REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD 'UN

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LONDON

EVELEIGH NASH

1911

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CHAPTER I

The first thing I can remember vividly was being taken, at the age of about four, to the convent above the town of Funchal in Madeira. At the side of one of the waiting-rooms and let into the wall was a sort of whirligig affair in which food and other things were placed. It was then twirled round, and lo! and behold, whatever was in it was then on the other side of the wall and within the sacred precincts of the nunnery itself. I was placed by my nurse in the whirligig and shot round to the other side. There my memory ceases and wonder begins. Was I surrounded by poor blushing novices, blushing at the very thought that a man child had invaded their recesses, or was I perchance fondled by some old frump of an Abbess? I know not. But this I think, that had they packed me into that whirligig affair about twelve years later and twirled it round, there would have

been some fun among the dear little persons on the other side before they had twirled me back again.

Ah me! What a lot of chances we miss as we sojourn through this vale of tears.

I remember when I was about fifteen a little boy ran up to me on the esplanade at St. Leonards and said that "mamma wanted to know if I would come to tea." I only knew mamma by sight. She was a very lovely creature and was, I believed at that time, in my divine innocence, married to a man with whom I used to see her walking about on Sundays. Si la jeunesse savait. Oh dear! Oh dear! Trebly distilled young idiot that I was I didn't go to that tea. I wish I had the chance now. But instead of that I can only sit and mourn and compare myself unfavourably with the page-boy in story No. 1 in Balzac's *Contes drolatiques*.

Some years before this, it must have been in 1849, I had a greeting of a very different nature, from a no less august personage than the poor dethroned Louis-Philippe himself, so soon afterwards to appear before another throne, and Marie Amelie. They were taking the air on the parade at St. Leonards. He came up to me, and putting his hand on my head, in a kindly way, asked, "Well, my little Scotch boy, and where do you come from?" I was indeed arrayed in

kilt and Scotch cap, which by the same token I had no right to be. I can most vividly remember his putting his hand on my head, and I am told he asked me many questions, but of what they were about I have no remembrance at all.

I had a godfather—a fat, fussy old man who had never been outside his native land in his life, and knew uncommonly little of that. When I was about twelve it was decreed by the authorities that this dear old thing, who was going to spend the summer with us at Lausanne, should take care of me for the journey. This plan appears to me now at my mature years on a par with asking the flagstaff to take care of a flash of lightning. To begin with, the old man could speak not one word of any tongue but his own, and knew nothing of francs, centimes, gulden or kreuzers. That delivered him bound into my hands, for I had travelled in France, Belgium and Germany and could speak both French and German pretty well. One night, at Dôle I think it was, the hotel was crowded and we were put into the same bedroom. When Godpapa came to bed an hour or so after me, he looked me well over, held the candle to my face, and came to the conclusion that I was sound asleep. Confiding old man! I don't think he knew much about either boys or fireworks. He then proceeded to

disrobe. All I can say is that I well remember thinking that that stout old gentleman of fifty was fearfully and wonderfully made, and thenceforth I entirely ceased to marvel why he puffed and grunted and sweated whenever he ascended even a slight incline. We did a good deal of diligence travelling, which to me was dull, weary work. One day as we crawled along I spied a snake at the roadside. I was out and after it before Godpapa knew what I was about. To the poor old man's horror I killed the snake, ran and caught up the diligence and was in my seat again within a minute.

After we reached Lausanne Godpapa fell deeply in love with the governess, and she at any rate was "blessed willing." My mother wasn't. It has been stated by some very wise person that "grown ups" always say "don't" and are put into the world mostly for that purpose. It is to a great extent true. When one day at Geneva Godpapa gave the governess a gold watch and chain studded with turquoises my mother said "don't" very loud and clear, and the trumpet blew without the slightest uncertainty in its sound. Children don't of course understand these things and—so much the better.

I was one Sunday afternoon listening to the band on the Terrace at Windsor—I was at Eton

then—when I was aware of an exceedingly lovely girl walking with a man. After a bit I looked at the man and found I knew him quite well and all about him. He had stayed with us scores of times, his wife being with him. No! It wasn't his wife with him this time, rather the contrary. I had a long talk with them. She was indeed a darling, and I should like to have kissed her—would have, if we hadn't been in such an exposed place. They were staying at the White Hart. He gave me a sovereign and a wink, and she a wink without the sovereign. A year or two afterwards it all came out, and there was a frightful kick-up and a separation. Hands were held aloft in dismay and eyes were severely lifted. I was then told about it as a solemn and dreadful secret. I roared with laughing and told the dear authorities that I had known all about it for ages. Then why on earth hadn't I told them? Well! why hadn't I? There you are! Little children don't understand these things.

But to go back to Godpapa and the poor little governess. She was sent off to a neighbouring convent, to be fed on the bread and water of affliction until such times as Godpapa should re-seek his native shores, while he, poor man, sweated and grunted up those two miles of hill to the convent, larding the earth like old Jack

Falstaff as he went to get an interview with Fornarina. Had he been worth a—well, we'll say—cent, he'd have got his interview and more too, but I have a suspicion he was a laggard in love. Anyhow he went to his grave a bachelor, and what became of poor Fornarina I have entirely forgotten. Godpapa, a girl cousin, and I went home to England together. Rachel was a dear unselfish girl. Godpapa was quite the contrary. One day in a diligence I was put with my back to the horses, a fatal position for me in those days, and this was well known and usually guarded against. Rachel, dear girl, was most anxious to change seats with me, but the good Godpapa said, "Nonsense! Nonsense! let the boy sit there. Do him good. He won't be sick any more than I shall. Sit it out, boy." I said nothing, winked at Rachel and sat it out. I, however, took care to get exactly opposite Godpapa. Then anon (I quote from "My Sunday at Home," R. Kipling) that fell which fell, and Godpapa sorrowed with an exceeding great sorrow. Let the veil descend and imagination do its worst. Good-bye, Godpapa! You were a fat, selfish, important old man, but in your death you were very useful, and there were no tears shed over your grave. Perhaps, after all, it is just as well that no drove of little Fornarinas and little Godpapas were standing

round snivelling with little wreaths in their hands, and little handkerchiefs rubbing their little noses. Make inquiries of one who puts "S. M." on his gun-cases.

After I had left Eton in the year 1858, at which most alluring abode I did but little worthy of record beyond securing sundry quart pots as winner of certain races, and being, I believe, the first lower boy who was ever permitted to play in Upper Club Cricket, the rapidity with which sundry narrow-minded parsons, to whom I had been sent for the completion of my education, saw fit to eliminate me from their establishments appeared to my guardians at any rate somewhat alarming. There was no pleasing these little consequential prigs; they were generally about five feet long. They appeared to me to know nothing and to have seen little beyond their own sacred hearths. One of them indeed sent me flying homewards because I dropped myself into the water, while the next one requested me to vacate his establishment with the utmost rapidity because I dropped him into the same element. It happened like this. I was with No. 1 at St. Leonards. The bathing season came on, and there were machines opposite the parade where we lived. Some fellow broke his neck, taking a header off the wheel of a machine, evidently not knowing his work. I therefore proceeded at once to get the machine

lowered into water as deep as possible and took many headers from the roof thereof, and this, to any Eton boy really fond of the water, was a most simple and safe affair. Sundry feline females of course went off to Parson No. 1 with complaints—they had never, no never, seen anything so improper in their lives, etc., etc. Oh yes ! I was indeed in puris naturalibus, but then the parade must have been fully thirty yards off. So headers from the top of bathing-machines were "tabu." Nevertheless, as it amused me, and what was of more consequence, amused a great many of my friends on the parade, I, like Father William of immortal memory, did it again and again. So arose a strife, and I was requested to absent myself from that establishment.

That reminds me of Mrs. Squaretoes, who went to the Squire to complain that his boys bathed right in front of her windows, and that her daughters had been shocked beyond any power of description by the gross indecency of such a thing. "But, my dear madam," said the good Squire, "where my boys bathe is more than half-a-mile from your house." "I tell you sir," snorted Mother Squaretoes, "that with a telescope we can see everything—everything, I tell you, sir." It was then the band supervened.

Now comes Padre No. 2, a fussy little person some four foot long with a most tremendous idea

of his own importance, with a knowledge of mundane affairs derived from St. Bees—I think—and a remote country curacy. His charges were some three or four small boys and myself, who was in size at any rate a full-grown man and excellently strong. These good little small boys took it into their little heads to "bait" me one fine afternoon; therefore, to amend their manners, I dropped them solemnly, one by one, into the river from an adjacent arbour into which I had cornered them, for they were too small to lick. They came crawling out much subdued, and went off howling and dripping to the fussy little person four foot long. To me shortly arrived the F. L. P. foaming at the mouth and in the most frightful wax. I fancy the little man was a bit particular over his carpets. He opened his mouth and spake winged words. I was no gentleman. I was indeed a blackguard. I wasn't fit for any decent society, etc., etc., etc. I told the little man to go slow or he might perchance get into the water himself. Then indeed did I see to what the ungoverned wrath of man could come. He dared me to touch his sacred person. He'd like indeed to see me touch him. He'd like to see me attempt to put him in the river. Well! After such an invitation what could I do but comply with the little man's likes and dislikes. So into the river he went, and a

more hopelessly feeble, soft little piece of humanity I don't think I ever laid hold of. I do believe I could have heaved the poor little chap across the river as easily as into it. What a shame? No! I don't think so. I didn't hurt him an atom, and after all a good ducking wasn't a bad thing for such a stuck-up little ass. That was the end of my sojourn there, and I sought other fields. I remember I did any quantity of rat-catching in that establishment, and though there but a very short time secured some of the finest trout I ever caught in my life, one of them 6¾ lbs. What did I catch him with? Never mind; it was a line with a hook with something on it. I have caught many a goodly trout and salmon too with funnier things than that. So there!

CHAPTER II

About that time I was dispatched to Heidelberg for a season, and a most interesting and somewhat lurid time I had there. I wish I dare put it all down, alas! "timeo danaos, etc." I mean I am horribly afraid of the editorial blue pencil; so many of my corners have been abraded by that fearsome weapon, applied with no gentle touch, that by this time, even after such a brief and feeble literary career as my own, I tremble to write more than the proverbial "Yea, yea, and Nay, nay."

There were three of us, although our names were neither Ortheris nor Learoyd nor even Mulvaney. We were, however, all about sixteen or seventeen and fresh from public schools. The windows of our bedrooms were all on the ground floor, and our chief, our preceptor, our "homo in loco parentis," was, of course, a parson. He, however, wasn't a bad fellow, and we got along with him most capitally. He troubled his head but little about us. On occasions he went away for days together and left us to ourselves, and to this sort of thing we none of us had the smallest

objection. On looking back over the half-century that has passed since those most interesting days when "all the world was young, lad, and every lass a queen," I am inclined to think that a trifle more supervision would have been most salutary for us three young men. No matter! It's too late to remedy that now. I fancy, from the little wisdom that years and experience have brought, that that particular parson from a purely esoteric point of view knew fairly well what he was about. He was always well dressed, never had a hole in his gloves, always had a well-brushed hat and never a crease in his exquisitely manœuvred white tie. But boys don't notice these things! Oh! don't they? I remember another thing about him. One day at lunch he spoke somewhat warmly about a certain most charming little governess—"Minx," "No better than she should be," etc., etc., were epithets he used. Now I was at the time deeply in love—after the manner of my kind—with that much-abused little woman. I was blushing furiously and saw his eagle eye coming round my way, so I floored my glass of beer and went down on my knees to pick up the fragments. He never looked my way again and said no more, but the old fox had helped himself to the information he wanted. Any one who took that particular parson for an ass would get left. Instead

of taking a curacy at £80 a year he took pupils at £800. No! We three musketeers were not the only ones. There were others, babes and sucklings who had rooms on the upper floors. We didn't trouble ourselves to any great extent about them. They had a housekeeper—a most excellent lady—to look after them. In that housekeeper's room there were on occasions very merry little parties when the Padre was away. N.B. The babes and sucklings were not invited to these parties. Later on in England the Padre found an ancient dame more than old enough to be his mother, with untold shekels. Her he led to the hymeneal altar. He was a crafty old fox—far too crafty to give well-paying pupils the sack.

One night as the bells were telling the hour of midnight a solitary figure might have been seen with fishing-rod on shoulder and creel at side, swinging along over the bridge and along the Neckar past Charlottenberg, past the Hirschgasse—scene of students' schläger contests—up into the hills and far away through the forests. It was I. I was exceedingly fond of wandering long distances alone, as summer came on, in search of Rhopalocera or butterflies. I put the word Rhopalocera in the hope that it may be thought that I am not the casual "bug hunter," who delights to catch a few pretty

specimens, pin them out, and then forget all about them. No! I am a real Entomologist and have made serious collections in many lands. In one of my mountain wanderings, then, miles and miles away from headquarters, I came one day upon one of the loveliest streams I ever beheld—clear as crystal, fifteen feet broad with pools and shallows, pools and shallows mile after mile. And moreover—now don't all speak at once—teeming with trout two and three to the pound. I did not on that occasion go "guddling," but I sought the owner. I found him. He was a morose, dirty, unkempt and most infernally disagreeable old miller, a heavily bearded cross between Martin Luther and Mephistopheles. He give me leave to fish? Not he! He would in fact see me hanged first. He had never given any one leave to fish in his life and never would, and I could go. I went. But that stream and those trout, those hundreds of lambs of trout that had never seen a fly, lay heavy on my soul. I was but a young fisherman, not yet indeed had I learnt to cast a dun successfully to the denizens of Mimram and Lea, of Test and Itchen, and I was most exceedingly keen, and could scarcely rest upon my bed for the thoughts, the longings that came to me for that mountain stream. Hence came it that the solitary figure was seen at midnight taking its way across the

bridge and on and on and up into the distant forest. I arrived, as I had intended, at the side of the stream in question about daylight. I put together my rod and commenced operations. The trout rose like the most innocent lambs, and there was indeed but little need to trouble as to what flies to use. By the middle of the day my creel and my pockets were full of fish of four to six ounces each. There must have been nearly or quite thirty pounds weight. Then I was aware of a figure approaching me along the bank of the stream, not a very stalwart person, I was glad to see, and neither young nor active. We had some conversation, the result of which was that he said I was his prisoner and must go with him. This I said I would do as soon as I had got my rod and things ready, which meant strapping them up as firmly as possible for a run. I did indeed intend to go as I said with the old Förster or whatever he was, just a little way, but certainly not far. So off we went together quite amicably for a mile or so until we approached a certain road the run of which I was well acquainted with. I then took the opportunity, when he wasn't looking, of hitting my amiable friend a very fair-sized smack on the side of the head with my open hand which floored him, and I promptly bolted. I was fully a hundred yards away and on the road before

the Förster pulled himself together and began jogging along after me. He was indeed no sprinter. But I was heavily handicapped with my fish and kit, and dared not run a chance of losing my wind, but I was still going a little faster than he was. All was well! But soon I saw another man coming along the road towards me. Him by means of shouts and signals the Förster made grasp the situation. As I approached him, he stood in the middle of the road with arms extended and called upon me to surrender. I thought not. I sparred up to him, and when he lowered his hands on account of a little pat I gave him with my left about the region of his third waistcoat button, I brought down my rod on the top of his head. I didn't hit quite so funny as I could because the reel was still on it. But it was enough. He went down like a poleaxed ox while I pursued my way. The last I saw of that entertainment was the Förster kneeling by the side of his prone friend and shaking his fist in my direction. I jogged on peacefully for a mile or two and then took to covert in the shape of one of the big forests, and when well away in its shade lay down flat and laughed till I cried. Good lord! I laugh still when I think of it. It really does me good. I got home all right the same evening and told the Padre all about it. He was quite delighted

and patted me on the back. He also played no mean fist in getting through those trout. I don't think I lost a single one. No! I never heard any more about it. There was indeed a rumour of advertisement and reward offered, but as far as I was concerned, at any rate, it came to nothing. About a month or so later I again visited that stream, caught a heap of trout and never saw a soul or was interfered with in any way. But had I been caught and locked up for some prolonged period I am afraid the universal verdict would have been "Served him right." Anyhow it is always a comfort in this life to reflect that for once the game was worth the candle.

The old Padre once again proved himself a brick.

He greeted me one day with the words, "I say, my boy, have you been interfering to any great extent with a fellow's face lately?" "Well yes, sir," I replied; "I did give a chap a bit of a hammering a day or two ago, but he wanted it badly—asked for it in fact. Is anything wrong? I don't think he was really hurt." "Well," said the Padre, "a man who said he was a riverside boatman came here with a face something like a Christmas plum pudding, with a couple of black eyes and a few cuts, and stated that you had grievously assailed him for nothing. Now tell me what it really was."

"The man's a damned—I beg your pardon, sir—liar all round. It was his show from start to finish, and he deserved all he got. I was walking along the river with young Mowbray, and this bounder, with whom I've never even had words before, from the bank above us flung a fair-sized stone at Mowbray, as his side can now testify, and hurt him badly, making the poor kid weep. Of course I at once went after the blackguard, who when caught pulled up a vine-stake as weapon, silly fool, and then I gave him what for. Directly he was tackled the dirty cur lay down and screamed. So I just turned him over and knocked his ugly mug against the ground half-a-dozen times. That was really all, sir."

"Capital," said the good old Padre. "I shan't interfere, and he'll get nothing out of me, and if he takes legal proceedings I shall most certainly back you up."

Now that's the sort of boss I like to serve under. O si sic omnes! There are far too many of these whining, snivelling, canting hypocrites going about crying peace, when there is no peace, whose only idea in life is to fill their pockets and keep their own cowardly skins out of harm's way.

I had one more round with that bargee. I was walking alone near the river and met him. He had an oar over his shoulder, in which he

evidently had much confidence. He greeted me with "Verfluchte Schweinhund," and added a good deal of opprobrious embroidery of an insulting and indecent nature. He then said I was a coward and dared me to tackle him when he had that oar in his possession. Could one imagine a much worse weapon wherewith to tackle a hefty (pardon, Stalky) boy who knew how to spar? Well! He had one crack at me and not unnaturally broke the oar against the ground. He took little further interest in the proceedings. No! Please don't call me a bully. I was only sixteen and he a man, and an exceedingly aggressive one, of four or five and twenty. I could scarcely have done otherwise, could I?

During that summer the Neckar was in flood, and we three boys thought it would be rather a sporting thing to swim down a couple of miles on its breast. So we hid our clothes just below the town and paddled out into the current. Our swim was all too short, for the stream was tearing along. When we approached the next village, Wieblingen I think was its name, we clambered up the bank, and ran right away back along the high road as naked as "Venus," to quote my friend Mulvaney, or indeed as he was himself in the taking of Lungtungpen. We passed several folk and a few wagon-loads of people both men and women. Shocked? Not

they indeed! Very far from it! They laughed inordinately, and seemed to think it was a show got up for their special entertainment, and took it all, particularly the ladies, in the utmost good part, without turning a hair or indeed their faces. We got back to our clothes all right and so home. I don't think the Padre ever heard of that round.

It was towards the end of June and our time was very nearly up, for we were all returning to our native shores, including the Padre, who had some other irons warming. I went down to the baths on the river for the last time, and directly I entered I saw a compartment which bore over its entrance the notice "Fur alten Herren," and in its interior sundry small luxuries such as arm-chairs and a sofa or two that were wholly denied to the ordinary bathers of years not quite so mature. This old men's shop had been put up since I had last visited the bath. Truly I was at the time only sixteen, but this fact did not deter me for one moment from entering this sanctum sanctorum, "Fur alten Herren," and undressing. I took a header into the bath and swam about. Anon I was aware of the proprietor of the bath, one Herr Boetz—be very particular about the Herr—entering the old 'uns' crib, seizing my clothes and carting them away to other and commoner quarters. I

flew out, got my clothes and put them back again, and again jumped into the water. Instantly old Boetz was at the same trick again. So I got out once more, put the things back and told the old cock that if he interfered with them again I'd shove him into the bath. He moved them again and I again put them back. Boetz was standing not far off near the edge of the bath. I ran at him full butt, got my shoulder well up his chest and sent him flying into the water, while I went clean over him. It was a game! I swam to the side and we hooked him out again, and oh lord! how he did splutter and swear. I have often heard Gaucho cattle-drivers let go, but I really think old Boetz's language capped them. German isn't altogether a bad language for swearing in. I leisurely dressed, and I well knew I had some fun in front of me. As I passed the office Herr Boetz, dry again, said that I should never be admitted into the bath in future. I showed my season ticket and laughed at him. He then offered to return half the price paid, but he insisted that I should keep away. No! Nothing less than the whole amount paid should keep me out of the bath. Then Gott bewahr! He would pay it all sooner than run the chance of having such a Teufels Kind on his premises. "Then let's have the guldens," I said, "and here's the season ticket."

He counted the guldens over and I handed him the ticket. He beamed, but I spoilt his smile, for I said, "Now, look here, old man, you ain't quite so clever as you think—if you'd gone a bit slower you'd have come out of the fight top dog. Now you're done brown, for I'm off to England to-morrow." All I heard further as I quitted the bath was old Boetz's mournful words, "Ach Gott! das Ich war ein grosse knarr."

During the autumn of 1860 a cousin of mine who was an Elder Brother of the Trinity House had the nomination of a candidate for a clerkship in that establishment. I accepted his nomination. There was but one vacancy, while there were five candidates. I had less than a week's notice and I was only seventeen, the youngest of the competitors by some years. I honestly thought I had as much chance of obtaining the vacancy as of being made Archbishop of Canterbury. But somehow or other I most miraculously came out at the top of the poll. I thought then, and I think so still, that the other candidates must have been more eligible for the wards of an asylum than for a clerkship in the Trinity House. It was, as I found out afterwards, my answer to one question that had brought me in a winner. In the few days that I had for preparation I had gone in chiefly for the coast geography of the United Kingdom, for

I knew that the Trinity House dealt to an enormous extent with ports. One question was, "State what ports you know, with their situations in the United Kingdom." I knew every one in England, Scotland and Ireland, and down they went. That landed me. So for a couple of years I drove a quill in the service of Her Most Gracious Majesty. As most people are aware, the Trinity House is an establishment on Tower Hill, and controls lighthouses, pilotage, beacons and buoys; the collection of light duties, and many other things connected with the Mercantile Marine. When a vessel reaches port, light duties have to be paid according to what course she has taken and what lighthouses and light vessels she has passed. Every port in England has to render account of the dues collected. A few of the largest ports, Liverpool and London for instance, render accounts daily, whilst every three months is sufficient for the very small ones. The amount collected for light dues alone is about £300,000 per annum. The checking of light duties accounts from a big port is about as intricate work as I have ever made a mess of, and that is saying a good deal. Trigonometry is child's play compared to it. Into this vortex was I—"wretched boy," as the Bishop said to his page—cast helpless. Had not the head clerks and others, in the accountant's office to which I was relegated, been

most kind and considerate to my innumerable mistakes and failings, I don't know how I should have got along. But they very soon took me over, and were good enough to hold me with a very loose rein. So I succeeded capitally and was quite happy. I stuck to my desk manfully and hardly ever took a day off, and entirely gave up cricket, shooting, fishing and almost all the things my soul loved, but I cannot say it was without casting some longing, lingering looks behind. I kept very fit and hard, however, with walking, running and boxing. Luckily there was not far from the Trinity House a crib where one could always find a "pug" ready for a turn with the gloves. Just before I went up for the examination for the clerkship I was wheeled before the Deputy Master, a very pompous old dear. I think his name was Gordon, and I fancy he was an Admiral.* He stunk aloud to Heaven of the quarter-deck. Now the lions didn't care for Daniel, and Daniel didn't care for the lions. I mean that this old cock was nothing to me, and I was, as yet, nothing to him. We were just two very ordinary English gentlemen. We had some conversation, and he asked me a lot of what I might venture to call silly questions. By and by the old dear said, "Are you a Quaker?" "No, I'm not!" "Then why don't you say 'Sir' when you address me?" asked this old auto-

crat, looking decidedly bristly. "Because among the people with whom I have lived it is not the custom, in these days, for men to call each other 'Sir,'" was my reply. I then got a curt dismissal. Later on that old cad tried very hard to get me dismissed, and stooped to some very dirty work indeed. But it did me good rather than harm, and proved that I had plenty of friends, including the head of my department, who were more than ready to take my part. So the old Admiral Johnnie had to take a back seat and "shut his head."

As time went on I began occasionally to air my intense love of fun and mischief. No one seemed to mind; quite the contrary, indeed; it came to my ears from a friend that the august Secretary himself—who, however, I had noticed had a merry twinkle in his eye—had said of me that he believed I was the life and soul of the place. At any rate, two years later, when I quitted the Trinity House, the old man, as he most warmly shook my hand, said, "Well, good-bye, my boy, and good luck to you. You're without a shadow of doubt the most mischievous young dog we ever had in the place, but all the same I wish with all my heart we had a pup or two more from the same litter."

One day the old Secretary came into our office and asked for one Mr. Mayo, an accountant.

Now it had happened that a few minutes previously, in the effusion of the moment, I had hoisted the said Mr. Mayo, who was a little man, into the top of a cupboard fully six feet from the ground, and there he was squatting when the Chief came in. "I want Mr. Mayo, please." No reply! Then the old man looked round and saw Mayo. "Come to my office as soon as you can, please, Mr. Mayo," was his only remark. But as he quitted the room I heard him mutter as he smiled, "Some more foolishness of that young Streatfeild, I know."

Luncheon of bread and butter, tea and coffee, were provided on the establishment for the clerks —if frugal, it was at any rate economical. There were at times amusing scenes in the luncheon-room. I well remember one in which I bore a rather large share. There was a clerk of the name of MacNeile, who was exceeding full of importance and considered that he was on a platform considerably raised above that on which we other ordinary mortals reposed. He took the utmost care of his personal appearance and was very choice in the matter of waistcoats and neckties. But he was a leper. In other words, he wore a wig and flattered himself that nobody knew it. One day I asked him how tall he was. He came at the lure with the utmost confidence, like a very pike. "Six feet one," he replied. "Oh, rot," I

answered. "You're nothing like it; why, I'm as tall as you are." I knew I wasn't, though. Then there was talk, and then I was measured against an adjacent door, and afterwards MacNeile stood up and I measured him with book and pencil. But in my hand was also a very fair-sized pin which I manipulated with craft. When I had finished I said, "All right, old cock, all over, cut away." And he cut, but left his wig pinned on the door. Tableau! There was much laughter in that room, for MacNeile was very far from a popular person. Yes! He had some things to say about it, the mildest of which was that I was an impudent young dog—in which statement I think he was justified, for he must have been my senior by many a long year—but he added that he had a great mind to give me a d——d good licking, which was foolish, and caused more yells and shouts of laughter to re-echo round the room. Poor MacNeile, there was nothing further for him to do but to gather up the fragments—the wig, I mean—and depart. There was a marked stiffness in his demeanour to me ever after, and I don't think that little episode was ever forgiven.

CHAPTER III

It was decreed about this time that my remaining on at the Trinity House permanently did not offer a very alluring or remunerative future. I was a good all round athlete and cricketer, pretty good at all sports and games, and enormously strong. It was therefore decreed by those who were responsible, that a commercial career was the one best suited to me. Personally I had all my life longed for the Army, but this had always been very strongly discouraged, for I came of Quaker blood and from a most peace-loving and law-abiding family. Was not Elizabeth Fry, *née* Gurney, herself my grandmother? The poor lady died when I was but two years old, but I love her still if only for Lord Byron's lines, and in *Don Juan* too, I am afraid.

"Oh Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin
With Carlton or with other houses? Try
Your hand at hardened and imperial sin;
To mend the people's an absurdity,
A jargon and mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better. Fy!
I thought you'd more religion, Mrs. Fry."

I think Lord Byron must have been a pal. But to return, I could not for the life of me see in what way I was fitted for an office stool. If I had any brains they were surely wholly unfitted for money-making. I think now, in looking back, putting me into a business career was very similar to chucking a lamb into a den of wolves to get its dinner.

Well ! A career of the City it was to be for me. So I forthwith bade adieu to the Trinity House, not without regret, and took my seat on a rather high stool in the lordly offices of Messrs. Brown, Jones & Robinson to learn business.

May I be allowed here to say a few words on a country gentleman taking up a career in the City ? A young man of twenty or thereabouts, a typical country gentleman (I am not referring to myself in any way), is sent into the City to pass the best years of his life in trying to make money. In what way has he been trained to do this ? In no way at all ! He has been trained, or ought to have been, in exactly the opposite direction. He has learned that it is mean ever to take advantage of one weaker than oneself, to be absolutely generous in all games to one's opponents, and under no circumstances to attempt to secure an advantage that could by any possibility be deemed unfair, to be as straight as

an arrow in all things, and never to lie to save one's own skin, but to be always ready to do it wisely and well to save a pal, either man or woman. Above all things but one has he been taught that to tell a lie in order to make money from any one is abomination and dishonour. He is sent into the City, and he finds that about the first and biggest thing he has to learn is that in business lies are permissible ; nay more, that the most successful liar and at the same time the liar that is seldom found out is the man of business that is the most respected and looked up to. There are, indeed, men I know in ancient and time-honoured banks and large merchants' houses who can afford to be, and are, honourable and truthful. All honour and glory to these, for God knows they are but few. A great many years ago I was waiting in the parlour of a large bank where I was exceedingly well known to many of the partners, and was at the time in conversation with one of them. Within five minutes two customers came in. The first wanted a bundle of bills discounted, a second wanted to deposit some thousands. The man with the bills was told that money was most awfully tight and that he would have to pay a swingeing rate to get his "stiff" done, while the second was informed that they were absolutely flooded with money, and could only afford a very low rate of

interest indeed. Now this banker was one of the holiest of the holy. He said grace at meals with great unction, he read family prayers morning and evening with regularity and precision. If he heard you say "damn" he looked as though he was going to faint or worse. But as soon as that old hypocrite got into his "business" jacket he could have given points to Ananias and Sapphira. There were others in that abode of iniquity who were not quite so holy. I well remember two of them, brothers, who amused me and many others too on a certain occasion. One of them, the elder, had an exceedingly smart new brougham ornamented with a somewhat striking and florid coat of arms on the panel, which soon became tolerably well known in the smart regions of London. One afternoon the younger brother borrowed this brougham, went for a short drive and left it standing for two hours at the door of a house which was at that time more celebrated for the beauty and charm of its dwellers than for their morality. The chaff that ensued may be imagined. I am well aware that many men have one code of morality for their houses and another for their offices. Well! It is nothing to me. But when I see these holy ones kneeling at the altar rails, when I hear them with their eyes turned to heaven saying unctuous graces and

in public making long prayers "to be seen of men," I laugh and laugh at the humbugs, well knowing that they will tell any lie and be guilty of any meanness to get the better of a bargain or sell 20,000 pairs of socks at a raking profit. None of these do I call country gentlemen. They live in the country probably for part of the year, and probably at Christmas hand over doles of beef and groceries to the poor in the village hall, to be seen of men again, and talk rot as to the close ties of affection between them and their people, not one in twenty of whom do they know even by sight if they pass in the village street. Faugh! All this cant and humbug makes me sick, when I know so well the true inwardness of the animal and what he is really made of. But to return to Messrs. Brown, Jones & Robinson, where I remained and "learnt business" for two years. Of the true inwardness of business I acquired next to nothing, *i. e.* the financial part of it. But I soon learnt that the ways of most business men, not quite all though, resembled those of the heathen Chinee. This was at the time of the North and South war in the United States. There was then, as the elder generation will remember, a tremendous boom in cotton. The speculation was enormous, and Mincing Lane went off its head. I remember talking to a man one afternoon about his

speculations, which were not going kindly, and noticed that he was terribly jumpy. Next morning I heard he had thrown himself from a top window, into the paved area, of a house in Cleveland Square. Cotton from India came over in hundreds of thousands of bales and went up to at least six times its normal value. At Messrs. B., J. & R.'s we indeed had strenuous times. My work consisted in looking after incoming produce from India and conducting the necessary correspondence connected with it. I got hold of a certain knowledge of Dhollerah, Oomrawuttee, Tinnevelly, Rangoon and many other sorts of cotton, and of an infinite variety of Colonial produce that I had never heard of before. I also learned thoroughly to appreciate the fact that the wily Parsee knows uncommonly well what he is about, and can give points to many an ordinary business man, and that if any one takes him for a flat he will assuredly get left. The said wily Parsee consigned many bales of cotton to B., J. & R., who on receipt of bill of lading for 500 bales of cotton remitted bill of exchange for 75 per cent. of its value as per sample. By and by the bales made their appearance, but were found to contain a minimum in weight at any rate of cotton and a maximum of brickbats. Recover from the Parsee? By all means! The Parsee knows all about that. I had no time for

mischief while with B., J. & R. I was as ever blessèd willing, however, but I worked most days until nine in the evening, and not infrequently all night, the day before the Indian mail went out. We usually had tea about seven, when B., J. & R. had departed, and then two or three of us sparred for half-an-hour in one of the big rooms and then worked again. I usually got a cricket match on Saturday too, through the summer, but I had to work to get it. I remember on one occasion I played for M.C.C. against the Gunners at Woolwich, and at the end of the first day went back to London and worked all night, and then went down to Woolwich for the second day, and went to a dinner-party in the evening, whereat I went sound asleep at the table. I had an arrangement with B., J. & R. that so long as my work was always done I could be away when I liked. I am sure now that it was a most undesirable arrangement, although at the time it suited both them and me most admirably. They got an *enormous* amount of work out of me *for nothing*, and I got the exercise, which was the breath of life to me, and indeed has been so during the whole of my career. I remember about that time garrotting was very rife. So one night about eleven I put on a revolver and walked off from Ilford in Essex, where I was then living, right through London to Hampstead, which I

reached in time for breakfast. I wandered through many of the slums of Whitechapel, on through Houndsditch, Bishopsgate, Cheapside, and away through the shady groves of the Evangelist, where I did not tarry or "rest my weary head" on anything whatever, and so on to the top of Hampstead Heath. Garrotted? Not a chance! I don't think a single soul spoke to me the whole way. I fancy the wily but cowardly garrotter would much prefer me at the present day, ætatis 68, to what I was then, ætatis 20. Eheu fugaces.

In looking back on that most peaceful walk through those umbrageous regions—I suppose they were so once, anyhow—how many scenes of an interesting, perchance even lurid, nature are brought to the remembrance of some of us! How few of the actors and actresses on that wild stage are still with us! One most amusing scene I cannot refrain from relating, for although I was naturally not present, the *dramatis personae* were well known to me, and I heard all about it immediately afterwards. A very stalwart young guardsman with whom my friendship commenced at Eton, and who by the same token could spar like an angel, had been paying a call, granted a somewhat late one, not a hundred miles from Lord's cricket ground. Before he took his way back to barracks, there was

a somewhat heated argument connected with finance. I may here observe that my friend was one of the most recklessly generous fellows I ever knew. He was threatened with chastisement from one Billy, who dwelt obscurely somewhere or other in the Marble Halls where my friend was paying his somewhat elongated call, unless the difficulty (financial) should be forthwith terminated. Billy was called. He came, looked my stalwart friend over, and elected to disappear instantly through a green baize swing door from the room in which the conversation (still financial) had taken place. Then was that green baize door re-opened by my friend, and Billy was assured that if he did not at once return he would come down to him and give him the same sort of licking only a much worse one, that it had been his (Billy's) custom to administer to those whose financial views differed from those held by the fair if frail châtelaine of that castle. Billy elected to stay where he was. The gallant guardsman pursued him to his lair, and amidst howls for mercy which the cowardly brute uttered, gave him the licking and a good bit to spare, which he had so justly earned. I never heard of any further late calls to those particular Marble Halls, or to the vassels and serfs thereof, of which Billy apparently had formed no small part.

Reminiscences of an Old 'Un

The only fun I remember at B., J. & R.'s was when I pinned a cracker on to the tail of the head clerk and set it going in the middle of office hours. Lord! That *was* a cracker. I remember I gave sixpence for it and that it had forty bangs. It seemed to take about a quarter of an hour going off. All the clerks and all the partners were looking on and laughing, like to burst, while the old head clerk —he wasn't really old, about thirty-five I should think, but that was Methuselah himself to me, in those days—turned round and round and appeared to think that Satan himself held him. I never heard any more about it, but all the chiefs knew well who the culprit was. Poor Brown, Jones and Robinson! They came to most awful grief later on, in that disastrous year, 1866 I think it was. Well do I remember that black Friday when the "Corner Shop" tumbled down, and great indeed was the fall thereof.

CHAPTER IV

In due course, after various vicissitudes of a wholly uninteresting nature, it was ascertained at last that a "business" career was in no earthly way suited to me. It was indeed wholly without regret that I turned my back on the City. I had wasted many valuable years of my life, and except for greatly increased knowledge of humanity, had nothing to show for it. I had always pined for an out-of-doors life, and for all the sport with it that it was possible for a poor man to obtain. When, therefore, it was decided that together with my wife and three small boys I should learn farming for a season, I rejoiced most heartily. We forthwith took our way to the Border country, where we had secured comfortable quarters in one of the best farms on the Netherby estate. I remained there for about eighteen months and most thoroughly enjoyed myself. I saw and took the deepest interest in what was, I suppose, the highest farming in England. Besides the usual agriculture we had a small herd of some five-and-twenty shorthorns, a good flock of Ewes Cheviots, a

good number of Clydesdales, including five entires, and a thorough-bred. So there was indeed no lack of interest on the farm. Then there were many good coursing meetings within easy reach; indeed, during the Border Union Meeting many of the courses were on our farm, and through one meeting I was riding in the hares to the slipper with the field stewards, and most capital fun it was. I attended endless agricultural shows, even getting so far as Edinburgh for the Highland. I was on one occasion at an agricultural dinner in Carlisle. When in the anteroom previous to the repast I felt a tap on my shoulder—No! Not an arrest this time, at any rate—and saw the kindly face of old Sir John Heron Maxwell of Springkell, who greeted me with the words, "Now then, my particular private policeman, come along to dinner and sit by me." How I had secured Sir John's friendship was like this. I was some time before this playing in a cricket match at Springkell, but only knew Sir John by sight. In the course of the afternoon he came up to me and said, "Mr. Streatfeild, will you kindly do me a small service?" "Most assuredly, Sir John, if I can," was my reply. "Well! You see there's a 'drunkie' over there making a row and rather too near the ladies' tent. I am told you are exceptionally strong,

and I should be tremendously grateful if you'd put him over the fence for me." I said, of course, I'd gladly do my little best. So I went up to the "drunkie" and got him by the seat of his breeches and the collar, and ran him in front of me up to the fence, hoisted him on to my chest and then jolted him over it. He fell on the other side, as Uncle Remus would say, "Kerblam." Two days afterwards, a man appeared at our farm and told me he was the man that I had heaved out of the ground at Springkell, that he was a very poor man and that I had rent his nether garment to fragments. A minute later I was the poorer by five shillings and there was peace. Over and above learning a little about farming I did a good many other things; but as to the farming I came to the conclusion, with no shadow of doubt, that I at any rate could never make a paying concern of it. I saw around me shrewd, hard-headed old men who had been brought up to it from their very cradles, who were up and out by daylight every day of their lives, and who were ready to haggle in the market over every halfpenny, do no more than make a bare living. What chance, then, should I have with such competition? Why, the very fact of being unable to haggle over that halfpenny would mean just the difference between a profit and a loss. I fished a great

deal all over the Border country; Eskdale, Liddesdale, Ewes and Hermitage all knew me well. Truly I did not take part with Fosters, Fenwicks and Musgraves in racing and chasing on Canobie Lea, but I walked over every inch of it times without number and caught a few salmon and endless trout in the streams that flow by. I also walked enormous distances, all over the country, very often right across to Howick on the Northumberland coast, where a brother of mine was Rector at the time. I once, going along the south side of the Cheviots, made a mistake in a thick fog and got right over to Jedburgh. I turned round and went back over Carter Fell and on to Otterburn, which I reached exactly twenty-four hours after leaving home. I think I had walked well over eighty miles. Yes! I was a bit leg-weary, but reached Howick the next day none the worse. I spent many days fishing on Hermitage Water, and many a time have taken a frugal repast under the walls of the old Castle itself. It was easy to close one's eyes and dream of scenes and tragedies of yore, To hear the heartrending shrieks of the numberless poor wretches tortured to death within its walls, to see the band of Moss-troopers sallying forth to the midnight raids, and see them returning with their lowing herd and perchance a damsel or two held in fierce embrace across the

saddle. As one cast one's line below the Castle one was sure to think of young Kieldar who was done to death here, perchance on the very spot where that last trout took the fly so boldly. Truly that Border country exercises the most wonderful fascination for me, and while I lived there I was never tired of wandering about it, usually with rod in hand and occasionally with gun; never tired of seeing places that recalled to me fair women and brave men who had borne their part nobly in days long gone by.

While living in that dear, delightful Border country, I came across many most interesting stories of Scottish life, one of which is so good that it will well bear repetition, although I fear some of my readers may have heard it, and will gently murmur, "Chestnut." Of these I ask pardon.

The "Meenister" had for a Sabbath quitted his own Manse and was sojourning for the "ae nicht" at that of a "brither." It was bitter, wintry weather, and the snow was deep in the strath. Our Meenister had completed his day's work and had delivered "twa discoorses" very much to his own satisfaction at any rate, although some of his congregation had whispered words to each other that sounded like "sair lang." There had been a most profuse and excellent supper to which our Meenister had done ample justice, and the two divines were seated cosily in front

of the fire feeling at peace with all the world. Their steaming glasses of toddy were beside them, the whisky bottle was at hand with its hand-maidens, lemon and sugar, and the kettle was singing on the hob. At first little was said, and except the occasional words, "Donal, joost wrax me the watter," or "Hoot man, I've drooned the miller again," or some such expression in connection with the ingredients on the table, only the cruel blast as it howled through the strath could be heard. "Janet, Janet, lass," called the owner of the Manse, "Ye'll no be forgetting to warm the Meenister's bed, deed and it's a sair cauld nicht." We might, as regards our "twa Meenisters" as the night progressed and the whisky in the bottle fell very low and the water in the kettle failed altogether, almost quote Robbie Burns as to "Twa blither hearts the lee lang night ye wadna find in Christendie." At length they—not altogether without a hitch or two on the stairs—sought their bedrooms. Soon after his arrival there our Meenister, on looking round him, discovered the fair and buxom lassie, Janet, sound asleep in the middle of his bed. Her instructions as to warming the Meenister's bed on this "sair cauld nicht" had been taken absolutely literally, and in carrying out her ideas with her own fair little body in the place of a warming-pan, the poor

little damsel had fallen fast asleep. The Meenister stood and regarded the sleeping beauty, and then exclaimed, "Aweel, aweel! A've had a graund nicht indeed, the supper was fine, the whusky was joost magneeficent, but eh! I ca' this the height o' hospitality."

I quitted these scenes, I think, in 1870, and shortly afterwards took my way in the *Oneida*, a small Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's boat of only 2,000 tons burden, to the Argentine Republic.

CHAPTER V

One Henley at that time was raising a company of young fellows to form a colony for flax-growing in the Argentine. "Los lineros," flax growers, we were christened later, and the word "Gringos" was usually added, and with the utmost justice. Gringos in the Argentine is equivalent to "New Chum" in Australia, "Tender Foot" in America, "Griffin" in India, and "Greenhorn" all over the world. It seems to me wholly and utterly incredible, with the light that fifty years of varied experience have shed upon me, that some two hundred young fellows of from eighteen to five-and-twenty years of age, to say nothing of parents and those who were supposed to look after them, could have had their legs pulled, could have been so exceedingly well hoodwinked, diddled and bamboozled as we all were by that infernal scoundrel Henley. The bait on his hook was thus presented unto us. Flax-growing in the Argentine was without doubt the most certain way of making a fortune—this was shown on paper. Henley was an experienced flax-grower. He owned

much land and an estancia at a place called Frayle Muerto on the Rosario and Cordova railway, and between three and four hundred miles west of Buenos Ayres. There was this land and this estancia, Henley's property, all ready waiting for us herd of woolly lambs to take possession of, and on which we were forthwith going to make our little fortunes. N.B. Not one of us, I fully believe, having ever seen growing flax in our lives. Gringo! Yea verily! And we ought to have been taken out in perambulators with nurses. And yet there were those among us who had seen more than a little of this wicked world, who were quite capable of keeping their end up in very varied and wholly untrustworthy company. For instance, a man —one of the band of flax-growers—was after Croydon races at the bar of a public-house in Croydon. It was not a very respectable one, and the bar was somewhat crowded with facing folk, a few "sharps" among them. To the flax-grower one of the "sharps" suggested a little game of cards which the f.-g. thought might be productive of amusement. Whist? He had a friend or two who would like a game. You bet he had! So the quartette went into a private room and started a mild rubber at very low points and no bones were broken. Soon, of

course, écarté came on, and the original "sharp" and f.-g. began at a sovereign a game. The "sharp" was exceedingly handy with a pack of cards. He turned the king most beautifully, perfectly, with one hand, right under one's nose. After a bit the "sharp" was two quid, pardon, I mean two sovereigns, to the good. Said the f.-g., "Double or quits? All right!" then added, "If I don't win this journey I shall chuck it." He was sure the "sharp" wanted a good deal more than four sovereigns, evidently thinking he had got a veritable lamb, for the f.-g. had not a hair on his face and appeared very young indeed. The f.-g. won. All quits. Then said f.-g., "Well, good-night; thanks for a nice little game. I'm off." "Hang it all," exclaimed the "sharp," "surely you'll give me my revenge." "No revenge in it," said f.-g. as he stood up, left shoulder well forward. He guessed what was coming, for he saw the "sharp" was "short of wool," and he too had stood up. "Won't play any more, won't you? Then let me tell you you ain't no gentleman." As the words came out of his mouth the f.-g.'s fist, with every ounce of his twelve stone behind it, got the "sharp" full in under the jaw, and he fell in a crumpled heap at the other end of the room. As the f.-g. went past the bar somewhat rapidly he said to

the barman, "You'd better go and attend to some one who's lying in that room yonder; he won't walk away without help for some time to come yet." Yes! the flax-grower was I. In those days I can tell you Croydon races were an experience.

But to return to Henley's Colony. We paid him, I think, £200 each, it may have been only £150. For this he was to teach us flax-growing and keep us for a year, after which we were to scratch for ourselves, retaining a piece of *his land*. Each one of us had to bring out a hut, which cost about £12, and an outfit. Now these huts and these outfits were all obtained at the same palatial establishment. All of us Gringos were provided by Henley with a printed list of things that were *necessary*. I'm not quite sure at the present moment whether I am more inclined to laugh or cry when I think of all the expensive useless rubbish that we were told was *absolutely necessary*. It was indeed a mass of useless muck. Naturally it was Henley's object to make our "little bills" as heavy as possible, as he was of course receiving a very large return commission. I can't say I know it, but I know Henley. Also I believe I know this world and the wickedness thereof a trifle better than I did in those days. Here is a little sum which embodies my ideas of how the gentle

Chinee (Henley—I mean) lined his pockets at the expense of the all-too-unsuspecting flax-growers:—

200 Flax-growers at £200 each .	£40,000
5% return commission on 200 Kits and Huts at £150 each . .	1,500
Pickings (very moderate for a man like Henley)	1,000
	£42,500
Passages to Rosario at £20 (probably less. Arranged by Henley)	£4,000
Expenses—liberal, I fancy . .	10,000
	£14,000

According to my calculation this shows a net profit to Henley of £28,500. In due course we shall be able to give a pretty good guess what became of this very large sum of money.

We didn't all go out to Buenos Ayres together, but one bright May morning some hundred and twenty or thirty, a first detachment of "Los lineros," took up their abode for a season on the *Oneida*. I should gravely doubt if ever, since the day when the first little boat steamed away from the Broomielaw, has a skipper carried in his charge a more varied assortment of passen-

gers. There were medical students, there were many who had left the army, some who had left the navy, some who had left the 'varsity, which nobody can deny. There were a good many who ought not to have left their mammas' apron strings. I remember one exceptionally fine-looking and well-built young fellow coming on board. Although he was with his father he was most abnormally intoxicated, and he wasn't the only one in that undesirable condition by any manner of means. He at once disappeared into his cabin, and there remained. I heard afterwards that he had tried both navy and army. I only saw him twice again. The first time was pretty early one morning when we were right out in the Atlantic, and again the same afternoon when he was lifted out of one of the ship's boats and carried up the gangway dead. It appeared that the poor fellow was a very hard drinker. As I saw for myself, he had come on board drunk and had gone on drinking steadily in his cabin until the day of his death. He was on the quarter-deck that day before breakfast and spoke to me, and asked why all the passengers cut him and kept him at arm's length, etc., etc., etc. Of course it was all imagination, for that was the first time he'd come on deck at all. Poor fellow! He had got 'em very badly. He couldn't keep his hands still a moment, and his

lips were shaking so that he could scarcely speak. He very soon went off to his cabin again. I told the chief officer at breakfast what I thought about it, and added that the man ought not to be left alone a moment. He laughed at me and told me I knew nothing about it. I believe he was wrong. I was playing "Bull" that afternoon, and there was a cry of "Man overboard!" Of course we all knew pretty well what had happened. He had come out of his cabin and gone overboard in a moment. All was done that could be, but he had entirely disappeared. The vessel came round, two boats were lowered and sought round and round, and though they retrieved the buoys that had been thrown out, not a sign of the man was there. The boats were back in the davits and the ship had regained her course and was going full steam ahead. I was leaning over the taffrail on the quarter-deck chatting to one of the quartermasters. He suddenly said, "There he is," and pointed to where, not more than thirty yards off, we could see the bare chest of the poor fellow shining in the sunrays. A boat was again lowered and the body was soon brought back. He was quite dead, and had probably been killed by the propeller, for there was a large gash on his forehead. It was as well. We buried him at sundown that evening. A very sad service and

impressive withal, but later on in the evening a change came over the spirit of our dream and the fun got rather fast and furious. I remember one very young and cheerful spirit—now a General and one of the best men in England over a country—who was a trifle above himself, on being advised by the skipper to make a little less noise and to betake himself to bed, replied that the sad events of the day had so wrought upon his feelings that he had been compelled to resort to stimulants, apparently too many stimulants. Two members of Henley's Colony who were also on board were the chaplain and his wife. They too, poor people, had been utterly taken in by Henley, thinking they were going out to a satisfactory and permanent billet. Among some second-hand farming machinery and the huts for the members of the colony was a church, a very small iron church. Now I ask you kindly to consider this matter. In Henley's prospectus—so to call it—of his proposed colony we read, "A Clergyman of the Church of England will accompany the expedition. He has been permanently engaged as Chaplain to Henley's Colony. A church will be taken out and erected immediately after arrival, in which frequent services will be held." As a matter of fact this church, this decoy duck, was never erected at all. There was no land to erect it on. It was sold on

arrival, and Henley absorbed the proceeds. The poor parson and his wife, finding that they had been done, very brown indeed, returned to England forthwith. But they and the church had done most excellent work, and had without doubt herded many lambs—and many shekels—into the Henley fold. Can't you see and hear the dear old women of both sexes gloating over the parson and the church? Can't you fancy them beaming over the fact that dear Marmaduke and dear Algernon will be under the wing of a good clergyman, and will be able to attend divine service with the same regularity that the old dears believe their sweet offspring make a habit of whether in sight of the maternal eye or otherwise. That Henley was a cunning fox. He knew pretty well how to bait his trap for some of the Ancient British Matrons, and indeed he did not bait in vain. There were, alas! as I found out, many who had with sore difficulty scraped together sufficient money to enable some whom they loved to launch their barks on the treacherous and woeful waters of Henley's nefarious scheme. Many were cast adrift in that, for young men, exceedingly perilous country, not having money enough to pay their passage home. Many died, and not a few committed suicide. Caña cocktails used except with the very utmost discretion form a most

excellent pavement for a pretty sure path to the devil.

There were on the voyage many of the usual amusements, which we know all too well. At various ports there were some riotous luncheon and dinner parties, especially at Lisbon, St. Vincent in the Cape de Verdes and Bahia. I remember in a dancing saloon at St. Vincent having a polka with the tallest and fattest nigger girl I ever saw. It was an experience, and I found my arms would not go round. It was very warm, and several of us swam back to the *Oneida*, sharks notwithstanding. There are those who may scoff at this. Let 'em. In a varied and exceedingly watery life, I have found the dangers of the deep by sharks very much over-rated. I will allow nevertheless that I have been in places where I wouldn't bathe at *any* price. Pernambuco is one of them. I have seen bigger and beastlier-looking sharks and more of them at "Pernam," I think, than anywhere else in the world. In the Knysna Harbour in South Africa I have bathed times without number right in among them. There they never pay any attention to a human being, but will readily take a bait—as readily as "Los lineros" swallowed Henley's.

On arriving at the end of our voyage we found we had been *done*. So far from having land and

an estancia at "Frayle Muerto," Henley hadn't a rood of land or so much as a shanty to his name. He hired a small farm with an estancia of sorts some twelve miles from Rosario, and to this miserable place a good many of us went. We learned a good deal about roughing it, which was very good for us. We got plenty of mutton to eat, but little else, and bread was a rare luxury. There were no vegetables of any sort, and very seldom anything to drink but water, and that usually brackish. We all slept on the floor in a sort of barn with only a blanket or two apiece—no mattresses, of course. It was exceedingly good discipline and hardened our hips. I remember that in those days I thought I was *really* "roughing it," and was rather pleased with myself. I have learned since on many occasions what real "roughing it" means, but I don't fancy I have ever been much the worse.

In order, I suppose, to make a bit of a show, a row of the huts was by degrees erected, and certain of "Los lineros" dwelt in them for a season. A ditch was commenced by way of enclosing land for flax-growing, but the whole arrangement was without form and void, and in due course fell utterly to pieces and passed into oblivion. I spent some time at the huts, and have a vivid remembrance of several exceedingly cheery evenings when Caña punch was brewed and

songs were sung and stories told after the labours of the day, for some of us worked very hard with pick and spade at that same ditching. I wonder what that ditch encloses now. I wonder whether a grave or two I remember helping to dig are even visible at the present day. I trow not. Indeed, I can remember helping to bury many a brave lad in other climes where now you would search in vain for any sign of even a mound.

I well remember a very sad ending to one merry night at the huts. One poor boy was suffering badly from toothache, which had troubled him sadly for days and nights too. To ease this he had procured some laudanum from Rosario. The morning after our little revel he didn't appear, so we went to his hut. There he lay in his bunk, quite dead, and looking very peaceful. The toothache had ceased.

We had a good deal of horse-racing among ourselves, for we all of us had horses, some a good many. Indeed, I remember one Neeld, who owned dozens. Yes, and could ride them too, although he was only about seventeen or eighteen at the time. If any one had told me that that child had been born in a manger begirt with a surcingle, and with a bit in his mouth and without a bit in his pocket, I should assuredly have believed it. One morning soon after day-

light he and I met at covert side, or rather the watering place, to water our horses. We were both riding and were both stark naked. We eyed each other's horses, proposed a race of some half-mile or more to a given point, and were off. The result I entirely "disremember." I wonder if "Fatty" has any recollection of it. I think that same "Fatty" had the best "hands"—for a *man*—I ever came across. I don't fancy in these days he rides many races without a stitch of clothing on him.

There was a boy we called Dick in our crowd, who, over and above being an exceedingly fine horseman, was possessed of one of the sweetest tenor voices I ever heard. To hear that child's voice ringing out "Marta, Marta, tu sparisti," in those wild scenes was an experience. I believe "Dick" stayed out in Pavon some years after most of us had scattered over the world. The last I heard of him was on this wise. He had been spending his Sunday at a Pulperia (store and shebeen) at a place close to the Indian country called India Muerto. I know the place well, and a wild crib it is. In that Pulperia there are no windows at all on the ground floor, and the one door—a stupendous affair—is at night fixed up with large bars. An Indian raid in the sixties was no joke, I can tell you. He, Master Dick, finished up his peaceful Sabbath by

cleaning out a couple of Gauchos at euchre. Now Gauchos are wild persons and hate losing money at any game of chance, and have many playful ways, not only of evading payment of bets or stakes, but also of securing a return of the same even after having been safely lodged in the pocket of their opponent. Dick had a Caña cocktail and quitted the Pulperia after dark to ride to an estancia some nine or ten leagues away. He was riding a fine black horse called El Diavolo, one of the speediest in the country, which had won him hard dollars without end. As he was quitting the Quinta, Don Manuel, the owner of the place, stopped him and whispered, "Those two devils are coming after you to get their money back, so look out." That same Don Manuel was an Italian and a real good sportsman. He did me many a good turn, and I spent many days and nights at his place, where by the same token I slept in an old shed; for not a soul beyond his own family was ever allowed to spend the night inside the house. "Thanks," replied Dick, "for the warning, but they can't even get near me unless I choose. We'll see. Good-night, Don Manuel," and off rode Dick at a canter, went a league or so and eased off. He listened, and was soon aware of galloping horses coming his way. Then set El Diavolo going, but not too fast, and kept the

Gauchos well behind for a time. Then he gradually let them close up to within sixty or seventy yards; not nearer, for there are such things as lassos and bolas. Then he took out his revolver and emptied it towards where he could dimly see figures in the darkness, and then set Diavolo to work in real earnest. "And that's the last I ever heard of those two scoundrels," laughed Dick. "Hit 'em? No, I shouldn't think a chance of it, I could hardly see 'em, damn 'em! Never got their dirty dollars back though."

I was talking just now about singing. It happened about that time that Carlotta Patti, the sister of Adelina, and long since dead, alas! was in Rosario and gave a concert. There were at the time a great many "camp" men in the town, for there had been a cricket match, Los Lineros against Rosario; there was also an execution under exceedingly peculiar circumstances, of which later, and this had brought together a phalanx of us as wild spirits, although mostly gentlemen of refinement and education, at any rate in the past, as could be found in the world. To attend Carlotta Patti's concert we all rose as one man. The theatre was crammed. She sang like a goddess, and we were all enthralled, entranced. It came to her last song, and she was once more encored and cheered to the skies. She came

back, and stood a moment while the piano gave us the prelude of "Home, Sweet Home." Consider it kindly! Two or three hundred spirits the wildest of the wild, almost all, if not goats altogether, certainly the blackest of sheep, suddenly lifted from the whirling shadows of their present lives into peaceful regions they had known in the past, into the long forgotten calm and pure waters of "Home, Sweet Home." While Carlotta sang the dear, well loved and never stale old melody, I don't think there was a dry eye in the place. She ceased. For a breathing space there was silence, the silence of a grave. Then like an overwhelming avalanche broken loose a roar that might have rent the roof asunder. It was glorious. Simply glorious. There were many bearded devils there that night who feared neither God nor man, who would cheerfully have gone down on their knees—all unaccustomed as they were to any such attitude—and kissed the hem of that dear woman's garment.

A few days afterwards, on my way down the Parana to the Tigre, I had the great pleasure of being introduced to the fair Carlotta, and moreover after dinner in the saloon of the *Capitan* I played in the same rubber of whist with her. While so engaged, a man—thank God he wasn't an Englishman—came up unintroduced and

asked her to sing. The stony gaze with which she looked that cad up and down, speaking never a word, did my heart good. He did indeed look as though he'd lost a shilling and found sixpence.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN I had only been in the Argentine bu short time, I made great friends with a broth Kentish man, who was—as they call it there· vaqueano. This means that he knew the count well, could speak the language fluently, and w very far removed from what I was at the tim a Gringo. I was most thankful for his guidan and friendship. We went about the count together a great deal, and stayed at ma estancias, and saw some exceedingly wild li and endless sport of various descriptions, espe ally horse-racing. I did a certain amount shooting, but cartridges were a great difficult We went everywhere on horseback, and cou carry but little ammunition. In some of t districts we visited there were wildfowl thousands, which had probably never heard gun-shot in their lives. I remember on riding up to the edge of a laguna on t borders of the Indian country on the bosom which swam wild-fowl in thousands and tho sands, swans, geese and ducks without numbe

and endless waders in all the shallows. No! I had no great desire for slaughter. They were too tame. The ducks indeed went on feeding as I sat on my horse, within less than twenty yards of them.

Sunday is a great day at any well-known Pulperia. Gauchos come in droves and bring their wives with them. As the day wears away the fun gets pretty fast and furious. Horse-racing and cock-fighting are, I think, the chief amusements, but of course there is endless card-playing, a certain amount of dicing, and at one Pulperia we occasionally went to was also a billiard table of sorts. I have never played on it, however, but I have seen what isn't often seen, a man shot dead across the table. I forget what the row was about, but I fancy the man threatened a police official. At any rate I very plainly saw the official take out his pistol and shoot the man as dead as a stone.

There is on these peaceful Sabbath afternoons a great deal of Caña drinking, and by sunset there are many Gauchos who have bitten the dust and lie prone. After dark one must tread warily outside a popular Pulperia, or one may possibly plant a foot in the stomach of a recumbent drunkie. If the said drunkie has life enough left in him to resent the insult, he is just as likely as not to whip out his knife and stick it through

the calf of your leg. In attending a Sunda afternoon séance like this, one must have al one's wits to the fore. Every Gaucho amon the crowd is dishonest, and will rob you in an earthly way if he gets the chance. If you be with a Gaucho—which is rather a "heads I win tails you lose" sort of game, from his point of view —he usually will only pay under compulsion. I once won a few dollars from one of them over a cock-fight. When I asked for the money he promptly pulled out a knife. I then pointed my pistol at him, when he instantly paid and made me a most polite bow. Caña is awful poison. It sends them mad, and when the beggars are three sheets in the wind, they play about with their beastly knives in a very alarming manner. One day when my knowledge of Gaucho Spanish was very much in embryo, I went into a store to purchase eggs, and asked the fair damsel of the place for "Gallinos huevos," otherwise Cock's eggs. Of course I ought to have said "huevos" simply, or anyhow "Gallinas huevos," and given the hens a chance. Anyhow, the man of course thought I was chaffing his girl, and came at me like a tiger, with a knife about as big as a bayonet. My revolver was out with some rapidity, and he gracefully retired. In those days it was absolutely necessary to wear a pistol, but I don't think a man of discretion would ever be called on to pull the

trigger. I hate revolvers like poison. They are most infernally mischievous, dangerous things, and have led to accidents, and fatal ones too, without end. I have seen some most wonderfully comic things with revolvers in my life. I have had a man in delirium tremens in the same bedroom with me, searching about all over the place for his pistol to shoot *me* with. He was of the opinion that I was a very disagreeable person indeed—in which he was very likely right, by the same token—because I wouldn't let him have as much Caña as *he* thought was good for him. He did *not* find his pistol, I had that safely concealed on my person, but he was very cross about it, and wanted my blood very badly. On another occasion—this was in a lodging-house in Rosario, and also result of overdoses of Caña—a boy of twenty had, so he said, very strong objections to people looking at him through his bedroom window. N.B. The window was ground glass. Anyhow he got his pistol and blazed away at the folk he imagined were looking at him through the opaque glass until all his ammunition was expended, and every single pane in the window smashed. Indeed, I hate revolvers, and I am of the opinion that out of fifty people who carry them, not more than one is fit to be trusted with such an exceedingly dangerous machine.

I referred a short time ago to a certain execution that took place in Rosario while I was there. The facts of the case were as follows. Two brothers of the name of Ball—I think it was—lived together in an estancia not very far from Rosario. One evening a Gaucho came along and asked for food, which was willingly supplied. One of the brothers was away from home at the time of the Gaucho's visit. The other was in the house reading by lamplight. There were at the time no men about the place. Soon sounds of a tremendous struggle were heard by the women who were about, but after a time these ceased and all was quiet. When the room where young Ball had been sitting was entered, it was a truly awful sight. The furniture was knocked about all over the place, the walls, the floor, the chairs were dripping with blood, and there lay Ball dead in the middle of it, stabbed all over the body. As far as it was possible to tell, that treacherous hound of a Gaucho, after having had his meal in the servants' quarters, had sneaked into the room where Ball was sitting and had stabbed him in the back. Then evidently had ensued a struggle most fierce and terrible. Ball, in spite of his awful and bleeding wound in the back, must have fought and wrestled all round the room with his murderer, for those who saw it told me the whole place was drenched with

blood. Of course by degrees Ball got weaker and weaker from loss of blood, and then the Gaucho got in some more stabs and all was over. The Gaucho had disappeared, but was traced up, apprehended and lodged in the gaol in Rosario. Had the matter been left to the authorities the murderer would never have been apprehended at all. That he came to justice and death was entirely owing to the surviving brother and his friends, who—so to speak—banded themselves together to see that justice was done. Ball himself, with whom I had many talks about it, swore that if the authorities played tricks and let the murderer escape he would again track him up and execute him with his own hand. He had many friends, myself among the number, who would most gladly have lent him a hand. We Englishmen were well aware that the authorities would willingly have connived at the murderer's escape. They seemed, in those days at any rate, to look upon murder as a very trifling affair. Rudyard Kipling in one of his gorgeous stories says you can buy a murder charge, including the corpse, all complete for fifty-four rupees. In the Argentine you could go two better. You could buy a knife for your enemy's back for "dos reales," somewhere about ten pence. That about sizes murder among Gauchos. I have seen a man standing at a bar shoot down another

and kill him merely on account of some paltry dispute. There was certainly a little drink on hand. Very little notice was taken, and the shooter was told he had better get across the river to the Bánda Oriental, which he did. The last I heard of that excellent citizen was that he had a shot at and missed a wretched waiter who had annoyed him. I said something about revolvers and the fools who carry them just now, didn't I? By dint of keeping guard ourselves, we Englishmen at the Rosario gaol kept our bird inside it. After much delay he was led forth to execution. A great many of us were there that morning, for among ourselves at any rate there was very deep feeling about the case. The Gaucho was brought about a mile out of the town in a cart, and two or three disreputable looking priests were with him. He was but twenty-two, and confessed to seven murders. He was taken out of the cart and set down in a chair on the plain. His elbows were tied to the chair and his wrists to his knees. He looked frightened to death and was green. There was not one man, however, in that crowd, I feel quite certain, who would have raised a finger to help him. I know I wouldn't. Then six animals that called themselves soldiers and looked like chiffoniers after a hard night's work, took their places a few feet in front of him, and at the word

of command from a dirty little swab who I suppose was some sort of officer, blew off their muskets into his chest. So close were the guns that I noticed his shirt was singed. One of his tethered hands twitched a bit, so one of the chiffoniers reloaded his weapon—muzzle-loader—put it to the side of the man's head and blew the top of the same into space. Sort of sight one doesn't come across often. But I've seen, aye! and witnessed worse. A man doesn't lead a thousand or so Fingoes into action all through a campaign against Kafirs, their hereditary foes, quarter being unknown on both sides, without seeing a thing or two, I can tell you.

That job being most satisfactorily concluded, we all adjourned back to the Hôtel Londres and had a drink. Now I come to think it over I'm not altogether certain we didn't have two.

CHAPTER VII

I PLAYED rather a funny billiard match about that time. There was a Casino in Rosario, at least it was called a Casino. It was a rotten little place kept by an out-at-elbows cad who supplied baddish drink, worse ham sandwiches and little else. But one could play cards as late as one liked with no limit as to stakes. Except for whist at moderate points I never was much of a card-player—moreover I could never afford more than very soft stakes. But all the Englishmen in the place except the very respectable ones, which by no means included most of "Los lineros," used to frequent this Casino.

One night pretty late, after a not very quiet evening, an American whom I had never seen before was gassing a good deal about billiards and at the same time drinking a lot. After a bit he said he would play anybody in Rosario for 100 dollars. I wondered if he was really a top-sawyer at it, or if it was the drink. Moreover I had had a kick under the table from a pal and a wink above it. So I said, "All right, sir; I'll take you on money up right now with the

proprietor." I hadn't got 100 dollars or nearly that sum on me, but I knew my pals. I just held an open hand behind me and it was stuff-full of notes in a moment; far more than I wanted. The money was posted and I went straight off to bed. The American didn't. I wondered greatly whether I had been a mug or not. Anyhow I was fit and sober as a judge, and my nerves were in good order. I had played several games of billiards and was in pretty fair form. I never was first-class as an amateur, but was decidedly useful. We were to play at ten o'clock the next morning, 100 cannons. I knew the cannon game, and had played any quantity of it. There was a very large gallery, and I believe they almost all wanted me to win, which was in my favour. Soon my opponent came along. I gave him good-morning and a good look over, and I thought from that inspection that the game was mine. He ordered a brandy and soda and took a buster. I watched him making his drink and heard the bottle chattering against the glass, and then I *knew* the game was mine. He soon had another B. & S., and I was cocksure he was over-egging the pudding and must go to pieces. We kept about level for 20 cannons. Then he had a third B. & S., and then I went straight away to the post and won by over 50. He wanted to play me double or quits then and there, poor silly

man, for he was far gone. Of course I refused, and was called a good many different sorts of an ass for my pains. One more yarn about Rosario and I think we shall have had enough of it. I was strolling home alone very late one night when a man, English I think, met me and we talked a bit. I had never seen him before, and didn't much like the look of him. He suggested a drink, and I thought out of pure mischief I'd see the show through, though I was gravely suspicious and very much on the *qui vive*. We entered a bar not far from the river side that I did not know, and I saw about the worst set of blackguards it was ever my lot to look upon, and that's saying a good deal. Some were seated at tables playing cards, and some were standing about at the bar. But they all of them eyed me suspiciously and with evil glances. I thought to myself that if I got out of that den of thieves with a whole skin I should be luckier than I deserved. What would I drink? I rather wished I knew, for I fancied the matter wasn't altogether in my hands, and I didn't feel at all certain that it was going to be in my mouth either. I gave my order, and the barman took a bottle and a glass from a shelf behind him, and while he filled the glass stood for a moment with his back to me, so that I couldn't see what he was doing. Then he put the glass down on the

counter in front of me. I have a very shrewd suspicion that if that drink had gone down my throat, the same throat would very shortly afterwards have had a knife in it. I saw no sign pass between my lately made acquaintance and the bar tender, but no doubt there was one. Equally without doubt a trifle of powder went into my drink when the barman's back was turned to me. My host—so to speak—was the only man between me and the door, which was close by. I had to act very quickly or take down my hocussed drink. I made up my mind in a moment, hit my temporary would-be entertainer a real "wonner" on the jaw and bolted through the door. With a yell like a pack of foxhounds about a dozen of the cut-throat swine were after me, but I had three or four yards start, and as I was nearly a first-rate sprinter I was not uneasy, barring a fall. I had nothing on me of any value except my revolver, but they thought otherwise and hoped to get all I had. The revolver with so many of them was no good, for even had I put down a few of the blackguards, it would have done me no good, for in the end I must have gone down myself, and that was the very last thing I desired. When I bolted I remembered that I had a pretty clear run to the river side, where at a certain place I knew the bank was steep and the water deep. I fled straight away to this place, having gained fully

thirty yards on my pursuers, took a header and swam away out into the river. I was aware that not very far off was an old friend of mine called *Esmeralda*. Oh no, not at all! Not the least like what you are thinking of, very far from it! She—yes! so far you are right, it was a she. She was a dirty, rat-infested, stinking little River Plate cargo boat on which I had on one occasion forged my way up the river from Buenos Ayres. She had a capital cheery fellow for a skipper, and a good-looking out-at-elbows English gentleman for a steward. I knew they would make me welcome for the night. They did, and they were very hospitable! No more hocussed drinks for me that night! I swam alongside and gave 'em a cooee or two, and was soon sitting dripping in the cabin, and was royally entertained with tinned oysters and stout. I could eat any quantity of tinned oysters in those days, and enjoy them too, and I verily believe I could almost have eaten and digested the tins also. I told the skipper and steward what I had been about and where I had been. They both knew the crib by reputation as one of the most evil dens in Rosario, and the skipper—a Scotchman—"jaloused I had dune vera weel to get oot' o't withoot a bit dirk in ma wame."

CHAPTER VIII

Soon after my return from the Argentine we took up our abode in the south of Hampshire, at the village of Wickham. That was early in 1871. There I spent four or five most peaceful and enjoyable years of very quiet and domestic life. I played cricket steadily—I don't mean to state there was any steadiness in my batting, for there certainly never was that, quite the contrary—through the summer. I had fishing without end in that best of all counties for trout streams, and spent days without number on the banks of the Test, Itchen, Meon Hamble, and many others. It was in the early seventies that I began dry fly work, and made friends with many good fellows who later on became celebrated experts in that, the most seductive of all kinds of fishing; better even in my opinion than good salmon fishing, that is on such waters as the best reaches of the Test, such as the Houghton Club, Bossington, Compton, Mottisfont, Kimbridge, etc., were in those dear delightful days. Then in the shooting season I had as much shooting as I could manage, and though bags

were small indeed to what they are now, I am not at all sure that the sport was not equally enjoyable. It was a great woodcock country, especially on one estate near Wickham named Little Park, the owner of which at the time was good enough to invite me to almost all his days. I remember that one season on his shooting alone I got thirty-nine woodcock—twice getting six in a day and once five. Of course, for real woodcock country this is nothing at all, as I am very well aware, having shot hundreds and hundreds in the Hebrides, to say nothing of Ireland, where I have slain a good many in some Februarys when the Blackwater was in flood. I have had some splendid days on that good old Blackwater when it was very different to what it is now, and before those accursèd nets had gone far to ruin the rod fishing of that magnificent stream.

I once scored off a priest most successfully on the banks of the Blackwater. I was fishing down Carey's flat when to me entered a greasy, sneaking-faced priest who not very politely asked me to punt him over the river, about eighty yards across. Of course I was only too delighted to be useful, walked with him to where the punt was chained and poled him over. When we got to the other side he jumped ashore, gave me a scowl, and without even one word of thanks,

walked away. I poled the punt back pondering deeply on these things and continued my fishing, wondering if that benighted heathen was likely to come back again and whether he would want to come across the river. Yes! he was! Yes! he did! Three or four hours later I heard a shout from the opposite bank, and there stood that black-avised padre. He shouted, he gesticulated, he seemed to me to be getting excited. I went on very calmly with my fishing. I remember I thought I was casting a very neat and masterly line about that time. The hallooing and waving of arms continued, I should say, for nearly half-an-hour. Then I slowly wound in my line and leaned my rod against a tree, and walked thirty or forty yards up stream till I was exactly opposite old black-face. Then I sat down on the bank and looked at him, and gradually raising my right hand, applied my thumb to my nose with fingers extended. Then I added the left hand and pointed all in his direction. I will say for him he seemed thoroughly to grasp the true inwardness of the situation, for he at once walked off up stream, and I saw him no more. I was rejoiced to think that the nearest bridge was seven miles off, and also that it was highly improbable that he would be ferried over until he had walked some very considerable distance. Now I wondered as I

resumed my rod if that ill-mannered cub of a priest would have the wit to realize that one halfpenny worth of politeness would have saved him a good deal of trouble and wind.

The cricket that I played during those seasons in Hampshire was exceedingly enjoyable, especially matches against the Southern division at Hilsea, where the ground was then situated. I played a good deal at the Priory Park, Chichester, to which I was generally in the habit of walking and back again at night. In fact in those days I walked everywhere for all my sports and games, and literally did not know what the word "fatigued" meant. The longest walk I ever did to a cricket match was from Wickham to Winchfield, thirty-four miles. After the match was over, during which I remember I bowled a good deal, the Rector of Hartley Maudit, close to Selborne, drove me to his home, gave me some supper and sped me on my way, twenty-two miles more. So in just about the twenty-four hours I had walked fifty-six miles and played a cricket match. I reached home untired and not ashamed.

While on the subject of cricket I hope I may be pardoned for referring to two single-wicket matches in which I took part, one at East Dereham in Norfolk, which was got up by my cousin Edward North Buxton, and the other by

C. J. Thornton (Buns), the gigantic smiter. The former was Essex *v.* Norfolk. We had been playing a match Gentlemen of Essex *v.* Gentlemen of Norfolk, an annual affair played at Ham House, the old Gurney mansion in Essex, and the return at East Dereham. The match was over early on the second day, and Ted Buxton arranged this single-wicket one-innings game Essex *v.* Norfolk, three on each side, to amuse the spectators. There was, I believe, also a bet or two about it. For Norfolk, Fellowes, Cotterill and Brereton were the players. Fellowes was the Oxford, and Gentlemen *v.* Players fast bowler. Cotterill was in the 'Varsity team at Cambridge; an exceedingly fine bat. Brereton I only knew as playing for Norfolk. Our team was W. F. Maitland, the slow bowler for Oxford, who also was Gentleman *v.* Players, and "Cat" Davies, 60th Rifles (I think), and myself. I think I did most of the bowling for our side. I was a very fast bowler in those days, but, like Corporal Terence Mulvaney, I've been "rejuiced since." Norfolk went in first and got 19. I went in last for our side, and seven runs were wanted to win. I had got five of them and then hit Fellowes a tremendous tonk over his head and sped off to the bowling stump. As I got home Ted Buxton said, "Run again, man, run again." I ran and was run out by a yard or more. So the match

ended in a tie. If Ted Buxton—to whom I offer my affectionate and cousinly salaams—sees these lines, I hope if I have made any mistake, he will kindly write a line and tell me.

I think the origin of my match with "Buns" Thornton arose from his great anxiety to give me a good leather-hunt and a good dressing down. We were both playing in a match at Chatham. It was either West Kent or Sevenoaks Vine against the Sappers. Somehow or other this other silly single-wicket match was arranged, one innings each and no fields allowed. Old William Rashleigh, "Billy's" father, was umpire, and I can see him now—in my mind's eye, Horatio—as he stood at the boundary stump and can hear his dear old voice calling "No hit" when I got out of my ground. I think he was a bit tired of his job before it finished. Now, it's a very odd thing that Lord Harris is firmly convinced that he was umpire in that match. I had a talk with him on the subject only a few days ago and utterly failed to convince him that he wasn't. He really, to the best of my belief, wasn't on the ground at all. But to continue. I won the toss, and of course went in. "Buns" in those days bowled very fast sneakers all along the ground. They wanted watching and a very straight bat, and that was about all. "Buns" failed altogether to get me out or

indeed to go near it. The last ball he sent me was a very fast throw at the pit of my stomach, which I hit well in front of the square-leg boundary stump, and for which I ran four. My total was then 77 not out, and "Buns" had had enough of it and retired. He was a little angry? Yes! A short account of this match can be read in *West Kent Cricket*, by Phil Norman.

During my wanderings all over Hampshire both by day and night I used occasionally to come across quite funny scenes. Once I came across some pigeon-shooting at a country "pub" for a fat pig. I entered and won. The competitors were not strong. I think it was about twenty-five bob I sold it for, and it was promptly put up to be shot for again, but I didn't care for a second innings and passed on my way.

On another occasion I heard, as I was passing, the deuce of a row in the yard of a public-house, and wandered in to see what it was all about. They had got a poor beast of a badger in a tub, and were hurrushing on a lot of mangy terriers to draw the unhappy brute. The terriers weren't taking any badger. The men were just about as mangy-a-looking lot as the terriers. Broken-down farmers, welchers, thirteenth-class bookies, and such like scum. After a bit I began "rotting," and said things about the terriers, which appeared to annoy one of my friends, who said

jeeringly, "Perhaps you think as 'ow you could draw the blank badger, governor." To which I replied that not only was I quite certain I could draw the animal he was pleased to call the blank badger, but that I would moreover put five golden sovereigns on it. They snapped at this, and among them planked down the money, which together with mine was held by the landlord. Oh yes! I knew the landlord. Also he knew me. I took off my coat, bared my arm and put it elbow first in to the poor old badger, who fixed it like a shot, and I brought him out hanging on to my arm. I took him by the scruff of his neck, and when he let go I chucked him at the nearest welcher or whatever he was with the remark, "There's your damned badger, and now you'll pay up and look pleasant!" "No," snapped the gentleman with whom I had made the bet. "I'm somethinged if you get that swag without fighting for it." "Take your coat off, man," I said, "and I'm all ready." He was a half-hearted cur, like a good many of his class. When I put up my hands and sparred up to him he turned tail and fled. I took the stakes and very peacefully departed on my way. The bite was nothing, and did not give me a moment's inconvenience.

I have had fifty dog bites far worse, and never took any permanent harm from any one of them.

The only bite that I remember that seriously inconvenienced me was that of a puff adder, but that will glide on to the scene later. I did once have some rather funny work with a very savage dog in the neighbourhood of Wickham. He belonged to a man whom I knew well as a beater, whom I occasionally employed. The dog was a really dangerous half-breed sort of lurcher-collie, and was very strong and swift. He had bitten many people, and it was very strongly borne in on me that he had bitten a good many hares and rabbits too. One Sunday I went to his master's cottage to get him to come beating next day. I didn't see the dog anywhere, but guessed he was not far off and on the look-out for something to get his teeth into. Therefore as I walked away I held my stick—a hefty one—in my right hand over my left shoulder. Very shortly, without even a snarl, the dog's teeth were in the calf of my leg. I swung round very hard and low and got the brute on the fore-legs. He howled dismally and went off on three legs, for the fourth was hanging. The next round was different, quite. I was lying in bed one morning with a broken collar-bone, my right arm in splints. Only the maids were in the house, and one of them came and told me there was a big dog at the back door, and they were afraid to go out. I went down just as I

was and tackled my old friend, for he it was, sure enough, but what on earth he had come to interview me for the deuce only knows. Directly I got out he went for me bald-headed, and having only one hand to fight with I was sorely handicapped. I got several bites, one of them a really severe one right through the palm of my hand and out at the back, but at the end I cornered the brute. I got an old lasso, and at length got it tight round his neck, then passed it through the bars of a grate in a disused scullery, pulled all up taut and comfy, and had my friend tight up against the bars and absolutely unable to move. Then I solemnly got a cutting whip. You will please remember that this nice gentlemanlike person had come to call on me uninvited, and had fiercely attacked me without provocation in the midst of my own Lares and Penates, and that I was dripping with blood from many wounds, one of which is now staring me in the face and will go to my grave even should I live another twenty years, which is distinctly improbable. If I had lost my temper that dog would then and there have been a deader. As it was he received a good, a thundering good, licking, and I fancy was exceedingly glad—when I had done with him—to get out of the place with the skin still on his body. I had one more round with that dog, poor beast, and that time he had my entire

sympathy. It was a dirty business and mean withal, very like having four aces up your sleeve. A man wanted to speak to me about ten o'clock one Sunday evening. I went out, and there was my friend on a bit of cord, led by his master, and looking tame enough, poor brute. I fancy he had suffered more than the biblical forty stripes save one before ever he had reached my humble abode. Would I kindly kill the dog for him—he had got to be "that savage" that he, the owner, could do nothing with him. I loathe and abominate killing any animal in cold blood, especially horses and dogs, horses that I have loved, worst of all. I would, however, sooner kill an old favourite with my own hand than have him sold for £6 to become a cab horse. Yes! I, I who write, have known a very wealthy man indeed, who fancied he was a country gentleman, sell two old horses that he had owned for years and driven in his team times unnumbered for £6 and £10 respectively. Those two poor gees—out at grass the last few months before they were taken away to their cabs—would come at my call and cuddle up to me, and put their dear old heads in under my arm. Faugh! That same brute has a shoot. He gives his beaters and stops bread and cheese and ginger beer, and that only. A pretty spectacle on a very wet day to see those poor

devils, wet through and shivering, sit down to a repast of bread and cheese cut to a very moderate nicety for each man, and a bottle of ginger beer. It makes me sick! But I have indeed got a long way off the rails, and my poor dog sentenced for execution with me. I ran down to my friend the village doctor, who gave me two-pennyworth of prussic acid, which was very quickly administered. One stifled scream, as usual, and all was over. A beastly job! I love a fair fight, no one better, but I do hate hitting below the belt or hitting your man when he is down. Putting that poor beast out of the way like that, even though indeed I had scant cause for pity, always has made me feel rather ashamed of myself.

The Puff Adder? Well! Yes! It was on board the *Roslyn Castle*. The snake was on its way from the wilds of Bechuanaland to "The Zoo." I was giving a lecture on thanatóphidians in the ship's smoking saloon, and had the puff adder in my hand while I was explaining the mechanism of its poison apparatus, fangs and idiosyncracies generally to the surrounding listeners. The snake was very cross indeed, quite extraordinarily so. In returning it to its box I got bitten. I must have been very clumsy, for I was in the constant habit of handling snakes of all descriptions. I did not die, but I believe I am

the only man who has survived the bite of a puff adder. The puff adder did. It lingered for three months, after biting me, without meat or drink, became very pale and emaciated, and then died. My friend's state of alcoholic poisoning! I was a very sick man for a long time. Indeed, the ship's doctor—nice, kind, ladylike fellow—reported me dead and, still worse, wanted to have me buried. My much kinder and wiser pal, Walter Lockhart—God bless him!—thought not, and prevented that same watery sepulture. That's all!

CHAPTER IX

I HAD a certain amount of hunting with the Hambledon, and a little with the H.H. while we lived at Wickham, chiefly on "Shanks his Mare," but I did get an occasional mount, though never a very good one. On one occasion when I was running with the Hambledon a man I knew was riding one of the most vicious and three-cornered brutes of a mare I ever came across. We had been having a bit of a run, and this mare had fairly knocked her rider, who wasn't at all a strong man, into a cocked hat. He said he was tired out and ached all over, and was sure that the beast would very shortly get away with him. Would I take her over—we were less than a mile from his home—and give her what he was pleased to call Hell? Most gladly indeed would I take her over and give her to the best of my power and ability what her master seemed to wish. We had a very fair gallop, and when she got tame she didn't go badly and jumped well. I rode her into her stable yard that evening as meek as any lamb. Seeing that I had been fairly successful in the saddle, her owner asked me if I

would have a go at her in harness, which I consented to do at his risk. A few days later, with a pal who was staying with us, I started off in a four-wheeled chaise which I thought quite the wrong trap for the occasion. All went well for a couple of miles, and then the band began to play with a vengeance. Going down a descent—there was no brake in the trap—I suppose she felt it coming on her a bit, and set to kicking like the very devil. I never saw heels fly faster. She cantered down the hill, sending her heels into the trap at every stride. She had the dashboard in fragments in no time and landed me one on the edge of the kneecap, chipping a little bit out. This wasn't good enough, so I turned her up the bank, upset the whole shebang, and we found ourselves in the road none the worse, and the reins were still in my hands. The trap had turned turtle and was bottom up, the mare was mostly in the middle of it on her side, kicking herself and the trap into fragments, and as far as the trap at any rate was concerned, very small ones at that. At length, and not without much difficulty and some danger, we got the brute free. She was a piteous spectacle, was simply cut to pieces with the splinters, for she got her hind-legs right through the body of the trap and still went on kicking fiercely. It was indeed a very pretty little game. I led the mare home, but she had to be shot, for

the skin and flesh on her hind-legs were hanging about like strips of biltong. I entirely forget what became of the trap, but I'm very sure it was never got together again without the aid of a couple of besoms. I was none the worse for my kick, luckily, for the shoe had only just grazed the knee. Had it got me full I must have been hurt. As it was I was all right again in a week.

I got one rather nasty toss while we lived at Wickham, which I have never quite got over, for I was never able to bowl fast again or throw a stone; and for two years played cricket with right arm strapped tight to my side. I was upset out of a high dog-cart on a dark night—I was not Jehu the son of Nimshi at the time, but most assuredly my mate was—and couldn't see where I was falling. I came a most frightful buster on to some stones at the road-side and broke my right collar-bone badly, dislocated the shoulder, had various cuts and bruises all down my right side, and got a crack on the head which laid it open for some inches and kept me unconscious for hours.

As I said just now, I went on playing cricket after a time with my right arm strapped. It sounds incredible that a man could play decent cricket like that. There are many now living who remember it well, and that except balls that were rather wide of the wicket I could hit as

hard as ever. Ecce signum ! I was playing for poor "Billy" Greenwood—R.I.P.—at Brookwood Park, not cemetery, against Petersfield. One Underdown was bowling. I went in with my strap on as usual, and the good bowler, taking me for a cripple, most generously sent me down a soft one. I stepped out and hit it back to him most frightfully hard. Unfortunately he failed to see it or misjudged it, and it got him on the head. We all thought the poor man must be killed, and he was indeed within a measurable distance of death, for he was unconscious for many hours and did not leave his bed for weeks. Charlie Parsons and his brother Fred, the old Free Foresters, were both playing in that match, and are, I am glad to say, still with us hale and hearty. They can witness if I lie.

The last match I played before I went away to South Africa was for Gentlemen of Hants against the Foresters, and we were all staying at Brookwood for it—a goodly crowd—and the fun was fast and furious. There was an enormous dinner party at which I remember "Doddy" Johnstone and his new wife, Tankerville Chamberlayne's sister, "Nipper" Greenwood, and one or two other quiet little people got together in a corner of the room and showed our quietness, "Doddy" especially. He was always a cheery little soul, that night he was magnificent. Then

those tuneful Foresters sang glees to us from beneath the cedars. Who were they? Ah me! I am getting old and my memory is failing. I think Spencer Lyttelton—surely my tutor at Eton, Billy Johnson, used to call him "Roughhead"—was one; certainly poor Tommy Ratliff was there, and wasn't there Teddy Hume and one Marshall, a child of song? I know Longman, with his 'Varsity and Gentlemen and Players laurels fresh on his brow, was there, but though he could bat like a little tin god on wheels, I don't remember that he could sing. Then we danced till the eastern sky was aglow. As I wended my way at last to bed one of the sweetest, dearest old ladies I ever knew met me in her robe de chambre on the stairs. "Oh, Mr. Streatfeild, do you know where Willie is?" "Fast asleep and peaceful as a lamb on the drawing-room sofa, Mrs. Greenwood," I replied. "Please see that he goes to bed, will you?" "I will, with pleasure," and I did. Billy was a good twelve stone, but I was very fairly strong in those days. I also saw that there was a good supply of cold water in his bath—no, not for washing! I heard in the morning that when Billy was called, the bath was empty.

CHAPTER X

I RECEIVED an invitation from some old friends of ours in the George district at the Cape of Good Hope to go and stay with them, with a view to studying ostrich-farming. If I liked the prospect they had most kindly promised to lend us a house they had on their property close to the sea, which was quite big enough for us. I therefore made a start for the Cape in July 1875, in the good ship *Nyaniza*, my only companion being my well-loved and trusty black curly retriever "Rab." Well-known, indeed, was Rab to all cricketers and shooting men in South Hampshire, for he went with me everywhere. Teddy Ede of immortal memory christened him "Rabbits," by which name he got to be known far and wide. I never received an invitation to shoot without the words "Don't forget to bring Rabbits." He was the cleverest dog I ever saw, and in the field was quite perfect. I have owned scores of retrievers, but he was far ahead of them all. Though I have had many good ones, Rab was the only quite perfect dog I ever owned. George Marryat, of dry fly renown,

came to Southampton to see me off. He was grieving at my taking Rab away with me, and said that like the dear gazelle he'd be sure to die at the Cape, which was true. After endless vain persuasion, at last he said if I would only let him have old Rab, he'd give me a blank cheque which I might fill in for anything I pleased. It couldn't be, however, and so the trusty Rabbits and I sailed away together. The dog's passage fee was three guineas, which I had paid. I soon found there was no accommodation whatever for dogs on board. They suggested chaining him up on the open deck outside the butcher's shop, where every passing club-footed fool might tread on him. So Rab remained with me, and took up his position on the quarter-deck as we steamed away past the Needles. I didn't know the skipper at that time, although afterwards and until his death we were warm friends. He came along and spied Rab. "Whose dog is that?" "Mine!" "He must be taken away forward and the butcher will look after him." I wasn't the class of bird to be brow-beaten, and so I stood up, and looking very straight in the skipper's face said, "There is no accommodation for dogs of any sort or kind on this ship, although I have paid for it. Until such is provided I wholly refuse to let the dog leave my side; moreover, he will sleep with me in my

cabin. Now!" That was the beginning. Within a week Rab's favourite resort nearly the whole day was on the skipper's bed—and the skipper was quite disappointed when he didn't find him there. When we parted on the other side he was most anxious to get Rab for his own, and offered me untold gold for him. But of course that could not be.

To give more than an outline of the first two years or thereabouts of my life in South Africa is impossible in a book of this size, nor indeed do I think it would be very interesting to my readers. To me it was of the very utmost interest. I arrived at the Dumbletons' place, Oakhurst, the end of August, and stayed with them until Christmas. I was picking up useful information every moment of my life—the language of the country, and a very terrible one it is, Hottentot Dutch, but not difficult to learn, natural history of birds, beasts, butterflies, snakes and fishes, to say nothing of flowers. Any one who can talk of South African flowers without going into raptures must be a heathen or a publican.

Then ostriches. Of course to ostriches more than to anything else was I compelled to give my most strenuous attention. It was not difficult, for at Oakhurst I was surrounded by ostrich camps. As to the talk, it was ostrich; ostrich all day long and all night too, as long as any one

would sit up and listen to it. After I had been out there a few months I bought twenty-three young ostriches, and my sorrows began in earnest. I commenced operations by driving those birds home some fifty miles. It was an experience. It took three days. I had a good Hottentot "boy" with me, and together we herded those brutal birds along till we got them home. Although we had only brought the birds about fifty miles, the Hottentot and I must have gone fully double the distance, for we were on the trot and going backwards and forwards from side to side the whole time. When that took place it was awfully hot, and I found it out. But I found out a good deal more about ostriches before I was much older. The place that had been lent to us, called Fairy Knowe, had no enclosures at all that were at my disposal. The owner, indeed, had several, and in each a pair of breeding ostriches, but these were not for me. My only plan of keeping my birds, therefore, was to let them run free with a herd. And free indeed they ran. Twenty miles is just a little stroll for an ostrich. Unless some one watched him, the herd was always asleep and let the birds wander wherever seemed to them good. My herd was a Fingo of about fifteen or sixteen. He was a nearer approach to Satan himself, as far as I could guess, than any human being I ever met. He *never* by

any chance spoke the truth—he climbed into the windows and stole food, and then fled and hid in the bush. Whack him? Might as well whack an oak-tree. I once whacked him hard with a brass cleaning-rod. The rod was bent all over the shop, but the boy told the other men that the Baas couldn't hit hard enough to hurt anybody. He was terribly afraid of the dark—bogies, I suppose. So I thought as a punishment I'd tie him up in the bush at night for an hour or two. I did with his arms round a tree. He was back at the house before I was. There was no knot would hold that child of darkness with his pearly vice-like teeth. But I did at last get the better of the little devil by chance. Rab hated all niggers like poison, and showed his teeth if one so much as spoke to him. One day a small son of ours who was with us at Fairy Knowe set Rab at the boy, just to show there was no ill-feeling. Rab was blessèd willing, and promptly fixed the boy through the thigh and held on till I was fetched and released him. Soon after this the boy, after getting in at a window and stealing food, fled and hid in the bush. I bethought me of the trusty Rab, and put him on the boy's spoor. Very shortly there were yells and screams unspeakable. Rab had got him all right and brought him along. The boy never hid in the bush again after that. But

my life was made a burden unto me because of ostrich. Three or four times a week I was out from before dawn until after dark searching the country far and wide for those infernal runaway birds, walking sometimes twenty, thirty and even forty miles a day. My soul got weary within me and my body was like that of a lean stag. I started with the twenty-three birds, and when less than two years afterwards I left Fairy Knowe for other duties and other scenes, I think there were only seven remaining. They had grown small by degrees and beautifully less. Some had spiked themselves on enclosure rails—not my own enclosures though—one or two had died of snake bite, but most of them were either lost in the bush or died from eating poisonous leaves therein. That unerring instinct, that we read such a lot of gassy rot about, doesn't seem to apply to ostriches. Wild tobacco leaves are fatal to them, but they eat them whenever they get the chance. But enough of ostriches! Yes, thank you; quite enough, with a little left over for the morning.

But it seems to me that in writing so much about ostriches, I have got terribly ahead of my work. I stayed at Oakhurst four months, and then went to Fairy Knowe alone, and there abode in as much peace as was possible with some millions of fleas for my companions. I cannot

describe the legions of them, words would fail, also you wouldn't believe it. Months afterwards, when there were nothing like so many, after my wife and son had joined me, she and her abigail caught 188 one morning in our boy's bed. When I first took up my abode there I had no bed. It was no good. There would have been more flea than bed. I just put a mackintosh sheet over a mattress and threw a thin waterproof coat over myself. By dint of shaking these well fifteen or twenty times a night I got enough sleep. Oh, but I was glad at the first crack of light, to run down to the river and dive in and cool my heated skin. As time went on, the fleas as usual forsook the inhabited house, and we had peace.

Fairy Knowe was about the loveliest place I ever lived in. It might well have been "The Island Valley of Avilion," so exquisite was the surrounding scenery. A river fifty yards broad flowed at a short distance round three sides of the house, which stood on a mound thirty or forty feet above its level. On the fourth side was dense forest which came almost to the doors, and on this side verdure-laden high hills stretched away as far as the eye could see. Across the river to the south a line of sandhills, and then the Indian Ocean with its lines of ragged breakers giving us their soothing but everlasting roar.

In rowing up the river into the depths of the forest, as we turned a certain corner the booming of the ocean ceased, ceased as though it had never existed. It was almost painful.

Such was our home for two years, and exceedingly happy ones they were. I don't remember that we were ever dull. We made friends in the neighbouring town of George, and occasionally rode in and stayed a few nights. I went about the country a great deal, learning its ways and the manners of its inhabitants, not quite all of which were worthy of admiration. I got a certain amount of cricket, of sorts, and went to distant towns to play matches which were generally productive of amusement and sometimes were intensely comic. I got a great deal of shooting, especially at Fairy Knowe itself, where at times when the river mouth was closed, damming the water back for months at a time, the wild-fowling was superb. Among many other expeditions I made one through the Zitzikamma, a virgin forest in those days without a road of any sort. We spent many happy days and nights camping out under magnificent timber, and hearing nothing but the cries of wild birds and animals. I believe there is a high road right through it now, and a convict station where the elephants and buffaloes used to roam unmolested. All this sort of thing was excellent practice for me in

learning the ways of the country, in hardening my hips and elbows for rough and hard lying, all of which I was very thankful for later on when it became necessary to wear a smiling face even in the very midst of the hardest and roughest surroundings.

Towards the end of our sojourn at Fairy Knowe, I made an expedition into the Swellendam district after boutebok, which are most lovely antelopes about four feet high at the shoulder, and very beautifully marked with grey, chocolate and white. They have become very scarce, so much so that they are protected by law and may not be shot, in the Colony at any rate, without a special permit from the Government. This of course I had obtained.

A very wise man and supreme judge of human nature a long time ago wrote that misery brought one into contact with strange companions. He also, in another place, remarked to one Horatio that there are more ways than are dreamed of in heaven and earth of killing a cat than by choking her with our philosophy, or words to that effect.

Now in a somewhat prolonged and variegated colonial life, I must say I have been thrown into close connection with many very peculiar people, though I will gladly allow that it was never "misery" that forced me into their

company, nor indeed was the acquaintance close enough, thank God, to make me—to use the bard's word—their bedfellow. Truly I once heard the thing mentioned. I was, at the end of a seventy-mile ride on a blazing African day, washing my hands previous to supper at a road-side hostel. An unkempt Dutchman, one of the dirtiest and worst, one of the sort that always sleeps in its clothes, entered the room and remarked in most friendly tones, "So I see we're to be bedfellows to-night." "No, I'll be damned if we are," was my only reply.

At supper that night I remember being greatly amused by "I promessi sposi"—not Manzoni's, indeed, but a very different pair. Besides myself they were the only guests. The man was about twenty and the woman—lady, I mean, I beg her pardon—she was just the sort by the look of her that would have had a go at you, with what she would have designated as her ten commandments, if you'd have ventured to call her woman—was some fifteen years older. She was a hard-featured person, and in no way whatever attractive. She was very talkative indeed, and endeavoured to beguile the tedium of that supper time with legends of her youth, and details of her life history which were to me, to say the least of it, embarrassing. Among other things, she told me she was engaged to be

married to the young man opposite. I was startled more than a little, for it appeared to me wholly inappropriate. I looked at the young man and must allow he never turned a hair. I think he was a good sort of boy, but silent withal. He had cause. Supper came to an end at last, and the lady left the room. When the door had closed behind this awful person I looked across at the boy, who fairly met my eye. One of his own he slowly and solemnly closed with but one remark, "A man may not marry his grandmother."

I passed on my way and put many a mile, before I slept that night, between myself and my would-be bedfellow, and between myself and "The betrothed." I never saw them more, but in my mind's eye I feel convinced that that nice boy had a future, and I am also certain that the voluble lady was not in the very remotest manner connected with it.

But to return to the boutebok expedition. I was then thrown for a time, about a week, into the company of one man, the doctor—let him go as "The Doctor"—and another, Larry. Larry was a very good-hearted, agreeable companion. At Eton we used to call a boy who did nothing, and was neither wet bob nor dry bob, a "Swink." Larry was a swink, but he could load cartridges. He was just the sort of man who would load

cartridges with a pipe in his mouth and a slop-basin half full of gunpowder under his nose, and just as likely to knock the ashes out of his pipe into the basin of gunpowder as anywhere else. He was the most casual man I ever saw in my life. Now as to Larry's cartridges. I was one day driving with the "Civil Commissioner" and Larry. The C.C. had a gun and some cartridges —cartridges made by Larry *the night before*, and I noticed Larry's eyes were a bit pinky—"Look at him, his eyes are pinky; wasn't the claret, oh no! No. Bless your soul, it was the salmon, salmon always makes him so." We drove on, and were going through a good game country and saw many so-called partridges, which flew from the dusting-places on the road and alighted close by. The C.C. gave me his gun and Larry's cartridges, and dear old Rab routed them out of the heather for me, and I shot away gaily and missed every shot; nay! the birds never even shed a feather. Then I heard that Larry had himself loaded the cartridges, and so they *must* be all right. I didn't know much about Larry in those days, but in spite of that I looked upon the cartridges with grave suspicion. After I had missed a few more very easy shots and had re-entered the cart, I asked if I might cut open one of the beastly things. Why certainly, and I did so. The powder and shot

were in them right enough, but (and a fair good-sized "but" at that) *there was no wad in between them.* Good old Larry! And now we'll get on to my other boutebok mate, "The Doctor." Picture to yourself a smooth little, fat little man, more conceited and more full of self-consequence than I think I ever saw before or since, in any man. Overjewelled, overdressed even in a dirty little South African seaport. When one saw him swaggering down the street, he looked all waistcoat, necktie, rings and pins, something like 5′ 4″ of escaped rainbow. Add to this the blatant swagger of the man that he could do everything on earth, from discovering the North Pole to playing shove-halfpenny on the kitchen table in a roadside "pub," a length and a half better than any other breathing mortal, and you have "The Doctor." He was about thirty, and had a bad practice which he most shamelessly neglected. Why on earth, then, did I go forth to the fray with him? He amused me to any extent *for a season.* The boasting and bragging of this fat, feeble little fool, who could in reality do nothing but very badly indeed, amused me immensely. Therefore was I found in that particular galley. Don't forget that although the doctor was a very poor hand at most things, he was the most unfathomable liar I ever met on earth. Ananias couldn't have competed,

couldn't have taken a single trick in a game with the doctor. That reminds me that my acquaintance with him commenced over a game of whist in which I had asked him to take a hand. He refused at first, saying he could not stand South African whist ; that he was in the habit of playing with first-class players only, and a whole lot more rot, which, not knowing the little bounder, I more or less swallowed. However, he consented to play, and was my partner in the first rubber. His play from the very beginning was nothing but fireworks, scarcely a correct card, and any one could see that he knew nothing about it. I ventured to ask for an explanation, thinking that my ideas of whist must have got very rusty indeed, or that the game itself must have undergone convulsions that I knew nothing about. "What?" asked the doctor, "wasn't I playing correctly?" "Well," I answered, "unless you have some authority for it of which I know nothing, with ace, king, queen and two others of a suit, it is not correct to lead queen ; also your putting a low trump on a thirteenth card second hand, particularly when you held five of 'em, reminds me very forcibly of bumble puppy and the nursery." "Authority!" flashed the doctor. "I've no authority. I never read a word about whist in my life and never intend to. If a man can't play good whist by the light

of his own brains, then I think he must be a fool indeed."

There was nothing more to be said after that, was there? That was, however, the first and last occasion on which I ever played whist, or indeed any other game of cards, with the doctor.

I have met at the Cape some most excellent whist-players, in those ancient days before the better game of bridge had ousted poor whist from its time-honoured throne. I well remember some evenings at whist on the frontier at King William's Town. There was Upington the rising barrister, "Truthful Tommy," as he was called, owing to a certain proclivity of his, later on Sir Thomas Upington, Premier of the Cape Colony, and without a doubt the most wholly unreliable Premier that ever handled the reins of a most unstable team. Then there was Major Pulleine of the 1st 24th Light Infantry, left in command at Isandlana when Colonel Durnford sallied forth with his Basuto braves to stem the advancing hordes of Zulus and meet eternity. Poor Pulleine! That was indeed a fateful command for him. The third was Teignmouth Melvill, killed the same day on the Buffalo heights, while saving the colours after the slaughter under the Isandlana mountain. I suppose his is the only case where a soldier's widow wears the Victoria

Cross won by her husband's death. The fourth was myself, distinctly inferior to the other three, who as whist-players were quite first rate. I should imagine the case of the late Sir Frederick Bramwell as a whist-player was almost without parallel. He surely was a man of simply stupendous brain power; he was fond of whist, and yet had scarcely any knowledge of the game, and in the course of a rubber would play very many false cards. As to his brains, I well remember his brother, the late Lord Bramwell, saying of Sir Frederick that over and above all his knowledge as an engineer he was quite equal to himself as a lawyer. I once watched Sir Frederick lecturing, and while he was giving to us details and statistics and data on one subject he was instructing his assistant as to an experiment that was being prepared for another. He had no hesitation in his speech, and made not the semblance of any error in grammar or construction.

It is indeed an awful jump back from the dead Sir Frederick Bramwell to the very much alive doctor, but it must be made. In this case, at any rate, the dead lion is worth a full-sized pack of live dogs. The doctor's whist, as I found from that one night's play, was like the human being, fearfully and wonderfully made. He appeared to have certain rules for his guidance which may have been good in some circles, but which

appeared rotten and hopelessly confusing to ordinary whist-players.

1. Never neglect an opportunity of leading a singleton except in trumps.
2. If your partner leads trumps avoid that suit, more particularly if weak yourself.
3. When very weak in trumps never ruff, but try to keep the one or two small ones you have—they might come in useful. Who knows?
4. If your partner leads the highest of a suit and you can trump it, do so; there's nothing like making certain.
5. If your partner plays an unnecessarily high card and you happen to notice it, don't confuse yourself by thinking what he means by it; very likely he dropped it by mistake.
6. Always claim two by honours and occasionally four; you may get 'em.

CHAPTER XI

We were to make our start after the boutebok at noon. Larry and I were both ready and awaiting the arrival of the doctor with his Cape cart and team of four horses. We waited two hours, and as there was then no sign of the doctor we went to his place and found him in flannels and a smoking-cap, placid and imperturbable, rolling pills, while the horses reposed unharnessed in their stalls. We eventually got started at four o'clock, exactly four hours after the appointed time. Supper was ordered at seven o'clock, a solid thirty miles on the road, and as the doctor stated he had to go a few miles out of the way to pay a professional visit, didn't we wish we might get it. When the doctor drove up the trap seemed to be already full, with its owner's impedimenta. Although only going off to a bit of a shoot this doctor thing could not leave the usual sacrificial offerings to his personal appearance behind. He was just the sort of snob who on seeing in a shop window a flaming necktie marked, "Worn by the Prince of Wales," would instantly purchase and

wear it. Among other things for that little jaunt he took a white top hat, a very swell affair indeed. Imagine that in the wilds of South Africa! The infernal thing was lost. The doctor never knew how, when, or where, and was nearly in tears about it. Larry and I could have told him.

As we were getting into the trap I noticed that the lever on the doctor's gun was similar to one Westley-Richards used at that time, and asked him if it was built by those eminent gun-makers. "Yes!" replied the doctor. "And a magnificent gun too. I *gave sixty guineas for* it." Later on in the doctor's absence I had a look over that gun. It emanated from Liége, and had never a maker's name on it at all, and was bought in a South African store, price five pounds; original cost, fifty francs. A silly lie! But as long as the doctor could just keep lying all the time, he didn't at all care about being bowled out. The cart was an exceedingly good one and quite new, so the doctor had had as yet no opportunity of converting it into lucifer matches. The team was as bad as the cart was good, but by far the worst feature of the whole turn-out was the driver. In his method of getting his team along he closely resembled the son of Nimshi, but wholly without the skill which I have no doubt whatever that eminent charioteer

possessed in no small degree. For the first few miles we sailed along superbly, but after a bit not unnaturally toned down to the most sedate of ambles, which no amount of thong or jerking of the reins could improve upon. We reached the farm where the professional visit had to be paid, and at its conclusion started once more as darkness was closing down. I most regretfully indeed thought of those good four hours wasted and thrown away before the start. We had to find our way back to the road and then get on twenty long miles to our hostel at Gouritz River with horses already tired out, and where supper was just about that moment being dished up. There was about as much chance of getting there at all that night to partake thereof, either hot, rechauffé, or cold as of one of the doctor's rotten old horses winning the Derby. The way from the farm to the road was a mere track, well enough in broad daylight, but rough and perilous for night travelling. We tried to light the lamps, but found they contained no candles, also that there were none in the cart. Good doctor! Before we had proceeded much farther we found we were off what little track there was, and indeed were lost on the veldt. We descended and walked, leading the horses, and I went in front in case of pitfalls. There was at any rate one of these, a hole of sorts,

prospector's I should say, some six feet deep, and I was very soon lying prone at the bottom of it. I scrambled out again, and somewhat short of wind and decidedly so in temper, let go at the doctor *fons et origo mali.* "You benighted, pill-rolling son of Æsculapius, listen to me. If you think I'm going to wander over the face of South Africa tumbling about over ant hills and breaking my neck in damned pitfalls like this for your edification, you're mistaken. If you know where you are, say so. If you don't, let's unhitch those old bags of bones of yours you call horses and bunk down for the night. I suppose it won't be the first time you've slept with an empty belly and without a blanket, and if it is, so much the better for you. Quite time you learnt how." This speech had the desired effect and stirred the doctor up a bit. He vowed he knew where we were to a yard. I'm not sure he didn't say he'd made the pit himself as a burying place for his wretched patients at the farm so lately quitted. I should fancy from the doctor's ordinary methods in life the majority of his patients would be—like Tommy Moore's dear gazelle—"sure to die."

So on we plodded, a lugubrious cavalcade. Then ensued a miracle indeed, for that came to pass for which I had indeed all hope abandoned. We blundered on to the high road to Gouritz

River. The doctor and Larry both now knew where we were, and better still, that there was a farm owned by a Dutchman and his wife, a couple of miles farther on. At this farm we arrived about ten o'clock, hungry enough. But knowing the proverbial hospitality of South African farmers, we only thought there would be small delay before we had a plenteous meal—of sorts—spread before us, but at any rate plenteous. Much we knew about it. We knocked at the door, and very soon the owner, one Pieter, an enormous Dutchman, came out to us, greeted Larry and the doctor in most friendly fashion, and was introduced to me. We told him the state of the case, then saw to the comfort and forage of the wretched tired-out horses, and afterwards entered the house and sat down. We talked and smoked for some considerable time, but the subject of food was not even mentioned. I gave the doctor a furtive kick and worked my jaws as a gentle hint that Pieter should be made acquainted with the fact that the weary travellers were anhungered. The doctor then told Pieter we were nearly at starvation point and would be very thankful for any mortal thing he could give us to eat. Pieter pulled a fearfully long face, said he didn't know, and went out of the room shaking his head. Matters were beginning to look serious. It was odd, for evidently both the doctor

and Larry were on most friendly terms with Pieter. We soon, however, found out what was the matter, for a syren's (ship syren's) voice, the sourest and shrillest I ever heard, came ringing to our ears from an adjacent chamber. No! No! She would not give Pieter the keys. She would not provide travellers with food, and she would not get up. Then the good Pieter was heard with much softer and sweeter bass trying with blandishing and insinuating accents to get round his infinitely better half. Not one bit of it. This awful termagant would not and did not give him the keys. She vowed the travellers should have neither bite nor sup at her expense; and they hadn't. Poor Pieter returned to us with woe depicted on his face, still shaking his head and saying it was no good—none. His wife was in a rage, and had been so all day, and that he could do nothing with her. He seemed to be terribly well kept in hand by this thundering woman. He was evidently powerless before her, for though he was at least six feet four inches and weighed sixteen or seventeen stone, he turned green at the very idea of taking the keys by force, which we suggested to him. Neither Larry nor the doctor were at all likely to be found travelling without a varied assortment of creature comforts of a fluid nature. There was, in fact, enough in the cart to open the business of a small canteen. A

bottle of brandy was soon procured, and with Pieter's able assistance, after he had imbibed sufficient Dutch courage to get daring, we managed to give this terrible woman of wrath a roughish night of it, as far as noise was concerned. We very soon had our stalwart host in the most charming of tempers. He sang songs —which made us fancy we were surrounded by Bulls of Bashan—he joined in our choruses, not knowing a word of English, and was indeed for that occasion only a most magnificent success. At intervals we were aware of the "Enemy sullenly firing," for Frau Pieter, the "placeus uxor" very—called to her good man to put an end to the row in accents that must have turned all the milk sour within a radius of five miles. But her power of control for the time being was gone. The sweet melody of her voice had lost its charm over the good man, and he cared "Nix," as he said, for either her or her threats. He was even willing, so greatly had waxed his valour, to annex the keys. But we dared not risk it. We feared that once past the portals of that sacred marital chamber our Pieter would emerge no more. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that our singing, beautiful as it doubtless was, particularly as Pieter was unable to distinguish any difference between "God Save the King" and the low of a cow, at length began to pall upon

us. It was therefore with joy unspeakable that, as it reposed snugly in a corner of the room, my eye fell on the identical barrel organ that was used by Noah in the Ark for his Sabbath services therein, during his somewhat protracted voyage. We hauled this machine into the middle of the room, and Pieter with the utmost alacrity produced the handle and set to work to grind away as if for dear life. He went on and on till the perspiration fairly streamed off him. Angels and ministers of grace defend us! I never heard such an absolutely infernal row in my life. Tune there was none, not a vestige. It made nothing but a succession of groans, squeaks and grunts. The only thing I could the least liken it to, was several sties full of pigs of varied ages at feeding time. We all took a turn at the old thing until that too got stale. Moreover, a little sleep on the floor ere daylight seemed advisable. So we sent Pieter off with our blessing to the charming wife of his bosom, but not altogether without expectation of seeing him return with some rapidity with his skull smashed in by a water-jug. But nothing transpired. We had looked our last on Pieter. At the first sign of dawn we put to the horses, left money on the table for the forage, and took our departure for Gouritz river. I should like to have made kind inquiries after Pieter's head.

We reached our halting place truly rather late for supper, but in excellent time for breakfast, and when we had finished there was indeed mighty little left on the table beyond salt. We had before us a most charming easy day's drive of about thirty miles to a place called Riversdale. But in even that easy stage two of the doctor's wretched horses gave in, and had to be left behind to be sent home at leisure. The faithful Rab was with me, and I shot a good deal of small game as we went along. The doctor, with unceasing flow of Munchausen tales, was mendaciously amusing, and helped to pass away the time. The mottled feathers on a bustard's back led up to salmon-fishing, and then the doctor came along with "I was champion of the Spey one season." "The devil you were," I replied. "And pray what on earth does being champion of the Spey consist in? for I never heard of such a thing in my life." I had always imagined in my innocence that champion fishermen only existed in the suburban regions of Ponders End, Lea Bridge, and Hackney, and places where dear good old gentlemen sit in punts all day with two or three rods in front of them, a bag of gentles, a basket of victuals and a stone jar full of beer—full in morning, in the evening otherwise—and a bottle of gin, who catch many, very many small fishes of seven or eight to the

pound. While the man who catches the heaviest weight is in the course of the evening proclaimed champion, and gets very tight on the strength of it. The doctor explained that the champion of the Spey was the man who caught the biggest fish of the season ; how he had done so, how a public dinner had been given him, how he had been crowned champion, and a whole lot more of the same class of rot. I yelled with laughing, but he went on and told me he always fished with a 22-feet rod and 18 feet of casting line. Then I laughed still more and said, "Why, my good man, a little bloke like you couldn't begin to cast with a 22-feet rod, 16 or 17 would be the very outside size for you, and I don't believe you are strong enough to use that properly. A 22-feet rod would break your back in less than half-an-hour." Then he stopped the cart to make me feel his biceps. It was indeed a paltry affair and flabby withal, and as a doctor he should have known that the biceps is not of the most importance in salmon-fishing. Then I asked why he used 18 feet of casting line when 8 or 9 feet was the longest cast any *good* fisherman ever used, while in my humble opinion 6 feet was ample. Then he began to curse and swear, so to speak, and told me I knew nothing about it and had evidently never caught a salmon in my life. Well ! We can take it over at that.

Anyhow it was a most amusing drive, and I was excellently well entertained.

I am quite certain I never heard half the number of lies told in double the time, that the doctor whiled away the quickly fleeting hours with that day.

Two or three days afterwards we arrived in the boutebok country and went out in two carts to look for them. It was a vast open plain with no cover at all. As long as one was in a cart these antelopes would let one drive past at about 250 yards, but if the cart stopped they fled like the wind. I was in one cart and the doctor in another. After an unsuccessful shot or two at a "bok" in a small herd, I elected, as we were approaching another bunch, to drop off, and was partly concealed by a tussock as I knelt. I had a moderately easy shot, with my express, which went home, and the deer fell and lay dead. I had heard some random firing from the doctor's cart as the bouteboks fled after my shot. When I got up to the deer the doctor was standing over it with triumph on his face. "Magnificent shot, wasn't it?" said the doctor. Now I, thinking foolishly that he meant it was a magnificent shot of mine, said "Oh lord, no. Nothing at all out of the way, it was only just moving." "My buck, you know," said the doctor. This took me by surprise, for though I had heard several shots

from the other cart they were all *after* the buck, had fallen. I felt practically certain that I had killed the beast, for he most palpably had fallen to my shot and I had plainly heard the ball go home. It was not my first deer, indeed, or anything like it. So I said I certainly thought the buck was mine, and told the little man why. But as I was proceeding to add that it didn't matter at all, for we could certainly find some more, he raved out at the top of his voice, "I'll take my dying oath I shot that buck. I picked him out and saw him fall, and I'll swear I killed him and that no one else touched him," and used a great deal more very powerful language. Of course I shut up, for what was the use of having a row with the little cad, for it mattered nothing. There were plenty more. So I began filling a pipe. I wasn't going to gralloch his deer, and I felt quite certain, as indeed turned out to be the case, that I was the only one there who knew anything about it. As I stood there I bethought me that while I was shooting expanding shells from an express, the doctor was shooting ordinary ammunition from a Whitworth which would easily traverse six bouteboks, whereas my shells would seldom come through one. I turned the buck over and found that no ball had come through. I felt about, and very soon discovered my shapeless shell in under the skin. I cut it

out, and holding it out to the doctor in the palm of my hand asked, "Since when, you pill-roller, has your Whitworth shot expanding shells like this?" For the first, last and only time during my acquaintance with that florid little cad he shut up, utterly, hopelessly shut up. I firmly believe he knew perfectly well the whole time that he had no more shot that buck than had the reader. I often met him again under varied circumstances. Cricket, shooting with smooth bores, etc., etc. He was the same all through. At cricket he cheated. Shooting he claimed every bird that fell, although he never shot one unless somebody else fired also. Nevertheless, he was at times intensely amusing. Without a shadow of doubt he was the most extraordinary liar I ever met.

CHAPTER XII

Not very long after our return home I made an expedition with old Rab as my only companion, some five-and-twenty miles up into the Outeniqua Mountains, to see what we could find to shoot at in that wild and lovely region. We put up for a night or two at a roadside hostel at the top of the Montague Pass. The shooting was very pleasant and the scenery magnificent. Rab was in his glory, for we found many grey-winged partridges, which we didn't have down on the plains, and a few small buck called Grysbok, not quite so big as Roebuck. After one of these that I had wounded, poor dear old Rab had a splendid course of at least a mile, all of which I could plainly see until he pulled him down, but it was the last time he ever chased a buck, for the dear dog's end was at hand although I knew it not. We wandered among the mountains for hours, and then down to the foothills, where in the distance I had spied a farmhouse sheltering among some blue gums. I found the owner and asked if I might look for partridges on his farm. He not only gave permission, but

also said he would come and show me where I could find a covey near by. They were soon found, but rose out of shot, and alighted about a quarter of a mile off in a little dell thick with reeds, heather and long grass. Now they are mine, I thought. But the farmer said we should never get them out of that. He did not know Rab. I sent the old dog in—I don't know why I call him old, for he was only just five, but I think all dogs that one loves are old—and one by one he found those birds and put them up. There were seven of them, and soon there they lay side by side, papa and mamma and the five papooses. Of course I gave them to the farmer, who took us home and fed us and gave me some very welcome coffee. I noticed that his pigs had made havoc with the grass plat at the front of his house and said something about rings, to which he replied he had no rings, and didn't know how to put them in if he had. So I routed about and found an old box with french nails in it. Then I found some pliers and set to work on the swine which we had driven in for the occasion, and, oh lord! what a row there was before I had finished. The farmer was very grateful, and I'm quite sure his turf was safe from any rootings of those pigs for a season. As Rab and I were wending our way home again down the mountains, I heard him barking

savagely, and looking round saw him face to face with an enormous old baboon with tusks like a walrus; they were not ten feet apart. I was terrified, for baboons are sudden death to dogs and invariably kill them when they get the chance. This great devil was five times as big as Rab and ten times as strong. I rushed up as fast as the rough ground would let me, and on my getting within twenty yards the great brute turned and fled, to my immense relief. He, however, promptly received the contents of my two barrels in the region that was nearest to me, and I'll undertake to swear that it was many a long day before that infernal old baboon sat down with any degree of comfort. I was strongly reminded of the young lady who after an exceptionally strenuous day's hunting said she was not tired and none the worse, but would prefer to take her meals on the mantelpiece for the next few days, please.

The marsh at home had been in very good order for snipe and wild-fowl for some time, and I had seen a great many about, but, as I had been unable to get any one to come and help me shoot them, they had remained unmolested. At last I hardened my heart and went after them alone. I had a good day, getting nearly fifty snipe, a dozen duck, and about twenty head of other things—quite enough and to spare for one gun.

We had not lost a single bird, which was wonderful. Half the snipe and all the ducks and other fowl had fallen into water and masses of reeds far higher than my head. I shall assuredly never possess, never see, such an absolutely perfect retriever as Rab was. I will allow his sojourn in Africa had to a great extent spoiled his mouth, and who could wonder when he had almost daily fights with civets, genets, ratels, ichneumons and wild cats of many sorts, and all manner of fierce little devils besides. I noticed that day while we were shooting that the old dog wasn't quite himself, there was a slackness about him I did not like, and he had lost his usual exuberance of spirit. The next day he was dull and languid and would not face his food. I nursed him and looked after him as tenderly as was possible, but he gradually grew weaker and weaker. He apparently had no disease whatever, and had no pain, but was simply sinking. I fed him with a bottle five or six times a day with the most nourishing slops that could be made, for he would eat nothing of his own accord. One day, indeed, he appeared to be a little stronger, and came with my wife and me a short stroll down to the river bank, where we sat down. He slowly and solemnly brought me a stick and laid it at my feet, his method of asking for a swim. He was the only dog I ever

had that would come to my call in the water, and we delighted in swimming about together. We returned to the house, and he never came out again. Gradually day by day his life seemed to be ebbing away, and I was powerless to stay it. What ailed him I could not tell. It was nothing within the reach of any doctor's art. I have had too much to do with dogs all my life not to know that. It was, of course, the Cape climate, which is somehow or other always fatal to well-bred British thick-coated dogs. I kept him alive with varied nourishment and the utmost care for nearly three weeks, and indeed he was not very thin when he died. I went one evening to the kitchen where he was lying on his blanket to give him his last meal for the day, and, as I lifted his head, it fell like lead in my hand and I knew that my dear faithful old dog's time had come. I sat down by him and took his head on my arm. He turned his eyes on mine and just feebly moved his tail. His breath came in heavy sighs, but at longer and longer intervals and at last ceased. With his head on my arm and his tender brown eyes fixed on mine his loving, faithful spirit had passed away for ever.

Not long after this I had occasion to go to King William's Town to interview one of the Cape Ministers on the subject of a

magistracy on the frontier, which he had been so kind as to offer me, and he was good enough to say that he fancied I was a suitable sort of man for the billet. So once more I went down to Mossel Bay and away east in an ungodly little tub called *Florence*. I have had some rolling in my time in many tubs on many waters, but never worse than in that horrible little craft. I did my work on the frontier, and among other things had the honour of being presented to Sir Bartle Frere, that splendid man whose heart was later on broken by Gladstone. A finer and more trustworthy statesman than Sir Bartle Frere, in my opinion, never breathed. He was a man. Of him anon. He and his family later on were good enough to grant me and my wife admission to their home and friendship.

On my return home, on arriving at Mossel Bay in the *Anglian* we met the *Nubian* entering the bay from the opposite direction. I was aware that a great friend of mine was on board her, just returned from England. So when we had both anchored half-a-mile apart I hired a row-boat and was taken across. Poor Manning, skipper of the *Anglian* and afterwards of the *Teuton*, who was wrecked in the latter vessel and drowned off the Hang Klip, had given me an hour. Long before that hour had elapsed a

south-east gale had risen and was tearing into the bay, sending all the cockleshells of boats flying for shore. There was I left stranded on the *Nubian* with devil a boat to take me across back to the *Anglian*. I have forgotten to mention that I was not landing at Mossel Bay, but going on to Cape Town. My hour was more than past, and Manning was playing up tunefully indeed on his syren to warn me he was off. Indeed, I could already see the vessel coming up to her anchor. One Bainbridge, whom I knew not, was the *Nubian's* skipper. To him in my difficulty I appealed. Would he have a boat manned and send me across. No, indeed he wouldn't. He couldn't possibly do any such thing. It was out of the question. "Captain Bainbridge," I said, "I am truly loath to take any advantage of a little kindness I may have had the good fortune to confer on any relative of yours, but I am in such a tight corner, being likely to lose my passage to Cape Town with Manning and be carried back to Algoa Bay, that I am compelled to do so. My name is Frank Streatfeild." "What? Not the Frank Streatfeild that took in my shipwrecked brothers and treated them like kings." I replied that I did not know so much about treating them like kings, but that I was the man who had most joyfully taken in his brothers when in sore straits and had gladly done

my best for them. Then he grasped my hand and said, "By God, sir, the whole ship is yours. Boat? Indeed, you shall have a boat, and if necessary I'd get up steam at once and take you over myself." So a good boat was lowered from the davits and a gallant, stalwart crew very soon rattled me across to the *Anglian*, whose propeller was thumping before I was on the gangway. A very tight fit indeed. Now the intense gratitude of Captain Bainbridge had been caused to arise by a somewhat peculiar chain of circumstances which occurred as follows. It must not be forgotten that unless one came down through the forest, the only way to approach our little house was by crossing the river some hundred yards or so away, where we kept a boat. One Sunday afternoon I heard shouts and saw three figures, two men and a boy, that I knew not, waving their arms on the opposite side of the river. I went down and rowed over to them and asked what they wanted. The men told me their name, which was Bainbridge, and that they were brothers of the captain of the *Nubian*, and had just been cast ashore half-a-mile away in the dinghy of the little coasting schooner *Agnes*. Of course I believed not one word of it. I should have been just as likely to believe them if they had told me they had just come from heaven with the chariot of fire, that once went up that way, for a convey-

ance. However, I noticed that their clothes so far from being singed were dripping with water, and that there were other signs of their disastrous but at the same time most marvellously lucky voyage. They had started from Mossel Bay in the little *Agnes* to go to the Knysna, a small port sixty or seventy miles distant, and had got becalmed some twenty miles short of their destination. The Knysna Heads stood up boldly before them, and, as they thought, only three or four hours' row away. So they persuaded the skipper to let them have the dinghy, and they rowed off towards the haven where they would be, in a badly-built, broad-bellied old tub which no two stalwart tars could even in still water have screwed three miles an hour out of. Of course these two poor souls and the tiny ship's boy who was with them knew nothing of that Cape of Storms and its currents, nothing of the never-ceasing surf that raged along its shores. As a matter of fact they had a strong current setting against them all the time, and could not by any possibility have reached the Knysna against it in six weeks, let alone six hours.

That skipper ought to have been hung for ever allowing them to leave his vessel at all. They rowed for hours and hours, and were, of course, when night came down, much farther from the Knysna than when they started. They had long before lost sight of the *Agnes*, and were indeed in

parlous state. They kept within sound of the surf all night, and so were not carried out to sea. When daylight came of course the Knysna Heads were miles and miles out of sight, and all they could see beyond sky and water was the long, low line of sand-hills stretching away east and west. They had quitted the *Agnes* early the morning before, taking with them but a box of sardines, a few biscuits, and a few tots of brandy. When it got near evening on the second day they elected to risk the surf and try to land. They were most lucky, for indeed they had three several slices of most marvellous good fortune. Had any wind arisen, they would have been done for. Had it not been the quietest day that I ever knew on that coast, they would have been done for. Had they attempted to bring their boat in at any place other than they did, they must have been done for. So they risked it and started their old tub through the line of breakers, and, wonderful to relate, were not capsized until the last breaker rolled them over into water where they could stand and scramble to shore, while the old tub was washed up after them. They tied her painter to a log of drift-wood, climbed up the sand-hills, and there within half-a-mile of them, nestling under the forest, lay Fairy Knowe. There is not much more to tell. We most gladly took the poor fellows in and did all we could for them.

After a bit they became quite happy and comfortable, and before they went to bed that night they were singing hymns quite lustily, "For those in peril on the sea." I don't think they fully appreciated how uncommonly near they had been to lying dead at the bottom of it. We had some trouble in fitting up the poor little ship's boy with clothes, for he was somewhat bigger than our small seven-year-old son, but we at any rate succeeded in making him comfortable and quite happy.

My English retainer Jim—of whom more will be said—amused me vastly in the morning by his account of the poor boy's mental wanderings in the night, for he had been quartered with Jim, who described him thus: "That there young cove, he talked in his sleep the whole damn night through, and every now and then he sat up in his bed and hollered like hell, he did." Jimmie must have had a restful night of it. The shipwrecked heroes stayed with us for about a week, till they had quite recruited their energies. I then constituted myself as their guide, protector and friend, and conveyed them overland to the Knysna. We were two days on the road, although it was only thirty miles, but they were indeed most alarmingly bad walkers, and being very wet at the end of the first day, insisted on drying their boots at our fire, for we were camping out in the

open. I remonstrated most vehemently and implored them to keep on their wet things, and assured them no harm would result, but they were horrified, and wouldn't hear of it. The next day was awful, and I really thought we should never reach our goal. But we did so at last, and two more piteous wrecks, more utterly done-brown pedestrians I never set eyes on. I fear they were not very stalwart athletes. Their arrival at the Knysna was made the occasion of a very great celebration indeed, for it had been entirely settled that without doubt they were drowned. So certain was the captain of the schooner of this fact, and at the same time so sure that there was no one who could contradict it, that he had taken the trouble to go before a magistrate and make a statement as to—what he was pleased to call—the facts of the case. His statement was a tissue of lies, throwing all the blame on those whom he thought would not be able to return from the bottom of the ocean to contradict them. He averred that the dinghy had merely been lowered to allow his passengers to fish alongside, and that they had maliciously gone away. Couldn't they fish much more comfortably from the deck of the becalmed vessel, and why take sardines, biscuits, brandy, wraps, and ulsters to fish alongside? Rot! That skipper ought to have been heaved overboard from his

own quarter-deck with a stone tied round his neck. There was a little talk about it, and a little writing in the papers and that was all. It's very seldom any one really *does* anything at the Cape of Good Hope. It's always "Wacht een beetjie" (Wait a bit). They'll jaw and jaw till they're black in the face, but if a man comes along like Bartle Frere or Chinese Gordon, they'll get him out of it. *Masterly inactivity* is what they love, and to have people under them who will let them snooze and drowse and do nothing. That's so !

Now you've heard how it was that Captain Bainbridge of the *Nubian* so magnanimously sent me back to my ship through that south-easter in Mossel Bay.

CHAPTER XIII

A SHORT time back I referred to one Jim. His full name was James Hawkins, and he was with me for many years, and for several of them was a most faithful, useful servant, until that infernal demon "Cape Smoke" laid his grip upon him, and got its deadly talons well home. He was with me in Hampshire for about three years and afterwards followed me to the Cape, and was with me at Fairy Knowe and through the Kafir War of '78 as body-servant, and was most useful. He was, or rather had been, a very successful poacher, and though it was thoroughly understood that every nefarious method of securing game must be wholly obliterated while in my service, at any rate, I found him invaluable as a shooting-attendant, while as a marker I don't think I ever saw his equal. He was a good walker, but not good enough, for it must be rather trying to accompany a master to whom the word fatigue was unknown. Many and many a time have I been sorely put about to get Jim home from a distant shoot. I remember one day we

had been shooting at poor Billy Greenwood's place, Brookwood, fourteen miles off, to which we had walked in the morning. Before the end of the day Jim was absolutely cooked. Henry Wilson of Hazelholt was good enough to take him seven or eight miles on the road, as far as Droxford. We started at the same time, but I, on foot, had a short cut or two which saved me about a mile. I ran the whole way, and by the time Jim arrived had got a brew of dog's-nose steaming on the table of the village pub all ready for him. I did get him home that night at last, but it was hard work. Jimmie's vocabulary was, to say the least of it, far removed from being parliamentary, though at times exceedingly amusing. There is rather a funny little piece of repartee of Jim's which has become quite proverbial in certain circles. I hear that my old friend Sir Guy Campbell, late 60th Rifles, has now annexed this story as his own. Well! we'll talk it out one day. Jim was working for a builder, and in the construction of a house, fell through some rafters on to the floor below. The foreman looked down and said, "You baint 'urt, Jimmie boy, be yer?" The reply was this, *tout court*, "You be d——d well sure it ain't done me no good." I now know of some scores of men who if asked whether something or other has hurt them, will instantly reply with the above

words. They are, I think, on occasion eminently to the point.

Our time at Fairy Knowe drew to a close. One day I received orders from Government to find my way, as soon as possible, to the frontier to take command of Native Levies. The Gaika rebellion had broken out, and the Galeka war appeared to be recrudescent. I therefore appeared to have plenty of work in front of me. Jim and I worked day and night making packing-cases and filling them with what we did not wish to part with of our Lares and Penates. It was strenuous labour, and I remember the only material in the shape of planks that we had were the hen-houses that we had made when we first took up our abode in Fairy Knowe. In very few days all was completed and all our belongings that were not required, including ostriches, a cow or two, and our horses, were sold. My wife and boy were *en route* for England, and Jim and I on our way to King William's Town, where we arrived in due course.

I was handed my commission as Commandant of "Streatfeild's Fingoes," which, though the corps retained its name through nearly a year's campaign, was composed of many levies. Indeed, I think at one time we must have been over a thousand strong. When I first began active service I had the honour of serving under Sir Arthur

Cuninghame. I, however, had not the honour of ever being presented to him. I read a book of his later on called *My Command in South Africa*. I have no doubt that from a military and diplomatic point of view it was all that could be desired, but when Sir Arthur soared away on the wings of fiction into the realms of natural history he got terribly astray. I think I can trace many of his facts to the enterprising if mendacious Subaltern. Sir Arthur was very fond of acquiring interesting "facts" about the country from that source. I myself heard some exceedingly wonderful statements from enterprising young officers in barracks at King William's Town. One snake story of Sir Arthur's I am not likely to forget. He tells us that a certain snake pursues its enemies by putting its tail in its mouth, and then rolls itself, after the manner of a boy's hoop, hell for leather after its foe. He then informs us that it goes as fast as a horse can gallop. What a truly awful reptile. BUT— (that *But* in large letters, please, Mr. Printer !) I would give untold gold to make friends with the Subaltern that pumped that yarn into Sir Arthur. I would stand the child many drinks. I hope by now he is a General, with much trinketry on his manly bosom and many letters after his name.

During that Kafir War against the Gaikas

and Galekas I had a lot of very hard work and a certain amount of bush fighting, a record of which would, I am sure, only bore people, added to which it has already been recorded in a book and probably forgotten. Let it go at that. I made endless friends, most of whom are passed away, while a few are not only still with us, but, better still, are nearly at the top of the Army List. I remember a most laughable scene with "Hoppy," then Major Hopton of the Connaught Rangers—as Micky Free in *Charles O'Malley* said, "Let's drink the Rangers"—now Lt.-Gen. Hopton, K.C.B. He was my Commanding Officer once in an outlying hole of a little township called Komgha. Now it must be understood that the Cape Government of the day hadn't a *straight* man in it. No, not one. All they cared for was office and to stick to their salaries, and for this purpose to secure votes. Any one who could influence votes must be cuddled and made much of and given soft billets when possible. There was an appointment at that time called "Field Commandant," and they drew pay of 25*s.* a day and allowances. There were dozens of them. As Sir Evelyn Wood once said to me, you had only to shake any mimosa bush and a bunch of Commandants would come tumbling out of it. They commanded nothing but themselves, and that very

badly. If a farmer or a village store-keeper could influence a few votes he was promptly made a Field Commandant, and swaggered about with a sword nearly as long as himself, with a colonel's badge on one side of his collar and a captain's on the other. I can well recall one twopenny-halfpenny monkey of a man about four foot six long, who, being a brother of a Cape Minister, was made a Field Commandant. That little cad drew his pay for best part of a year, and never did one stitch of work or even went near where there was any fighting. It was a laughable sight to see him in a gorgeous uniform, carrying a sword as tall as himself and wearing a helmet all brass topknot, chains and buckles, under which with a little manœuvring one might have hidden the little beggar. But to return to old Hoppy.

One morning I was summoned by an orderly to Major Hopton's tent. It was quite early, not long after sunrise. He began by remarking on my appearance, for I was dripping with water and my clothes were steaming in the sun. I had as usual been sleeping out on the hillside, and it had been pouring with rain the whole night. It may be remarked that I had no tent of any sort till I had been out in the field for over three months. I didn't see any use in fussing about it, and I'm very certain no one else did. But I will

say dear old Hoppy was very much concerned. I told him I was quite used to it, and that it never hurt me in the smallest degree. Then he got to business, and Hoppy asked what on earth I had been doing to one Field Commandant Cowie, whose rage against me appeared to him, Major Hopton, to be beyond that of ordinary mortals. He gave me a document to read which he had received from Cowie, which stated that I refused to obey his order, had said to his messenger "Hew the hell is Cowie?" and a good deal more of the same sort, with equally accurate spelling. Hopton wanted the true state of the case, which I gave him. The day before, this gay and festive Field Commandant Cowie who spelt who *h, e, w,* had calmly sent me an *order* delivered orally by a messenger as to the disposal of some cattle with which he had nothing to do, and at the same time had no more authority to give me an order of any sort, I being his superior officer, than I had to send one to old Cuninghame. I hadn't an idea who this Cowie was, had never even heard of him. So I most naturally inquired, "Who the hell *is* Cowie?" and added that I wasn't taking any orders from him at all. Then shortly to me entered Cowie himself, with another cad that I presumed—correctly—was brought as a witness. Said Cowie, "Commandant Streatfeild, I am told you asked my messenger

just now 'Who the hell is Cowie?' and said you wouldn't obey my orders." "Quite true," I replied. "I did say so, and I say now, that you may go to hell immediately or sooner," and then turning round to the witness cad I added, "and you can jolly well go with him." "That was all, Major." "Enough too, I should think," said Hopton. "Man alive, you'll have to apologize to Cowie; you must, no other way out of it." "What! me—pardon grammar—apologize to Cowie? Not a chance, not a ghost of it. I'll see Cowie damned first and then I won't." "But what will happen then?" said the Major. "There'll be an awful row, there must be." I told dear old Hoppy that it was all right; that there would be no row at all; that I knew these Africander swine a great deal better than he did; that the very fact of Cowie having sat down and grunted and sweated over the letter, with the end of his pen in his mouth and his tongue in his cheek, would have eased him a lot, and that we should hear no more about it. Such turned out to be the case, and the Major worried no more. When we met many months afterwards in Cape Town Castle with our legs beneath the hospitable mahogany of one Frank Nixon, Colonel R.E., we laughed over it all heartily. But Lady (then Mrs.) Hopton was in sore trouble, I remember, that her husband's magnificent beard had

been ordered for execution by the authorities. I wonder if it is back again. I fear, if so, it must be like the writer's, chiefly composed of white.

About that time I had the pleasure of meeting Sir E. Strickland, head of the Commissariat department, and a most wonderfully efficient head too. He had indeed seen plenty of the world, and most excellently recounted some of his experiences in distant lands. I was always delighted when he asked me to dine with him. From a purely gastronomic point of view, too, it was no bad thing to dine with the head of the Commissariat department. About that time I made the acquaintance of George Paton, then Captain of the 1st 24th, now Major-General. We became great friends as time went on, but our first introduction was on anything but a friendly basis. He was Military Secretary at Head-quarters. I had to interview him on the subject of pay for my braves, to whom were due some thousands of back pay which I had had no time to attend to previously. The counter-signature of the Military Secretary on my pay-sheets was a *sine quâ non* before the paymaster would part. "Do you mean to tell me," said Paton, "that you ask me to certify that these sheets are correct, and that all these men are on active service with you, and that this large sum of money is due, when I know absolutely nothing

about it?" "That is so," I replied, "and it can't be helped. There is no other way of keeping the machine at work." He was very cross with me, very cross with the machinery that had made him Military Secretary, and still more cross at having either to certify that my pay-sheets were correct or put my corps out of the field. We got it all arranged comfortably at length, and I hope poor Paton returned to his quarters that evening feeling fairly satisfied that he had not been got at.

Last time I had the pleasure of seeing him was in a small hostel at Langholm on the banks of the Esk, where we spent a pleasant evening, although the poor river was almost dry, and had a good laugh over those pay-sheets and our first acquaintance. About the same time General Thesiger came out to take command, and I had to report myself to him in King William's Town. He kindly asked me to breakfast, and I met many with whom I afterwards became friends. Major North Crealock, Captain Mat Gossett, both dead; Molyneaux, then Lieutenant, now General, who, by the bye, published a book of reminiscences and spoke very kindly of me in them, for which I touch my hat. Towneley Wright, Commander of the *Active*, gone, I wish I knew where, and others. A day or two afterwards I had to report myself to Colonel

Wood, now Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn. I had the very great pleasure of serving under him for some three months, and was in almost daily intercourse with him. I cannot speak too highly of him as a most kindly, courteous friend, nor can I refrain from saying how very greatly I admired him as a commanding officer. Redvers Buller, too, was my chief after Evelyn Wood had done with me. Many and many tremendous scrambles after Kafirs did we have together in the Perie Forest and Amatola Mountains, casually camping together and often lying side by side, he with his Frontier Light Horse, and I with my Fingoes. I remember very early one morning poor Buller calling to me, "Get up, Stretty, you lazy beast, and don't lie sleeping on that damned rock any longer." It appeared that the rock was too hard for him, and that he had been unable to sleep, whereas I, so he said, had slept the whole night through like any lamb. This made him sick. Pure jealousy. Nothing else. He was a hard master, so they said. I never found him so, but I can testify to the fact that he was a splendid pal. I remember, too, on one occasion in my humble quarters in the Kwen Kwe Valley, welcoming for luncheon, the war being then just over, one Mat Gossett, and a certain Captain Grenfell—now with bated breath I say it, Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell—and moreover two most

charming ladies that accompanied them, Mrs. Pulleine, whose husband was so soon after to be killed at Isandlana, and Mrs. Lonsdale, wife of Rupert Lonsdale, who commanded Lonsdale's Horse through the Zulu War, and later on went to the West Coast and died. He it was who was the first to go into that Aceldama, the camp of the slaughtered 24th Light Infantry at Isandlana, on the evening of the fatal 22nd of January.

Rupert Lonsdale and I were great friends, having been side by side through a great part of the '78 War under Evelyn Wood. Very soon after the Zulu War we were together at the hotel at Wynberg, and he gave me a vivid account of his experiences on that day. Put in his own words they may, I think, not prove uninteresting, although the battle of Isandlana was fought thirty-two years ago. Said Lonsdale—

"I was very short of sleep, and awfully tired. When we were within a few miles of the camp under Isandlana Mountain, I asked the General (Lord Chelmsford) if I might ride on ahead, get back to camp and get a rest. This was granted, and I rode on my way. I was shot at by a couple of natives as I went on, but I thought nothing of it, as I imagined they were two of my own Swazis who had made a mistake, and I did not discover they were Zulus until later. I

approached the camp we had so lately left, but being three-quarters asleep did not notice that anything was amiss until I was well inside it. The first thing that woke me up and put me on the *qui vive* was a Zulu coming for me with a stabbing assegai, already red with blood, in his hand. I was wide awake enough then, and on the alert in a moment. I glanced round me and became instantly fully alive to what had taken place, and that the camp had been captured by the Zulus. I saw in a flash dead bodies of both soldiers and Zulus all over the place, tents rent in fragments, bags of flour cut open and the contents strewn about, boxes of ammunition broken open, everything, in fact, smashed and done for. Last but not least, Zulus with assegais still reeking with blood sitting and wandering about in all this indescribable chaos. I saw it all in a flash, turned and fled. My horse was as tired as I was. Many Zulus, becoming alive to the fact that an enemy and a white man was among them, rushed after me yelling and firing at me. It was the most deadly, awful moment I have ever had in my life, and you know we've had some pretty tight fits together. I could only screw a very moderate canter out of my poor gee, and as you know, old man, Kafirs are uncommonly fleet of foot. It was two or three minutes before I was clear of those howling

devils. It seemed to me like two or three hours. At length they all gave up the chase, and I went on my way to rejoin the column. By the bye, I saw the two men who had shot at me an hour before, and took the liberty of sending one of them to his happy hunting-grounds. When I rode up to the General and reported what I had seen I believe he thought I was mad. We approached the camp with great care and precaution, but there was no need. There was not a soul living left in it. The Zulus had entirely evacuated it and gone on their way to Rorke's Drift and elsewhere. We lay down as we were for the night among the dead in the middle of the destroyed camp. Such an awful spectacle as met our eyes in the morning but few people have ever seen. There were many bodies of the poor 24th boys with whom you and I have dined and played cards times without number. It was too heartrending for words. As for me, I don't think I shall ever close my eyes in sleep again without seeing that yelling horde of Zulus rushing after me, brandishing their bloody spears, and wondering whether my poor horse had steam enough left in him to carry me out of their reach."

Poor Lonsdale, I don't think he ever recovered that day. He certainly never seemed to me the same again. A braver soldier and cheerier

companion I never met, but I honestly believe that awful experience under the heights of Isandlana was his death warrant. Among those that he saw when the sun rose on the 23rd of January, '79, lying dead in and around the camp were endless friends of my own. There were two gunners, Stewart Smith and Francis Russell, and precisely twenty of the 24th Light Infantry. Once before, exactly thirty years, had this gallant corps almost suffered annihilation, at Chilianwallah, when the dead bodies of thirteen officers were laid out on the table in the mess tent. I was perfectly aghast when in my far distant Magistracy in the Transkei a few days afterwards, I perused this terrible list of the friends I had lost. When they were quartered in King William's Town towards the close of the '78 War I was their guest very frequently, and to me at any rate the officers had all been the very soul of kindness and hospitality. I can still vividly remember many a cheery guest-night in the old mess-house at King William's Town. How few, alas, of that jovial crew are with us now! What few are still here are mostly, I fear, Generals with many letters attached to their gallant names, and I fear at the same time suffering badly from gout, bald heads, bath-chairs, white hair and "other incident throes that nature's fragile vessel doth

sustain in life's uncertain voyage." Major Buller (Redvers) and I were about that time staying together in barracks bent on a little mild recreation with the 24th, after a somewhat long spell of patrolling and camp life in the Amatola Mountains, chasing the Gaika Chief Sandilli and his braves.

It happened—I believe for the first time on record, while on foreign service—that the two battalions of the 24th Regiment were quartered together. It was arranged by the two Colonels, Glyn and Degacher—both dead—that the two battalions should dine together and make a night of it. No guests were to be invited, but the two gallant Commanding Officers most kindly made exceptions as regarded Buller and myself. We were the immediate guests of Colonel Degacher, and I well remember his discontent with us. He told us we were most unsatisfactory guests, for one of us wouldn't smoke (that was Buller), and one of us wouldn't drink (that was I). But there were plenty of cheerful souls present that night who were ready and willing to do both. Before we all returned to our quarters there were many wild and amusing scenes. There had been, during the last day or two, friendly matches of cricket and rifle shooting between the battalions, in the former of which I had been umpire and seen some

very hard hitting towards the tails of the elevens, by that strong, fierce man Thomas Atkins—the enormous power exercised in the hitting was not, however, adequately represented on the scoring-sheet. With a view to dressing for dinner I sought my kit, which had been deposited many months before—for safety—in the Government offices in charge of a superintendent. It proved a case of *lucus a non lucendo*. As was ascertained afterwards, to the very great woe, in the shape of a prolonged period with hard labour to the culprit, the offender was the caretaker himself, who was taken in the very act of wearing a good deal of my attire, including a most excellent pair of my English-made butcher boots. I found on looking through my things that nearly everything of value had disappeared, including my evening coat.

Buller, however, came to the rescue and lent me one, as he was in uniform. It was, however, very tight across the shoulders. Buller looked me over, felt it and shook his head sagely, saying he gravely doubted its lasting through the evening. He had reason. It did not. In the course of some sudden exertion when I was for a moment oblivious of the garment, every stitch between the shoulder-blades was rent in twain, and poor Buller, who was standing close by, said a few

REDVERS BULLER

V.C. and bar, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., Commander-in-Chief

things. The next day I bought a reach-me-down affair which fitted more or less, and in due course entered the ante-room just before dinner. George Paton (the present General) eyed me somewhat suspiciously and slowly walked round me, and then gave a yell of joy. I had omitted to cut the ticket from the back of the garment on which were stated the name of the tailor, the price, and other valuable information. There were at least twenty men in the room who knew me well. I disremember, as the Yankees say, that any of them were short of chaff, and I have good reason to remember, for I always caught it on guest nights, when I drank "The Queen, God Bless Her," with an empty glass. I will draw a veil over that evening coat. It produced more chaff for the wearer than if I had come to mess in the full rig-out of a boggart.

The night the two regiments dined together, when the small hours were waxing and the fun was getting rather furious, it seemed good to one Watty Logan that he should dance the sword dance. No one said him nay, absolutely the contrary. We told him that to the best of our belief he was just the finest sword dancer in Scotland. Watty was a Major at the time, with a bit of a tummy, and not by any means nimble, also he was slightly and quite justifiably inebriated. The swords were duly crossed and

Watty began. It was a grim spectacle. Watty's legs would not obey orders, and wandered about among those swords at their own wild will. It was indeed the mercy of Providence they were blunt. Sine, as he would have said in his own vernacular, he sat down among 'em ; indeed, he sat down among 'em many times, but he tired at length, and in due course that night came to a close. But what I wanted and still want to know is, what happened when Watty got back to the sacred bosom of his own family ? I never heard and never shall. But I am aware that it was many a long day ere poor old Watty was allowed out again to attend the regimental mess.

CHAPTER XIV

THE next entertainment of any consequence that I attended in King William's Town was of a very different nature. It was a public funeral. All commanding officers had orders to attend. I therefore had to do so whether I liked it or not. Most distinctly I did not. I thought it was a beastly gruesome outrage, and I think so still. It was like this. Towards the end of the year 1877 the tribe of Gaikas broke out, and commenced operations by murdering in cold blood two men of the name of Tainton, brothers, and one Brown. One of them was certainly a Frontier Magistrate, if not two. Their murder was amply avenged later on, as I can testify from close and personal observation. That does not come into this history. The Public Funeral (with a big P and a big F, please, Mr. Printer !) does. These three poor men were buried at once at the place where they were killed, some forty miles from King William's Town, in a very rough-and-ready but quite adequate manner, without coffins, but under a sheet of corrugated iron. The Cape authorities now in their great,

if beastly and depraved, minds, decreed that these three wretched bodies should be dug up again from their graves, in which they had lain uncoffined for eight months, and be taken to King William's Town for re-burial by means of a Public Funeral. The coffins were displayed side by side in the Town Hall, and over them wept the poor widows whose sorrows were thus renewed, whose wounds, partly healed, were opened afresh, whose tears in the act of being dried by the kindly hand of time, were bidden to flow freely once again. There was no reason for it. It was beastly! It was terrible! All the troops of volunteers who had been enrolled for the war were ordered to attend. Yes! It was a funeral, indeed! Enormous procession, at the head of which strutted a little cad who called himself "The Master of the Colony," and drank hot water at dinner for fear he might get a pain in his little tummy, in a billycock hat with a weeper trailing from it. He did look a beauty, indeed. There were muffled drums, lots of them, and bands and firing-party and volunteers, some sober but most of them drunk. Oh, but it was a beautiful, refined, bewitching sight! I was told that the scene in King William's Town afterwards beggared description. That not one man in fifty was sober, and that the whole town was as though hell

itself had broken loose. I can well believe it. Thank God, I was passing the night peacefully in barracks and saw and heard nothing of it.

The war was now entirely over. I disbanded all my levies and sent them to their homes with my blessing. I raised one more levy for police work on the frontier, and I think they were the most unmitigated scoundrels I ever came across. They appeared to think I didn't know the little habits and proclivities of the semi-civilized nigger who had come under the benign influence of missionary labour. Didn't I? I rather fancy I did. A day or two after they were enrolled some fifty or sixty pounds of meal were abstracted from the commissariat wagon. Very simple remedy! All rations stopped for forty-eight hours unless the thief was brought to me. He was not brought, and no rations were served out for two whole days. There was no more stealing from the commissariat wagon. A bottle of brandy was stolen from an officer's tent. That thief was very easily detected, for he was found lying in an adjacent patch of Tambookie grass still grasping the bottle, empty, the thief dead drunk. I waited till he was quite sober and more than a little sick, and then had him laid out flat and administered three dozen of the very best. Oh yes! I know how to make a cat-o'-nine-tails, and I am at the same time a fairly

good judge of sjamboks. Very soon all their playful little ways ceased, and we got on the most amicable terms. Said to me one day an officer of the Cape Mounted Rifles, "You've got the most deadly set of ruffians under you that there are in this district—they are gaol-birds almost to a man." I told him with a laugh that I knew it well, and had got them on an uncommonly tight rein and they knew it. "Do you purpose leading them into action should occasion arise?" he asked. To which I replied, "Not counting their officers, who are quite trustworthy and well known to me, there are in this levy one hundred and fifty men. I take it that if I led them into the action, which is inconceivable, and if they could shoot straight, which is most improbable, I should at least have one hundred and forty-seven bullets in my back in the first ten minutes." He asked one more question. "Have you served out any ammunition yet?" "Not a single round and I'm not going to, and what's more, I've rendered it impossible for the blackguards to get any." "All right," he said, "I think you'll do." I thought so too, for I had picked up a good deal of very useful information in the last nine or ten months. Not long afterwards I disbanded that corps without getting any bullets in my back or elsewhere, and that was the end of that campaign. On the

whole I had had a very good time. I had made endless friends, and in places and in season had enjoyed a great deal of fun and frolic. I had at times, indeed, gone through work that had, even with my wonderful strength and vitality, nearly found the bottom, but it never did quite. Any one who worked under Evelyn Wood and Redvers Buller would very soon know the meaning of hard work. For all that, I had a most true respect and affection for them both, and given the health and strength that were mine, I would most gladly sail away and begin it all over again to-morrow. But alas, one cannot recall the dead, and bodies that are worn out, to them remains but the peace of the grave.

Why did I not go on to Zululand? For many reasons, the first being that I had been offered a satisfactory—as I thought—and permanent appointment under the Cape Government as a Magistrate in the Transkeian territory. Also my wife and eldest son, aged thirteen, were on their way out and almost daily expected at Cape Town, and could not possibly be left without a protector. Lord Chelmsford had been so complimentary and kind as to offer me the command of three thousand Swazis in the Zulu Campaign which was looming very near on the horizon. So I left the matter entirely in his hands and expressed myself as willing to do whatever he

wished. He wrote to me most kindly from Pietermaritzburg, strongly advising me not to give up my Cape Colony appointment in order to take on another which could not possibly last long and might prove to be of only a very brief character.

My wife and son duly arrived, and we took up our abode for the season at the St. George's Hotel, for after such a long bout of roughing it, with mother earth for bed and bully beef for diet, with occasional trek ox for a Sunday treat, I was very thankful for even such a change as that not very luxurious hostel afforded. We had several very merry dinner-parties, for we had at that time endless friends in Cape Town and many who were arriving by every steamer on special service for the Zulu Campaign.

Among others was poor Rodolph Gough, who had come out in the same ship with my wife. He was indeed a dear merry boy, with one of the nicest faces I ever saw. His Irish songs accompanied on his banjo were splendid. We indeed grieved with heartfelt sorrow when we heard of his death so soon afterwards. He got a commission in the corps I was offered command of under Commandant Nettleton. It is said of him that after being in hospital with dysentery for many weeks, he went back to duty far too soon. Lord Chelmsford's words to

Commandant Nettleton were, "Young Gough is going about far too soon." In spite of this the exceptionally plucky boy—for he was little more—rode from Durban, where he had been in hospital, back to camp, over eighty miles, in less than two days. He suffered tortures on the way, and reached camp more dead than alive. Then in very few days came the battle of Ginginhlovo. Gough was lying almost sick unto death in his blankets in a wagon. He heard the alarm sounded, and got up, staggered out and took command of his company. That hastened his end, and he died very shortly afterwards. And that was a member of an effete and useless aristocracy that is so feeble that it has to be taken to its duties in bath-chairs and on crutches. So say these lying hounds, dirty funksticks who are afraid even to go out into the streets without policemen to take care of them. At one of our little dinners, the dry Monopole was going along merrily and Gough was keeping his end up manfully. Our old friend Captain Warleigh, Commodore of the Union fleet, was there too, but as usual—having been "got at" by Basil Wilberforce—drank nothing but water, and adorned his nautical buttonhole with a blue ribbon. Gough was annoyed to see the "fizz" passed by again and again, and chaffed Warleigh unmercifully. At last the poor skipper turned

and said, "Why on earth don't you chaff Streatfeild, he never drinks anything, and hasn't for years?" "Oh," said Gough, "old Stretty doesn't matter. He always makes just as big an ass of himself when he is sober as when he's drunk."

That reminds me of another soldier's yarn. We had been playing cricket and having an exceedingly merry night with the "Greenjackets" at Winchester. At a late hour three or four of us returned to our hotel. One "Chuckle" of the 30th and of Ashantee renown was with us. He, dear boy, bless him, was full of confidence, and well, yes, of other things. We ascended to our chambers some three or four flights by a well staircase. On reaching the top, as a most untoward Fate arranged it, was an elegant stand in a window with half-a-dozen pots of flowers on it. This "Chuckle" laid hold of, and reaching forward over the well staircase called aloud for the hall porter, who came in under and looked up. Then ensued a crash—a crash, nay, rather a cataclysm. The thing missed the man by a foot, or there had been a dead hall porter, and exceedingly well flatted out at that. Anon to me entered some one in authority. He said things, a great many things indeed, for he was very much annoyed. He seemed to think very little of my personal

character. I didn't even take the trouble to tell this angry person that I had no part nor lot in the matter. He was far past listening to any feeble discourse of that kind. In the meantime I could hear "Chuckle" and the others yelling with laughter on the landing, having all come along to get a bit of the sport. At length the infuriated monster, Manager, I mean, told me I was drunk, and took his departure. As he descended the stairs, unless my memory deceives me, the chaff that followed him down the stairs was not of an altogether soothing character. Now I had not drunk anything stronger than tea or coffee for many years. I therefore venture to think that in his tantrums that poor benighted heathen had formed an altogether wrong diagnosis as to my condition at the time. I think one John Willet in a book called *Barnaby Rudge* remarked that, "He believed there was a trifle of broken glass." In our case the "trifle of broken glass" was not forgotten in the bill the next morning.

CHAPTER XV

But we must now turn to much more serious affairs. Indeed, for some six years I had to bid adieu to all the frivolities of life. Not for one moment do I mean to state that my life as a Frontier Magistrate was devoid of pleasure, very far from it, but in the Transkei and without any neighbours within five-and-twenty miles, and those indeed not being of a very congenial or satisfactory nature, we had, so to speak, to take our pleasures sadly. No more cheery evenings at mess, no more lively little dinner-parties. But, on the contrary, very little beyond the solemn earnestness of stern duties, and those usually carried out under extreme difficulty and absolutely without any helping hands, with the diametric opposite of what the bard calls "all appliances and means to boot."

I happened in my South African career to be the pioneer, the first entrant into two Magistracies. The following pages will somewhat clearly demonstrate what sort of treatment was meted out to their distant officers by a grateful Government. What sort of care the Govern-

ment exercised in their endeavours to secure for those unhappy servants even the very slightest modicum of comfort. I think I may take it for granted by those who have been energetic enough to read thus far in these pages, that I am inclined to hunt vigorously for the bright side of affairs, however grey they may appear, rather than lie down in the mud and howl because at first I could see no light anywhere. Had it not been so I must at once have given up both these Magistracies in utter despair. Not so much because of the roughness, because of the utter lack of everything that was required, but because no one seemed to care in the very smallest degree what happened to me, or took one iota of trouble in the attempt to ameliorate one's miserable and inadequate surroundings.

There appeared an article in the *Saturday Review* of those days which runs as follows, but although we were the subjects of the letter it did not emanate from us, nor did we know anything of it till we saw it in print. "We happen to have been reading some letters from the wife of a Police Magistrate whose husband had been appointed to one of the districts on the Kei River and the borders of British Caffraria, which give a very fair notion of what one may expect in the beginning. The writer and her husband had no lack of money, they had the advantage of

introductions to resident officials, they were unincumbered by herds of sheep and cattle. But if they had not been blessed as well with excellent tempers and constitutions, they must have been inclined to throw up the appointment in disgust."

Yes, indeed, we were that! But having laid hold of the rope we were not at all inclined to let go, although we found it very dirty and disagreeable. But those who feel inclined to read our adventures in that distant home will find what appears to me to be of interest set forth in due course.

The Magistracy that I had accepted was over the eastern part of the Galekaland territory, and had belonged to the Chief Kreli, who had gone to war with us in 1877, had been beaten, and was at the end of '78 a vagabond on the face of the earth. We set forth, my wife and son, Jim and I, from Cape Town the beginning of December. We sailed away from Cape Town with a band of heroes, many of whom were intimate friends of mine, who were on their way to Zululand, among them one Reynolds, who got the V.C. a little later at Rorke's Drift, and exceedingly well did he deserve it. We went as far as East London and were grieved to leave all our friends, for well we knew that it would be many a long day before we should be in real civiliza-

tion again, or look upon a man in an evening coat. We did by the same token once more see a few mess-jackets, for Colonel Lambert, of the Connaught Rangers, kindly took us up to the old King William's Town mess-house to listen to the band. I saw my old friend Hans Garrett Moore, he who had with such exceeding daring got the V.C. for rescuing one of his men from the clutches of a bunch of Gaikas at Draai-bosch, putting several of them out with his revolver and getting an assegai through his arm. Poor old chap, he was drowned not long after while crossing a lough in Ireland. Alas, how few of my old Kafirland friends are now left this side of the dark river!

We stayed two or three days in King William's Town purchasing endless stores, beds, bedding and all things necessary for our home in the wilds. We knew, indeed, that it was going to be more than a little wild and rough, but to what an awful extent we did not learn until later. Then we got on to Komgha, the last village in the Colony, and there in the little hostel I left my people for a season while I rode on into the Transkei to report myself to my Chief, one Captain Blyth, who was Chief Magistrate over the whole of the Transkeian territory. I was gone some days, and went to the top of a high hill in the middle of my district and had a good look

round, and settled where I would make my future home. Blyth kindly (very) said he would take steps to have three or four wattle-and-daub huts built for us to inhabit on our arrival, and we made certain other arrangements as to future work and other things, and then I rode off back to Komgha, fifty miles or thereabouts. There we spent our Christmas, a weird entertainment and exceedingly hot. Soon afterwards, our things having come from King William's Town on two bullock wagons, we proceeded on our journey. I had already engaged three or four of the eight mounted policemen that each Magistrate was entitled to, and had bought two very satisfactory horses, Bob and Fidget, so we made quite a respectable cavalcade. The first two nights we found shelter of sorts at roadside stores, but after that it was many a long day before we put our heads beneath a roof of any sort either by day or night.

We camped out one night at the roadside, sleeping on the ground under one of the wagons, and the next day arrived at our future home, the Magistracy of Willow Vale, its Kafir name being Gatyana. Home! It was indeed a pretty home to bring an English lady to. I have stated that many days before I had ordered through my Chief, Captain Blyth, some wattle-and-daub huts to be erected by some Kafirs for our reception. Not a single wattle, not a single daub of mud

were visible to the naked eye. Instead of a couple of neat and completed huts as had been promised, and as there easily might have been, if the very slightest interest had been taken in the matter, the only sign of any work being even contemplated was a roughly thrown together grass hut, which the Kafirs who had been ordered to build our huts had erected for their own shelter during such time as they should see fit to take in carrying out the work. It was about ten feet in diameter, and one could just stand upright in it. In this erection we had to sleep and take our meals and carry on whatever official work had to be accomplished. When it is remembered that our party consisted of my wife and son, Jim and myself, the somewhat grotesque situation will be fully appreciated.

Before we had arrived at our destination the rainy season had set in, and for days rain continued almost without ceasing. This added very considerably to our discomfort. I can't say our grass-built shelter leaked, for that does not describe it at all. The whole erection was leaks all over, and every drop of rain that fell on it found its way through at some adjacent aperture. Every mouthful of food that we ate had to be cooked in pouring rain out in the open.

It was, indeed, a fortunate thing that I was an old campaigner, or I don't know what would

have happened. It will scarcely be credited that all this time there were within thirty miles of us at the Cape Mounted Police camp at Ibeka any number of military tents. With the slightest forethought of the situation on his part, with the smallest care for our comfort, Captain Blyth could with one scratch of his pen have had half-a-dozen tents all ready for us. But no! Not a bit of it! His withers were unwrung and not one jot did he care how we poor jades were wincing. He had a good comfortable house over *his* head, and that was enough. If I had howled loud enough I dare say something would have been done to ameliorate matters, but I believe as a howler I am not a success. It has always appeared to me to be more the part of a man to do the best he can under adverse circumstances, without kicking up a row like a pig in a gate and worrying other people to help him out of the mud.

When we unpacked our stores and things from King William's Town we found to our horror that endless things had been forgotten, and among them mattresses. Not a sign was there of even one. So I set to work, and in a couple of hours, out of straw and shavings and canvas from the packing-cases, I constructed a very fair one for my wife. On this the poor thing slept in peace many nights with an umbrella fixed in the roof to keep the drip off her face. After many days

the rain passed away and the sun shone again, as applied metaphorically to our affairs as well as in the sky. I can, however, truly say that during all those weeks of discomfort, even when the clouds were at their darkest, I never heard a murmur from any one of our little party. This will give an idea of how much thought or care a paternal Government gives to the comfort or well-being of its servants in distant lands. I say it is wholly disgraceful that a Minister or High Official should have the power to squander money unnecessarily for his own comfort, sometimes, indeed, merely for his own recreation, while a wretched magistrate has his conduct called in question if he dare to incur an expense of a few shillings. Many instances of this will appear as these pages are turned over.

In my inexperience and ignorance at that time I fondly imagined that the Ministry of a Colony like that of the Cape of Good Hope was composed of honourable men, as well as gentlemen. It was but a very short time before I was made fully aware of my most stupendous mistake. Honour! I never knew a single Cape Minister who had the vaguest conception of the very meaning of the word. The first thing that almost all think of is money. If they could only remain in office, they cared for little else. Of course, there was one notable exception to

this, Cecil Rhodes. He of course cared nothing for money, but he indeed cared a very great deal for other things, and never yet was there a man, nay, not even the little Corporal himself, who took less note of what iniquities, what seas of blood he waded through to attain his ends. Him, thank God, I never served under. It was, indeed, once suggested to me that I should come in under his banner. I didn't. I fancy that was the reason of my retirement from the service later on. Anyhow, thank God for that too. It is the fashion now-a-days to laud Rhodes to the skies. I notice, however, that most of the laudators in some shape or other have their pockets exceedingly well lined with the good Rhodesian gold. The Matabele War was, to my mind, nothing short of a damnable and outrageous murder. They had done nothing worthy of the punishment of annihilation. What small acts of apparent rebellion they had committed they had been led up to and incited to commit by Rhodes. Then that precious Jameson raid, a pretty and decent thing that was for an *honourable* man. Of course now nearly every one knows all about it. Now Jameson, good man that he was and is, was simply one of Rhodes' innumerable cat's-paws for getting his chestnuts. A nice honourable thing, wasn't it, on Rhodes' part, to misdate that letter that he cabled to *The Times*, the letter extracted from the terrified

women in Johannesburg imploring Jameson to come to their rescue? Well! he attempted to go to their rescue months after that letter had been engineered by Rhodes, who then altered the date and sent it to *The Times*. How truly gratified Mr. Buckle must have been when he found out to what extent his leg had been pulled! I should also very much like to know what the Poet Laureate thinks of his poem on the hero flying off with his braves in such hot haste—two months after his summons—to rescue the poor women who incontinently fled away from the rescuer directly they heard he had started. It was indeed a sweet-savoured business. My own humble opinion of Cecil Rhodes is that he was an infinitely clever, wholly unprincipled devil. Of course, people whose purses are bulging with his shekels praise him. They would be mean if they didn't. My pockets, at any rate, even after a great many years at the Cape, are still clean, and, alas! empty. So be it! I would far sooner have them so than bulging and dirty with ill-gotten gold.

I was some years ago at a dinner-party at the Athenæum. There were several well-known men there, chiefly swells of the Chartered Company, and among them Lord Grey, Lord Rosmead, Sir Gordon Sprigg (drinking his usual modicum of hot water), Cecil Rhodes and his brother

Frank, two Rudds and a few more millionaires. I was indeed like a fish out of water, and I can't for the life of me think what the deuce I was doing in that galley. I remember I sat between Buckle, the editor of *The Times*, whom I knew, and Gordon Sprigg, whom I loathed. Buckle was very busy talking shop to Hercules Robinson, and I wasn't taking any of the hot-water man, so it would have been dull had I not been fully occupied with Cecil Rhodes and all his works. After dinner he buttonholed the swells in turn, and I wondered what iniquities he was hatching.

He had a very long innings with Rosmead and another with Lord Grey. It looked to me very like a pen of lambs being handed over to the tiger. I know poor old Rosmead was indeed a lamb, and that was why he was sent to the Cape in the place of Sir Bartle Frere, who wasn't. I remember once when I was recommending drastic steps to his Excellency, he said, "Ah! my dear Streatfeild, my chief duty here is to stand by with the oil bottle." Just so! He was indeed a great deal too fond of that beastly oil bottle. Had it not been so I know of at least one of his secretaries, another cat's-paw of Rhodes, who would have gone through a very violent shifting. That little episode came of trying to serve two masters—the Governor on one hand, but on the other and much stronger one, Cecil Rhodes.

At the end of that dinner I was in a quiet corner with Frank Rhodes. He asked me if I knew his brother Cecil well. "God forbid!" I replied. "Hear! hear!" was all he vouchsafed. I think that about sized the situation. I had a great deal to do with that same Sprigg while I served the Colonial Government. I think I might also say to suffer from, as well as do with.

Not long after I had taken up my duties as Magistrate at Willow Vale, I was peremptorily requested to account for a certain £50, a receipt for which from me handed to Sir Evelyn Wood had been found among sundry Commissariat papers. I explained that the matter had been settled and concluded long ago. That the money had been expended during the late war on Commissariat cattle, obtained from one Richardson, an Imperial officer, and duly accounted for, and that documents in triplicate had been handed over to him. That was no good. Of course, judging by their own standard, these Colonial folk naturally thought I had stolen the money and was lying about it. They wrote all the way to Zululand to Evelyn Wood, who of course replied that he knew it was all right. Then they insisted on pestering me for a receipt and documents to the Colonial Commissariat, thereby acknowledging I had received two fifties instead of one. This of course I would not do. Then

they stopped my pay. Luckily I didn't want it, and so got no pay for many months. They had to give in at last, and all was well. That was a decent way to treat a fellow though, just as if he was as big a pickpocket as themselves.

By the same token I do not for one moment mean to state that my brother Magistrates were above suspicion, nor that all of them had clean hands, far from it. One of them had been a member of the Legislative Assembly. That stamped *him*. There was among others one most awfully sad case.

An officer of our army got into difficulties in England through gambling. I knew him well, and had played many cricket matches with him in his brighter days. He was a first-rate and most popular fellow in those days, but when he once ran off the line his descent was fearfully rapid. He deserted from his regiment and came out to the Cape, not unaccompanied, and a very smart little lady she was, to look at, at any rate. He was, owing to very strong influence indeed that was brought to bear at the Horse Guards, pulled through the mess that his desertion had made, and was given the berth of a Magistrate in the Transkei. I met him a few times during the war, and he was then, like myself, in command of Fingo levies. I noticed that he was almost always under the influence of drink, and looked

very bad. As times went on he got worse and worse, and was at last never rightly sober. Then he appropriated a large sum from the Government chest and was dismissed. He lingered on for some time, getting lower and lower down the hill, and then died. The last I heard of the poor devil was that his only excitement in life was waiting outside the hen-house till a hen cackled, securing the egg all hot, making a brandy nobbler of it, and then going back to wait for another. Isn't that piteous enough? And I can remember that boy looking as smart as a new pin, playing for the Zingari with Alfred Lubbock, Charlie Buller, Bob Fitzgerald, Tommy de Grey, as he was then, and Jimmy Round, and being just as good a man as any of them.

If he'd only have let the till alone I don't suppose the Government would have interfered with him over his drinking. They didn't appear to me to care twopence whether their Frontier Magistrates were drunk or sober.

I had one brother Magistrate who for years never drew a sober breath, and used on occasions when seated on the bench in his Court House, to roll gracefully off it on to the floor and be carried away. I once saw him dead drunk in the dining-room of the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, his commanding officer. As long as one didn't worry the authorities, and give them work to

do, it seemed to me that they cared mighty little what went on. Masterly inactivity, as before stated, is the chief thing required to be a successful official at the Cape.

Let old Macchiavelli's method of not disturbing Camarina be ever vividly before your eyes, so shall you smell sweet in the nostrils of your Africander or Dutch masters.

After the safe had been raided as above depicted, the all-wise Solomons of the Government, by way of shutting the stable door after the horse had been stolen, decreed that each Magistrate should give security for his honesty to the extent of £500. I think they were justified.

Now it happened that we had become well acquainted with an old missionary, whom we found out was none too well off. We asked him if he would allow us the pleasure of increasing his stipend by £80 a year. He allowed it, and it had gone on for three or four years. When this security business came on hand, I thought it would please the old man to be asked to be my surety. Remember, he was only to be surety against my *stealing*, nothing else. He refused point blank, and told me that under no circumstances would he be surety for anybody. He added that he had Biblical justification for his action. I gravely doubt it, if you think of the thing on both sides. I had a very great deal to

do with missionaries while I was in South Africa. I came across three, and only three, that were honest and good men. All the rest were rotten and absolutely untrustworthy. I should describe them as ungrateful, unwashed, niggardly canaille. I think the principle of nothing for nothing and precious little for sixpence is carried to extremes with missionaries. I have watched their work very closely, and I have known their so-called converts. I have never yet seen what is called a converted Kafir who wasn't a bigger liar and scoundrel than any dozen good honest heathens. The reports that are written by missionaries, and sent home, very seldom tally with the work accomplished, and are usually a tissue of lies. The best workers are the Wesleyans, and I know one really good Wesleyan minister. Next come the Roman Catholics. Church of England and Scotch denominations are usually rotten.

I once in war time asked Lord Chelmsford (General Thesiger) to let me surround a certain mission station at night and raid it, to see what I could find therein. He said, and perhaps wisely, that it would never do, and that all Exeter Hall would go down our throats with their boots and spurs on. I know well that in that mission station were scores of rebel Kafirs harbouring every night. These dirty mission-station Kafirs used to fight us in the day, and then after dark seek

refuge, food and rest under their slimy missionaries' wing. It makes me sick.

There was one converted psalm-singing Kafir called Dukwana, who left his mission station and joined in the Gaika rebellion of '78. He was a most excellent shot, and was, while we were fighting in his part of the world, continually sniping at us from some rock or bush where he lay hidden. I believe he got several of my braves, and I am convinced it was he who shot one of my officers through the head. He also shaved me very close indeed two or three times. I was told that he boasted he would get me one day. He hasn't though, and, what is more, he never will, for we got him instead, and very glad I was to see his dirty, psalm-singing hypocritical body with a bullet through it.

I once saw a Kafir we had shot in action with a full haversack on him. I told one of our men to empty it. It contained among other things a suit of clerical black clothes, a Bible and prayer-book, and writing materials and case. Exceeding plain where that humbug sprang from. Had we carted him to the nearest mission station, no doubt we should have been told that as a preacher, he was a shining light and an elegant Christian in his day and generation.

I fancy it has happened to but few men to be laid out in a coffin, except, be it well under-

stood, when they had been placed therein by hands other than their own with a view to permanent residence. Nevertheless, while I was Resident Magistrate in the Transkei, I was on one occasion to be seen stretched out in a coffin in the middle of the night on my own dining-room table. Judging from the scream my wife gave forth when she caught sight of me in that position, I don't think I can have been looking quite my best. My dear old friend, Fred Gale, well known to all old cricketers of half a century ago, who used to write a great deal under the pen-name of "The Old Buffer," once, in *Baily's Magazine*, wrote about me that among other things I should always be found "ready to oblige anybody from a turn with the gloves down to going with a lot of old ladies to a missionary meeting or taking a class at the Sunday school." I hope and believe this was and is still true. Alas! I fear that in these present days I should cut a far better figure with the old women at the missionary meeting than with the gloves. If the poor dear "Old Buffer" could have seen me lying in that coffin—not altogether unconnected with, at any rate, one missionary as it was—how he would have laughed while saying, "There, that's exactly what I told you." My becoming the tenant of that coffin for a season, a very short season indeed, happened on this wise.

One evening a deputation of Kafirs desired my presence. They came from a neighbouring village, and might be accurately described as "self-elected saints"—

> "But of all prides since Lucifer's attaint,
> The proudest swells the self-elected saint."

They said they were converts. I should put them down as "ushers of Beelzebub's black rod," in my own estimation, at any rate, for I knew them well, much too well, and their works also, which were evil. However, it was far from my intention to run any chance of quenching any smoking flax, and I made it my invariable habit as far as possible to take "the saints" over at their own valuation. But when, as was not infrequently the case, I found them both physically and metaphorically shedding their sombre and saint-like attire, and having donned the red blanket of the ordinary and far less hypocritical heathen, taking part with much pleasure and little saintliness in the most disgusting and degraded Kafir rites and ceremonies, my estimate of the real value of their religion was not a high one.

One of the saints had died. He was not a priest, did not even wear strict clerical garb, but just ordinary black. They had a name for such persons among their sect, if indeed it were a sect —an improver, an advancer, a trier, a stayer, or some such thing, I forget. I remember, though,

that as they wanted to *bury* the gentleman, I did not regard him as very much of a stayer. In order to conduct this funeral in a seemly manner they required a coffin for their saint. Could I tell them how to get one? Now in that climate both saints and sinners alike have to be buried without delay, and there certainly was no time to seek any undertaker, and as certainly I was the only man within scores of miles who had the necessary knowledge, to say nothing of planks, to turn out a decent coffin. Of course a long box would have answered the purpose. We all know that, for Tennesee—a probably very much more desirable person than our saint, in spite of his rather varied and lurid little proclivities, for which same they so incontinently hung him to a pine-tree that day—a section of sluicing answered the purpose. So I promised to make them their coffin, and told them to come for it at sunrise the next morning. That meant an all-night sitting for me. What matter? How many most refined, ladylike and softly speaking men, Lloyd George at Limehouse, and Keir Hardie whenever he opens his lips, for instance, have sat in their places and done it for the good of their country. Good lord! But I wish I had the chance of making a brace of coffins for *them*. I'd sit up for a week.

Wood to me one day, "They tell me the Chief Jali has been killed. Do you know anything about it?" "Yes, sir, he's killed right enough." Sir Evelyn was, as usual, very inquisitive and went on, "How do you know?" I replied that I did know, knew devilish well. He said he believed it was only some rotten shave, and that Jali was no more dead than I was. Then I took Jali's ticket of loyalty from my pocket-book and handed it over. "Well, that proves nothing," said the Colonel, "except that we've got Jali's pass." "I took it off his dead body myself after he'd been shot," said I, with a grim smile. "Who shot him?" asked the Chief. "I did." "I thought so," said the dear old boy. "They'll hang you one day as sure as eggs is eggs." "Got to catch me first, though," I said, and that ended it.

CHAPTER XVI

Soon after our arrival at Willow Vale the Galekas, who had promised to be good and settle down peacefully, were allowed to return to their old country. They came at first in very small parties of a dozen or so, and in abject fear, and with trembling limbs. These I located, and as far as possible in the situations they desired.

I obtained the sanction of Government to feed them, for they were at the point of starvation. They were, of course, all registered, and used to come to me at stated intervals to have Indian corn served out to them. By degrees as the years rolled on I won their confidence, and, I hope, affection. I ended by having almost the whole Galeka tribe under me, and we were the very best of friends. Had it not been for the abject stupidity of the Government, and more especially of Sprigg, I should have had poor old Kreli the paramount Galeka chief, and the last remnant of the tribe, about 400, who were with him, as well.

I think an account of my dealings with Kreli may here not be out of place. It must not be forgotten that he was after the war in abject terror of the Government and all its works and all its officials, including myself. It was the fact that, should he be apprehended, he expected death at our hands, or at any rate life-long incarceration in Robben Island, Cape Town Castle or St. Helena. He was with his little following a refugee in the wilds of Pondoland. There was with me at Willow Vale a brother of Kreli, of the name Lindinxowa (name unpronounceable by a tongue not accustomed to the Kafir language). He was a splendid fellow in every way, and a gentleman at heart. During the six years we were together we became friends, and I believe he trusted me implicitly. I know I very soon trusted him, and never on any occasion found that trust abused. I very soon made one of his sons a mounted policeman, and most excellently well did he comport himself. I will give one, and only one, instance to show the confidence Lindinxowa reposed in me. We were working together inspecting boundaries of locations, and had occasion to cross a river in flood, a small affair, some thirty yards broad. Lindinxowa could not swim a stroke. He was six foot four inches and as strong as Samson. I told him if he would let me tie his hands behind

his back, and tie his ankles together, I would promise to take him over safely and comfortably. He looked me in the face and said in that sweet deep voice of his, "Augha!" (yes). Lindinxowa had the most melodious voice I ever heard in a Kafir, and that is saying a great deal, for they all have not only most wonderfully sweet voices, but also the power of so pitching them that they can talk to each other, in that clear air, across a valley a liberal mile broad, without any effort. I took him over the river swimming on my back, with his head on my chest. He was perfectly quiet and didn't ship even one mouthful of water.

One day when I had been at Willow Vale some two or three years a mysterious messenger came to interview me, in deadly secrecy. He came from Kreli. The gist of his message was that the old Chief had learned from his people that I was trustworthy, and he was most anxious for a secret interview with me without the knowledge of the Government, whom he stated he trusted in precisely the same manner that Hamlet trusted his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, thereby showing a vast amount of acumen. That if I would come alone—that meant with only my young clerk as interpreter—and unarmed, he would send a messenger who should conduct me to him. I most gladly

promised all he wanted, and his messenger having been hospitably entertained, took his departure. I grieve in looking back at the foolishness, the sheer idiocy Government displayed over the affair. Had it not been for their pure funk at nothing at all, that poor harassed old Chief, who wasn't at all a bad fellow, might have ended his days in peace at Willow Vale—although I gravely doubt if he would have loved the half-bred Dutchman who succeeded me—instead of as a fugitive and an outcast in a strange land.

We had a seaside residence in the shape of a row of well-built Kafir huts some twenty-five miles from Willow Vale, close to the shore of the Indian Ocean. Of this there will be details later on. We were taking our pleasure at the seaside, when I was once more aware of Kreli's secret messenger. He had tidings for me that if I would be at a certain ford on a certain river called the Ngabaxa (another wholly unpronounceable name) at sunrise on a certain day, I should be conducted to him by messengers that I should find there. The rendezvous was about sixty miles off. My clerk Warner, a first-rate young fellow, the son of the Wesleyan parson before referred to, whom I liked and respected, had developed into quite a good pedestrian, and was nearly as fond of walking as I was. He

and I started off on foot very early one morning, and got to within a few miles of the Ngabaxa ford by nightfall. We were there before the sun was up next morning, and found Kreli's messengers ready for us. There was a high hill called the Mbongo about ten miles in front of us, and towards this we took our way. As we went on we became aware of scouts watching for us on the top of every hill, and as we progressed they gave me the N'Kos Inkulus (Big Chief's) salute, which consists in raising the right hand high above the head, saying aloud, "Aa!" broadly pronounced with the Chief's name—mine at that time was Nxalo or Vulindlela—and joined in with our party. At length as we approached the summit of the hill, we came upon old Kreli and the remnant of his tribe, about four hundred, all seated in a hollow on the side of the hill, and invisible until one was within a couple of hundred yards. With the exception of the old Chief they all rose and saluted at my approach. I then shook hands with Kreli and sat down by his side.

We had a long palaver, the long and short of which was, that he was most ready and willing to surrender himself to me, and to me only, on condition that I gave my word that he should not be handed over to Government, and that he and his followers should be located somewhere

near me at Willow Vale. In the word of the Government he placed not the very slightest trust. I do not blame him. But he appeared to think that I was trustworthy. His people had evidently given me a good character. If I had earned their respect and trust I most assuredly had not done so by my soft measures. Kreli, poor old man, had formed a most false estimate of my power to act. He imagined that I could take him over at once did I wish it, and arrange for his future. He was indeed dismayed to find out that I could take no such steps, indeed no steps at all, without the sanction of the Government, which appeared to him, and indeed to many others, as a most cumbersome and most utterly untrustworthy machine. I gave him my word that he should not be molested in any way until he heard from me again, and promised him absolute safety where he was, for on the Mbongo he was within my jurisdiction. I also promised to send him some provisions, and what I have heard described as "Medical Comforts." In the meantime I said I would communicate with the Government, and do all that was possible on his behalf. Without giving away the secret of where Kreli was, I tried to get Sprigg & Co. to let me take Kreli over and look after him.

They wouldn't hear of it. Kreli must sur-

render himself to *them* and unconditionally. This ultimatum I was told must be conveyed to Kreli. With the exception of Warner, who had interpreted every word that had passed between us, and my wife, no one at all had an idea that I had been in personal communication with Kreli.

When I went away the second time to interview him I was well aware that with such a message as I had to deliver on my lips, I was going into no slight peril. From Kreli himself no danger was to be apprehended, but from his followers, and more especially from his son Sigauw, who was a bloodthirsty, murderous scoundrel, who was close at old Kreli's side, the very gravest. When I sat down alongside Kreli again Sigauw was behind me. I felt something hard. It turned out to be the blackguard's bundle of assegais. That was a good beginning. I gave my message that I could do nothing. Kreli implored me to take him with me back to Willow Vale then and there, and do my best for him. This I totally refused to do, for well I knew that I should be forced to give him up and that durance vile would be his portion. *He* took it quietly, but his people were very angry and made ructions, and there was a row. I thought my time had come. But I got little Warner to interpret some winged words, in which I pointed

out very plainly that being 400 armed, to two unarmed men, they were a pack of cowardly hounds. I then shook old Kreli by the hand and turned my back on them and walked away down the hill. I tell you my back itched more than a little until I had got beyond assegai range. If Kreli had not been there to stay the hand of Sigauw I think I should have been a gone coon. When soon after dark the next evening I came near our huts I sent a ringing "Cooee" down the Kloof, and soon from the darkness came the words, "Welcome back, old man. I never thought to hear *that* 'Cooee' again."

A short time before that a small tribe called the Pondomisi had murdered their Magistrate, one Hamilton Hope, in cold blood. They called him to some native dance, formed a ring round him and speared him to death.

That was the end of the Kreli affair as far as I was concerned. The following paragraphs appeared at the time in the *Cape Times*:—

"The Colonial Secretary said that when the honourable member for King William's Town asked a question on the subject of the surrender of Kreli the other day, he stated on behalf of the Government that some steps had been taken to secure the surrender of the Chief. Since the discussion a message had been received from the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei stating that

Mr. Streatfeild, one of the Transkei Magistrates, had had an interview with Kreli, who had sent a message asking for the interview. At that interview Kreli said that he was willing to surrender if he had an assurance that he would not be sent to Cape Town or Robben Island. To that message a reply was sent by Government in which Mr. Streatfeild was authorized to give to Kreli the assurance which he asked for. Kreli was to be informed that if he would surrender the Government would proceed to locate him on the western side of the Buffalo River in the location commonly known as Jali's. He thought that the House would recognize the truth of the statement which he made yesterday, that a surrender in this way of a great and paramount Chief who had more influence over the native tribes of this country than any other Chief in South Africa, would have most pacific and tranquillizing influence over all the natives of that part of South Africa." And again : " Poor old Kreli, the Colonial Secretary said, had opened a kind of correspondence with that good fellow Streatfeild, so that we may hope that this Kafir gentleman (Kreli, not Streatfeild ; the latter is an English one) may end his days in peace, reconciled to the Government of his country and enjoying uninterrupted bliss in the manifold bosoms of his family."

It was reported of me to the Government that during my manœuvres, while endeavouring to assist poor Kreli to a happier state of existence, I had lamentably failed in maintaining the dignity of the Government. Confound the dignity of the Government! I fancy in walking sixty miles and back twice over, in my endeavour to get Kreli comfortably located, I was doing better work for my country, although I had on the very roughest of garments and only a stick in my hand, than the Chief Magistrate did a little later while on the same errand. A meeting was arranged between Captain Blyth and Kreli, the former imagining that after my preparation of the road he had an easy task. Blyth didn't know that Kreli already looked on him with grave suspicion. I did. Off set old Blyth with a drove of Fingo Militia, a troop of mounted police, half-a-dozen orderlies and his Secretary. In due course he, Magnâ Comitante Catervâ, came to the rendezvous. Not a sign! Not so much as a single red blanket disappearing over the distant horizon. That was the last of poor old Kreli. Before Captain Blyth and his phalanx were ten miles on their way the approach of the enemy was of course duly reported to Kreli, who fled. Can you imagine any one attempting to approach an old wolf like Kreli, who was already half frightened to death and wholly mistrustful of

the Government, with such an array ? The Chief Magistrate wrote an account of the utter failure of the expedition, that all the negotiations had fallen to pieces, but added, as though that was all that mattered, " that the dignity of the Government was fully maintained."

I remember Sir Evelyn Wood chaffing me very severely on a certain occasion as to my own very disreputable appearance on active service. No one knew better than he that my work at that time by no means lent itself to beauty of adornment. It was after an exceptionally long day in the bush, hunting down Kafirs, capturing cattle and horses, and climbing up and down very precipitous places, he grimly pointed at me, saying, " Well, you are a beauty," and then towards an officer not far off, who was *supposed* to have been in the bush too, but had spent the whole day outside and on his horse, and was at the end of the day in spotless attire and as neat as a new pin. Sir Evelyn compared us, very unfavourably to me, but there was a merry twinkle in his eye. I dined with the Chief that night, tatters and all. The other man was shifted back whence he came. Neat though he was, Wood had no use for such a man, and very soon found out that the elevation of his elbow was too high and too frequent.

I saw Wood once in a costume as is here described, and ventured to congratulate him on the

same. Ordinary butcher boots—bad ones—with military spurs on them, staff trousers, regimental tunic, and on the top a bowler with a puggaree round it. Enough to make the ghost of one George Ranger wriggle.

CHAPTER XVII

I HAVE said something as to the absolute untrustworthiness of the Cape Government Ministers, as far as my own experience went. I was once in Cape Town and had a long talk with Truthful Tommy, otherwise Sir Thomas Upington, at that time Premier. We had known each other well for several years. I was most anxious that he should see the Minister for Native Affairs with a view to his using his influence to get certain wrongs put right. He promised to do it, and later in the day told me he had seen the Native Affairs swell, had had a long talk with him, and thought things would be arranged to my satisfaction. I met the Minister for Native Affairs that evening and referred to his interview with Upington. He stared at me, and said he had never once set eyes on Upington during the whole day.

I was on a certain occasion going over the Convict Station at East London with one of the Cape Ministers, later on a pro-Boer, although once an Englishman and a very good fellow until

Cape politics, at one blow, upset his judgment and his honesty. A Kafir convict asked to be allowed to speak to him. The convict had lost a leg in machinery during his work, and wanted the head of the department to sanction the supply of a wooden one. The Minister took out a note-book, made an entry and told the man he should have it—the leg, not the entry. I thought all was well. Little I knew of Cape Ministers. I met this great official again some time afterwards and reminded him of the little episode, and asked if the convict had got his wooden leg. He laughed at me for even asking. Will you kindly believe me he had never meant to get that leg and was not ashamed to tell me so, was not ashamed to tell me that the entry made in his note-book was mere bluff, and that in his position he frequently had to do things of that description. From the light of wider and deeper experience of Cape politicians that years have given me I can indeed well believe it. I took care that the convict got his leg, though.

This same man it was who sent into the field —in the year 1878—levies armed with long muzzle-loading Enfields, their ammunition being gunpowder in bags costing ninepence a pound, while their bullets were in embryo, in the shape of bars of lead which the men had to run into the moulds themselves. The price of the

beastly stinking powder I had from his own lips, and the stink of the powder I can swear to, for I commanded the men who used it. Not much wonder was it that a little later that man developed into a Dutchman and pro-Boer.

By the same token I can vividly remember another instance of the very grossest dishonesty on the part of the Government to that identical levy through John Gordon Sprigg, who was then Premier, the Molteno Ministry having been summarily dismissed for cheek, to their very great surprise, by Sir Bartle Frere. And didn't that same dismissal just make our friend the Minister for Crown Lands, who had constituted himself a sort of War Dictator, sit up? The levy of stinking-powder fame had been enrolled at a village in the heart of the Amatola Mountains, named Keiskamma Hock. Among other things the men of the levy, 250 in number, had been most distinctly promised *2s. 6d.* each per day. They received it for three months, and then Sprigg from his arm-chair in Cape Town reduced it to *2s.* It was indeed a regrettable proceeding, and nearly brought on a Mutiny. It did cause endless heartburning and ill-feeling. I was the poor devil who had to quell the disturbance and keep things smooth. It was only with the very greatest difficulty I managed to keep things straight. I got the head-men to

help me by promising that under no circumstances should their pay be reduced, though how I paid it I cannot now remember ; but I strongly suspect to a great extent out of my own pocket. That little episode didn't tend to make me respect Sir John Gordon Sprigg.

Here is another case of still grosser injustice emanating from the same source. To begin with, I will quote an article which appeared in one of the chief Cape Town newspapers, the *Cape Argus*. I am aware that every word is true, for I was the Magistrate referred to at the beginning of the article, which runs as follows—

" It is a much-debated question whether there is in this country one law for the white man and another for the black. Two cases demonstrative of the proposition have lately been brought to our notice. Before referring in particular terms to either of them attention may be called to clause 27 in the regulations lately promulgated for the Government of the Transkei, which runs as follows :—' No suit or action claiming damages or other relief for acts alleged to have been committed during any military operation heretofore carried on in the Transkei shall be cognizable, entertained or tried by or before any Magistrate.' A short time since two farmers in partnership in the Colony appeared before one of the Transkeian Magistrates and laid claim to

certain cattle in the possession of one Jengili, a Galeka, who had taken benefit of the Governor's proclamation and received promise of protection. With the above clause before him the Magistrate had no option but to refuse to hear the case, especially as the farmers distinctly stated that the cattle had been lost during the war. The claimants then proceeded to the Chief Magistrate, who likewise refused to entertain their suit. They next appealed to the Government, by whom an order was sent to the Chief Magistrate to the effect that the man Jengili should be arrested and sent to Komgha, that being the district from which it was alleged that the cattle had been stolen. In due course Jengili was brought before the Magistrate, and by him committed for trial at King William's Town, where it was ultimately decided that there was not sufficient evidence for his conviction. He was accordingly liberated, but no compensation was given him in consequence of wrongful imprisonment for an offence for which, if he ever committed it, he had been promised pardon at the time when he made his submission to the Government. He was merely set free and given a pass back to his home 120 miles distant, and this precious document did not even state the cause of his long detention, nor the fact that no case had been proved against him. The correspondent to

whom we were indebted for the above particulars asks whether it is to be understood that the amnesty proclaimed at the end of war and the regulations since issued refer only to white men. He justly observes that it is very important to ascertain whether the refugee Galekas are liable to have their pardon cancelled at the will and pleasure of the Government and its friends. Are they to be made prisoners and tried for the *theft* of cattle when *capture* is the term applied to the countless thousands of which they have been despoiled? Are they to live in constant dread of being thrown into prison, solemn promises and proclamations notwithstanding? These 'poor starving outcasts,' such are the words in which our correspondent describes them, have little or nothing they can call their own, but they see around them numbers of cattle once belonging to themselves, now the property of the white man and his allies. On these they dare not lay a finger, and they have only to ask if they cannot get them back to be told that all cases having any sort of connection with the war are past and done with for ever. Before directing attention to the other case we may observe that all Magistrates are enjoined to tell their people that they are the children of the Government, that the laws are the same for them that they are for the white man, and that they enjoy advantages and privileges

equally with him. It need hardly be said that the actual treatment differs greatly from what these unsuspecting children are led to expect. Only a week or two since a Fingo took his way from the Transkei in order to hire a piece of land not far from Komgha. The man was in good circumstances and of excellent character, and there need have been no hitch in the bargain. But permission to hire was refused him by the Magistrate of Komgha, and when the Colonial Secretary—not the Secretary of Native Affairs—was referred to on the subject he caused Captain Blyth to be informed that permission to hire land in the Colony will not be given to natives, as their presence on this side of the Kei is not desired. This is a fair specimen of the way in which our coloured brethren are being 'raised' and 'fitted for the world to come.' That this unblushing hypocrisy and cant is set at its proper value we make no sort of doubt, and we agree most thoroughly with our correspondent when he says that the country need not wonder that the natives are discontented and restless, that troubles threaten, and that rumours of war are constantly heard. 'Children' though they are, the most barbarous amongst our barbarian fellow-subjects are well able to distinguish right from wrong, to distinguish between oppression and friendly attempts to effect their improvement, and to take

the measure of the justice that is dealt out to them."

When these two farmers came to interview me on the above subject, they arrived in the evening about sundown, and expected to stay the night in our house, expected to sit down to meals with my wife. Let me describe them. Dirty, dirty beyond words to express. They looked, as was probably the case, as though soap and water never came upon their persons. They expectorated *everywhere* in the house and out of it. I once entertained a man who had come on some business, for the night, and in the morning, as was clearly demonstrated, the filthy brute had lain in bed, and had spat all over the place. I was after that completely cured of putting up any chance Africander for the night, and was at the same time absolutely certain that I was missing no chance of entertaining angels unawares. I totally refused even to let the two blackguards in question through our portals. Where were they to go? I cared not one whit, and told them plainly that better men than they had slept many a night under a mimosa. They had no food. More fools they, better men had gone empty and so could they. Like Naaman the Syrian they turned and went away in a rage. I rather think I wasn't in a very sweet temper myself, for the brutality and

vile injustice of their errand had made me most justly angry, and I wasn't at all bashful about showing it.

It may possibly be imagined from the foregoing episode that I was a strong Negrophilist, and like a great many foolish folk not altogether unconnected with the Aborigines' Protection Society, ready at all times to take the part of the black man against the white. Such indeed was, I fancy, very far from being the case. I may say, however, that the wretched man Jengili on his return from the King William's Town prison, having arrived after his hundred and twenty miles' tramp three-quarters starved and thin as a greyhound, was well looked after, fed and taken care of, and did not go unremunerated for his false imprisonment and for the vilely unjust treatment he had received at the hands of the Cape Government. To show that I can produce a very hard side indeed when justice demands, I will relate the following cattle-stealing affair.

CHAPTER XVIII

I HAD been sorely troubled for a long time by three Galeka cattle-thieves. The thefts of cattle had been frequent, but the thieves had always got away over the border with their booty. Sometimes the thieves were in hiding in the Willow Vale district, but more often, I believe, with Kreli and his refugees in the wilds of Bomvanaland or Pondoland. In any case they were like hawks, and we could never get on terms with them. At length I heard from one of my trusty spies that two out of the three had been marked down, and were in hiding under the wing of a little scoundrel of a white trader that I had for long distrusted most absolutely. If half that red-headed ruffian was said to have done in the way of gun-running, trading in "Cape Smoke" and stolen cattle, was true, the gallows of Haman himself wouldn't have done him real justice. I summoned my sergeant of police—one of the very best and bravest Kafirs I ever had under me. I explained the situation to him, and described the position of the hut in

which the thieves were taking refuge for that night. I told him to take twenty men with him, arrive at the hut as soon after dark as was advisable, and then call on the thieves by name to come out *unarmed*. I ordered him should the men come out *armed* to shoot them down at once without a word. I gave him my blessing, told him to keep his tail up, carry out my instructions to the letter, and come to my bedroom window and knock on his return. Why didn't I go myself? Think of it a minute. It isn't a Magistrate's duty to go personally and apprehend cattle-thieves. That night I wished it were. I was rather afraid the old sergeant would funk the responsibility, although I had impressed it on him that the whole of it was mine, and mine alone. The thieves' haven of refuge under that accursed trader's wing was about five-and-twenty miles away. My little party of braves started between three and four, sundown was about six. In the middle of the night, about three o'clock, there was a tap at my window. I pulled on a pair of flannels and went out. The old sergeant stood there, grim and unhappy. Both men had been shot, and he had brought them along on a sleigh. One was dead and the other dying. He had, as ordered, surrounded the hut and called on the cattle-thieves to come out and surrender. This summons was replied to by the

men coming out instantly and attacking the police with their assegais. Then they were at once shot down. I went up to the prison where the sleigh with its gruesome freight awaited me. It was a somewhat peculiar situation to be feeling about over these two bodies in the darkness to ascertain which was the corpse and which the moribund. However, we soon got the corpse stowed away in one empty cell and the other poor devil in another. I eased his sufferings as far as possible, for he had an awful wound and death was a certainty, an absolute certainty. He liked the brandy I brought him, poor fellow! and I kept him pretty full of it till he died. All right! "Them's my sentiments." Maybe I was very wicked. I don't think so. It doesn't keep me awake at nights. Once on a time I had a man shot clean through the pit of the stomach, an awful wound! I asked a doctor, who was adjacent after the affair was over, for an overdose of opium, and told him what I wanted it for. He knew me very well, and that I was accustomed to such things, and gave it. It was a relief to my mind to see that poor devil drop off peacefully to sleep and know that he would wake, or otherwise, in his Valhalla. After that poor cattle-thief was dead I traced up the course of the bullet—a Snider, and they do indeed make ghastly wounds. When he was

shot he was stooping and in the act of throwing an assegai. The ball had entered above the knee and gone right up the femur, not touching the bone or the femoral artery, had broken the pelvis all to smash, cut the rectum, and lodged in the opposite buttock. A more ghastly wound I never examined; and the poor devil lived three days after it was received. Indeed, I was not in the very smallest degree sorry that I had kept him chock full of brandy.

Not long afterwards we got the third cattle-thief of the gang under no tragic circumstances. He had been marked down, and was taken in his sleep. I sentenced him to a year in the East London convict station, and told him to report to me on his return. He was a most peculiarly attractive-looking Galeka, with a very bright eye and exceptionally intelligent face. In due course he returned and came to me. I preached a bit, but I trust after a different manner to the ordinary converted Kafir preacher. I told him that I should watch him very closely indeed, that all he did would be duly reported to me, and that if he went forth into the wilds again he was done for. Then I took him out behind the Court House to our small cemetery. Yes! One way and another there were not a few sudden deaths in those days. I pointed out to him two graves, side by side, those of his two mates. I

assured him on my word of honour that if he ever took to cattle-thieving again he would inevitably lie beside them. On the other hand, if he sailed straight, and if for six months I heard nothing but good of him, which meant nothing at all, he was to come and report to me again. For those six months he sat as still as a mouse; then he came and saw me, and I made him one of my policemen, for I had kept a vacancy all ready for him. He became one of the very best men I ever had, and was as a tracker of a cattle-thief worth his weight in gold. What did the Government say as to my having two men shot down on my own authority in cold blood? Nothing! I duly reported the whole affair at some length, for I indeed felt there was a great deal of responsibility attached to it. The reply was that they had nothing to say, and that they believed I was well acquainted with my work. There was no inquiry of any sort, although I had on my own responsibility seen fit to take two lives. Now had I seen fit to tell any one of the Cape Ministers at the time that he was an unjust, dishonest, incompetent jackass there wouldn't, indeed, have been any inquiry, but I should have been sacked on the spot. Dear me! It's a great comfort to speak out at last what has been on one's mind for a quarter of a century!

I may add that in due course I received a message from the old Chief Kreli, saying that he strongly approved of the manner in which I had treated the cattle-thieves, and that he sent me his thanks.

CHAPTER XIX

When we had been at Willow Vale at least two years, living the whole time in Kafir wattle-and-daub huts, an enterprising Government at last found energy enough to build us a residence—of sorts. It is absolutely immaterial that, within two years of its completion, it was threatening to tumble about our ears. I was away most of the time while this beautiful building was in course of erection, and when I returned the rooms were papered. I had therefore been unable to observe that the inner wall of the east room, our own bedroom, had not been bonded to the outer wall, but was merely built up against it. But Jim, who had in the course of his varied career done a great deal of bricklaying, had seen the manner in which this magisterial residence was being chucked together and had warned me. Consequently I soon found out all about it, with the blade of a carving-knife, which when put through the wall-paper at the corner of the room passed without obstruction or hindrance into the room on the other side. Luckily I had drawn up

the agreement with the builder myself, and had him by the short hairs. I refused to pay, and never did pay the third and last instalment of the total cost of the house, £500. This money was used in the futile attempt to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, or, in other words, to make a decent abode of it. This it never was, although, I grant, we passed two or three quite happy years within its tottering walls. The outside wall, not being bonded to those within, very soon began to sag away outwards. This was to a great extent obviated by propping it up with lengths of timber, which at any rate kept it from falling over altogether. It was, however, far from uninteresting as one lay in bed to watch the gap between the outer wall and the inner gradually widening, and to wonder how long it would be before we were either buried beneath the ruins, or at any rate deprived of at least one wall of our bedroom, and left exposed not only to the eyes of the populace, but, moreover, to all that the elements might see fit to shower upon us.

I wrote and complained to Government until I was weary. Month after month went by and not the slightest notice was taken. At last, after nearly a year, the Government Inspector of Buildings came along. He was horrified. He declared the building was absolutely unsafe, and

asserted that he would not sleep in our bedroom a single night for any consideration. This he reported to Government. Even then it was months before anything was done. The masterly inactivity of the Cape Government has always been to me a thing passing understanding. The "Wacht een beetjie," the "Wait a bit," is the curse of the country. The "Never do to-day what you can possibly put off till to-morrow," is before one everlastingly.

About that time we had somewhat of an excitement caused by the rising of the Pondimisi and the Tembus. The former, as is not uncommon, commenced operations by murdering their Magistrate and organizing a rebellion, in which their neighbours the Tembus joined. A general rising of Kafir tribes was feared, but fortunately this did not take place and the rebellion was duly quelled, but not before some valuable lives had been lost. Poor old Von Linsingen, with whom I had fought on many a day in the '77 and '78 War, and his son were killed together, also Blakeway, an old officer of mine, and several more gallant fellows. It is wonderful how many good men are swallowed up in these little frontier rebellions. I did no fighting at all that time, for I was quite certain I had better stay in the midst of my Galekas. It was thought by almost every one that *they*

would join in the rising. I thought not. Indeed, I felt almost certain that they would be staunch and stick to me, for I flattered myself that I had by that time won their confidence. I am thankful and proud to say that events proved I was right. I had many talks with almost all the old Galeka chiefs who were now living in peace in my district, and explained the existing state of affairs to them, and showed them plainly that nothing but ultimate ruin to them could ensue if they rose. Not one of them lifted a finger or gave me the slightest trouble or any real anxiety. Every trader, and needless to say every missionary, fled from the district. We were the only white folk left within some thirty miles. The Chief Magistrate implored me to send my wife and her English maid and our boy to them for protection, as at his magistracy he had troops. However, they had no wish to go. On the contrary, they would much rather stay and take their chance. Honestly, I thought they were quite safe. However, I took every precaution. In the first place I enrolled and armed a hundred men with Sniders, and had them at our police camp. We fortified the magistracy with ditch six feet deep and square, the bottom paved with broken glass bottles, and in the ten feet space between ditch and house we placed impregnable abattis. The

windows and verandah were built up to the height of one's head with sacks of earth, with loopholes left. Hogsheads of water were stored in the house, and I had arranged pipes through which flowed all the water from the roof, either into the house or out of it at will. I found, too, that we had provisions enough to last thirty men for a month. In case, therefore, of a siege I felt we were safe, for relief in case of attack could not have been delayed for more than a week.

I am ever ready, some people I fear may say too ready, to see a humorous side if possible in any situation. On the day of our completing the fortifying of our small house, a little comedy was not lacking. Jim was living in a little cottage we had put up for him, in his beloved kitchen garden. Some time before this he had begged for permission to procure for himself an anker of Cape brandy, a cheap and deleterious fluid. I could not well refuse, but I felt quite sure that such a proceeding spelt disaster. As time went on, for Jim, indeed, poor fellow, it simply spelt ruin. I became aware on more than one occasion during the progress of our fortifications, that Jim was a bit above himself, but I had taken no notice. On the last afternoon, when our work was completed, I saw to my infinite amusement that in the dining-room by the side

of all the loopholed windows, Jim, the only member of the community who owned a muzzle-loader, had most carefully arranged powder, shot, wads and caps. I yelled with laughter. Jim "didn't know as 'ow they mightn't be wanted if we *was* attacked." How the deuce the stuff was going to be inserted into breech-loading rifles, or what harm it was going to effect on our attacking force, he did not explain. I felt I could not minister to a mind thus diseased. When poor Jim lost his head, which he did very easily under the influence of that accursèd Cape Smoke, it was impossible to foretell or even imagine what atrocious folly he might perpetrate. I once returned to Komgha at night, after a long patrol with my braves, tired, hungry, and sleepy. Jim was seated in my tent on the ground, singing and happy and inordinately intoxicated. There wasn't a mouthful of food in the place and no coffee, AND (a big "and," please, Mr. Printer) he had sent my perfectly clean blankets away to be washed.

The fortifications being complete, I sent instructions to a good many of my leading people to come and have a look at them. I thought a gentle hint of what sort of a reception an attacking force would meet with might possibly not be thrown away. They came and looked round and took their departure. There was never any

attack. There was in the district one seditious old brute, a Gaika, who held meetings to try and stir up the people to rebellion. He thought that I didn't know. Didn't I? I was myself present at one of his infernal talks. He didn't seem to me to be taking a trick. By and by I made things pretty warm for that gentleman and he could not understand why. Anyhow, he elected to quit the Willow Vale District, and he was wise.

The ordinary life of a Frontier Magistrate, if he be a man of energetic character and strong withal, ought to be very full of interest. To me, at any rate, it most certainly was so. I took the very deepest interest in my work and in my people. "Masterly inactivity" was and is my abomination. I hate a lazy man as the devil hates holy water. That, and a certain habit I always have had of speaking my mind very plainly, especially to underbred cads who pose as gentlemen, and perchance because I happen to be an Englishman, I feel quite sure, made me very obnoxious to the Cape Government, and especially to some of the illbred or perchance dishonest Ministers thereof. I don't appear to be alone in my estimate of these folk. "By Jove, I've lost my hat," exclaimed the late Duke of Devonshire when going away from a city dinner, at which many Cape magnates

had mingled. "I suppose one of these damned Cape Premiers has bagged it." I should say that is just about the estimation in which they were held. But I was talking about laziness in officials.

I had a brother Magistrate who was seldom sober enough to do any work, and, when he was, never did it. Therefore a citizen of Graham's Town bethought him that he would run a cargo of eight hogsheads of Cape brandy into this officer's district, and sell it to the natives at some five hundred per cent. profit. Most unfortunately for the Graham's Town citizen he fell among thieves—one thief, at any rate, and it was I. It happened on this wise.

At sundown one evening a ragged and most disreputable-looking native came up to me at Willow Vale and saluted. I told him to go and report himself at the police camp, and that if advisable he would be brought back to me. He took his cap off, gave me a grim smile and said in English, which he spoke as well as I did, "I thought you wouldn't know me, sir." It was Bangani, who had been a sergeant in one of my militia companies, and who on occasions did most useful detective work for me. I asked him what on earth he was after, and what he was masquerading for in such a truly awful disguise. He was usually a well-dressed, soldierly-

looking fellow. In reply he produced from among his rags a bottle, which on examination was found to contain the very vilest Cape Smoke that I ever smelt. I asked where he got it, and he told me that he had heard that a white man had come into my neighbour's district with three ox-wagons and a cargo of brandy, and was even then on the top of a hill called the Guadana, selling it to all comers as fast as they could come along. So, off with his uniform (he was then with a detachment of militia at Fort Bowker) and on with his rags, and away to the scene of slaughter. He purchased a glass of brandy and drank it and didn't die, at any rate not on the spot. Then he bought the bottle which I still held in my hand. Now this affair was, of course, not mine. It was out of my territory, but I could by a stretch of imagination connect it with my district, as the brandy purchased next door, so to speak, had found its way to me. Of course I was going to give myself a great deal of trouble when a very little "masterly inactivity" would have given me none at all. I sent for the sergeant of police and ordered our horses, Warner's and my own, in ten minutes, the sergeant and six mounted men to go with us and take rifles. I didn't think for a moment that there'd be any row, but if there should be I meant to come out

top dog. The Guadana was twenty miles away, and it was past ten when we got there. Our birds had flown. No matter. There was a moon at the full, or nearly so, and it was almost as light as day, light enough for me to see poor Inspector Hohenein's grave, and those of his troopers that were killed there in the first fight of the War of '77. Poor fellows, one could only just trace the outline of the mounds then, and now it must be many a long year since even that has vanished. We followed up the spoor of the wagons with much ease. The party had the cheek to go close past the Magistracy of the district with their illicit cargo. They knew they were exceedingly safe from any interference from that quarter. When we had gone on some dozen miles we came up to them. The party consisted of one white man and some half-dozen black servants. I got off my horse and went close up to their fire, round which some figures were seated. "Who is the boss of this show?" I asked. The white man stood up and said, "I am." Then I replied, "I am Mr. Streatfeild, R.M., of Willow Vale. I have clear proof that you've been selling brandy this afternoon to Kafirs, and I am going to take you and your men and your wagons straight off to Willow Vale, and keep you there till you are tried for that offence." He began to bluster

a bit, and gassed some rot about my not daring to do it, which I very soon put an end to by telling him that for twopence I'd handcuff the lot of 'em together and make them so walk the whole way to Willow Vale. While I had been talking I had observed on the man's waistcoat a rimpjie (a piece of buckskin string) leading after the manner of a watchchain to his pocket. This I laid hold of and pulled out, and found at the end, as I expected, the key of a tap. With this in my hand I soon found a small cask which it fitted in one of the wagons. Under the tap and all along the brim of the cask it was still quite wet. Evidence enough for me, had I wanted more than was already in my possession. One white man doesn't carry an eighteen-gallon cask of Cape Smoke on tap for his own consumption during a comparatively short journey; the hogsheads were still untouched in the wagons. We had a weary journey back to Willow Vale, and got there just as the sun was rising. The horses and oxen had had a long night's work, and I was glad for the poor beasts' sake that it was over.

My friend the brandy-runner was by this time tame enough and hadn't a kick left in him. He didn't know it, but he was very shortly going to be a good deal tamer, going to be made sicker than he had ever been made in his life before.

After I had tubbed and eaten some food I was out again and called to Jim, "Come along with me, Jim, and bring your biggest felling axe; I've got a little job for you." We went over to the police camp. Then we solemnly had those eight hogsheads rolled out one by one on to the veldt, caring nothing whether they burst or whether they didn't. As a matter of fact they didn't. Then Jim with fell blows knocked in the head of every one, and the damnable stuff they contained was set flowing across the plain. Stink! "My word," as the Australian lady says. Stink! "My land," as the Yankee damsel would exclaim. When the wind set that way all the doors and windows in the house a quarter of a mile away had to be closed. Also on about two acres of ground over which that noxious flood had poured, not a blade of grass grew again for years. Yes! truly I *was* in a bit of a hurry to get that cargo of poison upset.

Writing of Sergeant Bangani's disguise brings to my memory a disguise that was made use of much about the same time, but of a very different nature and in much more civilized scenes, far away beneath the spires of Alma Mater, which gave a Don, endowed with far more than ordinary common sense, the puzzle of his life. One night an undergraduate, a friend of my own, had been taking his—or perchance I

should say *her*—part in the full-dress rehearsal of a play that was on hand. He was returning to his rooms across the quadrangle, in full fig, when he found himself suddenly pursued by a night-prowling proctor. There was nothing left for him to do but gather up his skirts, for he was dressed as a woman—and a most lovely one he appeared, as I am prepared to testify—and bolt as hard as he could lay his legs, in their unaccustomed adornment, to the ground. The proctor was gaining fast, and his own quarters were yet a great way off. So, like a rabbit pursued by a terrier, he fled into the nearest doorway, up the stairs and into a friend's rooms. But few seconds later in came the night-prowling one, gasping, with wrath and indignation on his brow and heat in his words.

"I have seen a woman come into these rooms this very moment. I insist on your producing her."

"There is no woman in these rooms, sir, nor has one come in," replied the owner of the rooms.

"But, man alive, there *is*, I tell you there *is*. I saw her come in at that door with my own eyes not half a minute ago."

"I give you my word of honour, sir, that no woman at all has come in here, and that there is no woman in the rooms; pray search them if

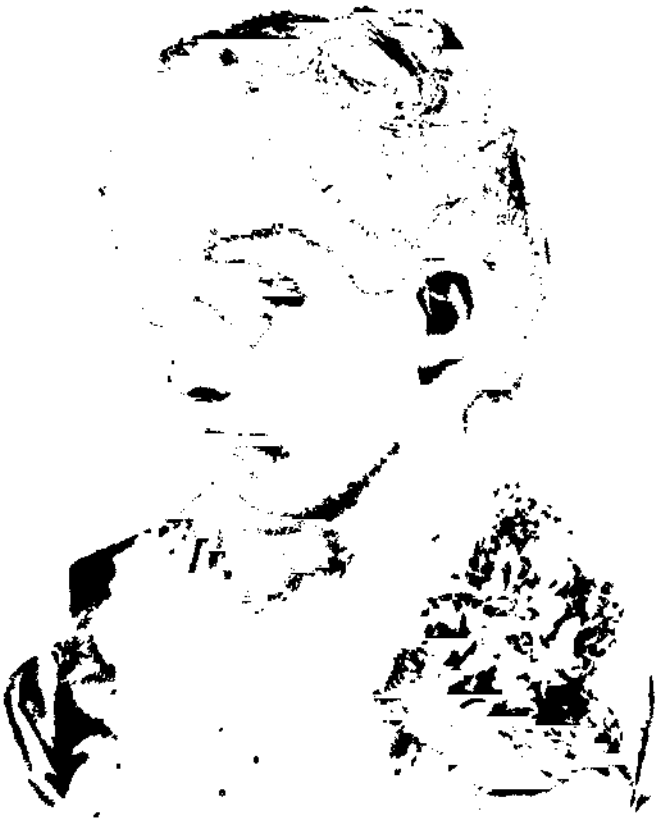
you like. You will find M—— lying down on my bed with a bad headache" (well the crafty fox knew what M—— would have been about), "which came on an hour or so ago, and I assure you there is not another soul in the place."

"Well," said the proctor, "so convinced am I that my eyes could not possibly have deceived me that I must insist on searching your rooms."

This he did forthwith, and indeed very thoroughly. He found, indeed, Mr. M—— in the bed and had some conversation with him, and expressed regret at the headache, while he continued his search for the *woman* that he was so keen on digging out, little dreaming, poor innocent, that she was lying under his nose, with her lovely hair well hidden under the pillow, and her flowing garments carefully tucked away, very greatly to their detriment, beneath the counterpane. Need I add that the search was fruitless. The poor proctor had to quit, greatly disconcerted, considerably humbled, and most woefully puzzled. I should imagine that he was inclined to agree with Hamlet as to heaven and earth and philosophy.

I wonder what he would have thought had he chanced to look under that counterpane and beheld M—— in all his glory as depicted in the accompanying portrait.

I laugh when I think of how I have on



'MR. M——'

O you beauty! but you have been seen well there's

occasions seen M—— on an engine, in a filthy jumper, black in the face and smeared all over with grease and oil, rubbing himself clean, or perchance dirty, with a handful of waste, and then turn to the counterfeit presentment of *this* lovely creature. Then, indeed, do I feel inclined to exclaim with Hamlet, "Look here upon this picture and on *this*."

But to return to Sergeant Bangani, whom we have left standing all this time at attention.

My chief, Captain Blyth, was a dear old thing, as good as gold, but an old woman from the sole of his shoe to the top of his hat, an awful old woman, but with a good heart and a most awful temper. When he lost the latter no punishment was sufficient even for a trivial offence. But when some infernal scoundrel, who had committed an atrocity for which he ought to have been most severely punished, shed crocodile's tears and prated a heap of nonsense about his wife and children, the heart of the Chief Magistrate became as water, and his tears not infrequently flowed down on to the chief magisterial bench while those of the culprit watered the dock.

I was once driving with him in the Transkei, and some wretched native we passed on the road failed to salute the Chief Magistrate. I don't suppose the poor beast had the least idea who it was. Anyhow, old Blyth flew into an ungovern-

able fury, stopped the cart and got out with the whip in his hand and chased the Kafir all over the veldt till he could no more. I sat and laughed till the tears ran down my face. The Kafir, not unnaturally, remained uncaught, though Blyth did by no means remain unblown. It was not a very dignified spectacle. On another occasion Blyth got into a frightful rage with me over some trifle or other. I entirely forget what it was about, but I have no doubt I had clumsily though inadvertently trodden on one of his chief magisterial corns, which indeed were legion. He blustered and made an awful fuss and then, when he got winded, to my horror burst into floods of tears and metaphorically kissed and made friends. Now this was the man I had to deal with in connection with the scoundrel of a brandy-runner.

I reported the matter to him, and I felt certain, as turned out the case, that he would come over and form himself into President of what was called a combined Court to try the malefactor in conjunction with me. I was well aware that the brandy-runner would be perfectly well acquainted with Blyth's little idiosyncrasies and would play his cards accordingly. Therefore was it that I set his beastly liquor flowing away. He couldn't, at any rate, get that back, and I think the hogsheads of filth that they held were worth about £400.

Suppose it had not come to my knowledge that the blackguard was running and selling that cargo, then he would have cleared out and got away with some £1,500. At the same time he would have sent unnumbered Kafirs raving mad, and been responsible for all the crimes that would have ensued.

I can tell you that a Kafir three-quarters full of Cape Smoke is not a very desirable person to meet. In cold blood and with due premeditation had this infernal scoundrel purposed filling his own pockets at the expense of the natives' souls and bodies, caring not one iota what happened as the result of his nefarious traffic. If I had given sentence it would have been three years on the breakwater and three dozen with the cat-o'-nine-tails, especially the latter.

We sat on our precious combined Court. The offence was proved to the hilt, and the blackguard, being found guilty, was allowed his say. Oh, but he knew his man. He shed copious tears, he talked about his wife and children, especially his children. Then old Blyth began to cry too, and I knew I was done. I was a sick man. All my rhetoric was thrown away. I was too hard, too cruel, etc., etc., etc. The poor man had been sufficiently punished, etc., etc., etc. The sentence was a fine of £2 10*s*., and the brandy-runner departed in

peace with his tongue in his cheek. If I hadn't spilt his dirty Cape Smoke, he'd have gone away with that too.

Not long afterwards I was travelling in the mail-cart from Graham's Town to King William's Town. Before we started, a lady—well, yes! let it go at that—got in and sat down by my side. I happened to see her name on her box, and smiled to myself. She was young and not bad looking, and was evidently an outrageous flirt. We got along quite nicely, and when we reached King William's Town at the end of our eighty miles' drive she was holding my hand. She bade me adieu effusively, and said she hoped we should soon meet again. I hoped not, and I am inclined to think that if that young woman had for one moment imagined that I was the man who had run her blackguard of a husband to ground and spilt his eight hogsheads of Cape Smoke on the plain, her feelings towards me would have been of a wholly different complexion.

CHAPTER XX

I WAS once again successful in catching a blackguard of a trader in the Willow Vale district in selling Cape brandy to natives, but I most deeply regret the case from my point of view terminated in a most unsatisfactory manner, but from that of the trader in quite a pleasant one. It happened that Captain Blyth had gone away for a year on special service to Basutoland. The man who had been appointed in his place as Acting Chief Magistrate was a great friend of the Minister for Native Affairs, and that was his only recommendation, if, indeed, it were one. He most assuredly had no other. He was in the Cape Mounted Police, and in that corps had spent his life. He was without education of any sort, without knowledge of the world, and, beyond the routine of the duty of a frontier policeman, as ignorant as he could possibly be. He could not, without reference to the dictionary, which I noticed always lay close to his writing materials, indite a simple letter of less than a hundred words, without at least five mistakes in spelling. I

noticed, too, that the mistakes always occurred in simple words, clearly showing that complicated ones of three or four syllables had proved stumbling-blocks to this delightful, gentleman-like officer and had been looked up in his dictionary. I once made use of the word "adjust" to him. He had not the very vaguest idea of what it meant. I am perfectly certain that if you took the first six policemen you met as you walked down the Strand, every one of them would be far better educated and have infinitely better manners than this boor, who was pitchforked into this position by his Dutch pal, the Minister for Native Affairs.

The trader that I caught selling brandy was a very old friend of this Acting Chief Magistrate, and had opened his store at the identical time the acting appointment had been made. I had met him in the Colony, and had, indeed, heard plenty about him. It was of a most unsavoury character, and I knew that selling guns to the natives, beastly cheap Birmingham and Liége things, was by no means the worst of his nefarious transactions. I was, therefore, on the look-out, and shortly had the very clearest case of brandy-selling against him. I tried, convicted and fined the ruffian. He appealed to the Acting Chief Magistrate, who promptly reversed my decision and remitted the fine. I think while I

served that ignorant cad almost all my decisions were reversed. He didn't like me at all, and I must allow that I did my level best to encourage him in his dislike. He sent many samples of my correspondence to his friend and master, the Minister for Native Affairs in Cape Town, and I was told that the abstruse methods I made use of, and the cynical tone that pervaded my letters were not approved of at headquarters. I dare say any ordinary English gentleman will be able to most fully appreciate what an awful *gêne* it must have been to serve and obey, and to be expected to honour and respect such an utter ruffian.

He was a fair sample *at that time* of an officer in the Cape Mounted Police. It improved, however, enormously, as time went on, and I look back with the utmost pleasure to making friends with such men as Lyndhurst Winslow, Dalgety, Hartly, V.C., George Giles, and others. There was one little cad I remember who had been cook to the Commandant of the Corps, and who, because he cooked successfully for his C.O., was made a Lieutenant. I can't say I follow the reasoning. I can think of a whole lot of cooks that I know and appreciate to the utmost, but I should indeed be most distinctly unwilling to be led into action by any one of them. A man might be very clever indeed at spitting a capon, but I

can't see that it at all follows that he should be any good at spitting his enemies.

I had a most unpleasant piece of work while R.M. at Willow Vale in holding an inquiry into the conduct of a certain officer who was in command of a detachment of Militia about twenty-five miles away. This ought, of course, really to have been undertaken by the Chief Magistrate. But poor old Blyth—not having lost his temper—felt unequal to the task and implored me to do it for him. The fact that the man was an Englishman and—by birth at any rate—a gentleman, made it all the more unpleasant for me. Also he was a protégé of Government House. I rode over to the fort where he was quartered and told him my errand, told him of what he was accused, and that I was ordered to come and hold an inquiry into his conduct and take evidence. It was perfectly beastly. I think it was one of the worst things I have ever gone through. My inquiry proved that everything was as bad as it could possibly be—embezzlement of funds, men unpaid for months, injustice, gross bullying, etc., etc. My report went to the Chief Magistrate and on to Cape Town. There was some correspondence of a private and confidential nature, and I was implored to water down my report and make it a bit softer. This I wholly

refused to do. The work had been thrust upon me and I had fulfilled it to the best of my ability, and, at any rate, truthfully, as the wretched man himself admitted, and I would not alter one word. He was dismissed and went away. I next, and not long after, heard of him in Cape Town and that he had been appointed to a clerkship with a good salary in the Native Affairs Office. I was honestly glad to hear it, but I will confess that he would never have got an appointment out of me. I did wonder whether his work lay in the office where the till was.

The work that came my way at Willow Vale was of a most varied description. I say "came my way" advisedly, for I was by no means compelled or even expected to do a quarter of the things which I did. For instance, I dug up two dead bodies with my own hands. One proved to be a case of murder and the other of manslaughter. In the first instance I never traced the culprit. In the second I did, and he got three years on the breakwater at East London and three dozen lashes. I hope they did him good, but I fear nothing short of death would ever really cure a Kafir of cruelty. It is in their blood and ingrained in their nature. The way they treat their women is wholly brutal and repulsive and amounts to absolute

slavery. I cannot call to mind a single case of real affection between a Kafir and one of his wives. The women are quite ready to acquiesce in this abominable state of affairs, to accept their state of slavery and to feel themselves but chattels. How can it be otherwise, when they are bought and sold like oxen and sheep, when the women are the workers, with the exception of looking after the cattle, for the men who lie in the sun all day and do nothing?

I one day met a brawny Kafir marching airily along the road, his blanket hanging over his shoulder on a knobkerrie, but otherwise in a state of pristine nudity. Behind him toiled one of his wives, with their Lares and Penates as well as a baby disposed about her person. The woman was bent down beneath the weight she was carrying. My gorge rose, and I remonstrated in somewhat forcible language and called the man a few names, among which a d——d lazy hound was about the mildest. My words, however, were milk and water to those the woman used to me. The man was her head, her lord and master, and she would not allow him to lay a finger upon one of her burdens. He stood placidly by while the woman aired her facile tongue on me. So I retired as gracefully as might be from the unequal contest and took a back seat.

Among Kafirs gratitude is unknown. There is no such word as "Thank you" in their language. If you give a Kafir anything, he instantly suspects your motive, but he has not the smallest feeling of gratitude, and most probably puts you down in his own mind as a fool.

But to return to the cases of murder and manslaughter already referred to. I was cantering along one dark night, some dozen miles from home, alone, for I hated having an orderly unless necessary, being a man who, unlike most Cape officials, cared most marvellously little for the dignity of my position, when Bob, my horse, suddenly bounded into the air high enough to clear a hurdle, and totally refused to turn back along the track we were following. So I got off and led him, snorting and trembling, and very soon found the dead body of a woman lying on the path. It was too dark to make any diagnosis of the case, but I sent Warner up in the morning to report on the affair. He told me that there were signs of a mighty blow on the head—nothing else—and that he had buried her. So I went there again and had an examination. Although the skull was only slightly cracked, the brain was lacerated and there was much extravasated blood, and the cause of death was very clear. She had been

seen travelling with a man who carried a hoe, and that was all I could ever find out. There was nothing on her to show where she belonged, and as to the man who was supposed to have been with her I could gain no tidings whatever. I had to be content with that.

The other case of manslaughter was somewhat more complicated. A Kafir took unto himself a wife for whom he handed over to her father sundry cattle. The poor lady had not long been his property when she developed acute consumption, and it was quite evident that she was moribund. The sole object of her owner then was to return her to her father as unsound and get his cattle returned. For this purpose the brute of a man had put her on a horse, for she couldn't walk, and had taken her more than once back to her own people, who, however, wholly refused to take her in or have anything further to do with her. This little game of battledore and shuttlecock was played with the wretched creature until the affair happened to come into my hands. On the last journey that she was taken by her husband she was seen by our police as she passed the Magistracy, and they wisely thought it was a matter for the R.M., and so reported it to me, meanwhile detaining the man. I went up to the Court House and listened to all the piteous story. The woman

was evidently dying and could scarcely speak. I gave the man some slight idea of what I thought of him and I asked the woman what her wishes were, promising that they should be carried out to the uttermost farthing. She wanted nothing but to be taken then and there to her husband's home and to be allowed to lie down and die in peace. So she went away, being held on the horse, for she was even then more dead than alive. I heard the next day that she had never reached home, but had died on the way. I instantly sent off a mounted policeman with a reim (rawhide thong) and a pair of handcuffs to apprehend the brute of a husband and bring him along, and I omitted to issue any orders about bringing him at an easy pace. I was not without a suspicion that the woman might have met with foul play. From the man's statement it appeared that his wife had died at the roadside some five or six miles away, and that he had stuffed the body down an ant-bear hole. *That* should be seen to. It so happened at the time that we were very busy and that I was short of police. Well, I wanted no help for the work I was after. I went to the house and got one of my trusty breech-loaders, and with that over my shoulder and a spade in my hand I returned to the prison and had the man handed over to me handcuffed. It was

explained to him that he was to go with me and not under any circumstances to leave my side; that he was to take me straight to the ant-bear hole where he had deposited his wife's body and sit down close to me while I exhumed it; and last, but not least, that if during the whole time we were away he made the very slightest attempt to bolt, he would instantly receive the contents of both barrels in his dirty black back.

It has been my sad duty on more than one occasion to take away the life of a fellow-creature. Their ghosts have hitherto never worried me or disturbed my peace of mind, nor even my appetite. But as to that cruel, cowardly hound, it would have given me the utmost satisfaction to have put two ounces and a quarter of No. 5 shot through his black heart.

He paid me the compliment of saying, as we started, that he should not attempt to run away, for he had seen the Magistrate shoot. In due course we reached the place. The man pointed to a large ant-bear hole, the mouth of which was filled with earth, and sat down beside it. It was a gruesome and exceedingly awkward job, for the hole was nearly perpendicular. One treats a dead body with reverence and respect, that is, unless one is a medical student. I fear there was, of stern necessity, little of either in

the methods by which I got that poor soul out of her last resting-place. By the same token ordinary people have little idea how many gruesome crimes in the wilds of Africa are covered over for ever in the excavations of the innocent ant-bear. At length I got to the end of my task, and the body was laid out decently on the grass. I found no sign of violence at all, not a scratch, and it was quite evident that it was her disease, and that only, that had killed her. But at the same time it was perfectly clear that the way in which her brute of a man had dragged her about the country had not only hastened her end, but had, moreover, rendered the last days of her life misery and torture. It can scarcely be credited that while the man watched me getting the body, and not very gracefully either, out of the ground, he did not turn a hair. For all the signs of affection that he showed, for any least degree of pain for the loss of one who, at any rate, had lain on his bosom, I might exactly as well have been hacking out a barrow-load of gravel.

I loathe and detest seeing a man flogged. It is a disgusting and brutal spectacle. But I can tell you I looked on at that hound getting his three dozen with the utmost pleasure.

At the various frontier Magistracies there are, of course, no resident medical officers. It therefore devolves on the R.M. himself to be

present at all floggings. This is most unfair to him. Why should he be obliged to attend at a beastly spectacle for which he is not paid? Added to this, what does the ordinary R.M. know about the heart and constitution of the ordinary prisoner who has been sentenced to receive lashes? Usually nothing. And yet, should a prisoner succumb while undergoing a flogging, I think I know fairly well to whom the blame would be apportioned and what the press would have to say about it.

While I am on the subject of the brutal cruelty of Kafirs I may refer to a case that came to my notice, very much indeed to my notice, about the same time as the foregoing. There are not many people, in England, at any rate, who are aware of the terrible, the horrible ravages made by leprosy on the human frame. Any one who has visited the lepers' hospital on Robben Island in Table Bay and gone into detail, will, I fancy, never wish to repeat that visit. At a Kafir kraal, not more than a couple of miles from our house, was a leper, brother of the owner of the kraal. The leper had been living with others of his people in another district. His disease had become sore, very sore, upon him. He could not walk, and his people wished for his gruesome presence, poor beast, no longer. They therefore placed him on an ox

sleigh and took him over thirty miles across the veldt to his brother's kraal in our district, and there shot him down. Now if you and I were, in our usual robust health and strength, taken more than thirty miles across the veldt in the Transkei, in an ox sleigh, we should in all probability arrive at our journey's end dead. If we were by that time not dead, I am convinced we should greatly regret that we were not so, and should most devoutly hope to be so as soon as possible, for we should be suffering such tortures of pain in every joint, bone and muscle of our bodies that any further existence would be absolutely unendurable. Poor Lazarus, as we christened the wretched devil, for he was soon to be intimately connected with us, arrived at his brother's kraal and was shot on the ground. What did the affectionate brother do, do you imagine? Take him in, feed him and comfort him and entreat the afflicted and dying man tenderly? Not much! He put him in another sleigh, took him away out into the open veldt, shot him down once more, without food or shelter, and left him to die. He said he wasn't taking any lepers. Then I came upon the scene, and I hope at the same time a change for the better ensued, from Lazarus' point of view. I was, of course, wholly unable to stay the disease or the hand of death, but I could, at any rate, to

some small extent alleviate his suffering and provide food and shelter. I did not forget that I was dealing with a most serious affair, nor the chances of contagion, and I exercised the utmost caution. A hut was very rapidly erected, into which Lazarus was put, on a comfortably made bed. I fed and nursed him myself, and, I hope, made his last days as little dreadful as was possible. I did not allow any one to enter his hut, and, indeed, they were not wishful. I crawled into his hut one morning when he had been with us about a week, and to my horror saw that what was left of one foot had dropped off and that lockjaw had come on. Very soon afterwards he died. I have had some exceedingly peculiar work of a very gruesome nature in the course of my life, but getting the body of that poor man out through the small opening of the hut was no easy matter, nor was a shovel altogether unnecessary. Everything that could by any possibility carry contagion was consumed in a very great fire, and that was the end. I trust in Heaven that nevermore may I have anything to do with leprosy.

I didn't tell you what I did with the brother. Perhaps I had better not. My action was very effective but wholly illegal. I can tell you he got all he wanted, for I was a little cross and he hadn't pleased me in his behaviour. Quite the

contrary. I also fancy that I am inclined to punish brutal cruelty to either man, woman or animal rather severely.

There is a certain ceremony among Kafirs on a certain occasion when a beast has to be slaughtered in a particular way. It is fixed up so that it cannot move, a large incision is made in the side through which a man puts his hand and tugs at the heart until he rends it from the body. The preliminary arrangements must indeed be pleasant for the beast. A sort of glorified species of angina pectoris, I should think.

CHAPTER XXI

DURING the time that I was Magistrate in the Transkei it pleased that great and good man, Sir John Gordon Sprigg, to disarm the tribe of Fingoes and to attempt the disarming of the Basutos. Both these tribes had proved themselves absolutely loyal and law-abiding citizens, while the Fingoes had very nobly borne their part in the war of '77 and '78 against the Galekas and Gaikas, and had died on the field in numbers while fighting the battles of their white masters. What possessed the little man to imagine that this disarming Act, which he succeeded in getting passed through the Legislative Assembly, could do any good, beyond, perchance, adding to the honour and glory of the great House of Sprigg, no one could imagine. So loyal and peaceful were the Fingoes, so unwilling to show their teeth, that as far as they were concerned the disarming was carried out without any difficulty. But with the Basutos it was a very different affair. Sprigg had wholly

failed to read their character aright, and instead of the tame and entirely submissive tribe that he expected would bow without any remonstrance to his mandate, he found himself face to face with a most determined foe, who totally refused to deliver up their arms without fighting for them. Then ensued the Basuto War, and my friend, Colonel Mansfield Clarke (now General Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke), Commandant-General of the Cape Colonial Forces, had his work cut out for him for some time to come. The colonial troops entirely failed to effect their purpose. The Basutos were successful all along the line, and were distinctly victors in the fray. They retained their arms and retain them still. They were perfectly loyal before that most unnecessary war was got up, and they are loyal still, and seemed to take great pride in showing that they were so, only the other day, to the Duke of Connaught.

Now where do the acumen and statesmanship of the little man Sprigg show themselves in his getting up a war that no one wanted, in failing most utterly in bringing it to a satisfactory termination, and in the meantime running up a little bill for the Colony of some two or three million pounds? He knows best.

Once on a time a Cape Town lady—sometimes a great gulf exists between some Cape

Town ladies and those of other lands—was attending a function at Government House. As she approached her Excellency, she effusively held out her hand for a friendly shake. "Pass on, my good woman, pass on. We don't shake hands here," met her full in the face from the Governor's wife. It was indeed a facer, ably administered. I have more than once seen so-called ladies drinking water out of their finger-glasses at Government House. What can you expect when some of their husbands think nothing at all of expectorating on to the floor of the House of Legislative Assembly?

The last clever performance of the Native Affairs Department was on this wise. Among all Kafir tribes are certain rites and ceremonies, one might almost call them religious ceremonies, at the time when their boys and girls arrive at the age of puberty. These rites are called respectively Intonjana for girls and Amakweta for boys. They were held at a certain stated time of each year, and the assemblies were great. Any one who wished could be present. To a decent-minded person there was nothing in any way connected with either the Intonjana or the Amakweta that was not repulsive, obscene and utterly disgusting. They were an incentive to young people to be immoral and degraded, bad and filthy in every way. The Government

issued most distinct instructions to me and to other Magistrates in the Transkei to put an end to these beastly performances with a high hand. That was quite as it should be. But would not any ordinary person suppose that the wiseacres would see to it that their orders to their Magistrates were at any rate legal, before allowing them to be distinctly and definitely issued? They did no such thing, and thereby found they had instructed me and others to commit an illegal act which they had to reverse. An enviable position for them. Here is a report, word for word, of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly on the matter.

"Mr. Dowling asked the Secretary for Native Affairs what steps had been taken to remedy the unsatisfactory state of affairs referred to by Captain Blyth in his communication to the Attorney-General dated September 23, 1881, as set forth on page 11 of the Blue Book for Native Affairs. It appeared that the Resident Magistrate of Willow Vale, Mr. Streatfeild, in the pursuance of his instructions from Government to repress native dances, had convicted a white man named Taylor, and fined him £10 and expulsion from the district. This decision was appealed against and the appeal was upheld, whereupon Mr. Streatfeild complained of the action taken by Government in quashing a case,

when it was admitted that the man had been properly punished. He complained of being told to do a certain thing, and when he did it, the Government did not uphold him, and this state of affairs was described by Captain Blyth in his communication to the Attorney-General as being unsatisfactory."

Sauer, the Secretary for Native Affairs, then proceeded to explain to the House that why my sentence on Taylor had been reversed was because it had been ascertained that Galekaland, of which Willow Vale was part, not having been annexed to the Colony, I had no jurisdiction, and that therefore it was out of my power to obey the very distinct orders that Government had given. He naïvely explained at the same time that the natives usually took their punishments at my hands and obeyed my mandates without a murmur, although legally I had no power or right to do anything at all. As soon, however, as a white man fell into my hands and sentence was issued and appeal lodged, this all-wise body of Solomons, the Cape Ministry, ascertained that they had deliberately been giving me orders to do what the law of the land decreed I had no power to do. A very pretty muddle!

The man Taylor came into my clutches like this. I had heard that an Intonjana dance with all its concomitant filth and debauchery was to

be held at a certain Kafir kraal on a certain night. I sent police into the middle of it to stop the proceedings and report to me. The first person they saw in the thick of the fray was this young blackguard Taylor with only a blanket for covering. I tried and sentenced him as shown. I sincerely wish I had then and there given him three or four dozen with the cat. No Court of Appeal could have reversed them.

At the same time that I sentenced Taylor I fined the ringleaders of the Intonjana. The fines were paid and went into the Government chest. And yet I was told to explain to the Kafirs under me that the law was administered to them, as to the white man, with an even hand, and that all, black and white alike, shared equally in all the privileges that the law could afford. Oh, Lord! what a lie!

It still, a quarter of a century away, makes me sick to think of this rotten humbug in which I was compelled to bear my part. I never again, however, took a hand in interfering with any Intonjana or Amakweta dances. I drew the line at that. I hope the case of Jengili also, referred to at length some time back, will not be forgotten, as yet another sample of Cape Town *justice*.

Two more scenes at Willow Vale which are very vividly depicted on my memory, one of

them exceedingly pleasant, and the other, alas! very sad, and I have done, for it is nearly time these humble reminiscences came to a close. I can, in my mind's eye, see a warning publisher's finger, to say nothing of an enormous blue pencil that he is waving in my direction.

I can also hear the portentous yawns of readers who have graciously followed me so far, but do not seem inclined to stand much more of it.

When we had been nearly six years at Willow Vale, we indeed had an awakening. Not from Government this time, but from some far holier and brighter region than any peopled by Cape officials. A small daughter was born unto us, and our nursery, which had been closed for over fifteen years, was reopened. At first we were horrified, but if we could only have taken a peep into the future the heavens would have been rent with pæans of joy. That small piece of mortality soon became the very idol of the place, and it was most comic to see our black brawny policemen begging, as the utmost favour, to be allowed to hold her. I never came across so much of human nature in Kafirs as was shown to that tiny baby.

I think it was, to a great extent, reflected light, for though perhaps I say it who shouldn't, her mother had won the heart of, I believe, every Kafir in the district. She was in the habit of

going about alone all over the place, walking and on horseback, and was far safer among all those black, fierce Galeka warriors than in Regent Street. There were, at any rate, no motor-buses. Whenever she was seen coming near a Kafir kraal all the men rushed out and stood in a row and gave her the same salute they would have given Kreli or me, "Aaa! Nosomtsu!" or "Aaa! Incosikasi!" The former "Hail! Fast-walker," her Kafir name, the latter "Hail! Chieftainess." When she was walking not more than a few miles from the house, her companions—they were as numerous as Sintram's, but less gruesome—were a source of infinite wonder to the Kafirs. She usually had round her half-a-dozen dogs, mostly pointers, two or three tame, very tame, monkeys, and a crowned crane, tamer to *her* than any hen, but who never allowed one of us men to touch him. Whenever a hawk was visible in the sky the monkeys flew up into her arms for protection. The crane usually stalked majestically ahead, and occasionally took a flight round. When he had been with us a couple of years his thoughts, I suppose, like the young man's in the spring-time, "lightly turned to thoughts of love." One morning he was missing, and we saw him no more. I hope he found her, with a crown of glory as lovely as his own, and that she laid

many eggs and hatched many little Balearica regulorums.

Whatever it was that won the animals' hearts, I strongly suspect won those of the Kafirs. When the baby had been with us about three months I had a formal request from several Galeka chiefs, all of whom, grim warriors that they were, had fought against us but few years before, and had positively thirsted for my blood, that they might come to the house and see the Incosicosina (little chieftainess). They came and inspected this morsel of white humanity very closely and then, "Oh, might they just hold her?" It was a pretty sight, and they held her as though she was made of spun glass. Then they had cake and tumblers full of port, which they found comforting. Then they had martial strains sung and played to them. This made their eyes glisten, and they thought with that music (Soldiers' Chorus in *Faust*) to lead them they could make it sultry for their foes. And so they, too, passed away. A peculiar and interesting experience.

Then came the last scene of 'all, a very, very sad one. The Government did not want me any more. I was told it was economy, but I didn't quite swallow that. The real reason, I fancy, was that I had told them too many home truths, and had on several occasions exposed their dis-

honesty and intense stupidity. They didn't like me at all, and I should have been very much ashamed of myself if they had. I found there was a loophole in the wording of my appointment from the Governor, which allowed them to dispense with my services at will. I fancy they must have been a bit sick when, but two years afterwards, I turned up again with another appointment, from the Colonial Office, Downing Street, this time, in my pocket.

So we had to quit our pretty and happy little Transkeian home. When we arrived at it six years previously we had found the bare hill-side, and in the way of a house not one stone upon another. Our only shelter a dirty hovel into which we had to creep, after having swept out with a branch the Kafirs who had taken possession of it and their belongings. Now we left behind us for the Dutchman who was to reign in our stead a picturesque, though somewhat unstable abode, with creepers and roses climbing over it, a lovely rose garden with neat and well-tended beds, full of the most brilliant flowers, and a kitchen garden in excellent order, with a lovely hedge of edible passion flower surrounding it. As I looked round on all these things that had been planted, and grown, and thriven by our own work, I cursed the Government with all my heart for a set of sneaking, ungrateful hounds.

As I looked round on the poor weeping people who had assembled to see the last of us, I groaned in spirit, and was very sad, for I feared they would not perchance understand a new hand and a new master, and might get led into difficulty and trouble.

As I led my wife away through the throngs of people who were assembled, and who pressed around us for a farewell touch of the hand of those whom they would never see again, it was indeed a trying ordeal; and when I saw the row of our trusty mounted police all crying like children and unable even to speak, it took me all my time to keep a stiff upper lip. Twenty-six years have passed since then, but oh! how plainly can I still see that home, that had become so dear to us; still see the faces of those throngs of black, sorrowful people who had come to bid a last farewell to those to whom they had been so faithful, and for whom, according to their lights, I verily believe they had an affection.

In the last quarter of a century I have done and seen innumerable things, and could, perchance, produce some more reminiscences, did any one, which is most improbable, care for them. At present, at any rate, it is enough. Although I am close upon the years when the poet king says they are but labour and sorrow, I thank God I have as yet by no means found them so. I can still

shoot straight through the longest day and most thoroughly enjoy it, still put my fly in a lady-like manner to a salmon forty yards away. So I may yet possibly secure a little further experience of men, of beasts and of fishes.

Another poet, not a king this time, though he ought to have been, has a good deal to say about a man who complained that he had "fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf," while still, apparently, he was no mean hand with sword and buckler, though, perchance, in the silent watches of the night, a trifle shaky with a dagger. Then he goes on to hint that the "troops of friends" which should "accompany old age" are not only lacking in his case, but are, moreover, represented by much less desirable things. In my case the leaves are assuredly turning a bit yellow, but the "troops of friends" are with me, friends who have been and are most exceedingly good to me, and who make my declining years an infinite pleasure. Let me tender to all of these my warmest thanks for their increasing kindness and affection. And as—to borrow from Golf parlance—I approach the last hole, it may prove only a putt or a chip shot, possibly a short iron (I know it cannot be a brassie), I look back with pleasure and gratitude to the varied but happy life I have led, and forward with hope, and, I trust, without fear to that which is to come.

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