he would not have stolen one now, and I *know* he would not had they been left in his charge. To the savage mind there is no great crime in *picking up* as a waif or stray anything his heart covets, even although he knows it to belong to another, but place him in charge of your belongings and no mastiff guards his master's property more valiantly than will he.

Dick, who has been oxen-seeking or otherwise employed, joins me now and says laughingly, "Why, missus seems always to like sitting Kafir fashion" (for I refuse the rickety water barrel, or that unbearably warm seat, *i. e.* a roll of rugs, which he offers). "Does missus know why a Kafir won't never sit on a chair even if he gets the chance?" I venture the shrewd guess that possibly he finds the ground safer. Showing a row of exceptionally white and even teeth, Dick grins approvingly. "That's it, missus; a Kafir says 'tis only Eng-

lishmen and chickens what want perches!" I am in for a talk with Dick, that is plain, so I drop my note-book for awhile and indulge him; and, indeed, myself at the same time, for Dick is intelligent and observant, and has much to tell at times worth listening to. On my naming to him my momentary distrust of the Kafir, he spoke of the peculiar honesty of the Zulus. "They love money dearly, missus, but you may trust them with anything—and many's the chance of stealing they have—but they *don't* even if they are sure not to be found out. I think the Zulus are kind of *gentlemen Kafirs*."

After a pause a new piece of information strikes Dick, and he adds:—"Would missus believe it now, but Kafirs have their fashions like white folks. Sometimes they must have their beads all round-shaped, then kind of flat, then long. As to the colour of them, why one time they'll only have blue, and at another they wouldn't have a blue, no not for *anything!* then 'twill be red and then a kind of no-colour, or whitey-brown, then they'll mix them, then they won't; its enough to make you laugh." And we do laugh; Dick, because he cannot help himself, and I, because it gives him such pleasure to have his eloquence appreciated. The chuckle over, Dick adds, "Why sometimes a chief will choose what kinds of beads his people shall have!" Feudalism with a vengeance, think I. Dick walks away for



awhile, having an innate sense of what I cannot help terming delicacy; but he hopes to be recalled, I know. Seeing a tiny winged thing flit by I ask what it may be, never thinking a creature so small can be a bird! It is one nevertheless. "The honey-bird missus: That's the way the Kafirs find their honey. They just follow it, and it is safe to lead them to where the bees have been hiding their store." Dick is in two minds to follow the pretty thing then and there, to surprise us with honey for our next meal; but a new idea strikes him, so he continues his gossip instead. "Missus knows how the Kafirs up this way" (as if they were quite a peg below those he was more acquainted with) "make that horrible noise when they sneeze?" Missus does, for her ears are fairly, accustomed to the unearthly sound. So she is told the *Natal Kafirs*, or they of the upper ten thousand at least, "don't *do that*, not if they can help it. They'll snuff and snuff till the tears roll down their faces in streams. Oh! they like that—fine!" "What do they make their snuff from?" I ask. "Aloe ashes pounded up with tobacco—*they do!* but these fellows crush up almost anything. So long as it tickles their noses they're well enough satisfied!"

TUESDAY, 17TH.—The explorers did not return yesterday quite as early as they had planned, they having been decoyed somewhat further on by their extreme interest in all they saw. The

general opinion was highly in favor of the great fertility of the soil and the infinite resources of the Transvaal, not only as a wheat-growing, but as a grazing country.

"Surely, where nearly every fruit of the temperate zone can be produced, steady industry ought to have grand results for him to reap who does not spare its bestowal on this fruitful land. The Transvaal is the great grain-supplier, or has been, of the Orange Free State and Natal. It can produce sugar, tobacco, and coffee also. The rapidity with which the dry bed of a river will become full makes amends for its inconveniences, if due care be taken to hoard a supply at the proper moment. Then the mineral wealth is great, as all the world knows," &c.

This was the general chorus; but whether anything tangible is to come of all this, in the shape of farm-purchasing or such like, I am much too discreet to inquire. Geoff, who, boy-like, thinks more of the sport than of anything else, wishes that Dad would "let him off Oxford and let him take to Transvaal farming instead." "You could keep house (or hut), Auntie, and we'd have prime times"; with a royal disregard to my feelings on the subject, or knowing that he is secure of me anywhen or anywhere, God bless him! Grim and I ended the day with horrible headaches, really horrible. The sun had been very fierce. I had felt it so

in the tent, and Grim ditto whilst undergoing unwonted exertion, even for him. But neither of us would listen to the suggestion of sunstroke; and, but for "they stwons! they stwons!" as Geoff quoted, which cruelly jarred our nerves as we jolted over the track, the cool night air would have carried away our aches and pains even sooner than it did. What the bright moonlight showed us I must keep for my next chapter.

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## CHAPTER VII.

AUGUST 18.—"Oh! what a relief!" both Grim and I had exclaimed when the waggon came to a halt at our nine o'clock outspan last night. "Now you two can 'take it easy,'" had cried the trio, "whilst we get you a good cup of tea, after which you can enjoy this glorious moonlight to your heart's content."

It *was* a glorious moon! No one who has never left Old England can conceive of such beauty, size, or *propinquity*. There must have been a peculiar beauty in its rays last night, or we, who had all been so well accustomed to the glories of a South African sky, could hardly have been so severally alive to its influence then. Another waggon had outspanned close to us, and it stood out in the light with an almost startling vividness, whilst the very

blades of grass appeared as if magnified by a microscope.

All sentiment was dispersed to the winds (and what a trifle suffices for that!) by our hearing the shrill cries and chattering of a lot of Kafir women, who advanced towards us from their distant kraals to fetch water. Their vessels were borne upon their heads as they walked with their usual firm tread, single file, after their manner. Unfortunately our own dogs, down to little Bo, behaved most inhospitably, setting a bad example to those of our neighbors. They rushed after the new comers with a zeal which would have been praiseworthy in a better cause, but highly unbecoming under existing circumstances, for the women had a higher right than ourselves to the water close by. No calling back of the dogs, no assurances of Dick and Oomfan, who, I am afraid, made some jokes too hard to be put up with, at the same time, could induce the fugitives to return. I was the more sorry for them when I heard Dick say, "I expect, Master, their husbands will give them a greater fright still when they go back without any water." "Dick is too good-natured not to mend matters by deeds," I surmised as I saw a figure disappearing in the distance with what looked suspiciously like the water-barrel; and when, later, a far-away chatter, chatter, and then a nearer ditto, with really soft laughter, which could only come

from souls quieted and pacified, reached my ears, I was satisfied that the *amende honorable* had been made and accepted.

Once during the night our dogs made a frantic raid ; but, from the answering yells, there was no doubt they were after legitimate prey, probably jackals, if not worse, prowling round our camp. Bo leapt off our joint bed to share in the fun, and howled dismally at finding the curtain of the waggon fastened with a close impenetrability, over which I rejoiced. I am used to noises ; therefore, Bo's excitable fit over, the jackal chased beyond our limits, and our neighbor's dogs once more asleep, I had but the rattling horns of the oxen and the see-sawing of the waggon as it was pulled now at one wheel, now at another, by the horses tethered on either side of me, to act as my disturbers, and was soon in the land of dreams, neither hearing nor heeding the cries of the jackals nor the positively depressing sighs for emancipation heaved by the steeds almost into my very ears.

Talking of the dogs' misbehaviour at breakfast this morning, the Captain remarked that some of them have a peculiar antipathy to Kafirs, flying at them, pinioning them down, and standing over them until called off by their master. The very same dogs will fawn upon white folks. Kafir dogs return the compliment, flying at a white, but caressing a black man.

At 7 we had just a cup of coffee only, before inspanthing—trekking till 10, when we made excellent breakfasts of bucksteaks, bread and tea. Jack's horse had contrived to free itself from the wheel and had roamed away; but we are hoping to find him at the farm ahead, where the sensible creature has on previous occasions met hospitable reception, and is probably in haste for a repetition thereof. His "spoor" is visible on the track, and we have only to note the marks to catch the truant. Jack with his gun, and Grim his chum, have started on afoot, with a Kafir to carry provisions and game bag. They hope to meet with a buck or birds, this being a promising place for sport. We are to join them at the farm by-and-by. The Captain and Geoff are conversing in the waggon, whilst I am scribbling this sitting on a saddle in the very small bit of shade afforded by the vehicle itself. There is just a little breeze, but the sun is very powerful. The Captain laughs at our complaints of it, wondering how we shall bear the journey back to Natal a little later on in the season. I trust by then we shall have become more used to the dried-up, tight-skinned feeling this constant baking and glare produces.

A very fine-looking Kafir came up to the fire a few minutes ago, entering into conversation with our small black attendant, and looking with hungry eyes at the porridge-pot, his dog

snuffing round it with a view to breakfast also. Oomfan offered him nothing, going on with his occupation of stirring the porridge with the end of one of the three sticks from which the kettle is usually suspended, occasionally wiping its end upon his black paws, before licking them, with a great air of enjoyment. Tired of this, he took up the Kafir gun, pointing it here and there, evidently picturing himself a great brave all the time. I made the boy a gesture to stop his antics, and so perfectly has his previous mistress trained him to obey, that he dropped the gun instantly. It is now close upon in-spanning time, so I must stop for awhile.

12.15.—A man with a waggon has brought word that "the horse has been found," that "the Boss" has shot a buck, and that we are to make all speed to meet him at the little settlement a few miles further on, formed by a colony of Dutch relations, one member only of whom has married an Englishman. What we see there, and any trifle which may befall us by the way, I must enter into my trusty note-book as occasion offers.

4 p.m.—A very short "occasion" offers before we leave this interesting little colony, but I will make the most of it, and a beginning, at all events. Our first visit was to the house of Mr. M——, the Englishman, where we received a most kind welcome from himself and his Dutch wife, who showed by signs her pleasure

at our call, begging her husband to express her regret at her inability to converse with us. The Captain has so fair a knowledge of Dutch that he is at no loss, and Mr. M——'s broken English helped us considerably. Our host owned to being forgetful of his mother-tongue—and it was not difficult to realize the possibility, so rarely an opportunity offers for him to utter a syllable of it. We had been told that a lady from the Cape had undertaken the post of general instructress to the children of the colony; but she was engaged in the duties of her office, and so we missed shaking hands with her. Mr. M—— said, "I wish we had a doctor. We need one sadly; distances are so wide, and the impossibility of obtaining medical help we feel deeply." Pressed as to possible stipend a medical practitioner might count upon, our friend became somewhat incoherent, and fenced the question; but his need is that of others, and new comers, whose advent the Transvaal soon looks for, will surely include some doctors, who might, at all events, combine other avocations for awhile wherewith to eke out an income, payment in kind, after the favourite Dutch fashion, in that case not proving a bad one. First to come will be first to win, at all events.

There! I have used up all my spare time in digression, and the remainder of my visit must be scribbled about at our next outspan. . . .



Our second call at the house of some quite Dutch people pleased us best. Mr. Morais is a brother of the Boer who owned the farm upon which we have outspanned when the fire occurred. The rooms were very clean, and of a good size, with far more comforts than the Dutch usually have. Many of their peculiarities prevailed, however, such as the closets having glass doors for the display of china and glass, knick-knackeries, &c., each shelf being ornamented with a cloth trimmed with broad edging of crochet or other lace. Mrs. Morais showed me a small flower-garden, enclosed by a high bamboo fence, in which she was trying to raise a few flowers. Cattle and fowls are sad destroyers of gardens around the farms, making the latter rare luxuries. I like Mrs. Morais exceedingly, finding her vastly superior to the Dutch born in this country, who, as a rule, dislike the *bonâ fide* Hollander even more than they do the non-Dutch-speaking English.

There was no mistaking the fact that it was a very real pleasure to her to have us as her temporary guests. It changed the current of her life for a little, which must have much of stagnation to detract from its happiness. That her husband should prefer her, an *Old Country* woman (how it came about that she should have found her way to South Africa at all I did not like to enquire), was a strong argument in favo

of his own greater enlightenment and large heartedness; and, indeed, the air of refinement about their dwelling and home economy generally marked this very clearly. Mrs. Morais took me into her large cool bedroom (open to the roof, as all South African houses happily are), poured out water into a full-sized hand-basin from a *real* bedroom water jug, gave me soap in plenty and towel of English make and proportions. She added the luxury of a clean hair-brush; and, when I looked at myself in her small but *real* swinging glass of antique make, on a table meant for toilet purposes *only*, I could hardly believe that I was not in some rather quaint but clean and homely farmhouse in Europe. I had nearly said England, but that would be a misnomer. Its very charm consisted of a certain quaintness as fitting to it now as it might have been one hundred years ago, had the homestead then existed, and which would as equally fit it should it be the home of future generations a hundred years hence. The clean sheets might not have been scented with lavender, but I fancied they were, which did quite as well. As I stepped, refreshed and comfortable, into the "fore-huis," or general room, where not only our own party, but the other *gentlemen* of the colony had assembled also, Geoff whispered mischievously to me, "Don't cut a fellow, Aunt Hetty, just because you've had a turn at the looking-glass. Any one can

see you have been prinking your feathers." As of course I had, to the best of my abilities; and, although the additions to my usual attire were no other than a pair of linen cuffs instead of the inevitable paper affairs I occasionally indulge in, and just a tiny blue bow upon my holland jacket under my collar, I felt attired right royally, and prepared to enjoy to the full the remainder of my visit to this really nice Dutch family, of our further acquaintance with whom I hope to tell you presently.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

AUGUST 20.—Eersteling once more. No quiet moment has offered for me to continue my jottings until now, and indeed I believe you who may care to read them will not quarrel with the fact. You will gain in one thing at all events; they will not cost you half the effort to decipher as if they had all the ups and downs and involuntary flourishes I would have avoided making hitherto if I could. Try writing "on trek," and see if you could manage much better. But to my tale.

I left myself making a kind of stage entrance in a perfect elation of spirits at having dispensed with pounds of dust, and having laid what Geoff impertinently termed a "veritable shine" upon my sunburnt face. I found those

of the party who could converse, *i. e.*, the Captain, Mr. M., Jack with a rare monosyllable, and nice Mrs. Morais, all talking amicably; while Geoff, whose enforced silence was by no means to his taste, was making a bo-peep by-play with one or two small things who had crept in to have a share in the show. Geoff's only Dutch words are "Ja" and "Mooi," or pretty; but it is astonishing how eloquent he manages to be with them, and how far he makes them go.

The remaining guests sat quietly as listeners, but manifesting much interest when now and again a question was put as to the outside world, intelligent and pleasant to answer if one could judge by the Captain's air of animation and interest as he replied. Mrs. Morais placed me a chair close to her own, which was awaiting her at the head of the table, so that she might fill our cups—some of them with tea—herself, instead of having the tray upon a side table, and the details of its management attended to by a third person, the mistress being treated as a guest, as it were. It was "good to see" her dainty handling of her pretty china. I could picture her careful bringing to Africa of those valued relics from her far-away old home, as I am sure she must have done by her loving touch upon each. A fair white napkin lay ready to her hand for use after every cup was dipped before filling, into a china bowl close by, really benefiting by its bath instead of suf-

fering thereby, as frequently, nay, invariably, happens during a coffee-drinking ceremony in the ordinary Dutch Boer's house—a ceremony which so painfully detracts from one's appreciation of the hospitality intended. Tea over, the men-folk strolled about the place whilst I saw all my hostess could show of her own domain. The want of wood makes fencing an almost unheard-of process, and in place of it Kafir herd-boys tend the cattle and guard the crops from injury.

Talking over the fire incident of which I have made mention, I observed to Mrs. Morais my surprise at the calmness and equanimity with which her brother-in-law had awaited what seemed to threaten certain destruction to his property, only bestirring himself at the last moment, he having previously simply looked on whilst his Kafirs belabored the flames. She smiled as she replied in her pretty foreign tones, "Ah! he had plenty to do after you had all gone. The wind brought the fire round to the back of his place, where they had taken no great care to protect themselves, and even the house had a narrow escape. It was with great labour and difficulty that his corn-stacks and cattle were saved, and not without danger too. His wife worked hard to rescue the young colts and calves, which would keep running back again and again into the very places from which she had snatched them. My brother-in-law," she

added with an involuntary smile, "had the whiskers singed away from one side of his face. He must have gone pretty nigh the fire to do that!" Even a phlegmatic Dutchman must be moved *somewhat* by so personal a loss as his whiskers, I should fancy, especially as in all probability he might own no razor wherewith to make all "fair and even" once more.

It was with unaffected regret and real reluctance that we parted from our new friends; and I have now another treasured memory-mosaic to add to my store of unpainted pictures, in that little group of isolated Dutch homesteads, that land-island on the Veldt, inhabited by calm and peaceful souls seemingly so content with their lot that nought of the outer world could touch or move them, wishing for nothing more than just the return kindly Nature ever gives to human toil, and never unmindful in their simple piety of the Giver, without whose blessing earth, even to the most industrious of her labourers, cannot yield her increase.

Our outriders had gone on ahead to select our next camping-place, and we were called to a halt somewhat earlier than usual for a short rest only, and for a more hearty meal than we had taken in "the colony." Two fires were lighted by way of expediting matters, that the men might, as soon as we were served, betake themselves to their own repast.

The spot chosen for our temporary camp was in such contrast to that we had so lately left that I half wished we had passed it by unvisited. I kept my notions ("fads," Jack calls them) to myself, but I will confide them to you, and I doubt if you will think me fanciful, as he does. We had left smiling plenty, happy homes filled with happy people within, and ample life and animation without—waving corn and sweet-scented orange-trees and cattle in abundance. Here we found what *had been* all that, ruined and devastated, telling of what might befall—Heaven grant it never may!—that little Arcadia from which we had but just parted. Had it been fever? Had it been savage warfare? or simply just a want, which hope had said might be better supplied a little farther on in the wilderness, tempting the inhabitants away "on the quest."

"Now, Hetty," said Jack, "before you build up a story about these ruins—and indeed they look quite imposing in this early moonlight—let me tell you there seems every sign of the failure of an ambitious attempt at irrigation, which failure has probably been at the bottom of the desertion of this little 'dorp.' Grim thinks so. He has been ferreting about in some dyke-like looking places, and the Captain shares his fancy. How much this country just wants enlightened inhabiting! I fancy the good folks who built themselves such substantial houses,

even going the length of ornamental copings to beautify their mud walls, trusted to the "divining rod" or some such simple method only; had they known a little more they would not have been so easily daunted; but who knows? "Here, take these," he added wearily to Dick. "I'm just dead beat; the buck gave me no end of a chase. If the birds had not been pretty nigh at hand you'd not have seen a feather of one of them." Five pheasants, two koorhaan, and an odd rabbit or two were disgorged by the game bag, and my brother richly deserved the snooze he took without ceremony by my side.

Tired Jack slept through the shouts, gunfirings, and dog noises which speedily followed our talk. "Look out, Auntie," cried my boy; "there to the left," for, of course, I looked, woman-like, instantly to the wrong side. "Yah! stupids" (to the dogs, thank goddness). "You've missed" (just what he had done himself; by-the-by), and the chased hyena ran to earth, panting and pursued, but safe and sound. Geoff's vexation was very great, and I think I was just a trifle sympathetic, because had I even seen the thing I might have made something of an adventure of it for those insatiable children at home.

The Captain, over our supper, told us how daring hunger makes these animals. A friend of his, while sleeping on the Veldt, had a piece



of mutton stolen from under the saddle upon which his head rested; and in hard times, when other prey is scarce or unattainable, cowards as they are, they have been known to carry off young children from native huts. They have a touch of the cannibal about them, too, he added, for they make nothing of devouring the carcass of a dead companion if they come across him after he has fallen a prey to man's vengeance which they have escaped, biding their time for the feast. Now Bo and I had been taking a quiet stroll for some distance in the moonlight amongst the ruins, and possibly this particular beast had licked his lips over the prospect of a dainty meal of one of us. Hitherto I had had no thought of any possible danger in the solitary rambles I loved, but in future I think I may keep nearer to camp as being the more prudent plan.

One more trek (this moonlight travelling, cooler for the oxen, is arranged for where practicable), brought us to our last halt for our last night out. Jack wishes to get back to the little mining settlement, where we remain for a short time longer, with no delay, if possible.

Our next morning's meal was enjoyed in the near neighborhood of our kind once more, although this time we unfortunately could make no acquaintance with the good people of the house. Diphtheria had, alas! carried off one of their little ones, and others were suffering

from it also. We could not well intrude, nor indeed were we invited to do so. The Captain held some friendly talk with them and expressed our sympathy in their sorrow. This farm lay somewhat low and was damp, a fact which in some measure accounted for the illness. Grim was especially struck with the productiveness of the place, giving it the palm over the generality of cultivated lands we had passed—hedges of apple trees, the mulberry tree, oranges, lemons, peaches, pomegranates, vineyards and corn. The grass about had been very carelessly burnt, and the orange trees had been seriously scorched; but Nature is a quick restorer in this climate, and I doubt if these traces will long remain. Troops of the prettiest, tiniest, softest, most baby-faced, kittenish-looking, and very lovable little kids, calves and lambs, gambolled about us as we drank our coffee, coming temptingly near, answering with yielding bleat our coaxing invitations, but allowing themselves to be caught, never.

Marabastadt once more was our next outspan, and there we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. G——, a Cape gentleman and his pretty young bride. Mr. G—— had been a resident of the Transvaal for some time, but his wife, fresh from her more luxurious home in the older colony, seemed determined to make very light of any little roughnesses which might fall to her share.

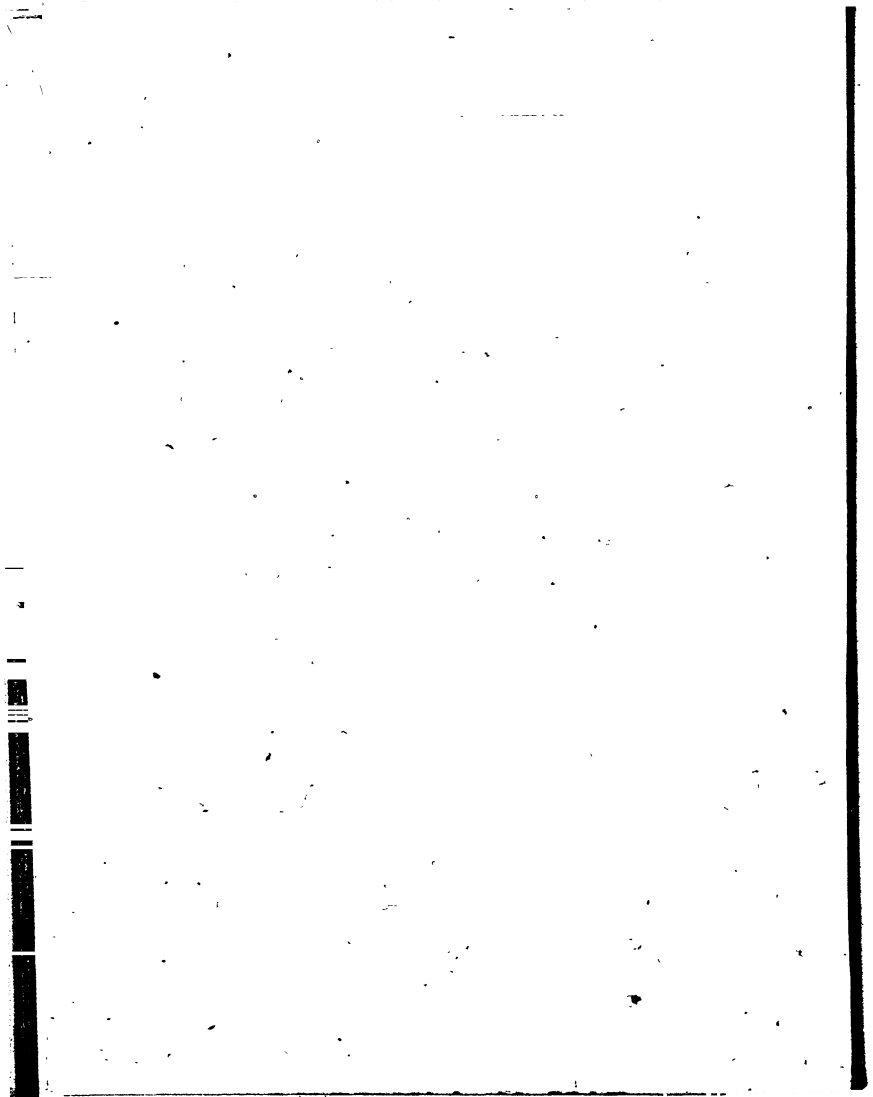
That she would have no more than her husband could possibly avoid was evident, for he had surrounded her with many of those elegances and refinements which can make a home beautiful, even in the wilderness; books, too! and who does not know how they can people a solitude anywhere?

One thing struck me as being particularly noteworthy as we neared our destination—namely, the manner in which the track was almost carpeted by locusts, a swarm of which must have lately passed over it, and have fallen a prey to their usual enemies, the locust-birds, which ever follow in their train. These clever hunters whirr through the floating clouds of living creatures, disabling them after a fashion of their own, probably nipping their wings, without which the crippled insects fall to the ground, where they lie helpless until their assailants are ready to devour them after the attack. . . . As I write, here comes, by way of practical demonstration, the big brown cloud itself, with its eager followers of more kinds than one. The air is thick with the destructive things, almost to darkness. They come in columns and ranks; they come in masses; then the rearguard, and then the stragglers; taking no note of their falling comrades, but with a dogged stupidity, helter-skelter, pell-mell, anyhow and anywhere, numbers at last dropping down and lying helplessly

in heaps on the ground and on the big boulders close to our tent. To see Bo's excitement as he snaps madly at them, and his extreme disgust at the sensation when he makes a better catch than usual, and gets one whole locust, and enough to hold by of another, is ludicrous in the extreme. The cats (and they swarm here as elsewhere) are half demented with delight, as they tear about madly, here, there and everywhere, slaying their foes by the dozen with paws and whisking tails; but sneezing furiously as their noses and throats are tickled by the struggling legs of a victim. The old hens, clucking to their chicks the good news of the feast spread for them, arrive from all parts, leaping to meet the smaller members of the mighty phalanx, and looking inexpressibly comical as they do so. Jack, the big tame buzzard, and small family of large, ungainly ostriches share in the excitement, a short-lived one happily, or I verily believe the infection would extend itself to Geoff and myself, and, our fit of irrepressible laughter over, that we should take to snapping at locusts too.

The Kafirs are gathering them in pans and native vessels of all shapes and sizes, with a view to a feast, when time permits of their roasting them in the ashes of the fire that will be a-light on all sides when the shrill steam-whistle of the Works screams its welcome invitation to rest and dinner presently.

But it is time that my tale should draw to a close. It was late at night when the wheels of our waggon awoke the echoes of the sleeping old Iron Mountain and its comrades nigh at hand. The weary workers above and below ground were all wrapped in slumber too. The whirr, whirr, whirr of the machinery was at rest until—all too soon for our ears, which had lost for a time the memory of its busy music—it should begin its weary round at 5 o'clock on the morrow's morn. We might have thought it a very city of the dead, but for the uprising, as if by the sign of a magician's wand, from all sides, of dogs little and big, whose furious bark of anger turned to one of pleasure, as they rubbed noses with our dogs, down to little Bo, and wagged their tails in greeting, as if to bid us welcome too, and to ask inquiringly how it had fared with us during our days of travel to and from the Government forests of the Haupt Busch Berg.



# ON FOOT THROUGH THE COLONIES;

OR, NOTES FROM OUR LOG IN PARIS.

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**M**Y old inveterate habit of note-taking has again seized me, here in the very heart of this great world's show, and I venture to forward the result of my jottings to the same valuable paper which found room for those other jottings of mine in the wilds of South Africa itself.

It seemed to follow in natural sequence that we should come to Paris—as many of our party at least as could do so—to see the gathered wonders of countries, new as well as old; we who had travelled so far to seek them where they are, after all, perhaps best to be seen. We had thought it would be good to note in full development much that we had viewed only in the rough, as it were; to see as a finished whole what had of necessity appeared incomplete; *there* the crude materials, *here* the vast uses to which they could be put. “What man has done, man may do,” and those who with thoughtful forecast look well ahead may from even the comparatively few specimens of Colonial products here exhibited predict what

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a mine of wealth they may prove bye-and-by to those who know how to use them with a wise skill and industry.

"All very fine, old fellows!" Geoff had said as we had passed one dazzling vision after another of the finished beauties of countries whose civilization dated centuries ago; "all very fine! but you are old hands you know; you just wait a bit, and we colonists will astonish you yet!" Geoff, on the strength of his South African wanderings, quite believes that he has a right to his self-bestowed title, and with a boy's love of taking sides, stands up for old England's far-away children as if every proof of greater excellence born of longer experience and other self-evident advantages were a direct attack upon them. "If I am not a colonist now," he urges by way of explanation, "I mean to be one some day, so it comes to the same thing." Geoff has been "grinding" and has well earned his holiday. "Let us go to Paris, Pater," he had said; "Aunt Hetty can skip a few blank pages in 'Our Log,' and begin a fresh one headed 'On Foot through the Colonies;'" and thus it came about that I find myself, note-book in hand, wedged in between two blocks of veritable South African timber, the "Boschboerboom" and the "white milk wood;" the eland's thorn, the sneeze-wood, &c., all nigh at hand, the well-made Cape cart, whose familiar friendliness has tempted me to its rear for shelter, affording me



the privacy I need for my little paper chat with you.

“Time is up, Auntie; you must have written ‘heaps’ about our more especial Colony, and you will have none left for what you used to call yours before we had our little African outing. Come to Canada, ’tis just next door. The educational department nearly gave me a fit of the shivers, so horribly real and complete is it in every particular, from the building in which the ‘young idea’ is taught, and the book he learns from, to the very bench upon which he sits, and the desk at which he writes. Ugh! . . . There are the very jolliest photographs of the snowshoe and golf clubs, of a carnival at the skating-rink, a . . .” But of what more Geoff saw, and of what I shall see when I pay an hour or two’s visit to Canada on Monday, as I hope to do, I must tell you another time, for, as he has reminded me, time is up!

MONDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1878.—“Surely there ought not to be a single dunce in the whole Dominion of Canada!” laughed Geoff, as—his pretended shudder over at their power to recall sundry scenes of school-boy life—he showed me the exhibits in the educational division, where truly Canada need lower her colours to none. Perfect in every detail appears to be the scheme of education for all classes, nothing omitted or unnecessarily added

to cumber or overweight, nothing overlooked which can encourage the timid and less gifted, or incite to greater efforts those with an ambition to win honours and a name in any career they may choose for themselves.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy!" Now, no Jack in Canada need be a dull boy, for there is no lack of amusement found for him there. This thought struck me as I stood looking admiringly at some excellent photographs of the members of the Snow-shoe and Golf Clubs of the Dominion. In the foreground of the latter stood the well-known figures of Lord and Lady Dufferin, who have found their way, both of them, to the warm hearts of the people with whom they must always be now identified. Lady Dufferin, muffled in the many folds of that specialty of Canada, the cloud, looks every inch a Canadian, a comparison which I am sure she need not resent, for who has not heard of the beauty and grace of our sisters over the water? "Comme elles sont belles ces Canadiennes!" I heard ungrudgingly remarked by a little bright-eyed French woman behind me, who was peeping over my shoulder at the coloured photograph of the carnival at the skating rink, and at one of two pictures of well-known beauties and people of mark. Her words recalled me from "long ago" to a sense of the present, reminding me that time

was too short for musing and memories. As I turned from those well-executed groups which *lived* for me, I could almost fancy that the sound of the sleigh-bells died away upon my ear, and that I should have seen the flakes of snow fall lightly presently could I have stayed to watch the grey cloud softly "unfeather" itself to drive homewards by its gentle persistence the merry-makers from their game upon the frozen river.

Specimens of needlework, &c., exhibited by Canadian ladies, deserve mention. The Misses Strickland, from Oshawa, contributed largely exquisite lace-work, tatting, &c.; Miss Farquharson, of Whitby, a pianoforte-cover delicately painted upon white velvet, and Miss Belle Russell, of Ottawa, a pale blue satin banner-screen trimmed with lace of great breadth; while Mrs. Ellen Villiers, of Toronto, sends some painting on china, executed with delicacy and much artistic taste.

There is hardly an industry unrepresented in this department, showing how well on in the race is Canada, and each is equally good of its kind. Geoff was attracted by the models of the canals, lock-gates, and not a little by the saddlery, the merits of which have been acknowledged by medals won at previous exhibitions.

The stoves of the Dominion are excellent without exception, their makers being taught by

experience how to provide the largest amount of heat with the least possible outlay. Our grates might well be improved after the Canadian model, *i. e.*, so arranged that half the warmth should not escape up the chimney, and so shaped that what is called a "blower" should fit, when needed, to the bars to exclude the air until the dying fire has by means of the gathered draught burnt up again. Who does not know the discomfort of those shivering moments of waiting while the maid with paper and stick tries to coax back into life the flame which seems alike deaf to vigorous efforts and to gentler measures?

Woollen and cotton stuffs, washing-boards and perambulators, organs and refrigerators, sewing-machines and machines of all kinds, turnery, rope-making, boot-making and boat-making, stained glass and pottery, &c., &c.; specimens, animal, vegetable and mineral, all are here, some almost in profusion. There are hats, too, of the Montreal Felt Hat Works, marked at from four and a half dollars per dozen, and, if the glass does not deceive me, of exceptionally fine texture and good workmanship. Self-fitting skates, and skates of many shapes and sizes shone like glass, and drew many observers. So much were the rocking-chairs fancied by first comers to the Exhibition, that they were all bought up within the first few days. An elegant set of drawing-room

furniture was noticed by many, and the case of confections, with the pyramids of fancifully arranged "popped-corn," caught the admiring eyes of others.

Pictures of those triumphs of engineering skill, the railway-bridges spanning the vast rivers of Canada, could be overlooked by none; and, to name lesser things with greater, neither could the photographs of the palatial hotels of Canada, some of the many which abound in its large cities, ready to entertain right royally any number of visitors who may be tempted across the Atlantic by seeing here in Paris specimens of the innumerable objects of interest the Colony can show them.

Mother Nature, too, has been bountiful in her gifts, therefore the Dominion has need to provide these great hostelries to meet the requirements of the countless numbers who visit that huge half-continent, attracted, many of them, by the fame of its almost unrivalled natural beauties, those grand, broad, majestic rivers, with their rapid currents, bearing fleet after fleet of rafts, manned by hardy lumberers, who have robbed the noble forests of millions of century-old trees, yet leaving standing others to supply the wants of generations yet to come. Has not Canada its Niagara, too? its sea like lakes? its . . . . . But I must "hark back," though sorely tempted to tell something about them!

The marbles, granites, &c., I observe, are

much noticed and critically tapped and examined by several for whom they have special interest; but what pleased me best was a modest little jar of brick clay from Stony Mount, Manitoba. Now, in my very young days, when Manitoba was but a simple settlement with scattered houses and few inhabitants, a brick had never been seen there, and when a lady, for whom I had, and ever shall have, a great esteem and regard, urged upon the people how easily they could make them with the wherewithal so ready to their hands, they understood nothing of her teachings, and were well enough satisfied with the solid logs, which certainly made them substantial and warm, if not very ornamental, houses. Now, bricks and brick-makers flourish, and streets and rows, squares and crescents, villas and lodges, take the place of Hallett's Point, Spence's Creek, Logan's Mill, and so forth. Growth of every kind in Manitoba, but "*Stony Mount!*" "That's a bit of a puzzler, is it not, Auntie?" queried my almost ubiquitous nephew, who had just returned to me again after what he called "a meander." "I have heard you say that you could wear the sokeless moccasin without inconvenience, because there were no stones in old Red River, and that there was no hill in or near the settlement. This 'mount' must be an imported Yankee notion, I opine." A long, gradual, and very gentle rise was the only

mount I could remember, and probably from it was sent the clay exhibited. That, with a few specimens of 'the potatoes and grain of the country—grain of great size and fullness, and which grows with but little effort of culture there, comprised, as far as I can see, the whole Manitoban contribution to the Exhibition.

Passing out from the Section under the symbolic emblems which crowned its entrance—wheat-sheaves, grouped fruits, antlered heads, and smaller animals stuffed and naturally posed, &c.—Geoff piloted me to the great Canadian trophy in the grand vestibule. There was quite a crush of people awaiting their turn for admission, too many at a time not being allowed to mount the circuitous stairs from base to top. Upon every landing various specialities of the Dominion were placed, and from the four sides of each gallery we could gaze upon the crowds below.

Many articles shown here we had noted more in bulk in the section we had just quitted, but others we saw for the first time. The toboggin, or long flat sled, upon which Canadian children, and light-hearted grown-up folks too, on pleasure bent, disport themselves, flying down the frozen mountain sides with lightning speed and merry recklessness; the smaller wooden sled, on runners, the delight of every Canadian youngster's heart; the snow-shoe, simple and ornamental; the birch-rind canoe, the Indian

saddle and bead-worked saddle-cloth, samples of silk-work leggings, moccasins, all brought back in friendly guise scenes of "Auld lang syne." Geoff pointed out a plough, which to my unpractised eye seemed perfect of its kind, and I think I was not far wrong, for others looked approvingly at it likewise, whilst some also handled the backwoodsman's axes lying around it, as if they too deserved their meed of praise. If there are many trees left like the large exhibited specimen in the grand vestibule, labelled, "Canada, Pacific Coast—Douglas Fir, 100 metres high—566 years old, aged 183 when Columbus discovered America," and which, flag and hatchet crowned, is the observed of all observers, the axes would need to be of vast strength, indeed, to fell them to the earth.

The big trophy swayed threateningly as we, with others, reached its summit, but it is erected on too firm a basis to cause any fear of its safety. On following the stream of outgoers by its other outlet, we found that more remained to be inspected. Two black or dark brown bears stood as sentinels, upon one of which was the usual label, "Priere de ne pas toucher." Alive, the request would certainly have been reversed, but its glass eye, fixed amiably upon vacancy, gave Bruin an air of humble appeal quite in keeping with its unspoken prayer. I could not help smiling as a tricky young sprite deliberately went up to



the creature, first giving it a friendly "shake-paw," and then, seeing the back of the caretaker was safely turned away from her, a contemptuous little flick upon the nose, as one who should say, "Who cares for *you!*"

Close by their bearships stood a massive coil of rope, and what I took to be light-house lamps and appliances; to their right, in a well-arranged case, some wonders from the petroleum works of Messrs. Waterman—candles of various shapes, sizes and colours, with some curious and even beautiful designs in petroleum wax, such as a miniature column on base, and a cross with wreath, bunches of flowers and monogram.—a kind of monumental design, fanciful and clever enough, but decidedly odd. A third cabinet held plumbago, in the rough, as well as prepared as pencils, &c. A table of inlaid woods, with sample of window-frames, doors, &c., we found just outside, and they repaid examination, whilst we refreshed our inner man by a taste of the big cheese, which was handed in small slabs to any who cared to know what a good article of its kind Canadian farmers make. Geoff, partly for mischief, and partly because he thought "the stuff not half bad" to eat with the remains of a broken biscuit in his pocket, walked round the trophy twice, so as to present himself as a new comer and thus get a double portion. The fourth glass case showed wools, wax, fruits, and so

forth; and when I have named the large block or column of coal from the Atlantic coast, and the comparatively small ditto representing the gold found in Canada, I think I have only left myself space to speak of the short visit we paid to Mr. Keefer's office, facing upon the street of model houses, where more particular information about the Colony is readily and courteously given when asked for. Here we met several Canadian friends, and at their recommendation tasted not only some excellent light wine from the Isabella grape, a vintage from Kelly's Island, Lake Erie, but some of that speciality of Canada, the maple sugar.

"Some people inquire if this is a model Canadian house—(it is that of an Old English, probably a Chester dwelling). We tell them 'No,' but that we could show them some quite as good, if not better, over the water, if they would like to come and see them," said young Mr. Keefer, with a merry twinkle of his eye. I think I cannot better wind up my little account of my visit to "Canada," as it is in Paris, than by recommending those who would like to make a better acquaintance with that grand old Colony itself to follow Mr. Keefer's advice! . . .

. . . . . Australia does not neglect her educational department any more than do her sisters. Foreigners cannot fail to be struck with this as they wander through the English

Colonies on foot in Paris. Nor can they fail to be impressed with the mighty power England has in these children of hers in other lands, and the power which they also have whilst lovingly linked to such a mother. May the dear bonds never be broken! Does not the parent trunk suffer when the branches are rudely lopped away? Is there not pain at heart when the blood flows from a severed artery? Does not the mother shed tears of sympathy when her child weeps from pain or sorrow? and does not the child gain strength and courage from the knowledge of how dear it is to that loving heart?

“Hetty,” said Jack, my brother, who had joined us in the Queensland Court, “I cannot help thinking what a great pity it would be for this to be the end of it, that all these collected wonders of nature and art should, when this big world’s fair comes to a close, be dispersed—here a little, there a little. What a grand opportunity for continuing the combination—say in London—in the form of a Colonial Museum! It would be such a linking together of interests—an added bond of brotherhood—an incitement to emulation to those of the family far away; while the home birds who have never left the nest would know more of the realities of the life led by the roving spirits of the brood! Half the battle has been fought in gathering together *here* these testimonies to

the wealth and power of Colonial England. Surely the other half would be worth the fight to have and to hold them for ever, just where their mission of usefulness could best be carried out in the dear old Mother-country—the 'at home' of the hearts which love their native land the more, rather than the less, that they have left her for awhile. I am becoming almost poetical, which is not in my line, as you know; but I am sure there is good sound sense at the bottom, at all events, and I only wish some could be found in whose hands this golden opportunity may be made the most of and turned to good account. The coming generation at home and abroad would have reason to thank them by and by, and I am not sure whether many now would not rejoice that the foundation stone should be laid and that the scheme (a bad name for it, by the by)—'should take form and substance at once.'"

"Well, Pater, your Museum need not languish for want of material, that is certain," remarked my boy as we sauntered wearily homewards after our tiring, but intensely interesting excursion "On Foot through the Colonies in Paris."

