LIFE

WITH

THE ZULUS OF NATAL,

SOUTH AFRICA.

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CHAPTER I.

PAST TIMES.—LIFE AN UPHILL JOURNEY.—REASONS FOR EMIGRATING.—CAVILS OF FORMER FRIENDS.—MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL.—VISIT TO THE SHIP.

WITH what fond recollections of bygone days do we go back, and endeavour to recall to mind the chief events that marked our path through early life!—that bright calm morning of our existence, our twenty-one first years! And when, at length, those years have rolled away, how often would we forego the *greatest* treasure we possess, to enjoy, once more, those happy hours of childish innocence!

Like travellers who, in their eagerness to gain the far summit of some steep long mountain range, start with the first dawn of day—while yet the clear pure atmosphere, softened with early dew, and chilled by the darkness of the night, imparts a peculiar freshness on all around, and braces their frames with healthful vigour to prosecute the labours of the forthcoming day. The little light they yet possess is barely sufficient to guide them in their onward course; much less to enable them to look around on the beauties or the dangers which meet them

at every turn. Still they pursue the beaten track, and anxiously await the approaching break of day.

Meanwhile, the rising sun, dispersing the fleecy clouds, first peeps, then quickly gilds the mountain tops, and there, in full view, reveals to their gladdened sight the long-sought for object of their journey; but, with increasing light, fresh difficulties and new obstacles present themselves, and that which, a short time since sparkling with sunshine, seemed but an easy stepping-stone, soon shows itself to be an ugly precipice, frowning, and, to appearance, almost hopeless of access.

At length the ardour, which at first urged them to hasten on their journey, yields to fatigue, but does not altogether die; for, only intent on reaching the nearly attained point, slowly but surely, with measured tread, they climb the steep ascent. The sun no longer cheers them on their way; but, faint and weary, they would fain escape his searching rays.

Thus, almost spent, they at length reach *the mountain top* (the summit of their ambition), and pause to gaze in silent admiration on the deep broad plain beneath; where, far as the eye can range, the narrow track they have so lately and so diligently followed appears at intervals winding awhile, then, lost in some ravine, growing still fainter and fainter, till it altogether fails to attract their straining eyes, and leaves them contemplating the surpassing scenery of the peaceful vale. Ah! then alone, when far removed, do they realize the full extent and beauty of what they have already left behind.

So we, in childhood, enter the first race of life; while yet futurity, "looming in the distance," affords no striking

object of attraction. We do as bidden, simply because we trust the superior understanding that age has imparted to our instructors; and thenceforth our mind, conscious of its wants, beholds, in increasing age, *the one key* which opens every door between the tedious present and the bright hopeful future. No pains are spared, no means are left untried, to raise ourselves in the estimation of our fellow-beings, and gain the same level as those before us on the uphill path of life.

Thus, as we advance in years, new fields of enterprise and fresh competitors present themselves, stimulating us to increased action, and awakening us to the difficulty attending the acquisition of any thing really great or valuable. Still, however, flushed with the achievements of the past, we feel no fear; but like good travellers, following the plain path (of duty) which lies before us, and spurning all behind, we pass each long stage, surmount each obstacle, till at the last we reach that crowning point, which, whilst it wreathes the brow with manhood and raises our standing to the highest rank of all creation, opens to view before us the vast amphitheatre wherein we have to run the great race of life, with all its ups and downs, its gloomy shades and sunny hills bounded by the unfathomable ocean of eternity.

Well, indeed, may we turn and contemplate the past, when thus about to commit ourselves to the uncertain future! And so it was that I, having arrived at the long-hoped for *twenty-first milestone of my journey*, for the first time looked back, and surveyed the path I had so diligently pursued. I thought how many started with me on this selfsame journey, who never lived to accomplish

half their task! How many of those who did attain that point would use their privileges without abusing them! And how few would be prepared, should they at that moment be summoned, to "lay them down," and make that their journey's end! Then, too, it was I learned the true value of those happy hours of childhood, when to obey a mother's voice, or gain her approbation, is esteemed not *an obligation*, but *a joyful privilege:* when, free from every care, we wake with the rising sun only to meet with tenderness and love; when, strangers to the hard usage of the world, false friends and open enemies, the voice of slander, toils of business, and pinching hand of want, we think all hearts as open and as happy as our own.

But though my path had kept me clear of many of the stumbling-blocks which so often waylay youth, still it had brought me to a nervous state of anxiety about my future course of life; and perchance there may be others—like myself—who will feel it no disgrace to own, that, lost amidst Greek choruses and Latin prose; puzzled with surds and chances; replete with formulæ; perplexed with integrals and Newton's lemmas—they have at times been driven to despair, and almost forced to yield in utter hopelessness to the stern difficulties which beset their path.

It was the first of March. Ah! well do I remember—as though it were but yesterday—how I took my seat in my snug room at Cambridge upon that morning, while yet the grey twilight only sufficed to show the neighbouring housetops whitened by a passing snow-storm. The old *six o'clock* bell was pouring forth its iron-tongue strains, and calling drowsy students to quit their beds, to apply

themselves to study. The cutting wind, drifting the snowy sleet, came howling through the casement. In vain the easy-chair and glowing fire lent their cheering influence, and bade me read as usual. But, no! the very elements appeared to join in fanning the flame of restless melancholy, and heaping strange forebodings of things to come on my already heated brain. When I looked back, and thought of the days and nights spent on that row of musty books, and considered how little had been accomplished, compared with what still remained to be "got up" within the next three eventful years; when I surveyed the dread "Littlego" and "Tripos," with all their attendant horrors; I fancied myself already "plucked," or "gulphed," or "spoon;" but never thought of substituting Caffre clicks for Grecian accents, or Caffre picks for pens and paper.

As hour after hour rolled away and left me still musing over the cheerful fire (my only comforter), I thought of the folly of thus wasting precious time, and strove to smother the all-engrossing melancholy suggestions of my mind, by having recourse to my daily occupations, till, loathing the very sight of books and papers, pens and ink, I at last rushed from my room, and sought to drown the remembrance of the ugly picture I had conjured in my mind, by joining in the society and lively mirth of college friends. But, even there, the unwelcome thought would oft intrude itself:—How goes the time? How stands the work? And then, determined to prevail, again I sought my silent chamber, and applied myself with increased diligence to the tedious task; till at length, weary of the world, with all its toils and cares, I fell asleep.

How long I thus indulged myself I cannot say; but the

day had already closed when I was suddenly roused by the visit of a younger brother, who, too, was in an unsettled state, having lately been much thwarted in his undertakings. Drawing the curtains close to shut out the dismal night, he took the opposite seat at the fireside, and related all the troubles he had encountered, his disappointments, and his blighted hopes.

While thus we sat musing on our respective positions, the thought presented itself of seeking our fortunes in foreign lands. At first we treated it as a matter of pleasant speculation, to think of the romance attending a wild colonial life, in back-woods and prairies. Soon, however, the freedom and primitive happiness of such a course of life took so firm a hold of our imaginations, that we quite envied the happy lot of those of patriarchal times, who, free from the noise and bustle of the busy world, the stiff formalities of modern life, with all the vain distinctions for which so many toil—found their enjoyment in some rural spot, tending the bleating flocks and lowing herds, surrounded with fruitful orchards, brilliant flowers, with figs and vines (the ornaments of trees).

Strange it may appear that any one should wish to go back to ancient modes of living, or seek to exchange a student's life for the rough usages of settlers or emigrants; but so it was; and that very night we pledged ourselves to take passages by the first ship, and set sail for Port Natal, South Africa, at that time only just become a portion of the Queen's dominions, and scarcely known, except as a land where half-crowns would buy broad acres, and "where a perpetual summer reigned throughout the entire year."

Having formed a rough sketch of our line of operations,

it became necessary, in the next place, to break the unwelcome intelligence of this new design to our parents, and to obtain their consent and co-operation.

I do not purpose, however, going through all the little circumstances of those anxious days; to say—how many times fond parents urged us to wait awhile, and consider well before entering on so hazardous an undertaking—how some kind friends endeavoured to console them by saying, that "When we saw the sea we should be quite satisfied, and quietly return"—how others, doubtless with good intentions, reminded us of the prodigal son and his fate—or how one gentleman in particular (a former school-fellow, but then a fellow of a college), advised us "to keep in hand always sufficient money to pay a passage home again"—or finally, how some few (real friends), reserving to themselves the opinions they might chance to entertain of the motives and result of *our* expedition, supplied us with various articles that could not fail of being useful, either to ourselves or the benighted "Zulu Caffres," amongst whom we were about to dwell.

Far be it from me, however, to think lightly of the admonitions and recommendations expressed at those trying moments, now that we have safely returned, and after that success has rewarded our hardships and labours in those distant climes. On the contrary, I know too well, that recollections of the "doubts and fears" (shall I say sneers?) expressed by *old friends*, acted as goads, and urged us to perseverance, when otherwise we might have yielded to pleasure or despair; but, at the same time, this thing I also know, "that many a shivering Caffre has had to thank fair hands for a warm covering from the keen night air,

that would have been compelled to lie and sleep in the cold piercing wind without a garment, had all our friends afforded nothing more than best wishes and kind admonitions."

A month, so spent, soon fled, and brought the first of April (an appropriate day for setting out on such an enterprise, as the aforesaid school *fellow* shrewdly remarked). However, neither the day nor warning sufficed to keep us from starting, nor slackened the speed with which the ruthless train bore us from our old home, with all its endearments; whilst each moment served to widen the distance between us and those we left behind, whose tender care had hitherto supplied our *every want.* Fields, roads, church steeples, all came flying past, almost as quickly to hide themselves in far obscurity. The ploughman seemed to cast a wistful eye, and long for a team like ours. The very sheep ceased—for a moment—to crop the tender grass, and raised their heads to take a parting peep.

I will not attempt to describe the route from Cambridge to Liverpool—that I will leave for others—better qualified, and more disposed, to do. For my own part, so thoroughly was I wearied with the incessant rattling, the noise and dust, the constant change of passengers, and their variety of character—some sitting in sullen silence, indulging in secret thoughts—others affording merriment to all around —here some all-important gentleman in stiff cravat, disdaining even a glance at his next neighbours (a burly farmer and his careful wife) regaling themselves with home-made sandwiches, and something good to wash them down —while yonder, occupying a compartment to themselves, sat a knot of drunken jockeys, or men of some such calling, all gambling, swearing, and smoking promiscuously. And

so bewildered with uncouth names of stations, and pitch dark tunnels—that I gladly concluded my first day's journey, by sitting down to a comfortable dinner (or rather supper), at a quiet old-fashioned inn in the good old town of Manchester.

It is needless to say how soundly we slept—how the various scenes, occurrences, and faces of the previous day kept rising in our dreams—or how we still felt the jolting of the train, until we awoke, and found ourselves sunk deep in the soft down feather-bed.

The day had long commenced before we found our way into the coffee-room, and despatched breakfast. The streets, close packed with vehicles and ponderous drays, were pouring forth a never-ceasing din. Crowds of haggard, half-starved beings, were wandering about—wending their way, some here, some there—contrasting strangely with the princely wealth on every side displayed in such profusion, and raising in the mind one wonder:—"Where they all came from?"

However, as time would not allow us either to observe their way of procuring a subsistence, or to commiserate their wretched lot, we quickly despatched what little business we had to transact, took—for the last time—our seats in the rattling train, and soon reached Liverpool.

Once safely at the port of embarkation, our first business was to seek out the "Prince's Dock," and make inquiries for our ship, the ——, which we very soon found, painted and polished from stem to stern, with colours flying from her mizen top, and with a huge placard, posted on the ship side, bearing her name and destination, besides detailing the superiority of her accommodations for passengers.

CHAPTER II.

THE DELAY.—DISPOSITION OF OUR STOCK OF CAPITAL.—INTERNAL FITTINGS OF AN EMIGRANT SHIP.—A RAMBLE ABOUT LIVERPOOL BY NIGHT.—FIRST NIGHT ON BOARD.—LADIES IN THE ADJOINING CABINS.—QUITTING OUR NATIVE LAND —LYING AT ANCHOR IN THE MERSEY.—GETTING UNDER WEIGH.—SEA-SICKNESS.—GALE IN THE "CHOPS OF THE CHANNEL."

THERE is nothing more annoying to travellers, than to arrive at their vessel punctually on the appointed day, only to find themselves a week too soon. Delay, at all times irksome, is doubly so when a fair wind is blowing steadily, and promising a good commencement of the voyage. To us, especially, the loss of time was any thing but agreeable: situated, as we were, at a considerable distance from home, our baggage shipped, our cash limited and only just sufficient to meet our expenditure for the first few weeks in the colony.

I should have mentioned the way in which we had invested our capital (of about three hundred pounds). Our passages took fifty, entitling us at the same time to a farm of one hundred acres in the colony. Next, we had shipped not quite two hundred pounds' worth of merchandise on board the ill-fated Indiaman ——, including a valuable corn-mill. By the same vessel we had in fact engaged passages at the time of sending our goods on board, but most providentially, owing to some mistake, the berths were all filled up; so that her charterer was compelled to

give us passages by a Liverpool vessel, on board of which latter ship, as I before remarked, we had placed our personal baggage; so that, after this heavy outlay, our cash was reduced to barely ninety pounds, and of this we had been induced to transmit fifty, by means of Byrne, the projector of the emigration scheme under which we were going out. Unwilling, therefore, to fritter away our time or money, and having now been waiting five long days, we received with no small delight the announcement, that our ship would really start early the following morning; and, as we purposed sleeping on board that night, it was necessary to repair to the vessel, and arrange our cabin before dark, for *lights* are never allowed within the precincts of the docks.

Our ship was of about eight hundred tons burden, with raised poop cabins, so that the "intermediate," in which we had taken passages, occupied the whole deck abaft the mainmast; a long fixed table, fitted for thirty sittings, ran from end to end, leaving a width of six feet on either side between it and the sleeping compartments. At frequent intervals, solid blocks of glass were sunk in the planking of the deck above, in order to admit light; and, altogether, it was a very comfortable dining-room.

The cabin, in which our berths had been allotted, consisted of a small room some eight feet square, with four long boxes resembling hastily made coffins, fixed two on the ground and two over head, leaving just room enough besides to stow away a few small boxes and sundry indispensables. And of course, as *we* arrived first, we took care to appropriate the two "bunks," as the aforesaid coffin-like boxes are called, that possessed the largest share of sky-

light, to our own use; made up our beds in the said bunks; packed a few books on a shelf for use on the voyage; lashed our boxes firmly to the ship's fixtures; and made all things ready for finding our way to bed at midnight.

We had scarcely concluded the operation, when the third fellow-occupant of our cabin, a gentleman from Douglas, in the Isle of Man, made his appearance on a similar errand, and took the next best berth; affording us considerable amusement at the ingenuity and tact with which he proceeded to make for himself a snug berth.

Leaving our new companion—whom I shall hereafter speak of as the Manxman—to complete his arrangements, we found our way on deck; and, having made another inspection of the ship, quitted the docks, and rambled over the town till dark, and I must confess that the idea I there formed of Liverpool was any thing but a favourable one. Indeed, the perpetual din; the thousands of ragged Irish fighting and swearing; the black mud, almost shoe deep, which every where prevailed; the endless stream of ponderous carts and drays; jaded policemen in faded uniforms, spattered from head to foot with dirt; barefooted girls, walking bolt upright under huge burdens, well balanced on their heads; the boisterous mirth of drunken sailors, just returned to their native shores after a long absence in some distant clime;—all these, I say, left in my mind impressions which neither years of wandering, hard days of labour, the depths of poverty, nor the returning sunshine of prosperity, have hitherto sufficed to obliterate.

At length night came; the streets began to lose their busy throngs; the brilliant gas-lights, which a few hours before had made the vast shop fronts a dazzling blaze, now

for the most part vanished. Knots of suspicious-looking characters still hung about the dark corners of the streets, and, with the exception of a few drunken stragglers reeling home and solitary policemen, were the only living creatures, besides ourselves, who roamed abroad.

It was near midnight before we succeeded in gaining our ship, and found our way below. Once on board the right vessel, we soon groped our way down the pitch-dark hatchway, and stretched our weary limbs in the long narrow wooden berths.

The Manxman had already "turned in," to use a phrase, and immediately commenced an account of his adventures since parting with us in the morning. We, however, were in no mood for talking, having been on foot all day, and consequently being rather tired, so that the conversation soon died away, and every thing on board was silent as the grave.

Upwards of an hour had elapsed, when suddenly the stillness of the night was relieved by the merriment of a party of ladies and gentlemen, who were evidently trying to find their berths in the dark. At first they directed their course towards our cabin door, and I began to consider how awkward it would be, should they make a mistake of a cabin, and come tumbling in amongst us. Soon, however, they passed our door, and took possession of the two adjoining cabins, where they commenced making up their beds, and stowing away packages, which in the dark was any thing but an easy task.

Now I should remark, in constructing the different little cabins, a small space had been left open, a few inches wide, round the top of each, more effectually to ventilate

the berths, so that the mirth of our young companions in the adjacent cabins, was just as audible as though in our own; and, as I supposed myself to be the only person awake in the cabin occupied by us, I thought it was becoming high time for me to give some intimation of our close proximity, when all at once a laughable occurrence took place in one of the cabins, which sent my brother and the Manxman into convulsions, and quite silenced our merry neighbours.

When morning came, we found our way on deck, and introduced ourselves to the fellow-passengers that we had heard, but had not seen, on the previous night. Since our coming on board, the ship had moved from the quay side to the centre of the dock, ready for slipping out into the basin at high tide.

By this time, the greater portion of the passengers were on board: in number, about one hundred and fifty. Amongst them I observed a few of the better class; the rest, being working tradesmen, small farmers, a few farm labourers, some shop-boys, and a goodly sprinkling of riff-raff, who, I imagine, were proceeding to the colony for the purpose of pursuing their very questionable avocations with greater freedom than they could enjoy in England, with its effective police establishments.

As the clock struck nine we passed through the dock gates into the basin, where we had the misfortune to run foul of a small brig, and carried away a portion of her rigging. We soon got clear, however, and, having been made fast to a tug, quickly passed the basin, and made for the river.

I should here observe, that at the outset I had managed to scramble into the shrouds, from whence I had an

excellent view of all that was going on below. Immediately beneath where I was sitting stood the gentlemen and ladies of the preceding evening, of whom I shall have occasion to say a little hereafter, under the title of our "Scotch friends." Near them stood an old careworn man, bent almost double, surrounded by a young family of motherless children. Hard by these again lay an old bedridden gentleman, attended by a ladylike woman (his wife), and a daughter of fifteen. Collected in yonder corner of the vessel, a group of blushing maidens—politely waited on by all the young gallants on board—were smiling and shedding tears alternately: reminding me forcibly of the sunshine and passing showers of an April day. The rustic portion of the passengers seemed quite bewildered with what was going on around them—standing about in knots of four and five, just as they came on board, loaded with bundles and baskets, with arms full of crying children, attired in holiday costume, and gazing with open eyes and mouths at the strange spectacle, of which they themselves formed no inconsiderable part.

As we approached the river we found a dense crowd of well-dressed people assembled on the pier, and lining the narrow outlet, waiting to give us a parting cheer on quitting our native shore. It was, indeed, an animating sight to see the hearty good-will impressed on the countenances of our fellow-countrymen as we took our last farewell of them, although I did not fail to catch a glimpse of—here and there—a tearful eye; and even in the long loud hurrah could plainly hear the plaintive cry and deep stifled sob of parents parting with their much-loved children—parting, never again to meet in this world.

Once fairly in the river Mersey, we cast anchor, and remained motionless for the rest of the day, for the purpose of enabling the sailors to get somewhat sober before going to sea—a plan which, I understand, is generally adopted in "Liverpool" vessels.

The view from the position in which we lay was very imposing: on one side ran the endless line of docks, as far as could be seen each way, crowded with shipping, so as to present an unbroken forest of towering masts, at the heads of which were floating the colours of every nation, from the American liner to the stately Indiaman. In the rear of these, again, stood terraces of lofty warehouses, packed story upon story, till they reached almost to the clouds; turning to the opposite side of the river, there lay Birkenhead—with its unfinished docks and piers—backed by the Cheshire hills; while countless steamers, freighted with human beings, kept flitting every where throughout the day.

Before leaving the docks in the morning we had neglected to get breakfast, intending to do so soon after anchoring in the river; but, so thoroughly engrossed were we with what was going on around us, that the day had wellnigh closed before we thought of getting our morning meal.

However, discovering all at once that we were hungry; we managed to procure some fresh boiled beef (at least they called it such); and then, tumbling into our berths, we fell asleep, and never awoke till late next morning, when, the stir of the sailors on deck, and their chant "cheerly-hoy-ho," gave notice that the anchor was being weighed.

Up to this time, the fourth berth in our cabin had been unoccupied, and we three (that is, the Manxman, my brother and myself) had agreed to apply it to our private use, as a common cupboard. But our plan was suddenly frustrated; for, just as the steam-tug was in the act of making fast the hawser, a small boat pulled alongside, and in half a minute our complement of passengers was increased by a stout hearty gentleman, in the prime of life, all bustle and confusion, running against every body, and begging every body's pardon, carrying his entire baggage about with him, consisting of a carpet bag, a German flute, and horse-rug. Some doubts were entertained at first whether the new visiter could be accommodated on board, as he had not taken a passage beforehand; but, hearing from one of the crew that we had taken a berth for the purpose of a cupboard, the captain immediately allotted it to him, and forthwith bundled our goods and chattels out on the deck. However, the loss of the cupboard was more than compensated by the accession of a most agreeable companion for the remainder of the voyage.

We were now fairly under weigh; and, under the combined influence of wind and steam, were quickly losing sight of Liverpool. Old Holyhead was growing more distinct each moment; while the snow-white church steeples, which dot this portion of the Welsh coast, appeared like landmarks to guide the hardy mariner along his trackless course. By four o'clock that afternoon we had rounded Holyhead, and taken leave of the smoky tug.

I should have remarked that, at first starting, every body on board was full of spirits; music and dancing, cheering

and singing, the loud laugh, the gay dress, bright smiling faces, and little pleasantries, were all the order of the day; but now the scene was sadly changed. Two long rows of heads, with faces ghastly pale, reaching over the bulwarks on either side—regardless of the sailor's cry of "D—— you! go to leeward"—afforded unmistakeable evidence of the effect produced already, and augured ill of what must be expected when we should be tossing in the stormy "Bay of Biscay." Nor did the "fair sex" escape the unwelcome visiter; but they, too, had to yield their tribute to "father Neptune." Indeed it was a piteous sight to behold the condition of poor helpless women, scattered about the decks, propped up with packages of merchandise or coils of rope; unable to obtain the least assistance from their husbands (who, in many cases, were far more helpless than their weaker helpmates), no longer mindful of the fancy bonnet and costly dress; but, sunk on the dirty deck—groaning aloud—half dead—they lay, and hid their faces in their hands to weep.

For some time, I and my brother paced the deck in silence, contemplating the scene of misery around. At length a queer sensation stole over us, which quickly induced us to rest ourselves against the raised skylight on deck. However, it was of no use, for every pitch the vessel gave, stirred up afresh the boiling element within our breasts; until the distress became no longer bearable, and compelled us to join the pale gaping row that lined the bulwarks.

The breeze had now freshened almost to a gale. The little tug we had so lately cast off, was fast sinking in the far horizon. On one side the coast of Wales, lighted

by the beams of the setting sun, appeared, just visible, in the distance. On the other side, all was swelling wave, crested with white fleecy foam, as far as the eye could see.

Another hour, and every vestige of land had vanished. The evening, too, was cold and damp; we therefore crawled below, where, having procured a few slices of the aforesaid beef, a hard ship biscuit, and a cup of tea, we stretched ourselves along the narrow berths of our cabin, and sought relief from our sufferings in sleep.

The "Manxman" and "stout gentleman" had already made the discovery that *lying down* was the easiest posture during sea-sickness, and, accordingly, were lying (the former in his comfortable bed, and the stout gentleman enveloped in his horse rug), endeavouring to fall asleep, each contemplating the unpleasant reality of their first night at sea.

As we were now far away from port, they allowed us to have lights below deck; so that, by means of lamps suspended from the deck above, the intermediate dining compartment (into which our cabin doors all opened) was tolerably well lighted; and, by throwing open our doors, we were enabled to procure a little light—a very valuable addition to the scanty comforts of a sick chamber, especially at sea.

There was not much sleep on board that night; for what with the sea-sickness, the motion of the vessel, the murmuring of the passengers, squalling children below, and swearing crew above, it was impossible either to sleep or lie awake with comfort.

I have often heard the old proverb, that "It never rains

but it pours," and this was most completely exemplified in the case of our "stout gentleman." For it was not sufficient for him to be in the same miserable condition as the rest of us; but he was doomed to lose his only bed (his horse rug). I should have stated, previously, that our "stout friend" had a sister on board, who, with her husband and a large family of young children, were going out to settle at Natal. Now, in the middle of the night, it happened that some of these children commenced crying out for more blankets; and, not having any to give them, the steward was despatched for "dear old uncle's horse rug." I certainly was in no mood for laughing; but I could not forbear a smile at hearing the hasty old gentleman confounding the ship, the waves, the steward, and the day he came to sea; and then, laughing at his misfortunes, quietly part with his warm rug to comfort his little favourites. However, as it was rather too much for a joke to be suffering from cold and sea-sickness at the same time (and, I may remark, the Irish Channel is very cold in the early part of April), I therefore took the opportunity of offering him one of my blankets, which of course was readily accepted; and thus I made my first acquaintance with my afterwards esteemed friend ——.

Twelve long hours of ceaseless rocking had failed to send me to sleep, when the cook sent a large kettle of coffee down for breakfast: at the report of which, we, and a score or more fellow-passengers, managed to crawl from our berths, and, having obtained a tolerable cup of coffee, we staggered on deck, so thoroughly exhausted by our night's illness, that we gladly breathed again the cool, fresh sea air; then wrapping ourselves up in great-coats, and securing

comfortable seats on deck, we watched the angry waves as they skipped and gamboled, rising and falling, and bounding our view in every direction.

Flocks of seagulls were skimming over the troubled surface of the hoary deep, now just dipping their wings; then with their wild, shrill scream, hovering on high above the tall masts, and, as if in mockery of our poor speed, shooting past, leaving us far, far behind. There, too, were "Mother Cary's chickens," flying so near as almost to tempt one to make a grasp at them. These, the superstitious sailors think, are the ghosts of drowned mariners; and any attempt to injure or frighten them away, would be looked upon by them as being a direct insult to the memory of the dead.

Throughout the day, the wind, though favourable for taking us on our course, had been exceedingly boisterous. The clouds, heavily laden with moisture, were scarcely higher than our main royal; but, as the day closed, a thick small rain commenced: the wind, moreover, chopped round, and put us on the "larboard tack;" while every now and then a big wave would come tumbling over the bows, drenching any one that chanced to stand in its way.

Cold, wet, and hungry, we went below that night, with sundry misgivings of the sufferings to be endured down in the densely packed cabins before the light of another day shone out upon us. The heavy sea, running across our course; the strong head wind; the constant rush of water; the half-battened hatches; the execrable stench, arising from the filthy state in which the sleeping compartments had become (from the sickness of their occupants): these, all together, were not at all likely to improve the condition of

invalids, or make illness more bearable. So that, almost out of heart, we once more sought relief in sleep, by stretching ourselves along the cheerless berths; and thus for fourteen successive days and nights we lay, unable to stir, except to crawl to the breakfast or dinner table for a biscuit and drop of water: during the whole of which period we were beating about in the "Chops of the Channel," with a regular storm of wind and rain "dead a-head."

Sometimes, as the ship was pitching and tossing, a huge wave would come rushing down the gangway, flooding the berths immediately below, and, when it ceased, we felt as though we could almost have welcomed it, had it continued, and relieved us from our present miserable condition by sinking the frail craft beneath the raging billows. But then the voice of conscience would awaken in the mind a sense of the sinfulness of indulging in thoughts like these; and forthwith a messenger of comfort would whisper to the drooping heart the cheering words, "Peace, be still!" there is now, as in the days of old, one close by, "who holds the waters in the hollow of his hand; who maketh the storm to cease, and the waves thereof be still."

CHAPTER III.

REMEDY FOR SEA-SICKNESS—HOW CONTRACTS ARE KEPT IN EMIGRANT SHIPS—CONDITION OF THE SHIP AFTER A FORTNIGHT'S VOYAGE—A WORD ON THE MERCHANT SERVICE—ILL TREATMENT OF YOUNG SAILOR LADS—SMOKING IN BED ALLOWED—REACH THE CANARIES—SUNDAY SERVICE—CATCH THE "TRADE WINDS."

OUR fortnight's knocking about had carried us but three days' ordinary run from Liverpool; for, although our ship had been constantly moving through the water at a rapid rate, still it was not in her right course; so that we had been driven round two-thirds of the coast of Ireland. Fair weather, however, came at last, and not only helped us on our journey, but produced a wonderful improvement in the sick list as well; although there still remained a considerable number who grew no better, and were fast sinking from sheer exhaustion.

Amongst this latter class, I and my brother were included: on deck or below, it was all the same: too ill to help ourselves, and too little cared for to meet with attention from our fellow-passengers (who of course had families or friends of their own to attend to). I know not how we should have ultimately fared, had not one of the "Scotchmen," an old sea traveller, assisted us on this trying occasion, by waiting on us occasionally, and prevailing on us to eat and drink (by no means an easy task during sea-sickness).

However, at this juncture, just as we were giving up all

hopes of recovery, something possessed my mind that a cup of chocolate would do me good; and, as I had a small quantity in one of the boxes, I took the first opportunity of giving my kind friend the key, and requested him to make me a good cup. I had some difficulty in persuading myself to take it at first; but, after having troubled my friend, I was ashamed not to drink it, and therefore made an effort, swallowed the chocolate, and in ten minutes was as well as at the present moment.

Of course my first impulse was to try the same experiment on my brother, and, to my delight, the effect was exactly similar; which induced me to offer the agreeable remedy to all the remaining sick passengers; and, I am bound to say, that in no single case did it prove ineffectual, though the cures were not all so rapid as in our own cases. I may also observe that, since then, I have found chocolate to be an almost infallible cure for retching, either at sea or on land.

But, to return to the voyage, our fair wind soon brought us to the Bay of Biscay, where we again enjoyed a considerable amount of shaking. At length we reached the sunny coasts of Spain and Portugal; and, though too far off to distinguish much, still we esteemed it something to have had even a glimpse of the famous "Peninsula."

Sailing slowly along, we passed the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, and arrived off Morocco; where, falling in with a succession of adverse winds, we stood on and off: sometimes being near enough to obtain a good view of the coast of Africa: at other times, only just catching sight of the mountain tops, low down over the curling waves.

I will here endeavour to describe the state of affairs on board. In the first place, it was quite clear that we had come to sea "short-handed" (to use the sailors' term); relying, probably, upon the assistance of the emigrants. Next, scarcely any of the conditions (required by our contract for the voyage) were kept by the captain; for instance, we had especially agreed for the attendance of a cook and steward for the *intermediate cabin;* but, no sooner were we fairly out at sea, than the captain informed us that "we, the steerage passengers and sailors, would have but one cook between us;" and that, with respect to a steward, "there was not one for us, and therefore we must either scrub the decks, and keep the cabins clean ourselves, or hire a person to do it for us;" threatening, at the same time, "to put us on short allowance unless we complied."

We therefore complained to the doctor, who should be (but never is) the representative of the emigrants on the voyage, in all matters relating to their welfare or comfort, and told him that, though the cook did his utmost, yet that it was quite impossible for one man to cook provisions for near two hundred people, at a small stove not more than a yard square. He, however (as a matter of course), sided with the captain; and so we were obliged to submit, having first engaged an excellent steward from amongst the steerage passengers, and raised a subscription to defray the consequent expense.

The constant withholding of some part of the stipulated provisions was another annoying breach of contract, and of daily occurrence; for, instead of faring according to the liberal dietary scale with which we had each been carefully

provided before taking our passages, we had to be contented with the coarse fare of the common sailors and lowest class of emigrants, during two-thirds of the voyage.

A fortnight's living in this way had produced an indescribable effect on board amongst the passengers. "Number one" was every thing with every body. A plate, a knife and fork, or spoon—even your bed-clothes and dirty linen—were not secure for an instant, unless constantly under your eye. Indeed, so daring had the light-fingered gentlemen become, that a gammon of bacon was stolen from us, and my pocket picked of a small book during Divine Service, the second Sunday we were at sea. And, what was still more amusing, a sheep that the captain had had killed for the first cabin table, was every bit stolen before the following morning.

The dining-room, too, had become a perfect pigsty, and the sleeping compartments were in a still worse plight, solely from the want of a steward. Under the table of the former, and in every convenient spot, were heaped remnants of former dinners, soup tins, beef bones, and empty bottles; while tea leaves, coffee grounds, washings of plates and dishes, good oatmeal, split peas, and mouldy biscuits, strewed the deck in every direction.

It was, indeed, no small change, to have quitted my snug, clean, comfortable rooms at Cambridge, to come to such a scene as this!

There was, however, some consolation in knowing, that we were not the *only* ones in this predicament. Indeed, we might almost congratulate each other on being bachelors in such a case. But, as there were several gentlemen on board who had wives, it was not sufficient

to content ourselves with being no worse off than our neighbours; and we therefore set to work (as I before observed) and engaged a steward, besides appointing a couple of messmen and two constables, by which salutary measures we hoped to establish a certain degree of order.

But beyond these discomforts, and the annoyances to which we were constantly exposed from the mixed character of the passengers, there were still more serious causes of complaint, which, combined with the apathy of the captain in all matters beyond the urging of the vessel through the water, was nearly proving destructive to the ship and all her human cargo, on more than one occasion; for the captain having brought out a large stock of spirits, retailed them out quite indiscriminately to all who liked to purchase; so that, not only was drunkenness universal amongst the lower class of passengers, but the crew also were continually re-purchasing the spirits from them, and all getting "gloriously drunk" together. On one of these occasions I heard the captain say, "That, had it come on to blow hard, nothing could have saved us," as there was not a man on board sober enough to take a sail in.

I will here make a slight diversion from my subject, in order to say a word on the *ordinary* class of "merchant captains." I say "ordinary class," because I *have* met with exceptions. And I feel satisfied that any person who has studied the difference of bearing between "a captain on shore" and "a captain at sea," will fully corroborate my assertions. In the first place, education is wholly neglected in nine cases out of ten, and, as a substitute for it, the unfortunate beings are obliged to assume a false and superficial polish when in port, in order to conceal more

completely their ignorance and bad breeding. But no sooner do they get to sea, and become masters (in the fullest sense of the word) of their vessels, than they throw off the garb, and at once return to their natural state. Imperious, impatient of advice, unable to command respect by their superiority over their crews, they have recourse to the blackguard's usual expedient, and strive to awe into submission those who may fall under their power, by pouring forth volleys of oaths, and playing the tyrant to perfection. Secondly, and, as might be expected from their own want of education, they pay no regard to the moral wellbeing of their crews. Indeed, so far from any improvement being encouraged by them amongst the men, I have known cases in which men have had extra work imposed upon them merely because they have employed their own leisure hours in self-improvement. Now, this ought not to be the case. For it should be remembered, that a very large portion of our merchant sailors are the children of respectable people. Nay, I have myself met with more than one common sailor whose father is a clergyman; and many, very many, who have been well and tenderly brought up, but who, through some caprice or misfortune, have taken to the sea. Such, then, being the case, how easy would it be to alter the present reckless character of merchant seamen, by bestowing a little attention on their comfort and improvement on their first entering the service, instead of allowing them to be (as at present) the jaded fags of the whole crew, the butts of petty officers, and subjects for the captain to "*rope's end*" whenever a fit of ill-temper, or the desire of shewing off, comes across him.

I cannot, however, quit this subject (although I fear I may seem tedious) without giving two instances of the wanton barbarity of the older towards the younger hands, that I have met with during my short journeyings at sea.

The first case that I shall mention was that of an inhuman brute, a common sailor, towards a newly entered apprentice. It happened that the sailor had told the lad (who I may remark had been well brought up) to wash some dirty clothes for him; but the lad refusing, was at once knocked down, and held with his head beneath the sailor's foot for more than a quarter of an hour; during which time the poor little fellow was crying out with pain, but still possessed too much spirit to submit. At length an officer, who was looking on, remarked, "You must let the obstinate young dog escape this time!" and with that, and another box on the ears, the poor lad got off.

The other case was, perhaps, more justifiable, the victim, a lad of eighteen, having been found at the wheel in an intoxicated state, though not so drunk as to be unable to steer. In fact (to use a sailor's phrase), he was "three parts groggy." However, it afforded ample opportunity for the captain to display his natural brutish disposition; for, walking up to him, he felled him to the deck with a heavy ship's telescope, and at once chained him down on his back, and ordered the mate to draw buckets of water, with which he amused himself, by doucing it upon the poor creature for nearly an hour. At length he grew tired of the exertion, and went below, leaving the sailor in his drenched clothes—unable to stir hand or foot—chained to the deck all night, with the thermometer nearly down to freezing point. I need hardly say, that when released

next morning, the poor creature staggered to his berth almost insensible, and more like a walking ghost than a fine, young, strong, active man. Surely the owners of "merchantmen," who live at home in ease and luxury—who live in a Christian country—who live as Christian men—who would shrink from the disgrace of being found guilty of cruelty to dumb animals—surely, these men cannot be sensible of the barbarities practised by those to whom they entrust their noble vessels, their costly merchandise, and lastly, the lives of their hardy sailors.

But, to return to my subject. A few of the more reckless amongst the passengers had taken a strong fancy to drink and smoke in their beds throughout the greater portion of the night. Now, tobacco fumes are not the sweetest when you are in bed, trying to sleep: nor are the thoughts of being burnt at sea the most agreeable to people in their prime of life, still hoping for many happy years. Accordingly, I made it my business to remonstrate with the offenders; and, as that had no effect, I gave information to the captain, who, however, took no notice of the matter beyond thanking me, and laughing at my timidity. However, to get a more favourable view of affairs, I will proceed with the voyage. Leaving Madeira to our left, we fell in with a gentle breeze that quickly brought us to the Canary Isles, amongst which we found ourselves becalmed on a Sunday morning, it being the *fourth* since leaving Liverpool. And I must confess, that whatever might have been our hardships and annoyances up to that time, they were far more than compensated by the sublimity of the picture that there presented itself.

We had no idea of being near any land; so that when

daylight came, and discovered us lying perfectly motionless, almost enclosed by floating islands, we began to fancy it a pleasant dream; but as the morning clouds rolled off, and brought to view the outlines of distant mountains, the well-cultivated slopes of hills, diversified with many coloured soil, dotted over with simple homesteads, and almost lost in the deep, rich foliage of vines and orange groves, we then came to the conclusion that it was no dream, but a glorious reality.

Scattered about, within a mile or so of each other, lay twelve large ships, all outward bound, freighted with German and English emigrants; and, like ourselves, becalmed. An unusual stillness pervaded the whole scene. The clear blue sky above, the unruffled surface of the limpid water, the lifeless hulls of the little fleet close by, seemed as though conscious of the sacred day of rest; and all the while the lofty peak of Teneriffe soaring on high, appeared to raise the mind from things below, and point towards heaven.

The day, the place, the past—all combined—produced a universal wish that service should be performed on deck; and, the doctor having expressed his willingness to officiate, we agreed to assemble, early in the forenoon for that purpose, on the poop of the noble vessel.

Accordingly, at ten o'clock the tolling of a bell gave notice of preparation, and shortly afterwards the passengers began to assemble, ranging themselves in rows on the quarter-deck, the women being seated on forms, and the men either standing or sitting on the deck. Precisely at eleven the crew marched aft, and drew up in two lines across the stern. At the same time the doctor took his

place at a raised stand, hastily constructed for the occasion, and covered with the Union Jack, on which lay a handsome Prayer-book and Bible. Every thing being now ready, the service commenced with the "Morning Hymn," in which all joined, young and old—those who could sing, and those who could not—with an earnestness which plainly showed that the danger we had already experienced was not forgotten, nor our deliverance from it disregarded, The same might be said of the whole service, which was conducted throughout with the greatest order and decorum; and which very much improved the opinion I had formed of my fellow-passengers.

But much as we enjoyed a day thus spent, amid such surpassing scenery, breathing the sweet balmy air, and resting from all our toils; still that enjoyment was far, very far, surpassed by the indescribable beauties of the succeeding night. The setting sun, while sinking behind the island of Teneriffe, and throwing a sombre shade over its fertile hills and dales, was lighting up the opposite island of Canary with his parting rays, frowning on the one only to smile the more kindly on the more favoured sister.

With the declining day a gentle ripple began to agitate the hitherto placid surface of the transparent deep; and warned us of an approaching breeze. Only a few moments intervened before the hinder vessels had caught the soft gale, and were in motion towards the position in which we lay. At length, we too partook of its cheering influence, though only just sufficient to poise the drooping sails, and give a slow motion to the inert mass of beams and planks, on which—a little world of our own—we dwelt.

To gain the outlet, we had to pass athwart the bows of several of our fellow-travellers, who, as we approached, lined the rigging and thronged the decks, to cheer us on our journey and be cheered themselves in turn.

The sun had, by this time, wholly vanished from our view, though brilliant trains of sparks still shot from his place of hiding, illuminating the western quarter of the heavens, and tinging the few light clouds that floated on high with all the colours of "The Bow."

We now approached the outlet. The breeze increased, fresh sails were added to the already loaded masts. Royals and studding-sails were raised and set, the steady gale, not blowing in puffs, but one continuous flowing stream of moving air, came rushing right after us, stretching the snowy canvass till its four corners all but started from their holdings, and satisfying us that we had caught the "north-east trade wind."

Night had long commenced before we got well cleared of the land. The crowd of beings who had lately thronged the deck, and rent the air with shouts, now—wrapped in the arms of sleep, each in his narrow bed—lay in the enjoyment of peaceful silence. Only the helmsman and myself remained on deck. The little fleet, formed in a long straggling line, and skimming the tranquil deep, appeared in the dim moonlight to haste its flight, as though escaping from the frowning peak of Teneriffe, still raising itself aloft *like some huge spectre*, and peering through the dark curtains of the night.

I could not turn from such a scene without indulging in the review of what I had that day witnessed; without a contemplation on the supreme power and unbounded

wisdom of a Being who, in the midst of the vast expanse of ocean, should plant a little group of islands, and endow them with such surpassing beauty. And not only so; but lest the weary mariner should say, "Here will I cease my labours and my contentions with adverse storms! Here, in the midst of all this unrivalled beauty, will I stay, and make it my home!"—lest he should thus say and do (and for other all-wise purposes), the same Almighty hand has caused a constant wind to be in readiness, to tempt him to continue on his way to regions more remote; to aid him in withdrawing himself from the fascinations of that lovely spot; to cheer him on his lonely way, and give him rest!

CHAPTER IV.

LEAVING THE CANARIES—TROPICAL SAILING—THE STEWARD—HOW CAPTAINS IMPOSE ON EMIGRANTS—SHIP ON FIRE—MOONLIGHT DANCE ON DECK—CROSSING THE LINE—THE STEWARD IN TROUBLE—COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA—ENGLISH AND CAPE PIGEONS—PASS THE ISLE OF NIGHTINGALES—PREPARATION FOR ROUNDING THE CAPE.

SUNRISE is always an animating moment, but never did I witness a more glorious sunrise than on the following morning. A spotless sky was waiting to receive its absent monarch. A chilly keenness in the air seemed to invite his genial warmth. The drowsy helmsman, slowly revolving the ever-moving wheel, looked forward to *his* advent—to be relieved; the second mate, regardless of his duty, had wrapped himself in a pilot coat and fallen fast asleep. I alone of all our passengers had left my bed to see that simple sight—"A sunrise!"

The scene from the deck had greatly changed since the preceding night. The broad expanse of water unbroken, and only terminated by the distant horizon, had now no other occupant besides ourselves. Our fellow-voyagers—the little fleet of last night—had all dispersed and vanished. Old Teneriffe, too, was gone. And there we were, once more, alone on the bosom of the boundless Ocean. But as the vessel staggered beneath her load of canvass, and reeled as she ploughed the main, driving the milkwhite foam before her bows, spreading it far and wide on either side,

and dashed through the rising billows, we could but feel that the distance between us and our adopted land was each moment growing shorter.

During the next few days we fell in with large shoals of "porpoise pigs," as they are called (I suppose) from their striking resemblance to swine—*minus* the legs and tails. These amphibious creatures kept following in our wake, then rushing past, leaping and gamboling quite out of water, sometimes turning half over in the open air and plunging again into their native element, buried themselves beneath the surface of the boiling deep.

The third day from the Canaries brought us to the Tropics, where we found that the weather, though fine in the extreme, was rather too warm to be agreeable; for, it being the month of May, the sun had journeyed a good way towards the tropic of Cancer. However, our old first-mate soon found a remedy; for, having extended the poop deck some thirty feet by means of planks and spars, he formed, over the newly constructed part, a splendid awning with old sails; so that, as the heat of the scorching sun was moderated by the canvass, the cool sea-breeze which had free access on all sides made it most delightful.

While in those sunny latitudes we endeavoured to turn our nights into days and days into nights, by sitting up till one and two in the morning, enjoying the refreshing cool night air, and lying all day under the awning, on cushions and pillows, sleeping or reading. Still, we had a regular routine of amusement, to help in wiling away the time; as, for instance, forming parties of eight and ten to read (alternately) some popular work; or joining in singing classes; playing chess; writing our logs; and finally, a

daily lecture on chymistry, and general useful information, which was got up and successfully carried out by a gentleman on board, who had devoted considerable time to that sort of study. The same individual had, moreover, a valuable library on board; from which, in a most handsome manner, he allowed the passengers (or rather the reading portion of them) to have any books they pleased.

At one o'clock, precisely, our quaint old steward would give notice that dinner was on the table, by commencing some rambling speech, to the effect that "he had got dinner ready for us; but could do no more!" And that, "faith! we could not want any thing to eat, when we did nothing but sleep and read nasty stupid books from morning to night."

Now, what would have been *impertinence* in some people, was not at all so in the case of the steward; simply because we knew what an unsophisticated being he was at the time of engaging him. This worthy personage combined in himself, at once, the appearance of a huge savage of about sixty, with the mild timid disposition of a child. By birth, *he was* a plain country labourer. In after life, a fisherman. And, finally, an emigrant, and at our request a steward. His great excellence, however, consisted in his scrupulous honesty, his extreme cleanliness and punctuality; and, though sometimes inclined to be humorous, still he was always a most obliging and attentive servant.

Dinner concluded, a most disagreeable duty was daily imposed upon us by the captain, who, taking advantage of the excessive thirst to which we were subject in those warm regions, refused to allow the crew to get up *fresh* water from the hold for drinking and cooking, beyond

what was required for themselves and the first cabin. So that the passengers were compelled to go below, and move away cargo till they came at the water-pipes, which, of course, were stowed beneath the cargo. They had then to pump the water into buckets, and pass it along the bottom of the ship up the hatchway, and finally pour it into a tank on deck.

Now, this was a most unwarrantable proceeding; but, as we had no remedy beyond submission, we made the best of it, and divided the work amongst us, so as to take it on alternate days.

From this, however, two very serious evils resulted; for when it came to the turn of the lower classes to go below, they took the opportunity of turning the luggage over, and breaking open such of it as appeared likely to contain valuable property; thus, a regular system of robbery was carried on below. But that was a mere trifle compared with another result; for, not content with going down to draw the water, these gentlemen took advantage of the licence granted to them, and, under pretext of moving away the cargo, were below at all hours of the day and night without a safety lamp, and often with nothing but a loose candle stuck in a potatoe for a candlestick. So that the reader will feel no surprise at hearing that our ship was on fire three successive times; and, on one occasion, I myself got a severe burn in extinguishing the flames.

Towards evening the decks were swept, spare coils of rope packed up, and every thing made ready for a dance. This was by far the most amusing part of the day's proceedings. The ladies, no longer dreading the effects of sunbeams, were able to appear on deck in low dresses, and

with nothing on their heads beyond a handkerchief tied (in gipsy fashion) beneath the chin. The gentlemen, too, came out in dress coats and pumps (at least such as possessed them), while those less fortunate appeared as they best could, in carpet slippers, tight nankeens, surtouts, and indeed every variety of garb, from the Highland kilt to the Ottoman costume.

At length the music struck up, partners were found, the couples arranged themselves, and, at the given signal, were off like tops whirling round; now here, now there, now spinning on the toe, skimming the polished deck with rapid step, gliding noiselessly amongst the gazing crowd of lookers-on, then, whirling again, and rushing headlong into the very vortex of the giddy mass of moving forms, were lost to view.

As for myself, I never took a more active part in these proceedings than that of looking on, and watching the fun from the mizen shrouds; where, seated on the ratlines, I was enabled to obtain at a glance a view of the whole company, besides enjoying the cool refreshing evening breeze.

It was very interesting to observe the different characters of the gay dancers. Here would be some prim maiden lady waltzing with a stiff old bachelor, each striving hard to keep pace with yonder youthful pair—a brace of lovers—who, lost in bliss, with hearts still lighter than their noiseless step, were threading the giddy maze with grace incomparable, and, quite unconscious of the admiration they drew down upon themselves, were thinking only of each other's charms. There, too, would be young married couples, performing their dance at leisure, and smiling

lovingly in each other's faces as they paused to fall in with the busy throng. Then, all would be whirling in and out, with rapid step, and flowing hair all floating in the breeze, until an ungallant wave would strike the ship, and, causing a sudden lurch, produce a general sprawl. No harm, however, resulted from these mishaps, beyond the raising of sundry bumps and blushes. And then, as though nothing had occurred, they fell to work again more merrily than ever.

After the dance, sea songs and music helped to wile away the hours till bed-time; and, sweet as music on the water is at all times, it is doubly so when fifty voices join to end the day by chanting the Evening Hymn beneath the broad canopy of heaven, set with ten thousand diamonds, and lighted by the moon's soft, pale, reflected ray. It then gives to the night a peculiar charm, and kindles in the mind an inward sense of joy, which stirs the very soul, and baffles description.

Ten days sailing in the Trades, brought us nearly to the equator. We then experienced light variable winds for a few days; during which we constantly sighted vessels, both outward and homeward bound, but not sufficiently near to take letters.

At last we sighted one bearing right down towards us, and making a signal for her to "lay to" and take our mail, we hastily closed our journals, deposited them in the steward's bag, and despatched them in the captain's gig, together with several bags of biscuits, potatoes, and other provisions, the stranger having made signal to us that he was from Canton with a cargo of tea, and quite destitute of provisions.

Upon our mate's delivering his charge and present, the gentlemanly captain inquired, whether our ship was in need of any thing that he could offer in return for our substantial present; and, learning that our ship was out of tea, he ordered his steward to "weigh out a half pound of the best," and sent it to our captain. Another specimen of merchant officers!

We now approached the much talked of "Line;" and great preparations were made by the sailors for celebrating the event by a general shave of the passengers, or rather of that portion of them who had not before crossed it. But as they talked a little too freely of the ducking, dosing, and dousing, to which we were all to be subjected with the captain's sanction, having been apprised of the danger by those who had on former occasions experienced this disgusting process, we quietly set to work, and organized amongst ourselves a sufficient force to have effectually put down any attempt on the part of our scanty crew, had they resorted to the threatened violence.

There were, however, several individual cases in which they were allowed to have their own way; but in all of them the victims were richly deserving of a still worse punishment; as, for instance, in one or two cases of petty theft, and things of that sort.

One triumph, however, that they enjoyed, was so amusing that I cannot forbear mentioning it. Now I should have observed in my remark on our queer old steward, that to his other qualifications he added that of being a first-rate mimic, and also a thorough teetotaler. This worthy gentleman had seen the effect produced by the

threats of the sailors, and, taking advantage of our determination not to be bullied out of our money by threats of tar-pots, salt-water doses, corked bottles scented with points of needles, nauseous pills of filthy grease and pitch, and sundry other appliances, the wily steward had hinted significantly, on several occasions, that "because he did his work in quiet, therefore nobody ever thought of him; while all the nasty noisy sailors must be getting heaps of money from their masters, by behaving shameful to them!"

A few such hints as these produced the desired effect; and the old steward thus managed to get a shilling or two from the passengers, that would have gone to the sailors, had they not acted in the matter in the way I have mentioned.

This having reached the sailors' ears, they determined on getting either the cash or the steward's grizzly beard; and, as it was impossible for us to escort the steward about the ship throughout the day in question, we recommended him to keep down in the intermediate compartment till we had passed the dangerous "Line,"—a suggestion which he very prudently acted upon during the day; but, towards evening, wishing to reach his bed in the fore-part of the ship, he hit upon the following ruse for gaining his point, namely, of feigning drunkenness. And accordingly, watching his opportunity, he staggered on deck, and almost as quickly reeled over and fell heavily, breathing hard, and being to all appearance "dead drunk."

Now, common sailors, above all people, have a peculiar sense of honour; they will fight and bully each other;

but they will not maltreat a drunken man, though he were their greatest enemy. Of this our worthy friend had taken advantage, and rightly; for no sooner did the "tars" behold his condition, than they ran to lend their aid in putting him to bed, and had carried him to the gangway for that purpose, when one of them suspected foul play, and hinted his surmises to the rest.

Of course he was quickly dropped, and charged with roguery; but it was of no use; he was too far gone to heed their words! At length it was shrewdly remarked by Jack, "Now's the time, boys, for a shave!" "Hoo-Roosh for the tar-pot!" "Fetch a razor!" Still it was to no purpose, for not a muscle moved; and there lay his huge carcase, apparently as lifeless as a sack of bones. By this time, however, the tar-pot had arrived, the razor too, a piece of iron hoop, was being carefully set, or rather notched into a saw, and every thing was in readiness for the operation; when suddenly the steward revived, and throwing on the deck his newly-obtained money, rushed from his captors, and made his escape before the crew had gathered up the spoil, and thus saved his beard.

Some wag played a very ingenious trick with the ship's telescopes, by unscrewing the upper parts and, having stretched fine hairs across, screwing them on again, so that every body, who looked through a glass that day, beheld the identical line.

At night too, the sailors managed to put the nervous portion of our passengers in a state of great excitement, by sending a fire barrel overboard, which, as it blazed in the pitch-dark night, rising and falling on the distant wave, had just the appearance of a burning ship in our

rear; the sailors assuring them that it was either a burning vessel, or a pirate chasing us.

Passing the equator, we met with light variable winds and heavy thunderstorms for a few days; after which, falling in with the south-east trades (properly head winds), we made a great tack, and so brought the wind on to the beam. Then, hoisting every stitch of canvass, we lay over till the quarter-boats just skimmed the boiling waves, by which time the vessel was so much inclined, that it became extremely difficult to keep a footing on the decks, and quite impossible to pace them, unless holding on by the rigging.

We now were bearing down directly for Pernambuco, a Brazilian port, where we purposed taking in a fresh supply of water, that on board having become quite putrid; but learning from a coasting vessel that the yellow fever was raging on that part of the South American coast, our captain abandoned the idea, and ran us along the coast till off Rio Janeiro, where, making the other tack, we steered for the Nightingale Isles.

This name, however, recalls to my mind a singular event that happened soon after quitting the equator. We had been sailing slowly all day, when, about sunset, an English pigeon suddenly made its appearance, and, hovering over head for a minute or two, finally lighted on the poop deck, between the captain and myself. For an instant we both stood gazing at it in astonishment, but the captain recovering himself, made a grasp at it, caught it in his hand, and, I regret to say, had it killed and stuffed.

How it had roamed so far from home I cannot think, unless it had escaped from some other ship, where it had

been petted, and naturally concluded that it would be served the same in every ship.

Soon after leaving Rio Janeiro we fell in with flocks of Cape pigeons, certainly not so called from any resemblance that they bear to that species; since, on the wing, or in the water, they are less like pigeons than any bird I know. In size they are about equal to ravens, but beautifully spotted all over with small black and white patches, and in such countless numbers that the ship's wake was dotted with them for miles; floating on the waves, however rough, gathering the fragments of food that escaped our ship, and chattering as they quarrelled with each other over half a biscuit, or an unusually large piece of meat. Sometimes a heavy sea would break right over them and bury them beneath its ponderous mass, but next moment they would rise again quite unconcerned, still floating on the waves like corks and always ready to devour the smallest atom you might throw to them. Indeed, their voracity was quite wonderful, for they actually would swallow a bent pin fastened to a line if baited with a piece of pork rind.

This made them an easy prey, for you had only to cast out of the stern of the ship a long line—say of two hundred yards' length—and fasten to its end a baited pin, and in a few minutes a bird would be sure to hook itself; after which, if carefully pulled up, they were soon on deck. This latter part of the business, however, requires a good deal of care; for, if drawn in too roughly, the hook is torn from their mouths, and if the line is allowed to grow slack, they manage to disengage themselves.

When caught, their beauty very far exceeds what you

would imagine from their appearance at large. The black then shows itself to be a bluish-green; which, with the snowy whiteness of their plumage, their bright intelligent eyes, and finely turned beak, gives them a very handsome appearance. Their size, however, is very much less than would be imagined. Indeed they are, literally speaking, "all feathers," which well accounts for their graceful appearance on the wing.

Leaving the "Isle of Nightingales," we continued to steer south-east until we crossed the meridian of Greenwich, at which time we were upwards of five hundred miles to the south of the Cape of Good Hope, so that we expected to be able, on making the other tack, to run in a straight course to the port of our destination, without approaching the noted "Cape of Storms" nearer than by a couple of hundred miles.

Before we reached those long-dreaded regions, it was necessary to effect a complete revolution in the condition of our craft. All useless articles were stowed away below; the boats emptied of rubbish, and lashed firmly in their positions; the royals and top-gallants taken in; all doubtful tackle replaced by new; precautions which we soon discovered had not been taken in vain; for, though we had already encountered some severe weather, nothing that I had ever witnessed, or even imagined, came near the awful reality of "rounding the Cape in a storm."

But, to proceed. As we approached the longitude of "the Cape," the temperature dropped nearly to freezing point; the weather, moreover, was any thing but cheering. No sun, or moon, or stars, showed themselves for several days; but low white clouds, of a wild tempestuous

character, kept flitting over head, and, scouring away, soon vanished in the distance, only to be replaced by others more watery, and as cheerless as the first. And if by any chance the sun did, for a few moments, break his way through, and show his cheerful face; forthwith the sullen clouds would make themselves more dense, and force him to retire; while, day by day, the breeze increased in strength, and caused a diminution of our spread of canvass. Nevertheless, the reel continued to give us twelve knots an hour, so that we had the satisfaction of knowing that our journey was growing shorter, by nearly three hundred miles a-day.

The motion of the vessel was now as great as in the Bay of Biscay; and yet we had not fairly reached the Cape; which gave us a slight foretaste of what I shall endeavour to describe in the next chapter. Still we could not help looking forward to the *coming storm*, and almost longed for its commencement; knowing that, when once past, we should soon be able to quit the narrow limits of our crowded vessel, and realize the bright hopes we had so long and dearly cherished of our adopted land.

CHAPTER V.

STORM AT THE CAPE—SCENE BELOW—THE MANIAC—NIGHT, IN THE STORM—FAIR WEATHER SUCCEEDS—SIGHT THE COAST OF CAFFRARIA—RUN OUT TO SEA—PASS BY THE PORT OF DESTINATION—LAND IN SIGHT—THE COAST OF NATAL—COMING TO ANCHOR—HOUR OF MIDNIGHT.

At last we were really "rounding the Cape," an event not likely to be forgotten in a hurry, by any who chanced to be there that day! The hurricane which now overtook us, had given ample warning of its approach, by causing an extraordinary fall of the barometer; so that, by the time it commenced, we were in regular storm-going trim, with single-reefed top and main sail, all others being close-reefed, the top-mast yards and top-gallant masts sent down on deck, and every thing made snug.

I was on deck when it first came on. In an instant, "yards were squared," "mainsail sent adrift," "spanker carried clean away," leaving the vessel almost "head under"—literally flying before the wind. Never did I witness such a scene! The rushing wind obtained complete possession of the ship. Two strong helmsmen, lashed to the wheel, were scarcely able to "hold her up." Huge seas, like moving mountains, pursuing the little craft (now a mere nutshell on the water), raised themselves high aloft, threatening instant destruction, and striving hard to overwhelm us beneath their ponderous mass.

At this period the reel gave fourteen knots an hour,

although our sails were reduced to mere strips of canvass. The very pulleys uttered a shrill continuous whistle, such as I never heard before, nor since—as the cutting wind rushed through the quivering blocks; while thick, strong ropes strained and snapped just like whipcord, giving a report as loud as that of a gun.

At noon the mizen top-mast "carried away," falling on deck—on the spot I had just left—with a fearful crash, and cutting the halliards, to which the chymical lecturer and myself had been lately clinging. This made a job for poor Chips, who had to go aloft and repair the mischief. Oh, Chips! I had much rather *you* perform that task than I!

The sea was at this time making clean breaches over our stern, and swept the decks fore and aft. Indeed, so rough was it, that the aforesaid lecturer and myself were the only passengers above board; and, though encased in Macintosh coats and caps, and clinging to different portions of the rigging, yet were we scarcely able to abide the severity of the weather, or keep a footing on the slippery deck.

But, though terrible, the view from the poop-deck was truly grand! At one moment, as we floated high on the wave top, the boiling surface of the sea revealed itself as far as the eye could reach; another instant, and deep down —walled in on every side by banks of water—we seemed on the point of sinking to the depths below.

Of course, at a moment like that the whole crew was on deck at once; and all hands busily employed in clearing away aloft—strengthening the remaining tackle—or splicing broken ropes. And I must confess my belief, that

under Providence we owed our safety, in a great measure, to their unwearied exertions on that trying occasion. At the same time, I would strongly recommend sailors to put off their half-crown levy until such an opportunity presents itself, when, I have no doubt, they would be liberally treated.

Having attempted to describe the state of affairs above board, I will now take a peep below, and see how the storm affects them down there. What a scene! Nearly dark! All gone to bed! while heavy boxes, cases of merchandise, bottles and crockery, pots and pans, and what else I cannot say, were being bandied about like playthings, to the imminent danger of any one who might happen to fall in their way; to say nothing of the fearful crash of broken glass and earthenware, that kept ringing in your ears as the fragments were tossed alternately from side to side of the rolling ship. In addition to these new calamities, sea-sickness had again made its appearance amongst a large portion of the passengers; while others had sought to drown their cares in ardent spirits.

Amongst the latter class, our fellow cabin companion, the Manxman, was included. Unfortunately he had, of late, become an inveterate drunkard; to such an extent, indeed, as to bring on an attack of *delirium tremens*, which made him *any thing* but an agreeable shipmate.

On entering our cabin, I found him, as usual, lying in bed, with a flask of Hollands in his hand, raving aloud, and quite unconscious of the critical position of himself and all on board. He, however, caught sight of me as I entered the cabin and threw myself along the narrow berth; for, in an instant, he recognised in me some gentleman that he had known at Douglas, in the Isle of

Man, and at once commenced an account of his adventures at sea.

It was quite useless for me to endeavour to stop him, by protesting that "I had never been at Douglas in my life!" and that he was altogether mistaken. No! He was quite sure! He recollected my face too well! I was indeed his dear friend * * * *! And forthwith he proceeded to recount, with wonderful precision, the various occurrences of the voyage. Next, he began to describe the character and intended pursuits of his fellow-emigrants, and in so loud a strain as to be heard by all the occupants of the adjacent cabins; at the same time, showing off their weak points so admirably, that many of them were in turn raving at him, and insisting on his being kept quiet; but, unfortunately, without devising a plan for attaining so desirable an end.

At last he came to the description of those in his own cabin, commencing with myself and brother. However, with the exception of a single term, we had no cause to complain of the account he gave of us. It was as follows: "Oh! Tom, my boy, you should have seen those two poor d——s that were in my cabin! We thought it would have been a case with them the first fortnight; but they came round by drinking chocolate. Only think—going out to farm the sandy deserts of Africa! However, they came from Cambridge, so we must not wonder! although I somehow think they will soon be tired of colonial life; but hope they won't be disappointed."

Lastly, he came to the description of "the stout gentleman they had on board," who, by-the-by, was lying in a berth directly under him, tossing his feet and hands about,

and roaring with laughter at the Manxman's surmises on our prospects.

However, the amusement soon gave way to boiling wrath, at hearing the character that the drunken Manxman was bestowing on his "stout friend;" for, not content with bringing up every silly word and action that the hasty old gentleman had been guilty of (and they were not a few), but he must go still further, and state the strong conviction that he had always entertained, that "there was something very queer about the unexpected manner in which his stout friend had come on board," and adding thoughtfully, "I should like to see the Hue and Cry for that week! A hundred pound or so would be very nice!"

At this the stout gentleman grew so exasperated, that he was on the point of jumping out of bed to pummel his drunken neighbour; but—just as he raised himself in his berth for that purpose—an unlucky lurch started the internal fittings of the cabin, and down went the drunken Manxman right into the very clutches of his antagonist, who, however, was so terrified at the occurrence, that he rushed from his fallen foe, and left him in quiet possession of his new berth.

It was indeed an awful night that followed! The heavy tramp of sailors overhead—their dismal ditty, as they worked the pumps all night—the creaking timbers, straining and leaking at every seam, threatening each moment to part, and leave us to the mercy of the relentless waves—the cries of affrighted children, imploring their parents' aid—the flickering light of the fast dying lamp, suspended from the deck above—produced a scene too wretched to depict with pen and ink, and only to be met with at "The

Cape of Storms." Two days thus spent brought us safely round the Cape, and carried us beyond the limits of the storm, although the weather was still any thing but calm. However, as the wind was favourable, we made rapid progress towards our destination.

At last the wind grew light, the clouds rolled off, and left us almost becalmed under the glorious sky of Southern Africa. A day and night of calm was succeeded by one bringing with it a fair strong breeze, which carried us steadily on our way until we sighted land, near Faku's territory; we then made a slight deviation in our course, and ran along the coast, gazing in silent admiration on the sunny plains and wood-crowned heights that stretched from the craggy shore far into the interior.

As night drew on, the captain deemed it expedient to avoid the chance of running ashore in the dark; and gave orders for "the head of the vessel to be put about," for "standing out to sea." However, about midnight the wind increased to a gale, and we were once more running at a fearful rate under close-reefed topsails. Thus we continued driving through the water till daylight came, and found the entire body of passengers assembled on deck, waiting to catch the first glimpse of their adopted land. But, as the darkness slowly rolled away, what was the disappointment at beholding nothing but the old, dreary waste of water bounding our view in every direction! At this moment the captain—rushing on deck—ordered the vessel to be put about, and retrace her steps; as we had run some fifty miles too far. With willing hearts and hands, both crew and passengers responded to the captain's order "Tack-sen sheets," "Main-sail, haul," and in less

time than it has taken me to describe it, the vessel had turned round—braced yards sharp—and was beating up against the adverse wind.

About mid-day the wind chopped round, we immediately squared yards, got out studding-sails, ran up the royals, every man and boy on board lending a helping hand. Leaving the deck, we now went below to dinner, our appetites being considerably improved by the morning's exertion. Scarcely, however, had we taken our places at the dining-table, when the look-out man sang out those magic words, "Land in sight!" In an instant the table was deserted, dinner forgotten, and the deck thronged with cheerful faces. I was not the last to gain the deck, nor the first to turn from the picture that there presented itself. To our right, at a distance of eight or ten miles, lay the mainland; and, twenty miles a-head, we could distinguish, by the aid of our glasses, the celebrated bluff that forms the southern side of the harbour, stretching up like a vast rampart high above the adjacent hills and woods.

As we got nearer to the port, we came within a mile or so of the shore, and were able to form an estimate of the surpassing beauty of the country to which we approached. The sombre mass of bush crowning the mountain tops, and stretching far down amongst the little hills and vales; the sparkling rivulet winding in and out amidst bright sunny slopes of pasturage, and fields of standing maize, then tumbling headlong over some cascade, and hastening to add its scanty tribute to augment the vast Indian Ocean. The varied foliage of the endless bush that lined the shore almost within reach, the herds of cattle browsing

on the distant plains, the smoke of the Caffres' fires curling up from out the sombre woods, and, wafted by the breeze, to float in fantastic forms far, far away; the brilliant sun, the spotless magnificence of the bright blue sky,

> Gave each to each a double charm,
> Like pearls upon an Æthiop's arm.—*Dyer.*

We now began to make preparation for coming to anchor. Some of the sailors went aloft and took in sails, others got up cable from the lockers, and fixed it securely to the anchor, which hung at the bows suspended from the cat's head, while the officers were busy "signalizing" with the shore, relative to the position we were to take up in the outer bay; where, I should have observed, two large East Indiamen were already riding at their moorings. Another short ten minutes, and we were gliding swiftly past the sterns of the above-named vessels; one minute more, and the sails are set adrift, the anchor plunges into the briny deep, and we too are riding by a single cable beneath the stately bluff.

From this point, all that can be discovered in the shape of buildings is the blockhouse, perched up so as to form an excellent target for an enemy's guns, without having a single one wherewith to return the compliment.

Immediately on our coming to anchor, the port boat came alongside, rowed by half a dozen pilots, to receive our mail-bags. I was much struck with the robust, healthy appearance of these men, and still more delighted at hearing the favourable account they gave, both of the soil and climate of our new country. We were, however,

slightly disappointed at the announcement that we could not land till the following day, the boats being all engaged by the two Indiamen. One of these, we soon ascertained, was the one we ought properly to have gone out in, and which conveyed, as it was, the chief of our stock of goods; consisting of farm implements, two complete sets of workman's tools, a large assortment of screws, nails, &c., a valuable stone flour-mill, some pounds' worth of biscuit, several quarters of wheat and oats, together with various smaller articles, amounting in all to nearly two hundred pounds' worth of property.

The sun was by this time setting over the distant hills and vales, and shutting them out from our view. The stately wood-crowned bluff, stretching far out into the troubled sea, lay all calm and beauteous, and quite unconscious of the sad catastrophe about to happen beneath its sombre shade before the dawn of another day.

Having thoroughly satisfied themselves that the voyage was now concluded, the passengers, one and all, betook themselves below for the night; where coffee and tea, together with some fresh provisions, having been served up, parties were formed, and preparations made for celebrating our safe arrival on an extensive scale.

Now, what with the music and dancing, singing and cards, the strength of the whisky, and the excitement of the past day, by ten o'clock the whole ship—cabin, intermediate, steerage, and forecastle—was in a boisterous state of mirth; too much so, indeed, to be altogether pleasant. So, leaving the company unobserved, I stole on deck to enjoy a few quiet evening thoughts before retiring for the night. I found the decks wholly deserted by both crew

and passengers; the wheel, for the first time since leaving Liverpool, stood motionless. The moon was fast sinking behind the distant mountain tops, and every thing was still excepting the hoarse murmuring roar of the angry breakers, as they dashed upon the neighbouring rocks that formed the basement of the aforesaid bluff.

There was, however, every appearance of an approaching storm; thick black clouds were rising from the south-east horizon. A heavy sea was noiselessly sweeping by, and rushing to break itself against the bluff; while every now and then a flash of lightning would come and go, only to make darkness more visible.

Having taken my station at the corner of the poop-stanchions nearest to the bluff, I stood till near midnight tracing the indistinct outlines of the distant table-lands that stretched from the coast far into the interior; and while contemplating the scene before me, I fell into a deep reverie. I thought of the dreary past, the tedious present, and the uncertain future; and wondered what would be the feelings with which I should look back to the day of first setting foot on African soil, when another twenty years had rolled away.

While thus musing, I happened to turn my attention to the Indiaman, that *should have been* lying at anchor alongside of us; but to my surprise found that she had shifted her position, and was lying considerably nearer the bluff than at the time of our coming to anchor. Still, however, as she appeared to be quite stationary in her new position, I took no further notice of the matter, beyond reporting the fact of her having moved to the company below, and expressing sundry misgivings that I entertained of her

being on shore before morning. But, as may be supposed, my apprehensions produced no effect on the jovial party that occupied our division of the ship, who were, if possible, more noisy than before. So, quitting the merry scene, I sought my cabin, where, throwing off my hat and shoes, I quickly fell asleep, along my narrow couch.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHIPWRECK—LIFE-BOAT—SHIP LEFT IN CHARGE OF THE PASSENGERS—TIMELY PRECAUTIONS—SWAMPING OF THE LIFE-BOAT—DESERTION OF THE CREW—DIABOLICAL SCHEME FOR WRECKING OUR VESSEL—HOW FRUSTRATED—QUITTING THE OLD SHIP—THE SPLENDID HARBOUR BAY—LANDING.

SCARCELY an hour had elapsed before my slumbers were broken by a confused tumult on board. The men were rushing up the gangways to gain the deck. The women, with families of helpless children, were wringing their hands, and wailing, in expectation each moment of our vessel's breaking from her moorings, and being dashed upon the adjacent rocks. The storm had risen to a fearful height. The Indiaman (containing our goods), unable to ride it out, had parted from her anchor, and rushed headlong into the very jaws of destruction.

As I ran on deck, I could not help observing the change that a single hour had wrought in the intermediate cabin. The lamps were still burning brightly; cards and dice still strewed the table; plenty of wine and spirits yet remained; but their charms had vanished with the guests. A nobler vessel than *our own* had failed to withstand the storm! Could we escape? Three hundred fellow-creatures were at that moment struggling in yonder surf! could we remain unscathed? Above, too, the scene was strangely altered; a close-packed mass of human beings occupied the poop,

and gazed in breathless silence at the spot—under the lofty bluff, where the bright flashes of minute guns and signals of distress told us the disaster had already taken place. So great, however, was the roar of the waves, that, notwithstanding our proximity (we being within three quarters of a mile), the report of the guns was quite inaudible.

At length our noble, old first-mate, asked and obtained permission to take a boat, in order to render assistance in saving life; but, before the boat could be launched, a rapid succession of flashes from the wreck, with now and then a sky-rocket, gave notice of the imminent danger attending their perilous situation. A few minutes more, and the little boat—manned by six stout hearts—was baffling with the contending billows in its endeavour to reach the wreck, and as we watched them, rising and falling on the swell, bending to their oars, and urging their frail craft amidst the angry waves, our anxiety naturally turned from the wreck to the safety of the little boat and its gallant crew.

Before despatching the first boat, we had put several green lights on board of it, to be burned in the event of more aid being needed. So that, having seen them well off, our next business was to get ready another (boat), in case the expected signal should be given. In this work all lent a willing hand; slings were fixed to the yard-arms, the life-boat (for we carried a large new one) was hauled to the ship's side, then lowered into the water, and a crew selected to man it (of which I and my brother were anxious to form part, as being more especially concerned in the unfortunate wreck; but were denied, on the ground of our being passengers).

An hour had now slipped away since the tidings of the disaster first reached us. All hopes of getting off the rocks was at an end. A constant stream of rockets shot from the bows and stern of the ill-fated ship. Blue and red lights were burning brightly on the decks, throwing a lurid glare on all around, revealing the snowy sea of foam, the ugly rocks, the foliage of the dense bush that clothed the bluff nearly down to the water's edge, and lastly, the forms of the affrighted beings on board, as they flitted about the deck, or climbed the remaining rigging.

At this time the sea was making clean breaches over the vessel, sweeping away her bulwarks, boats, and greater portion of the rigging. Only the mainmast yet remained, from which strong ropes had been passed to the timber trees growing on the bluff, to prevent the vessel from *canting over* into deep water, before the souls on board could be landed; since it was found to be impossible to pass them to the shore in the dark, on account of the fearful surf.

Up to the present no signal had been given by our first mate; but soon after, a green light shone out, bright and clear, some fifty yards wide of the wreck. This, we naturally imagined, proceeded from our boat, and forthwith the appointed crew descended the ship's side, and took their places in the life-boat; but here an unexpected mishap discovered itself. The boat was leaky, and was levelful of water! Having at length emptied it and plugged it up, the crew again took their seats; but here a fresh delay occurred. The oars had been forgotten, and were stowed away amongst the cargo in the hold! Another half hour lost, and the men and oars were both in the boat.

But now a third obstacle presented itself; for (being a new boat) there were no rowlocks, nor even holes to receive them. To remedy this evil, they at once hit upon the fatal expedient of boring holes in the gunwale, and letting in stout pegs, to serve as rowlocks. This done, they shoved off amid deafening shouts, and rowed for the scene of the wreck.

While thus busily engaged in providing for the necessities of our unfortunate fellow emigrants, we had wholly forgotten that the same danger was attending our own position. Indeed, as the night advanced our situation became more and more critical, on account of the heavy swell that *set in shore* after it had been blowing a few hours. We, therefore—that is, the *passengers* (for not a single able-bodied seaman remained on board)—now fell to work, and, at the captain's request, got up another fifty fathom of cable from the lockers. We also made ready for casting a second anchor at the bows, in case the one by which we were swinging should give way, a thing by no means improbable, nay scarcely to be escaped considering our exposed position, since not only wind and tide, but also a five-mile current was driving us directly towards the wreck. Indeed each heave the vessel gave, as the huge wave swept past, seemed as though it must uproot the windlass from the deck, or snap the straining cable. An old disabled sailor now gave his opinion, namely, "that the anchor was dragging!" Still the captain refused to let go the second, fearing lest it should *foul* the first, so that an indescribable consternation was produced on board. At length the welcome order was issued, "Pay out another fifty fathom;" which was at once done, and we rode securely through the night.

Early the following morning the first mate got back with his little boat, having been unable to approach the wreck on account of the surf, or to reach our ship in consequence of the wind and tide. He had gained no intelligence as to the condition of the wreck, nor was he aware of our having despatched the second boat. The captain, therefore, determined on rowing ashore in his gig to hear particulars; and, nothing daunted at the forbidding aspect of the heavy sea, entered the frail craft, and bade the sailors "pull ashore"—a piece of hardihood that cost him the boat, and nearly the lives of all that it contained; for on getting amongst the breakers they were swamped, and with difficulty pulled on shore by the people assembled on the rocks.

As the day advanced, the condition of the wreck kept getting worse and worse; yards, masts, bulwarks, poop, were all washed away. The mutilated hull had fallen over on her broadsides, the forepart had gone down in deep water, leaving the stern still resting on the sunken rocks where it first struck, exposed to the fury of the relentless waves as they dashed at the *once stately vessel*—now gamboling playfully amongst her broken posts and massive timbers; then running back to gain fresh impetus, only to return with increased vehemence, and once more rush upon their fallen foe to tear her piecemeal.

Thus for five days and nights we lay watching the gradual breaking up of the noble ship; till, at the last, only a few straggling timbers remained to point out the precise spot at which the disaster had occurred.

During these anxious days we had been unable to hold any communication with the shore except by signals,

owing to the roughness of the weather; so that the danger was materially increased by our not having a single seaman or officer on board except the first mate.

We had learned, too, by the telegraph, that the life-boat which, as I said before, was despatched on the night of the wreck, had been swamped, and the finest fellow on board lost; moreover, that the entire body of passengers had been saved from the Indiaman, but that the cargo (ours of course included) was all lost; and, finally, that the greater part of our sailors had either deserted or got into prison.

It was indeed a dreary time, and seemed longer than that of the whole voyage. All that we could do was, to spy with our glasses the anxious faces of a mass of beings crowded along the beach, watching our vessel as she pitched and tossed; struggling to release herself from the provoking cable, to rush headlong upon the rocks, and share the same death and grave with her ill-fated sister.

However, on its becoming known amongst the more reckless of our passengers, that all *lives* were saved from the wreck, they immediately determined on cutting our cable at the first opportunity, for the double purpose of getting on shore without further loss of time, as well as of being able to join in the wholesale plunder taking place along the beach, amongst the cargo, that kept washing up from the wreck.

In this predicament, our old first-mate acted with great judgment; he first called upon the better class of passengers to come forward, and lend their assistance in preserving order on board. This done, he let go the second anchor;

and then, by the aid of one or two sailor boys and the passengers, braced the yards, and made every preparation for beating out to sea, in the event of our breaking from the anchorage, by which precautions the diabolical scheme was wholly frustrated.

At length the sixth morning arrived, and brought with it two large surf boats, for conveying a portion of the passengers and their personal baggage on shore. Here again it was necessary to act with considerable caution; for—the sailors not having returned—if the better class were landed first, then the ship and cargo would be left entirely at the mercy of characters whose past conduct was *any thing* but satisfactory, and, indeed, who had already shown themselves to be *nothing too scrupulous.* We therefore willingly complied with the first mate's request, and allowed the steerage—together with all the ragamuffin—passengers, to land first; while we ourselves, with upwards of fifty others, waited for the afternoon boat.

The sun had commenced his downward journey, and had travelled half-way from his noonday throne towards his evening bed, when the boats again came alongside, bringing with them the captain and some new sailors. The weather had now become delightful in the extreme. The sea had gone down, and scarcely a ripple disturbed its placid state of rest. A gentle breeze—only sufficient to give a slow motion to the deep laden boats—wafted us softly from our "hale old ship," and afforded ample time for enjoying the surpassing beauty of the scene.

As we pushed off, the captain presented himself on the bulwarks, hat in hand, to receive the usual parting cheer; but every voice was still (his treatment of the passengers

had not been quite forgotten). The boatman, however, seemed to linger in casting us off, and evidently expected us to give a cheer; when, suddenly, a voice in the boat shouted for the "first mate," and, as the greyheaded old sailor mounted the bulwarks, a burst of applause greeted his well-known face, followed by three long deep groans for the tyrant whose power over us had ceased the moment that the last passenger was safely seated in the boat—in the former part of which proceeding I did my best; but, in the latter, I left it for those who considered themselves more especially aggrieved to groan their *friend.*

As we approached the narrow entrance of the Inner Bay, a picture presented itself that appeared more like the vision of some "fairy dream" than a delightful reality. Behind, lay the Outer Bay, a beautiful but dangerous roadstead, formed by a deep indentation in the well-wooded coast and the projecting bluff promontory. Floating on its heaving bosom lay the second Indiaman and the vessel we had just quitted—quite motionless—with their snow-white canvass spread in the bright sunshine, to get dry, and backed by the endless Indian ocean. On our right, the stately bluff, clothed with magnificent timber and dense evergreen bush down to the very water's edge, rose almost perpendicularly from its bed of billows. While to the left lay a vast forest—many thousand acres in extent—running from the tongue of land at the entrance of the inner harbour, called "The Point," along its whole northern (or left hand) side, till it meets a wood-crowned range of heights called the "Berea Hills," which sweep round two-thirds of this vast wood-skirted basin.

A minute more, and we are passing—almost within arm's length of the few projecting timbers, that still pointed out the grave of all our earthly goods, sunk fathoms deep in the briny element. Now we are on the bar! Another moment, and we are running up the narrow channel that lies between the lofty bluff and woody point. Only a few seconds, and our sluggish craft, tugged by a row-boat, chanting a lively air—has fairly entered the unrivalled "Harbour Bay"—a sheet of water, of at least ten thousand acres, completely land-locked by the Bluff and Berea ranges, except at the narrow inlet, which too, by a sudden bend, is lost to view, when once you enter. Fancy yourself thus floating on a vast lake of deep, transparent water, eight or ten miles in length, walled in right and left by masses of unbroken forest (evergreen*), stretching up mountain sides almost to the bright blue sky; then carry your powers of imagination still further, and picture this vast lake growing wider and wider as it stretches inland, till it terminates in a succession of slopes, extending from the water's edge to a distant chain of mountains, connecting the bluff with the Berea hills. Fancy, moreover, these slopes dotted over with thriving homesteads, with cultivated fields, with thousands of acres of wild, waving, deep green grass, with droves of depasturing cattle and herds of noble deer. Add to the picture also a thriving seaport town (Durban), reposing at the foot of this slope, under the shade of the dense bush; and fancy a cloud of pleasure boats, with their tiny sails, skimming the polished surface of this vast mirror, hiding themselves amongst floating islands and romantic creeks. Yes!

* On the coast of Natal, trees are green through the entire year.

Fancy this lovely picture lying in silent grandeur beneath a spotless canopy, and the brilliant sun of Southern Africa, and yet the conception, however vivid, will far —very far—fall short of the surpassing reality of that enchanting spot.

Our boats now approached the custom-house, before which lay, anchored in deep water, several colonial coasting vessels, of from fifty to a hundred tons (larger vessels being unable to cross the bar at that time). Passing through these, we grounded in about three feet of water, directly opposite the custom-house, where we found a crowd of colonists, emigrants, and natives, assembled to welcome our safe arrival.

Now, at that early stage of the colony, no quay had been formed for unlading boats, so that passengers were obliged to get from the boat to the shore as they best could. This, however, was nothing for gentlemen, but extremely inconvenient for ladies, who were obliged either to walk through some yards of water, or else to submit to be carried on shore by gentlemen, a process which produced considerable amusement amongst the lookers-on.

I was agreeably surprised at the appearance of the natives, although they did not seem at all overdone with clothing. Instead of the dull negro race I had expected to see, I found a most intelligent race of really handsome men—strong, active, and high-spirited. Indeed, so great was their gallantry, that when some of the blushing ladies (younger ones, of course) demurred at being carried ashore in gentlemen's arms, a score or more of these strapping fellows rushed to the rescue, and volunteered, in terms quite unintelligible, their gratuitous assistance in carrying

them ashore; services which, I need hardly say, were declined by the now thoroughly shocked ladies, who forthwith resigned themselves to the care of their fellow-countrymen, and so at last set foot on the soil of Southern Africa.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POINT.—PITCHING OUR TENTS FOR THE NIGHT.—FIRST MEAL ON SHORE.—GROUPS OF CAFFRES.—PAST HISTORY OF NATAL.—ENGAGEMENTS BETWEEN DUTCH AND ENGLISH.—EXPULSION OF THE BOER FARMERS FROM THE COLONY.—THE WATCH-FIRE.—A DAY-BREAK RAMBLE.

ONCE safely on shore, we began to look about for a suitable place of accommodation wherein to pass the night—now fast drawing on—the sun being already about to finish his daily journey. But the only buildings at this *Point* consisted of a custom-house, a small eating-house, a guard-room for a detachment of military, and the before-named blockhouse. Now, as there was no probability of finding lodgings at any of these, it was necessary to repair at once to Durban—distant a couple of miles—or else pitch our tent in the Bush, near the landing-place, where we stood.

I should have remarked that some little uneasiness was felt by most of the new-comers at the loose character of the soil, which, in fact, was nothing more or less than common sea-sand; although there was some satisfaction in seeing that—with such a salubrious climate—even barren sea-sand would produce masses of splendid evergreens, such as I never witnessed before nor since; amongst which were growing, in wild profusion, the huge cactus, deep crimson martingola, starch and castor-oil plants, Cape gooseberries, and endless

sweet-scented creepers, forming altogether an unbroken and almost impenetrable mass of bush.

But, to proceed. Having at length decided that it would be unadvisable to set out for the town at that late hour—since we should be obliged to leave at the landing-place a number of loose articles that we had brought on shore—we determined on pitching our tent at the nearest convenient spot; a plan that was immediately adopted by our two Scotch friends, and a respectable married Yorkshire man. Moreover, as they each possessed tents, it was agreed that we should all encamp together, the more readily to assist and protect each other, if necessary.

Fortunately a magistrate happened to come up at this moment, who not only gave us permission to carry out our plan, but kindly directed us to an opening in the surrounding thicket, that quickly brought us to a picturesque little glen—scarcely an acre in extent—partially cleared, and quite shut in by sand-hills, clothed with the prevailing bush.

We immediately selected a most romantic spot for our encampment, just under a thick clump of martingola trees, in the centre of the glen, and commenced operations by pitching a large bell tent—belonging to one of the Scotchmen—into which we at once conveyed the luggage of the whole party, to preserve it from the dampness of the night, as well as from the fingers of certain of our *worthy* fellow-passengers, who were loitering about in a very unaccountable manner.

Night had by this time overtaken us, and, as it was extremely dark, we abandoned the idea of pitching all the tents; but, appropriating the one already completed to

the three ladies and the luggage, we rigged up a temporary shelter for the five gentlemen close by.

While thus busily engaged, we had lost sight of the good housewives. They, however, had not been idle; one having procured water from a well in the neighbouring thicket, and prepared coffee; another had purchased beef-steaks, bread, sugar, &c., at the eating-house (before-named); while the third—with the assistance of some Caffres—had kindled a blazing fire before the tent-door, spread a table-cloth in the centre of the tent, procured cups, saucers, plates, dishes, and indeed every thing that the time and situation enabled her to do, preparatory to our assembling together to partake of supper.

Having at length constructed a sort of *gipsy-tent* for the accommodation of the gentlemen, we all adjourned to the *ladies'* tent; where, using boxes for chairs, and forming a family circle round the interior, we proceeded to do ample justice to the fare. Now, whether it was owing to the long interval since breakfast, to the goodness of the colonial provisions, or the cookery, I cannot say; but, certainly, we all enjoyed our first meal on shore most thoroughly.

The day's cares being now over, and the cravings of hunger appeased, we began to contemplate the peculiarly romantic situation of our snug little evening party. Indeed, it seemed hardly possible to believe that we were *really* ten thousand miles from our old homes, sitting at the remotest part of Africa, on the confines of the Indian ocean, with nothing but a fluttering sheet of canvass between us and the howling wind, that swept through the surrounding bush; with only a flickering rush-light, stuck

in the soft sea-sand at our feet, to save us from sharing the pitch-dark night with the prowling beasts of prey that roamed through the adjacent jungle. Yet we had only to look around, and be at once convinced that such was the case; though, for all this, we were as merry and contented as though feasting in a college-hall, or the canvass of the dimly lighted tent had been the tapestry of a brilliant drawing-room.

Without—every thing was still, excepting the occasional rustle of the night wind in the foliage of the trees, the distant roar of the surf, as it dashed itself upon the rocky bluff, and the laughing jabber of a dozen Caffres sitting close-huddled in a ring, about the still blazing fire at the tent door, wrapped up in cotton blankets, devouring the remnants of our late meal, and sipping a basin of coffee, bestowed on them by one of the kind ladies.

It was a pretty sight to watch the expression of countenance displayed by the different heads that formed the sable ring, as the sparkling flame shot up on high, throwing a momentary glare on all around, revealing their jet-black visages, their snow-white teeth, and sparkling eyes, together with the keen-edged "assegais" (Caffre spears) with which each one was armed.

Having at length finished their supper, they suddenly dived into the surrounding bush, and as suddenly emerged, each bearing a bundle of wood upon his shoulder. Then, heaping fresh fuel on the fire, they approached the open door of the tent, and thrusting in their woolly heads, saluted us with "Slalla gooshley," literally (Rest in peace), after which, displaying two rows of pearls, set in polished frames of ebony, they vanished once more like supernatural

beings, amongst the dense jungle encircling our little encampment.

I will now make a slight diversion from my subject, in order to relate a few incidents connected with the first acquisition of Natal by the British government. At the same time, I must observe once for all, that these, together with similar reports that I may have occasion to notice hereafter, are given by me *only as I received them* from persons *professing* to have been eyewitnesses, without the slightest intention on my part of vouching for their veracity; although I think it highly probable that the main points may be substantially correct, while the detail has been coloured, or perhaps altogether added, by tradition and party feeling.

Eight years previous to my visit, Natal was an independent state, containing upwards of twenty thousand white inhabitants, emigrants from the eastern province of the Cape colony. These people were for the most part farmers, or as they are called "Boers," who had migrated in consequence of the dangerous policy pursued by the *then* Colonial government, with respect to the treatment of the Caffre tribes.

Natal had long been known to be the most salubrious, as well as the most fertile portion of Southern Africa, and, at the time of the Boers' migration, had just been depopulated by Chaka, king of the Zulus; who, however, had retired from his conquest into his native fastnesses in the Zulu-land, Natal being too free from bush for Caffre retention.

This territory, in extent about equal to Ireland, with its capacious harbour, its rich soil, and great abundance of

minerals, naturally attracted the attention of the Boers, who forthwith established themselves in it as an independent people. Scarcely, however, had they taken possession of the country, before the Zulus recrossed the frontier river (Tugella), and slaughtered every man, woman, and child they came across; sweeping off the sheep, horses, cattle, and every thing else, into their own country.

This atrocity, of course, was resented by the Boers, who quickly placed their wives and children in "Laagers" (stockades), while they themselves took the field against the invaders.

At length, after several years of incessant fighting, the Boers had succeeded, not only in clearing Natal of the enemy, but in penetrating into the heart of Zulu-land; destroying their chief city (Goonloove), expelling Dingaan (the successor of Chaka), and placing Panda, a friendly chief, on the Zulu throne.

This done, they returned to Natal, and made an equitable distribution of the land amongst those who had taken part in the war; in six, four, two, and one thousand acre grants, according to the services rendered by the different individuals.

They now enjoyed a few months of peace, and employed their time in laying out towns, building houses, planting orchards and vineyards, enclosing as well as cultivating corn-fields; and, indeed, so great was their industry, that, besides producing enough for their own consumption, they actually exported fourteen thousand pounds' worth of produce to "the Cape" and Mauritius.

About this time, the importance of securing Natal as a British colony, induced the government to send a body of

troops, to occupy the new district in the name of the Queen.

Now, the Boers had not quitted the "old colony" from any want of loyalty; but simply that they might remove their families and property from the disastrous wars, which their intimate acquaintance with the character of the natives told them must result from the British policy towards the Caffres. When, therefore, the troops landed at Durban, the seaport of Natal, they were received with the greatest courtesy and attention by the majority of the Boers, who were very glad to have a body of well-armed men always at hand, ready to resist any future invasion of the Zulus.

A proclamation quickly made its appearance, calling upon the Boers to deliver up their arms and ammunition, and forbade their interfering with the settlement of Zulus within the district. This led to an altercation with the British commander, who at once saw the reasonableness of the Boers' complaint, and desisted from putting the terms of the proclamation into force. Being recalled, however, a Major Smith was sent to replace him, who at once came to blows with the Boers, and got so severely handled that he lost part of his artillery, the regimental colours, and a great many men. At this unexpected reverse, he made a truce with the Boers for a fortnight's cessation of hostilities, ostensibly for the purpose of burying the dead; but no sooner had the Dutch returned to their farms, than the English commenced building a stockade, and by the expiration of the fortnight had constructed a "log fort" of prodigious strength, so that the unsuspecting Boers, on returning from their farms, found the position quite unassail-

able, and had, moreover, the *satisfaction* of knowing, that any of them who might be taken would be treated as rebels and hanged forthwith.

This exasperated the Boers, who, taking advantage of the fact of the supplies of ammunition and provisions being stored at the Point (two miles from the stockade), and guarded by only thirty or forty men, rushed down unexpectedly upon the little detachment, ripped up the artillerymen at their guns, stormed a small guard-house, massacred all within it, and took the entire magazine, with guns, powder, shot, provisions, and a number of prisoners.

They now returned to the principal stockade, and opened trenches (which still exist) so as to get within range; then lining these ditches with "crack shots," they bored a hole in every hat or head that made its appearance above the parapet. Besides this, they brought the captured guns to bear on the English works, and also cut off their supply of water; so that the hundred and fifty men (composing the garrison) were reduced to the greatest extremity. Still the besieged managed to get a scanty supply of water by sending out children, under cover of the guns, to a neighbouring spring (knowing that the Boers would not shoot children). And, as they also possessed a number of horses, they refused to listen to any terms of surrender until the last one was eaten.

At this critical moment, a man named King undertook to break through the Dutch lines during the night, swim his horse over the bay, and ride for Graham's-town, a distance of six hundred miles, to obtain reinforcements.

In this extraordinary feat he was quite successful; and on the very day that the last horse was eaten in the

stockade, the Fawn (a sloop of war) appeared in the offing, and anchored ready for crossing the bar at high tide. Soon afterwards, the fifty-gun frigate, Southampton, also made its appearance, and poured such a shower of shot and shell into the Bluff forest, that the Boers, who had lined it with riflemen, in anticipation of the sloop running over the bar, were obliged to beat a speedy retreat.

At the rise of the tide, the troops, two hundred in number, were mustered on the deck of the sloop; and, though the depth of water at the bar was very small, less than the draught of the vessel, still they determined on crossing it, if possible; so, clapping on all sail, they stood for the inner harbour, grounded on the bar, floundered over it at the cost of breaking the ship's back, and ran ashore high and dry near the present landing-place, where the wreck still remains.

Of course, the Boers were waiting to receive them, but the troops charging furiously with the bayonet, they broke and fled before suffering any severe loss, and never ceased their flight till they arrived at Cowie's Hill, some twelve miles from the port.

On reaching the stockade, the sight that presented itself was heart-rending, the men being reduced to mere skeletons, and scarcely able to lift a gun, having been living on scanty supplies of horse flesh and biscuit for nearly six weeks.

The following day a body of troops set out in pursuit of the Boers, who, in turn, fell back upon Maritzberg, the capital of the colony, distant fifty miles in the interior, where they continued for some months unmolested.

At length, however, a formidable division of cavalry, in-

fantry, and artillery, was despatched to Maritzberg, where several thousand Boers had formed a "waggon camp," and were waiting an attack of the royal forces; but instead of marching the soldiers to attack their position, as at the *first disastrous engagement* near the port, the English commander opened fire with round shot on the waggons, which had the desired effect; for in less than ten minutes the whole body of Boers were in full retreat for the interior.

Leaving Maritzberg, they gave up all thoughts of further opposition, and determined on abandoning Natal. For this purpose they assembled the remaining farmers from all parts of the district; and on a stated day crossed the Drackensberg mountains, and established themselves in an open district, lying on the banks of the Orange River.

From this they have since been expelled by their implacable enemies (at least they think them such), the English; and at the present moment these twenty thousand of our best colonists are settled five hundred miles inland from Natal, over the Vaal River, where they have become rich and prosperous; more so, indeed, than the colonists in any part of "the Cape," and under the present enlightened colonial policy have been recognised as an independent people.

But to return to my subject. We were about breaking up the snug little party in the tent, when one of the ladies related a tale she had heard from a woman at the coffee-shop—namely, that "the surrounding bush was full of tiger-cats, and sundry beasts of prey;" and, moreover, "that a man had been lately attacked, and seriously hurt by them." Now, situated as we were in a lonely wood, it was impossible not to be startled at such an announcement;

each bush, we fancied, concealed a lurking tiger, ready to pounce out and carry off his prey.

Under these circumstances, it was agreed that a watch-fire should be kept up near the tents throughout the night. Accordingly, having divided the remaining hours of darkness into five equal parts, and drawn lots for the turns at the watchfire, we took leave of the ladies, and left them in possession of their tent.

It happened that my turn of keeping watch commenced at two o'clock in the morning, and lasted till three; after which my brother's turn commenced. So, making up a blazing fire, and giving the first sentinel a great-coat, a glass of grog, and brace of loaded pistols, we adjourned to the gentlemen's tent, where, wrapping ourselves in blankets, we made the damp sea-sand our bed, and fell asleep.

Precisely at two I was roused by the last watchman, who, having delivered up the coat and pistols, took his place in the tent, and dozed off to sleep. Seating myself on a stool by the fire, under the shelter of a martingóla bush, I proceeded to heap fresh fuel on the dying embers; then, hanging the great-coat loosely over my shoulders, I took the pistols, and watched the curling flame skipping from thorn to thorn, and crackling as it shot forth its bright train of sparks high into the pitch-dark canopy by which it was enshrouded.

Now, I certainly did not sleep at my post; but, somehow or other, the hour slipped away before I thought it half ended. It was still pitch-dark; a gentle breeze was making a rustling in the leaves; a few night-birds—disturbed by the unwonted glare—came flitting overhead to learn its meaning, and quickly disappeared in the deep recesses of

the wood. While, ever and anon, my timid imagination would try to persuade me that some wild beast was causing the rustling of the boughs; till—fearing lest I really should become afraid—I grasped my pistols and a blazing brand, and cautiously approached the spot from whence the noise proceeded; but all *there* I found silent and motionless; while *now* the rustling issued from yonder corner of the secluded glen.

It was indeed a dreary spot; but for all that there was something in the wild solitude that took my fancy; so much so, indeed, that I could not persuade myself to rouse my brother to his watch, and therefore proceeded to keep both my own and his.

At length the stars began to lose their recent brightness; traces of the approaching daylight appeared in the eastern horizon, and slowly spread till a red tinge came over that quarter of the skies: the air became piercing cold; the tall gaunt forms of noble timber-trees emerging from the black night kept coming into view; while thousands of little songsters welcomed the break of day with their sweet warbling melody.

All danger being now over, I took a ramble about the surrounding bush; passing through clumps of martingolas and narrow Caffre footpaths till I suddenly came upon the well (before named). Thence I found my way to the beach, and secured a bundle of splinters from the wreck for our fire. Next I reached the custom-house, before which a drowsy sentinel was pacing up and down—hugging his awkward musket. Scrambling over some heaps of merchandise and boxes—strewed along the beach above high-water mark—and again entering the recesses of the

bush, I suddenly found myself standing at the open door of a guard-room, within which some half dozen sleepy soldiers were sitting doubled up, over the embers of a wood fire, with their loaded muskets piled in a stack, close at hand, ready for service at a moment's notice.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MISHAP—UNEXPECTED BREAKFAST PARTY—BAD NEWS—COMPLETION OF OUR ENCAMPMENT—DIFFERENT CLASSES OF COLONISTS—VARIOUS REPORTS ON THE INTERIOR—TOUR OF OBSERVATION—EMIGRANTS' GENERAL ENCAMPMENT—DURBAN, IN THOSE DAYS—THE BEREA HILLS—BEAUTIFUL SCENERY—THE GERMAN HOTEL.

It was getting quite light ere I regained the secluded spot occupied by our tents, where I found every thing silent and undisturbed, just as when I left an hour previously. And as we had agreed amongst ourselves, the night before, to have breakfast over by times—so as to complete our proposed encampment early in the morning, before the heat of the day set in—I commenced making up the fire; after which I formed a triangle, and suspended a kettle of water from it over the flame. This done, I took the emptied pail, and started for the well to obtain a fresh supply, having first provided myself with a hooked stick, for lowering the bucket. On reaching the well, I let down my bucket, whirled it round a time or two to get it filled, and was in the act of drawing it up, when an unexpected calamity befell me.

To make myself understood, however, I should observe, that my own watch had got out of order on the voyage, and that I had borrowed my brother's—an old ancestral one of vast dimensions—for the night, which ill-fated watch I had safely deposited in my waistcoat pocket.

Now, while thus drawing the water, I heard a heavy splash below; but the faint light and deep shade of the overhanging bush prevented my seeing the cause. I therefore hauled up my bucket, and set off for the tents, without a single thought of the "big watch."

Having at length boiled the kettle, I roused my companions, whose first question of course was, "What's the time?" But on feeling for the watch, I discovered that it had vanished! In an instant, the late *splash* recurred to my mind; and, starting off at full speed, I quickly reached the woody recess in which the well was situated. But what was my chagrin at finding a crowd of Caffres busily employed in drawing water to cook their breakfast!

Of course, I gave up all hopes of ever seeing the watch again; but at the same time, pushing my way through the swarthy group, I gained the brink of the well; when stooping down, and carefully surveying the surface of the silt at the bottom, I discovered the missing watch lying face upwards in about four feet of water.

The joy of beholding my old friend once more can be better imagined than described; and as the whole depth of the well was scarcely nine feet, my first impulse was to jump down and grasp it in my hand; but this the Caffres would not allow, either from fear of thickening the water, or from a slight misgiving that my intentions were suicidal. However, on my making gestures and pointing out the watch to them, they discovered the cause of my anxiety; and, laughing heartily at the mishap, procured a barbed assegai, with which they quickly fished it up and restored it to me, when, to my surprise, I found that the water had not injured it in the least.

By this time the occupants of the tents were all up, and had set out a breakfast table on a plot of grass, in a cool shady spot, under a large clump of evergreen. They had also procured planks from the wreck to serve as benches, and obtained a fresh supply of provisions from Caffres despatched from the town with things for sale.

Scarcely were we seated before our party was augmented by the arrival of the captain and several of our shipmates—including the stout gentleman and Manxman—who were all on their way to the Point to look after the luggage, which, as I before remarked, they had been obliged to leave on the beach all night; and, as a matter of course, they were all invited to share our breakfast, to which they readily assented; and, seating themselves on the boxes and bundles lying about our tents, they related their adventures of the night.

The majority of our guests were any thing but satisfied with the little they had seen of the town—Durban, which they described as being "knee-deep in sand." While with regard to Byrne, the projector of the emigration scheme under which we had all come out, it was asserted, "that he was wholly unknown in the colony;" and moreover, "that his agent, Moreland, had already refused to accept some heavy bills drawn on him by Byrne, in favour of several individual passengers."

This was sad news for us! For, after our ruinous loss by the wreck, we had nothing to fall back upon but the fifty pounds transmitted by means of Byrne; and, if that too was lost, we should then be altogether undone! Indeed, as it was, our condition was any thing but enviable. Ten thousand miles from home, with only five-and-thirty pounds

wherewith to board and keep ourselves, until such time as we could get our land, bring it under cultivation, and produce a crop for the market!

Nor were *we* the *only* ones likely to suffer by this Byrne; for our Scotch friends also had been induced to part with a hundred pounds, in exchange for his (Byrne's) worthless bills on Moreland; so that by the time breakfast was over, and our guests had departed to see after their baggage—we, the Scotchmen, and their two wives, were nearly at our wit's end.

In the midst of our calamities, it was some consolation to know that, at least, we should get our grants of land; since we possessed guarantees from the emigration commissioners—securing us our farms under all circumstances. Alas! how little did we understand colonial business. But of that I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

At length we called a council of the five gentlemen and three ladies, to deliberate on the course to be adopted; which resulted in its being unanimously agreed to complete our encampment, and live at common charges for the ensuing week; by which time it was thought we should know more about the colony, and the best plans to be pursued; besides, that it would enable us to get our remaining baggage landed, without the trouble of running from the town to the Point each time the surf-boat came from the ship.

This part of the business being settled, we fell to work at our tents; and having learnt of a soldier that the precise site of the ladies' tent was the spot on which the massacre had taken place a few years before, we thought it as well to move our encampment a little further into the glen; so,

striking the said tent, we removed more into the bush, and by noon had quite a little canvass town of our own.

The remainder of the day was occupied in conveying boxes from the beach to the tents, as the boats happened to bring ashore any belonging to us or the rest of our party. In this work we all helped each other; and when, occasionally, a very heavy case turned up, we formed slings, and carried it on poles between several of us; while the indefatigable ladies worked right manfully in conveying the lighter articles, arranging them in the different tents, and preparing savoury dishes for meal-times; in which latter operation they were materially assisted by the common soldiers of the 45th, who kindly lent us camp kettles and sundry other cooking utensils, besides supplying us gratuitously with greens and herbs from their garden, and the services of several Caffres for washing up plates, &c.

In this manner we spent our first week on shore; during which period the greater portion of ours and friends' baggage had been landed. We had also ascertained that no cash would be forthcoming from Byrne's agent; that our hundred acre grant of land was to be made at the Illovo, fifty miles inland, and thirty west of the capital; also, that six weeks would elapse before the locality would be fixed upon, and two months more before the land could be legally transferred to us, by which time the much dreaded wet season would be at its height. We were therefore obliged to abandon all thoughts of settling on our farms, and began to look about us for some way of profitably employing our time and reduced capital.

The few days thus pleasantly spent in our encampment

at the Point, had enabled us to gain a considerable insight into our future colonial prospects, simply by conversing with old settlers, as well as by observing the character and appearance of the various classes that frequented the landing-place, or lounged about the custom-house. First of all appeared thriving merchants, whose bronzed faces and familiarity with the Dutch and Caffre language, bespoke a long residence in that sunny clime. These carried prosperity on their countenances; and as they came cantering over the sands, mounted on strong cobs, attended by ladies on light graceful palfreys, with long riding habits, and broad-brimmed straw hats flapping in the refreshing breeze, one could scarcely keep from envying the happy lot of South African merchants.

Next, there were not a few gentlemanly persons, of good address, whose time was wholly spent in loitering about the beach, basking in the bright sunshine, or lounging on heaps of luggage, ever watching for an opportunity of entering into conversation with *newly arrived* emigrants. These *disinterested* people would congratulate us on selecting Natal as our future country, and begin telling marvellous tales of fortunes realized by cotton-growers; then going on to say, "How many thousand acres of land they owned"—"How many acres of cotton they should have in bearing *next* year"—"How many hundred cattle they possessed"—"How many waggons they had *on the road*"—"How many Caffres they employed." In a word, "That they were the leading men in the colony."

Now, a person's garb and gait will often belie his tongue; and so I rather wondered at not seeing more yeomanlike costumes than tight white ducks! dress coats! fancy

waistcoats! pumps on their feet, and plumes of ostrich feathers in their caps! and, moreover, how men, with so much business always on hand, could thus sit wasting their time and spending day after day in idleness! Politely inviting you to "take *a weed*" from their cigar case; and then extolling the coast lands, remarking, at the same time, "how admirably tobacco grew on their estates!" and in conclusion, leaking out, that "they had a farm for sale, the finest in the colony"—and "at the lowest figure." Of course, it is needless to say that their estates existed only in their own imaginations; although, in the event of finding a dupe, they would no doubt have sold him somebody's farm in the neighbourhood, and bolted with the first instalment of the purchase-money.

Another class consisted of Boers, who had not joined in the general migration at the capture of the colony by the English. These men were exactly what you would expect to find: tall, athletic, freckled with sunbeams, attired in snow-white canvass trousers, bright blue cloth jackets with brass buttons, and broad brimmed, sugar-loaf, felt hats. Here and there you might find one on horseback; but the majority of them preferred the driving box of the ponderous waggon, where, seated behind a straggling train of fourteen draught oxen, yoked two and two, they made the very woods echo again with their "yeck"—"yeck!" and the loud crack of the prodigious whip.

The description of the colony at large given by these two last-named classes (viz. the beach loungers, and the Boers) widely differed; for, while the former declaimed against all parts, except the coast districts, the latter had only to point to their waggon load of wool, butter, corn, or

their well-conditioned spans of oxen; and ask the other to produce the like from any part of the coast division.

Still, however, the accounts of "dust storms," "tempests," "locusts," and "rocky wildernesses," which all classes at the seaport gave of the inland districts, were so alarming that *our party*, together with several fellow-passengers, expressed a strong wish for one or two to proceed inland some fifty or sixty miles, and make a report upon the true character of the colony.

Now, in our reduced circumstances, we could very ill afford the time or expense of such a journey; but as it was a general wish, amongst a number of our friends, that *we* should undertake it, we consented; although it is only honest to say, that in so doing we had a secondary object in view, namely, of purchasing land for ourselves, in the capital, intending to lay out our thirty-five pounds in buying a "town allotment;" we having determined to work as labourers, until our savings, and the proceeds of a crop or two enabled us to commence business for ourselves. In this decision some, doubtless, will condemn us; but when they consider that town lands were advancing every day—almost every hour—in value, and that provisions were rising still more rapidly,—I think they will then agree, that our decision was really the best, and the speculation the safest we could adopt.

About this time, we received advices from England that a few bags of seed wheat, and two ploughs—a present from a friend—would come out in a small brig, so as to arrive soon after us: and thus another obstacle presented itself to prevent our proposed journey. However, this was got over, by the party at the tents undertaking to see after its landing

for us, and also to take charge of our tent and luggage during our absence.

Every thing being thus arranged, we started upon our tour, at noon—on the sixth day after our arrival: having first provided ourselves with a bag of provisions for the way, a tin kettle, two thick blankets, a fowling-piece, and brace of pistols. Our road lay through the dense forest that extends from the Point to Durban; and though the boughs of overhanging timber trees nearly shut out the brilliant sky, and fiery sunbeams, still the two miles of sand, wellnigh "knee-deep," and our heavy loads, made us very slow travellers.

At length we emerged from the thicket, and discovered an extensive plain covered with stunted grass and straggling bush, bounded on one side by the forest we had just left, on the second by the Berea hills and woods, and on the third by the town of Durban. The nearest portion of this plain had been assigned to the emigrants for an encamping ground, and was dotted over with canvass tents, covered carts, gipsy-tents, hovels, cooking utensils, washed linen, men and women in groups of ten and twelve, squatting round fires, devouring half-cooked beef-steaks, and roaring out over the brandy bottle. While the farther corner was occupied by the camp, or rather stockade, before alluded to —where two hundred troops are stationed.

Our direct course lay through the *emigrants'* camp; but as we intended to buy a few necessaries for our journey, we turned aside, and passed up the principal street of Durban. At that time, no attention had been paid to enclosing the property on either side of the streets; so that the town—though really possessing many good houses, and numbers

of large mercantile establishments—appeared like a confused mass of dwellings, pitched about indiscriminately,—here an extensive store, brick and slated, with plate glass front, and costly stock of goods; and close by a miserable thatched cottage, built of the abominable "wattle and dab." There, too, would be pretty villas, standing in well cultivated gardens, abounding with oranges and lemons, pine apples, bananas, coffee, cotton, and indeed every known production from the English water-cress to the rare exotic; and all round these lovely gardens, would be public houses, retail shops, Caffre huts, inhabited by filthy Hottentots, pigsties, and what else I know not; while to complete the picture of misery, the sand was allowed to drift at pleasure over the whole town, so that in many cases the streets were next to impassable. In fact, it is impossible to imagine a place more admirably adapted for a handsome and thriving seaport town; but at the same time so wretchedly mismanaged. So much for the Durban of *those days.*

As we quitted the town, and drew near the Berea hills —over which the waggon road lay—we fell in with two fellow shipmates, attired in Turkish costume, with daggers, and loaded pistols slung at their belts, who also were journeying towards Maritzberg, the capital. We did not, however, think it desirable to travel in such queer company, so, quickening our pace, we bade them "good bye," and began the long tedious ascent of the hills before us.

It was nearly four o'clock before we gained the summit of this woody range; which, though scarcely six miles from our tents, had taken us three hours to accomplish, on account of the endless sand. Here the road improved and

became comparatively hard; we therefore sat down on a fallen tree, and rested while we emptied the sand from our shoes.

The view from this eminence was strikingly grand: far away lay the vast Indian ocean, sparkling in the sunshine as it heaved and throbbed; next came the bay of Natal, with its ships at anchor, tossing amidst the foaming billows, apparently intent on committing suicide, at the foot of the bluff promontory.

Then comes the glassy "Inner bay," as it is called, reposing beneath the sombre shade of the deep-tinted forests by which it is engulfed, with countless pleasure boats skimming its polished surface; and here and there along its margin a fishing party, or a picnic turn out. Next, the town of Durban discovers itself, in the shape of straggling snow-white buildings, dotted about, and almost lost in "bush," looking far more like a large English country village than a rising seaport town. And lastly you arrive at the magnificent forest—miles in extent all ways—that clothes the vast range of heights on which you stand; through which the sandy waggon track has broken a way below, leaving the spreading boughs to meet again above, and thus to form a most magnificent arcade, festooned with thousands of flowering plants and sweet-scented creepers.

But as the *would-be-Turks* were now overtaking us, we resumed our march, and soon came up with a party of Durban gentlemen, who gave us some useful information relative to our journey, and also informed us that the adjacent wood abounded with elephants, leopards, wild boars, deer, &c. &c., at the same time pointing out

thick timber trees, that had recently been broken down by the first-named monsters.

On emerging from the Berea woods, the country presents an undulating surface for several miles, consisting of gentle hills and lonely dales, waving in tall rank grass, broken at intervals by masses of dark bush, and dotted over with "Caffre craals" (or native huts), with their patches of Indian corn, and herds of goats, or cows.

Traversing this delightful tract of country, in the cool of the day, with the full splendour of the setting sun throwing a lustre on the already enchanting scenery—and the excitement at seeing a noble deer, now and then, go skipping playfully along the shady vales, almost within range, or a brace of "pows" (wild turkeys) crossing our path a few hundred yards ahead, and the unexpected change from the loose sandy soil of Durban—altogether so enlivened our drooping spirits, that, by the time we had travelled ten miles from Durban, our estimation of Natal had risen at least fifty per cent. even on what we had read of its charms, and the advantages it offered to colonists.

By sunset we reached an extensive cotton farm, where many hundred acres of cotton of the finest quality was growing wild, and blowing about in the wind, with nobody to gather it, or turn it to account; although there were good farm buildings, and a substantial house on the estate. Passing on, we travelled the next two miles in the dark, and having deviated from the path, lost our way; but at length found ourselves before a roadside house, called "The German Hotel," where we determined on taking up our abode for the night.

This hotel consisted of a long row of thatched buildings,

surrounded by a verandah; opening on to which were several doors, and numerous little casements, all bespeaking the ingenuity and mechanical skill of the industrious Germans, who built and inhabited it. The whole place wore an aspect of simplicity and homely comfort, with its poultry-yard, its "craal" for cattle, a stack of firewood, a coffee-mill fixed to a stump under the verandah; while beams of light from a blazing fire issued through the open doors and casements, throwing a flickering glare on the over-hanging bush, beneath which it was wellnigh buried. Within, the appearance exactly corresponded with the exterior: the several rooms, into which it was divided, being all open to the thatch, and only separated from each other by partitions running even with the house-walls; while the entire furniture—consisting of tables, stools, a sofa, and a few bedsteads, bore unmistakeable proofs of being "home made."

The principal room was occupied by a few old German settlers from the neighbourhood and a large party of newly arrived English emigrants, all eating, drinking, smoking, and singing promiscuously, waited on by half a dozen grown up sons and daughters of the host and hostess, who themselves were too busily engaged cooking in the adjoining kitchen to attend to any thing besides. Having obtained a private room, and secured two beds for the night, we ordered supper, and, while it was preparing, made a survey of our rude apartment.

CHAPTER IX.

EVENING AT A ROADSIDE INN—COWIE'S HILL—PINE TOWN FLAT—BOTHA'S HALF-WAY HOUSE—BOER'S TALE—MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY—"OUTSPANNED WAGGON"—MISSION STATION—UYS DOORN'S—APPROACH THE CAPITAL—DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY—INTRODUCTION TO A CITIZEN OF PIETER MARITZBERG.

THE only furniture possessed by our room consisted of two rough wooden bedsteads, a few chairs, and a three-legged table, on which was placed a long dip candle in a brass stick. The whitewashed walls were gaily decorated with coloured prints of fox hounds and English steeple chasers, together with engravings cut from the sheets of *The Illustrated London News;* while from the dark smoke-stained roof hung sundry flitches of bacon, pumpkins, choice ears of seed corn, and long waving cobwebs.

After a few minutes the room door flew open and a bouncing German lassie, all smiles and roses, made her appearance with a tray and clean white cloth, on which were arranged cups and saucers, bread, butter, fried eggs, bacon, tea, and coffee. Having deposited the tray on the table, and busied herself in putting the room a little to rights—taking care meanwhile to show her great agility—she gave us a hand-bell and withdrew, leaving us to enjoy the substantial meal before us.

The mirth of the party in the adjoining room was quite sufficient to have kept us awake had we retired to our beds

at the conclusion of supper. We therefore rang for the table to be cleared, and sat till near midnight, reading some colonial papers, which the said bouncing lassie had considerately brought us. By this time the sounds in the adjacent compartment had gradually died off to the low-toned conversation of a few inveterate smokers, and the heavy snoring of a drunken emigrant lying under the tap-room table. Now, as we intended to start before daybreak next morning, we rang, and asked for our bill, including the two beds; and, to our agreeable surprise, found that the entire charge for the two was but three shillings.

It was still dark, next morning, when we arose and set out for Maritzberg; the air was fresh, and loaded with fragrant odours from a neighbouring garden; a heavy dew hung upon the drooping boughs, and swayed the blades of tender grass almost to the ground; while, miles away, the breakers on the bluff kept up a ceaseless roar, like that of water rushing down a cataract.

A young German lad kindly accompanied us at first starting, to point out a turn of the road; who also informed us that the distance to Maritzberg was about forty miles. We therefore determined on making it a *two days'* journey, that we might the better observe the country as we passed along; besides that, my brother was far from well: he having shown symptoms of colonial fever during the preceding day and night.

Passing through several cotton plantations, all so completely clothed with white wool (hanging in large pods, the size of hen's eggs) that, in the dim twilight, you might almost have mistaken them for snow-clad fields, but for the bright yellow flowers of the unripe pods, and the deep

green foliage of the graceful shrubs on which they grew, our road now brought us to one of the thousand brooks which run amongst the hills, throughout the length and breadth of this well-watered land; then, traversing a couple of miles of park-like country, it led us to the foot of "Cowie's Hill," where the old road was blocked up with bushes, and a new cutting had been made, so as to avoid the formidable ascent—nay, mountain peak—over which the old waggon track lay.

Of course we followed the level road, which enabled us to get an insight to the formation of these vast hills. The sun had by this time risen, scattering his brilliant beams over the beauteous scenery around, and causing the foliage of the different shrubs to sparkle and glitter with pendant dewdrops; on our right, stretching up to the clouds, lay the celebrated "Cowie's Hill," while to our left, far down in a secluded valley, lay a neat farm, with an English-built house, and about fifty acres of well-cultivated land.

This cutting is about two miles long, and just in the middle it is crossed, at right angles, by the old Dutch waggon road, which crowns the highest peak of the neighbouring range, and runs down a fearful incline, to the depths of the ravine below. How ever any man or beast, much more a loaded waggon, could get up and down such a sickening precipice, was and is still a mystery to me!

We next passed over an extensive plain, of some four thousand acres, nearly circular in form, and completely shut in by lofty hills. A lovely spot! but wholly lying waste; presenting a surface of long waving grass, broken only by here and there a rivulet, a clump of bush, or solitary lone tree. And though it has *since* become the

site of a thriving town (Pine-town), at *that* time it bore no traces of human habitation, beyond the framework of a *wattle and dab* hut, which Murray, the proprietor of the whole flat, was that day commencing.

Hitherto, the soil over which we had travelled was of a light friable nature, containing a good deal of fine sand; and, though the entire face of the country was clothed with the richest vegetation, and studded thickly with timber, yet it was manifest that, for the successful cultivation of cereals, it would require claying continually, or else an immense amount of manure; which latter article it was difficult to obtain, as "the Ticks"* (which abound in the coast district) make cattle keeping a very doubtful speculation.

On leaving "Pine-town Flat," we ascended Murray's Hill, scarcely inferior to the great Cowie, and spent a couple of hours in passing over a broad open table land, some miles in extent. Here the character of the country completely changed, the soil became good and almost free from bush; the grass was shorter and less rank than near the coast, and thickly interspersed with brilliant flowers of scarlet, blue, white, and purple. By this time, however, the day had well commenced; we therefore gathered a few sticks as we passed along, and on arriving at a sparkling stream that issued from the hill-side, near a deserted homestead (Pearson's farm), we unpacked our provisions, made some coffee, and rested till near noontide.

Resuming our journey, we at length reached Botha's "half-way house," where we intended to get dinner, and

* The "Tick" is really a "land leech," only of a spherical instead of an elongated form.

to wait until the heat of the day was over. This house was beautifully situated immediately under an almost impassable ridge of hills, packed one upon another, and rising still higher and higher, till they ended in distant conical peaks, or abrupt surfaces of perpendicular rock. The host was proprietor of a six thousand acre farm, stretching along the valley beneath these mountains, and had enclosed several acres, on which were growing excellent crops of oats, barley, peas, and potatoes.

Having conducted us to the travellers' room—a comfortable apartment with folding glass doors, a chintz sofa, and neat furniture — our host brought us the remnants of a cold sucking pig for dinner, and left us in company with a most entertaining young Dutchman, who gave us a brief outline of his own adventures during the late war with the English.

It appeared that this Boer had command of a detachment of boats, whilst the English were besieged in their stockade at Durban. To use his own words, "One day a sloop cast anchor off the bluff, and I was ordered to take my boats and capture her, on behalf of the republic. So, manning a couple of boats, I rowed alongside, hailed the captain, and bade him throw a rope's-end. I and a half dozen men then hauled ourselves on deck, where no body was to be seen except the captain; who, on hearing my errand, and finding himself taken prisoner, became very friendly, laughed heartily, and bade me open the hatchways and see what a splendid cargo he had on board. But what was my horror on removing *the hatches*, at finding some hundred troops with loaded carbines and set bayonets, waiting to rush on deck! In this predicament I endeavour-

ed to jump over board, but the captain prevented me, saying, "No, sir! We shall swing you to the *yard-arm* first, as a traitor and a rebel." However, I remarked that the Boers would at once serve all their captives in the same way, amounting in all to nearly a hundred, which produced a change in the captain's intentions, and saved my neck.

Leaving Botha's, our first business was to climb the formidable barrier before us; but that accomplished one still more formidable presented itself. Happily the *late* Dr. Stanger had cut round it for about a mile, chiefly through red sandstone. From this cutting, which is very narrow, indeed only just a ledge on the mountain side—you get a "bird's-eye view" of Potgeiter's farm, down in a well-watered valley to the left, with a snug Dutch homestead, a large orchard, some fields of ripening corn, and droves of cattle, forming a pretty picture when contrasted with the barren steeps, and wild craggy peaks, by which it is walled in all round.

As we proceeded, the country became still more rugged, the hills assumed a conical shape, the road became one unbroken sheet of greenish marble; right and left lay huge blocks of magnificent granite—red and blue—perched upon hill tops, or lodging on the brink of some yawning chasm, ready to rush headlong down to the unfathomable ravines below. At length we reached Cheeseborough's accommodation house, lying on the banks of a mountain torrent, in the very centre of this rocky wilderness. Passing on, we began the wearisome ascent of the "Big Hill;" and after an hour's hard work, exclusive of stoppages, we gained its summit, from whence the surrounding country for miles was visible.

The sun was now setting, we were still twenty miles from Maritzberg, and ten from the next road-side house; but, what was worse, my brother was again becoming ill. However, we had no choice but to push on and reach the road-side house as quickly as possible. At length we got clear away from the "Big Hill;" and, for the next few miles, passed over an undulating country of rich black soil, equal to the finest English loam. Following a well-beaten track, we rounded a low flat hill; on the farther side of which a couple of waggons were drawn up for the night. A large fire—midway between the two—surrounded by Caffres, was burning brightly; the owner, Mariamne, a Frenchman, lay reading by fire-light under the hinder part of one, having made his position snug by hanging blankets round. A bright brass coffee kettle, a canister of sugar, and a large breakfast cup, lay in the grass close by, just as they had been thrown aside, and left for a future occasion. The Caffres were eating rice from a large iron pot, digging it out with wooden spoons; the cattle too were feasting themselves on the rich grass, that covered the whole surface of country, and every thing betokened perfect contentment.

On our approach, a shaggy dog saluted us with a snarling half-uttered bark, and looked to his master as though to gain his approbation; who, however, visited him with a kick for his pains, and begged that we would not be afraid, as the dog meant no mischief, but acted more from custom than from thinking us suspicious characters. At the same time insisting on our taking a seat, and drinking a cup of strong hot coffee.

From this good-hearted man we learned, that the dis-

tance to Luscomb's road-side house was still eight miles; but that there was an "American mission station" close by (that is, within a mile), over the adjoining little hill. Now, we had plenty of provisions, blankets, and every thing needful for encamping in the open air, if necessary; but as we were both very much heated with our long walk, besides that my brother was far from being well, we determined either to push on to Luscomb's, or else seek shelter for the night at the mission station.

Having fixed on the latter course, we crossed the hill in the direction pointed out by our informant, and in ten minutes reached the station; where we found the venerable missionary "Shrœder," I believe; who not only gave us shelter and a night's lodging, but also prepared for us a substantial supper and breakfast, to help us on our way next morning. It was impossible not to be struck with the great but unostentatious kindness of the venerable gentleman and his good lady, which, indeed, is one of those bright memoirs of past times and foreign lands, that frequently recur to my mind as it ponders over the past, the present, and the future, and asks "What have I been?"—"What am I now?"—"What shall I be?"

Starting at daybreak, we commenced the remaining eighteen miles of our journey. The first few led us through a rich open district, quite free from bush, but ill supplied with water, there being no *constant* stream for several miles; and at that time no wells. We now entered "Thorny Bush," or "Uys Doorn's," a long narrow belt of forest land, one mile in breadth, and twenty in length, possessing very little good timber, the trees being chiefly of the mimosa or acacia species, but affording an inexhaustible supply of

fire-wood for the capital, besides producing considerable quantities of gum and tanning bark.

On the borders of this forest, nearest the capital, stood Luscomb's house of entertainment, where we procured some coffee and cold roast beef. At noon we took our departure, and once more set out for Maritzberg, distant about ten miles. The waggon track here plunged down the precipitous bank of a small rivulet, and ascended the opposite one still more abruptly; the stream itself being only a few inches deep, and very narrow, but fifteen or twenty feet below the rocky banks that contained it. Another mile of picturesque scenery brought us to a deeply wooded valley, at the bottom of which a little brook of sparkling water rippled amongst the smooth stones, and buried itself in the adjoining thicket. Immediately beyond this lay a vast hill, possessing scarcely sufficient soil to hide its *iron stone* ribs, that protruded at several places, in the form of immense "boulders." From the crown of this hill we obtained our first glimpse of the *new* city of Maritzberg, appearing in the distance to be nothing more than a few straggling snow-white buildings, with a red brick fort at one end, and an even plain of some thousand acres at the other, interspersed with a few hedgerows and ornamental shrubs, lying in the hollow of a semicircle, formed by a long range of wood-crowned heights, reaching nearly to the clouds.

Descending a succession of slopes, through a track of fine grazing land, we at length reached the bridge over the Little Bushman's river, a deep and rapid stream running along the whole length of the town, at an average distance of five hundred yards from the outside tier of gardens. The place now wore a very different aspect to what it did

from Uys Doorn's hill. The streets were wide, the houses large and commodious, while the plan in which the town was laid out gave it a very prepossessing appearance, it being nearly two miles long by one in breadth, with ten principal streets running from end to end, crossed at right angles by six others of equal width, but less thickly occupied. Moreover, the frowning hills, which in the distance seemed as though overhanging the town, now showed themselves to be five miles away, presenting a splendid slope of many thousand acres, clothed with luxuriant grass, and scattered over with droves of cows and oxen, with *here* a woody kloof, and *there* a little fountain breaking out of the bare rock, and sparkling in the bright sunshine. The town too presented an animating scene; scores of Caffres were going in and out with things for sale, heavily laden waggons were jolting through the streets, parties of "red coats" were strolling about, merchants were trotting briskly from store to store, while fashionable ladies and dandified young gentlemen were promenading or cantering over the adjacent hills on their fleet steeds.

Now, what with the dust and heat, we were in any thing but in a desirable condition for entering the busy capital; so, taking advantage of the shelter afforded by the bridge, we unpacked our travelling bag, enjoyed a good wash at the river side, shaved, brushed, and polished up a little, preparatory to making our entry into the town.

While thus engaged, a lad of sixteen passed under the bridge, on the opposite side of the river, wild-duck shooting, and stopped to have a little conversation. Now, as he appeared extremely intelligent, we took the opportunity of making a few inquiries relative to the town and adjacent

country, to all of which he gave ready answers; and, bidding us "good-day," pursued the course of the river; but, suddenly turning again, he exclaimed, "if you call on Mr. Archbell, Long Market-street, he will give you better information than I can; besides that, he has a deal of land on sale just now. Mind you call, good-day."

At first we were inclined to suspect it a hoax; but as the latter part of the speech enabled us to inquire about the purchase of some land—a very important part of our errand—we determined on directing our steps as recommended. Accordingly, crossing the bridge, we passed between two neat cemeteries—Dutch and English—and entered the capital by the middle *Cross-street* (Commercial-road). A hundred and fifty yards brought us to Burgher-street; crossing it, another hundred and fifty brought us to Loop-street; another interval as before, and then came Long Market-street—by which time we began to form some idea of the extent and beauty of this extraordinary place; since there yet remained Church—Pieter Maritzberg — Boom — and Greyling-streets untraversed, each separated by an interval of one hundred and fifty yards, and still we were only crossing the town in its narrowest direction.

Lengthways, the above-named streets ran in parallel straight lines from the "Camp Hills," at the extreme left of the town, down an uniform declivity of nearly two miles in length, and terminated in a vast plain covered with rich herbage. Constant streams of limpid water from the neighbouring hills flowed in open channels at the sides of these streets, between the foot-paths and the horse-road. While long hedgerows of figs, roses, quinces, almonds,

peaches, and pomegranates, together with weeping willows, seringaboom, oak, Australian gum, lemon, and various fruit trees, gave the whole place the appearance of a vast panorama. Here would be the well-appointed residence of some *old Cape colonist*; close by, perhaps, the dilapidated house and overgrown orchard of an expatriated boer; near it, again, a newly opened store, crammed with articles for sale, from a rusty ploughshare to a flitch of American bacon, or a fancy stock of haberdashery; while, ever and anon, the fashionable European structure of some *new emigrant* would rise through the tall rank grass and thrifty fruit trees of an old deserted garden.

On reaching Long Market-street, we turned down by the Market-square, an area of from twenty to thirty acres, surrounded by public buildings and old-established mercantile firms (comparatively speaking), until we arrived at the house described by the lad; which, indeed, could scarcely be mistaken, from the fact of its being built with blocks of blue ironstone, very high, and standing in a large garden, with a row of seringas before it.

On rapping at the old-fashioned front door, what was our surprise at its being opened by *the identical lad!* who forthwith conducted us into a comfortable parlour, with old Spanish mahogany furniture, and a good library of valuable books, where we found a short active gentleman of about sixty, very polite, but straightforward. This was his father, Mr. Archbell; who, besides discharging the important functions of editor of the *Natal Independent* and mayor (styled "chairman") of the municipality, was, moreover, one of the earliest missionaries of the Wesleyan body to the heathen natives of this part of South Africa.

CHAPTER X.

THE LITTLE TAILOR—SUNDAY MORNING—THE VLEY—PIETER MARITZBERG CHURCH—LAND SHARKS—JOURNEY TO THE BAY—COW IN THE HILL-SIDE CUTTING—THUNDER-STORM UNDER CANVASS—SCENE IN A CAFFRE HUT.

HAVING apologised for our intrusion, and stated our errand, we were invited to be seated, while the kind-hearted old gentleman proceeded to give us the full benefit of thirty years' experience in colonial life, of which the greater part had been spent at Natal. This, of course, would have been highly interesting at any time; but to us—just commencing our career—it was doubly so; and great was the satisfaction with which we received his favourable report on both soil and climate of that and the upper districts of the colony; as well as the assurance of the existence of unbounded scope for commercial enterprise; and that a handsome reward—nay, fortune, would quickly result from steadiness and industry, at any trade or calling, in the *then* infant state of the country.

It was nearly dark when we took leave of our new friend, who bade us call on the following Monday for a list of Erven and farms on sale. Moreover, as it was Saturday evening, we were obliged to look out a lodging for that night and the ensuing Sunday. This we found no easy task. The hotel was full; and several private lodging-houses refused to take us in, except for a week certain. At length, after an

hour's ramble, we found ourselves in one of the principal streets, at the camp-end of the town; by which time it was quite dark, the thoroughfares were nearly deserted, a few customers only were passing in and out of the dimly-lighted stores; while we, worn out with fatigue and our heavy load, were wandering over a strange town in search of shelter and a resting-place for our wearied limbs.

Passing on, we came to a long low thatched cottage, with its gable end abutting on the main-street, and a large square sash, fixed in the centre, low down from which a thousand rays shot forth, and lighted the row of seringas that grew before it. Within this sash, on a counter, in the midst of flickering candles, sat an active little tailor, stitching away right manfully. Now, as the house seemed large, clean, and quiet, we rapped, and inquired whether we could hire a room for a couple of days.

At this the pale-faced little man shouted "Mother! Mother!" and forthwith a still paler-faced little woman (his wife) answered the summons, attended by a troop of six or eight small children, who, after a short deliberation, agreed to let us their keeping room, and cook our meals, for the moderate charge of *one shilling a day.*

Having safely deposited our baggage, and employed their eldest boy—a lad of ten—for a guide, we went out shopping; procured some fruit, flour, and a fine piece of roasting beef for the next day's dinner, together with a few necessaries for present use. Then groping our way back, through the pitch dark streets, we made a comfortable supper, and spread our blankets for the night on a carpet of deer skin, lent by our host.

These people had been in the colony twelve months;

they had landed without any capital except their industry —they had purchased the house, and seven roods of land adjoining it, for one hundred and fifty pounds, payable by two instalments in twelve and twenty-four months. The first seventy-five they had that very day paid, entirely from their hard earnings; and were full of hope and confidence of being able to pay off the remainder by the appointed time. This corroborated the statement of our friend (Mr. Archbell) so completely, that we too took heart, and looked forward to the day that would again find us in independent circumstances.

The day was well up when we arose from our slumbers next morning. A cloudless sky, a brilliant sun, thousands of chirping birds, a cool *sea* breeze, were ushering in that sacred day of rest. The band of the 45th was beating up stragglers; the English ensign floated from the bastion of the camp; while, here and there, a mounted orderly was galloping about the glacis adjoining the fort. Soon the splendid band struck up the National Anthem, and headed its regiment, as—slowly emerging from the Fort, attended by a company of artillery—it wended its way over the grass-clad plain towards the garrison chapel, amidst the rolling beat of drums, the blast and flourish of many trumpets, the tinkling shawms, and the clarionet's strong clear note, joining with the echoing hills in pouring forth "God save the Queen."

As the church service did not commence till eleven, we were able to take a short stroll beforehand; so, issuing forth, we passed directly across the town, and reached the side, opposite and farthest from that by which we had entered on the preceding day. The two extreme streets in this di-

rection—namely, Boom and Greyling streets—are situated in a valley, stretching along the whole length of the town; and beyond them again, lay an even plain of from two to three miles length, bounded on the one side by the last-named street, and on the other by a rapid rivulet. This plain varies in breadth from a quarter to half a mile, and throughout its entire length and breadth is one continuous surface of splendid turf; moreover, from its delightful situation it had become a favourite promenade of the townspeople. Indeed, the view from this valley, or "vley" as the Dutch call it, is very striking. On one side lies the "Garden-town," with its snow-white houses and bright red tiling; here will be a patch of maize, and there a field of white ripe corn; farther on will be the deep foliage of a fruitful orchard, with a high thatch roof stretching aloft, crowned with the common lime-cast ridge; and farther still (will be) the camp-fort Napier, with its heavy batteries ready to pour down volleys of destruction on the peaceful town lying prostrate at its feet. While on the other side, rising gradually from the before-named rivulet, lies the circuitous range of hills which, in the distance, appeared to envelope the town, and seemed as though about to bury it beneath their ponderous mass. From this point, however, they present a succession of terrace and gentle slopes—ascending little by little—all converging towards a point, till they congregate and form one high peak in the centre of the range. Over this peak the Dutch waggoners had made their road; which you might plainly trace by the bright red soil, shining amongst the waving sea of grass that clothed the whole from the summit to the brink of the sparkling rivulet that rippled along its base.

Little did we think as we passed along this vley, and plucked a handful of the brilliant flowers that grew in wild profusion on every side, that we and it were destined to become so well acquainted, as the event proved!

As it was getting on towards church time, we re-entered the town, and after *another* half hour's walk found the church—or rather government school-room—a commodious building in the form of a cross, capable of containing two or three hundred persons. Having entered, and obtained seats before the arrival of the congregation, we had an opportunity of observing the room and its fittings up.

Only one portion of the building was used for the church service, the remaining wings being occupied as a museum, library, and school-room.

The portion used for the church was by far the largest, it being upwards of seventy feet in length, by thirty in breadth, very high, with open-thatched roof, and a row of long low windows, running round three of its sides. The walls were of brick, plastered over, and lime washed inside and out; neat white blinds hung at the windows to keep off the sun; benches, formed of native yellow wood, were arranged along the sides—the front one, to the right, being *left vacant* for the governor, and that to the left hand being *occupied* by the judge. The farthest end of the room was railed off for the communion-table, with which were included—within the rail—the reading desk, pulpit, and font. The whole being completed by an orchestra and seraphine, placed at the end opposite to the communion-table. Towards eleven the benches began to fill, and, by the time service commenced, were all close packed with well-dressed people; and, though I have

attended many churches in England, and seen them well filled too, yet never did I witness one in which the sacred object for which we were then assembled struck me so forcibly, or that possessed more completely *that something* which here seemed to reign supreme. The clergyman performed the service in a distinct and impressive tone; the whole congregation joining heartily in the responses. An amateur organist and choir, consisting of ladies and gentlemen belonging to the church, took the choral portion of the service; a deep sense of the occasion, and the solemnity of the day, together with the absence of all formality, seemed to pervade all classes, and showed that, though far removed from the Sabbath bells of happy, happy England, nevertheless, a Christian church could take firm root, and pour forth prayers and praise at the throne of grace, sowing the seed of righteousness, and yielding the fruit of unity and peace.

Beyond attending the morning and evening services, we did not feel disposed to do much this day, and therefore contented ourselves with resting our weary limbs under the shade of a clump of apricot-trees, at the back of our lodgings—which house, by the by, was rather notorious, as having been the head-quarters of Major Smith at the time of his capturing the town.

The following morning we paid another visit to Mr. Archbell, and obtained a list of land sales. He, however, strongly recommended us, in our peculiar circumstances, to settle in the town, as being more likely to afford an opportunity of turning my past education to good account; at the same time offering us—in the event of our settling as farmers—an excellent three thousand acre farm, at the

low price of two hundred pounds, payable by two instalments, in twelve and twenty-four months, with immediate transfer, and title free of expense; or, the right of leasing some private property of his own, at one shilling per acre, with the option of purchase—within five years—at five shillings an acre.

Relying on his advice, we determined on buying an erf (a town allotment of seven roods), and having ascertained that the price varied from a thousand to fifty pounds—the latter being the government upset price, but that they might occasionally be purchased considerably under government price, we set out, and spent the next few days inspecting erven, searching out their owners, and inquiring the different prices.

Our success at first was very indifferent; and not one single erf could we meet with under fifty pounds, so that we began to despair of ever becoming burghers of Maritzberg. On the fourth day we chanced to hear of some land for sale about ten miles out, at *half a crown* an acre, and went to view it; but found that our journey was all in vain, since the owner would not sell less than three thousand acres.

During the fifth day, as we were purchasing a few necessaries at one of the stores, the shopkeeper, a man of good address, accosted us, and offered an erf for sale at twenty-five pounds—half cash, and half in six months. This offer was too good to be despised. We therefore accompanied him at once to view the ground; and, being perfectly satisfied with the land and price, were about concluding the purchase when the shopkeeper informed us that he was only acting for his next-door neighbour, to

whom the land belonged, and with whom we must make the final arrangement.

We now, all three, adjourned to the pretended owner's, who quite corroborated the shopkeeper's statement, and offered to let half the purchase-money remain unpaid for twelve months, provided we set about building a house immediately. This struck me as implying more than said; and I at once produced the twelve pounds for the first instalment, and demanded that the sale should be immediately registered at the colonial office, and the title-deeds deposited there, according to the colonial regulations. To this the vendor readily assented, and, bidding us to be seated, started to fetch his title-deeds.

After the lapse of half an hour, he returned without the deeds, saying "that his wife had gone into the country, and taken the key of his drawers with her; and therefore that the bargain must stand over a few days."

Here the shopkeeper interposed on our behalf, and wished him to agree not to raise the price during the interval.

To this he replied, that "of course he should take a better bid, unless we had paid a deposit."

The shopkeeper therefore counselled us to pay the first instalment lest we should lose our purchase, and wait for the transfer until the expiration of a week, by which time the woman would be back with the key.

Now, as the parties concerned appeared highly respectable, and anxious to do business, we were unwilling to break off the negotiation on the bare *suspicion* of fraud, which I must confess I entertained. We therefore put the money in our pocket, and agreed to let the matter rest

for a week; by which time we hoped to be able to bring our baggage up from the Bay.

The following morning, at daybreak, we quitted the capital on our return to Durban, accompanied by one of our fellow passengers, named Smith, a single gentleman, who had come out to the colony without any fixed object, beyond travelling about to spend his time and money. The coolness of the morning, and our light loads, we having left the gun and portmanteau behind, enabled us to make rapid progress; so that by sunrise we had reached Uys Doorn's Bush.

As we passed along through beds of tall rank grass shoulders deep, or scrambled through thickets, and waded brooks, sometimes a frightened deer would start from amongst the sweet-scented rushes by the water-side, giving a bound or two forward, then pause, and snuff the air, draw himself proudly up, turn round and stare us full in the face—then, throwing out his heels, make off, and quickly vanish in the recesses of the distant hills.

Passing Luscomb's house of entertainment, and traversing the entire "Thorny Bush," we at length gained the open country, where we discovered "the travellers in Turkish costume," lying sound asleep in the wet grass, with not so much as a blanket between them and the raw night air. Continuing our journey, we reached a pool of water in the dry bed of a rivulet, and having kindled a fire, boiled some coffee, and grilled a steak for breakfast. Late in the afternoon we reached Cheeseborough, where we obtained a good dinner, and starting again at dusk, traversed the mountainous district between "Sturk Spruit" and Botha's. We had travelled some miles, and it had become quite

dark, save from the dim light of the starry firmament above —when we entered one of the deep cuttings on the hill-side. Our fellow traveller, Smith, here insisted on sitting down to rest on an embankment overhanging the deep ravine below; and while thus sitting, with loaded pistols on full cock, a strange form appeared, advancing slowly up the cutting towards us. Now, in such a wild spot, and at that late hour—for it was then near ten—we had no difficulty in imagining the midnight rover to be some wild animal; especially as leopards and wolves in abundance, with an occasional lion, or buffalo, were wont to frequent these parts; indeed a hyena was at the very moment crying on a distant hill-side! We therefore arranged ourselves in battle array, which had the effect of causing the advancing animal—whatever it was—to stop short, and beat a retreat; we now concluded that it must be a large deer, and as it was impossible for it to get out of the cutting, except at the ends, or down the precipice, we determined on getting it. For this purpose, by the aid of my comrades, I scrambled up the steep face of the cutting, and gained the hill-side above, where I noiselessly creeped along until I had passed the dark form of the animal some fifty yards; then, sliding down into the narrow pass, I cut off all retreat from our noble prize, and shouted to my mates "to come on, and fire into him," while I stood—just out of range of their pistols ready to return the compliment, if necessary.

However, what was our surprise at finding the animal standing quite motionless on the brink of the ravine, although we had each advanced to within thirty paces of it. At this moment I heard two clicks, and saw two slight flashes; but, fortunately, both pistols hung fire, for the next

instant the supposed *deer* uttered a long plaintive low, and discovered itself to be *a cow*.

Leaving the fortunate animal to ruminate on its escape, and crop the stunted grass that grew along the embankment, we continued our journey, and reached Botha's by midnight: here we procured supper, and answered *in the affirmative* the question of "Have you seen a stray cow along the road?" without going into all the particulars.

Resuming our march next day, we reached the German house by noon, and made a late breakfast; concluding the journey by sunset, without farther adventure. On reaching the tents, we delivered our favourable report on the Interior; but it was too late, since the whole of our party had that very day purchased allotments at Pine-town Flat, and intended starting immediately after our return. We also learned that, on the previous night, a leopard had destroyed several fowls belonging to a white man, occupying a Caffre hut in the centre of the dense bush, close by the tents, who discovered the intruder in the very act, and could have shot it, had it not been in a direct line with our encampment.

The following day, our Scotch friends and the Yorkshireman struck their tents, and took their departure, so that we had the lonely little glen quite to ourselves; but as our goods were all ashore, we also intended to shift our quarters as soon as a waggon could be hired,—a matter of no small uncertainty, since the great influx of emigrants had created such a demand for *conveyances* that the usual charge had doubled.

On returning to the Bay, my brother had a fresh attack of his illness—occasioned probably by the brackishness of

the water at the Point—which quite laid him up; so that, when night came, it found him in bed, and me sitting in the solitary tent, surrounded with boxes of linen, a bag or two of seed wheat, some luggage of a friend, and the contents of a case, which had arrived (as we anticipated) during our absence, but had been smashed to atoms on the voyage.

Without, a violent thunder-storm was raging, accompanied by torrents of heavy rain, and blustering wind; which soon extinguished our fire, and put supper quite out of the question. The canvass of the tent, unable to resist the storm, was tearing itself from the fastenings, and threatening to leave us and our few goods to the pitiless blast of the icy shower that rushed through the air on every side. However, by repairing damages as fast as they occurred, I managed to keep a covering overhead till the hurricane died off and left only a drizzling rain.

By the light of a small oil lamp I was completing my English journal, ready for the mail which sailed next day; and, while thus busily employed, time stole away so softly that it was late ere I closed and sealed it up. A fearful shout now burst from the recesses of the surrounding jungle, apparently within a hundred yards of our tent; in a moment all was still again, and then the yell broke out with increased vigour, till it dinned in your ears, and made the very air shake and vibrate with the clamour.

At first we were alarmed, and looked to the priming of our pistols; but, as the sounds approached no nearer, I concluded that it must be part of some Caffre festival, and determined on ascertaining its meaning; so, putting by the pistol, I started just as I was, without coat, hat, or waistcoat, and made my way through the dripping boughs of

the jungle, towards the spot from whence the strange sounds proceeded.

By this time the storm had quite abated; the heavy clouds were rolling slowly from over the rising moon; the drops from the lofty trees fell heavily on the dense bush below; thousands of insects were chirping merrily; and there, louder than all the rest, was the regular rise and fall of voice of some score Caffres.

I had already penetrated three hundred yards or more into the bush, when I discovered a large, newly erected Caffre hut, with a huge fire blazing in its centre, just visible through the dense smoke that poured forth from the little semicircular aperture that served for a doorway. These huts of the Caffres are formed of trellis-work, and thatched; in appearance they resemble a well rounded haycock, being, generally, eight or ten feet high at the vertex, circular in form, and from twenty to twenty-five feet broad, with an opening like that of a beehive, for a doorway, as before described.

But, as it was near midnight, it occurred to me that my visit might not be altogether seasonable. However, to have turned back when so near the doorway might have brought an assegai (Caffre spear) after me; since the occupants of the hut would have attributed a rustling of the bushes, at that late hour, to the presence of a thief or wild beast. I therefore coughed aloud, stooped down, and thrust my head into the open doorway, where a most interesting spectacle presented itself. Fancy three rows of jet-black Caffres, ranged in circles round the interior of the hut, sitting "knees and nose all together," waving their well-oiled strongly built frames backwards and

forwards, to keep time in their favourite "Dingaan's war song;" throwing their arms about, and brandishing the glittering assegai, singing and shouting, uttering a shrill piercing whistle, beating the ground to imitate the heavy tramp of marching men, and making the very woods echo again with their boisterous merriment.

My presence was unobserved for a moment until an old greyheaded Caffre (an Umdōdie) pointed his finger towards me. In an instant, the whole phalanx of glaring eyes was turned to the doorway; and silence reigned throughout the demoniac-*looking* group. A simultaneous exclamation of Molonga! Molonga! (white man! white man!) was succeeded by an universal beckon for me to come in and take a place in the ring. This of course I complied with; and, having seen me comfortably seated, they fell to work again more vociferously than ever, till I was well near bewildered with the din, and stifled with the dense smoke issuing from the huge wood fire in the centre of the ring.

Giving them a piece of tobacco—a great prize amongst Caffres—I took my leave, and regained our tent, where I found my brother quite at a loss how to account for my long stay. We then rekindled the fire under the starry canopy of heaven, boiled a pot of coffee, cooked some provisions, and made a hearty supper; having been fasting since the noon of the day just ended.

CHAPTER XI.

A SOUTH AFRICAN BOER'S WAGGON—NIGHT AT A WAGGON FIRE—THE SHOPKEEPER'S ERF—CAUTION TO EMIGRANTS—A TURN-OUT ON THE MARKET SQUARE—VISIT TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE—PAST HISTORY OF PIETER MARITZBERG—ITS TRADE—OUR FINAL DECISION.

HAVING arranged with a waggon-owner for the conveyance of our goods—so soon as his oxen were found—we employed the interval in manufacturing a few articles of furniture, from fragments of the wreck. The time thus spent appeared worse than lost, since the wet season was fast approaching, and our capital decreasing still faster. At length, after a week's delay, the waggon appeared, breaking its way through brush and scrub, in the direction of our tent.

I will here endeavour to describe that *indescribable* machine "a Boer's waggon." Every body in England knows what a common *four-wheeled timber carriage* is; with two high wheels behind, and two low ones in front, connected by a long straight pole. This constitutes the essential portion of a South African waggon; and, so far, it is a perfect specimen of strength, combined with elegance and good workmanship. Indeed, some of the waggon wheels, with their carved and slender iron-wood spokes, beautifully painted, and picked out with various colours, should have been sent to the Exhibition of 1850, and I doubt not but that they would have astonished

even Crosskill or Mary Wedlake. The remainder of the waggon contrasts strangely with the first part. In fact, the rest is all tied together with ox-hide thongs. But to go into particulars, the bottom consists of thick *yellow-wood* planks, twenty feet long, fastened at each end, so as to allow plenty of play. The sides, which are always painted bright green, are formed of planks bound to bars of *milk-wood*, mortised upright into the axletrees, with room to shift about in the sockets; along the side, thin bamboos are fixed at intervals of six inches, and being bent over till they meet those from the opposite side, form a high lattice-work tent over the whole length of the waggon. Upon this, Caffre matting is first spread, and afterwards a snow-white canvass coverlet, which, too, is fastened down by means of thongs of ox-hide. A long box lies across the fore part, just under shelter of the tent, which serves as a seat for the driver, and is appropriated to his private use, for carrying provisions, spare tackle, and clothes for the journey. The front of the waggon is brought to the same level as the back by means of a thick piece of timber resting on the fore axle, and connected with it by a strong pivot, from which a pole, called "the dissle boom," runs out, and terminates with a short bar, forming a cross at the farther end: to this bar the "*wheelers*" (as the first pair of oxen are styled) are fastened by their heads, and from it extends a long rope of buffalo hide, with similar cross bars at intervals of nine feet for fourteen more oxen. This, with a huge bamboo whip, long enough to reach the foremost ox, constitutes the sum total of a Boer's waggon.

Striking our tent, we quickly loaded up; and, bidding farewell to the Point, seated ourselves at the back of the

waggon, gave the Hottentot the signal to start; and forthwith it was all Yeck, Yeck—Pandeulah—Ar-neugh —and Thwack, Thwack of the terrific whip, as we jogged along, over stumps and sand-heaps, towards the sublime Berea hills.

Our load was light, and the span of oxen first-rate; but as it was late when we started, so it was quite dark long before we reached Pine-town Flat, where the Hottentot *outspanned* (released the oxen) for the night. In the distance—scattered over the extensive plain—we could see the bright fires of newly-arrived settlers, as they prepared their evening meal in the open air; an operation in which we, the Hottentot, and his Caffre leaders, quickly joined, having first hung a large blanket over the waggon wheels to keep off the keen wind.

Seating ourselves under the shelter thus formed, and dispensing with the usual supper-table apparatus of plates, dishes, cloth, knives and forks, we still managed to make a very substantial meal, and spent a pleasant hour endeavouring to understand the meaning of what our interesting young Caffres were telling us in their unknown tongue; while the surly little Hottentot sat smoking a short pipe, and only spoke to threaten or curse them, on their obtaining an occasional reward for some little act of politeness, all Caffres being, by nature, excessively polite.

As midnight drew on we retired into the snug waggon, where we had made up beds, leaving the sour shrivelled Hottentot, and his three merry Caffres, carousing over a blazing fire, and roasting a bullock's head, the gift of some brother Caffres on setting out.

Next morning we discovered our Scotch friends, who gave us breakfast, and showed us over their new farm, while the oxen and waggon were being got ready for the day's journey. The spot they had selected was picturesque in the extreme, and admirably suited for cotton, coffee, and sugar growing; but, like the rest of Pinetown Flat, fit for nothing else.

Taking leave of our friends, we found our way into the ponderous vehicle, and started at a brisk pace for Maritzberg; which place we reached by the evening of the following day, without meeting with any thing worth notice, excepting some score of splendid deer, several wild turkeys, a pheasant, and plenty of partridges, all of which treated my rifle with the greatest contempt, as I had lost my powder-flask.

On reaching "Luscombe's hill," ten miles on this side of Maritzberg, I left my brother with the outspanned waggon, and pushed on to the capital, to complete the purchase of the Erf before conveying our goods on to it. The woman had now returned from the country; but her husband had gone out for a week, and had left word for us to go on to the land, build, enclose, plant, and do just what we liked, as he was in no want of the money, and would call for it in the course of a month.

This of course I saw through, and replied that unless the title-deeds were at once forthcoming, and the sale duly registered, I should decline all further negotiation in the matter.

The woman now called her friend, the shopkeeper, who became very high, and talked of damages and "his solicitor," asking disdainfully whether I thought him a rogue?

I now felt satisfied that we had fallen into a den of

sharpers; and, bidding him not lose his temper, told him I would return in half-an-hour, and settle the business.

This quite altered his tone, and produced a string of arguments, in support of his disinterestedness, which I left him expatiating upon in loud terms; and having obtained a witness, I returned, placed on the table the whole purchase-money, and a printed declaration of sale; after which I insisted on the immediate production of the title-deeds, and completion of the bargain.

This brought the matter to an issue; when it turned out that the whole was a got up affair, for the purpose of defrauding us of the deposit-money, and getting a good house built on the Erf, which, I need hardly say, belonged to the shopkeeper, who, of course, would not have been responsible for any thing the third party might do or say with respect to *his* property; while his accomplices, I discovered, were on the point of starting for Australia, and therefore would have been perfectly secure.

I should not have entered into this little incident so fully, had it not been that the trap from which *we* so providentially escaped, has to my knowledge been the ruin of many, I might say scores, not only at Natal, but also in Australia, Canada, and the United States; indeed, in every colony there exists a set of men who make a point of *catching new comers*, by inducing them to go on to their land and spend all their capital in improvements, always putting off any decisive arrangement for the sale or hire, until the unfortunate dupe has got a comfortable home over his head, when they come forward and demand an exorbitant rent, for the express purpose of driving their victim from his hard-earned labours.

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