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EMPIRES OF THE VELD.

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EMPIRES OF THE VELD

BEING

FRAGMENTS OF UNWRITTEN HISTORY OF THE
TWO LATE BOER REPUBLICS, WITH
OTHER PAPERS FOR THE MOST PART DESCRIPTIVE
OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE
PEOPLE.

BY

K. J. DE KOK

(FOR OVER FORTY YEARS A RESIDENT IN THE LATE
ORANGE FREE STATE.)

DURBAN:

J. C. JUTA & CO.,

CAPE TOWN & JOHANNESBURG

1904.

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PREFACE.

Many books have been written about the late Boer war, but there exists so much ignorance in regard to the late Republics and their inhabitants that I thought I might do a service to the conquerors as well as to the conquered by publishing my observations and impressions of the unwritten history and the social inner life of the latter, collected during a sojourn of forty-five years amongst them. During that period I have had opportunities of hearing and seeing more than the average traveller. This was owing to my profession of Government land-surveyor, which compelled me to stay many days in their homes and in their company. A year before the said war I published a small pamphlet in the Dutch language, containing various observations, part of which I have translated into English and reproduced in the following pages.

I came to the country in 1855, when a good many of the pioneers were still alive—people who had taken part in the Cape Colonial wars, under English Governors and along with English troops, against the Xosas, Gaikas, Tembus, and other native tribes. Most of these pioneers had taken part in the great Trek, and had successfully fought Mosilikatze (Mzili-

PREFACE.

kazi) and Dingaan (Dingana), as well as conquered and lost Natal. Their sons and successors compared notes with me as to our mutual experiences in the Basuto wars. I also saw a later generation being educated in the idea of building up a South African Empire. Hence, I have seen the population advance to rest and contentment (especially in the late Free State), and, at a later period, to prosperity and comparative wealth. I was, moreover, present at the last act, when, in 1899, they, as a nation, committed suicide. It stands to reason that I am highly interested in a people I have known and lived among for nearly half a century. I hope and expect that they will profit by the experience they have so dearly paid for, and leave the rôle of conquerors and the game of empire-building to larger nations. As it is, they, as a tribe, will always have great influence in the land, and they ought to know and admit that, having tried to play at independent government and failed, the wisest thing left is to try and live as happy and contented subjects of the most liberal Government known.

K. J. DE KOK.

JOHANNESBURG, OCTOBER, 1903.

CONTENTS.

I—HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL.

PAGE.

Three Epochs in the History of the late Orange	
Free State	I
(<i>a</i>) 1840—1860	I
(<i>b</i>) 1860—1880	6
(<i>c</i>) 1880—1920, and the three first years of the 20th century	12
Hollanders in South Africa	19
Basuto War (1865—1868)	31
Mzilikazi (Mosilikatze)	36
Morokko	41
Land Grants	43
Irrigation	47
Gold	51
Railways	54
Labour Supply in the Past	57
The Present Labour Question	62
Asiatics	67
Orange River and Transvaal Colonies	69
Young Africa	74

II.—SOCIAL.

The Ox-Wagon	81
The Schoolmaster	85
The Medical Profession	90
The Hawker	92
Game	96

SOCIAL—(<i>continued.</i>)	PAGE
Hospitality - - - - -	102
On a Free State Farm - - - - -	107
The Lower Courts - - - - -	136
Prisons and Punishments - - - - -	139
Postal Service in Former Days - - - - -	142
Stock-farming and Agriculture - - - - -	145
Horse-breeding - - - - -	160
Shops and Stores - - - - -	162
Food and Drink - - - - -	169

III.—GENERAL.

Slavery - - - - -	172
Spreading of the Gospel - - - - -	182
Two Weddings - - - - -	188
Jerusalem-goers - - - - -	193
The Unicorn - - - - -	199
Kismet - - - - -	203

I. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL.

THREE EPOCHS IN THE HISTORY OF THE LATE ORANGE FREE STATE.

(a) 1840—1860.

When, in the early forties, Natal was proclaimed British territory, that Colony had been in possession of the Dutch immigrants since the defeat of the Zulu power at the battle of Blood River (1838). Their primitive Government had been known as Boeren—Maatschappy (Community of Boers). Many of them, refusing to remain under the altered form of government, trekked over the Drakensberg and settled along Sand, Vet, and Mud Rivers and in the Wittebergen, whilst others crossed the Vaal to join their fellow-immigrants, who, before that time, had routed Mosilikatze (Mzilikazi) and entered into occupation of the present Transvaal. One of the last acts of the Natal Volksraad, which claimed jurisdiction over the few squatters living west of the Drakensberg, had been, in 1843, to proclaim Winburg as a township. According to immigrant custom the erven were sold to the highest bidder, and the proceeds used for the building of a church. Every burgher was entitled to pick a farm of 6,000 acres (minimum); the most favourable spots were soon secured, where apologies for houses, mostly of

wattle-and-daub—that is to say, of poles, reeds, mud, and grass—were erected. For a time they enjoyed a kind of Arcadian existence. No wars, with abundance of food, but certainly as much out of reach of luxuries as Robinson Crusoe was on his island. The first unpleasantness set in when later arrivals from the Cape Colony began to make their appearance—people, that is, who had not suffered the hardships of the great Trek or the dangers of the many kafir wars, and who had, with very little loss, succeeded in bringing their large herds of cattle and flocks of Cape sheep and goats to a country others had made safe. They could afford to procure the very best farms by purchase, and made no secret of the fact that they would prefer a strong Government to the patriarchal rule and family cliques then prevailing in every ward. In other words, they wished for English rule, and thus were, to a certain extent, at loggerheads with the original pioneers, men who had sacrificed much of their blood and substance in freeing the country from the rule of terror under Mosilikatze (Mzilikazi). The name of Andries Pretorius (who had retired beyond the Vaal River) was still fresh in their memory as a trusted and successful leader in numerous engagements with the natives. In his honour, they called themselves “Pretorians,” and spoke of the other party as “English partisans.” Luckily it never came to blows between them; but a strained relationship existed for years. The only annoyance from which the pro-English suffered was due to a filibuster of the name of Adrian van der Kolff, a Cape Colonist, who, for some misdemeanour or another, had to flee from his native land and live with a Koranna tribe near the sources of Vet River. From there he now and then

went on hunting or cattle-lifting expeditions into the northern lowlands, accompanied by a strong gang of Korannas, exceedingly well mounted. He gave out that he was an ally of Pretorius, and, whether that was true or not, made it a rule never to molest or rob anyone known as an adherent of the said chief. Perhaps that is the reason why no *posse committatus* was organised to oppose him. My informants stated that he was decidedly a *persona grata* with all the Pretorians. Travelling in 1861 along the Big Vet River, I was told by old farmers, who had not belonged to the Pretorians, that they at times received letters from van der Kolff, in which he signed himself "chief of the Koranna nation," ordering them to keep a few head of cattle or sheep ready for him, to be paid as a tax to save them from larger losses. It is strange that nothing was done by the Government of those days to put a stop to such irregularities, for they took place between 1848 and 1854, when the country was held by England, under the name of Orange River Sovereignty. It may be that prior to the arrival of Governor Cathcart, there were no regular troops at the disposal of the Government, and the local police, consisting of Cape Hottentots, were too few in number as well as too badly mounted to catch van der Kolff and his followers. He must have considered himself safe from all danger, seeing he was bold enough to make his appearance at Deelfontein, the farm of Willem Venter, in 1852, when Majors Hogge and Owen met the Transvaal delegates and drew up the Zand (Sand) River Convention. The attention of the English authorities was drawn to the fact that he was a public nuisance, which he undoubtedly was, and orders were given to have him arrested. But

many of his friends were present at these proceedings. He was consequently warned in good time, so all he had to do was to mount his famous black mare, and, like another Dick Turpin, laugh at his heavily-accoutred pursuers. I quote from memory, for I do not recollect ever seeing these incidents recorded in print. The account here given was got by me from actual eye-witnesses, some few of whom are still living. Van der Kolff ended his career about 1854 as follows: Whilst out on one of his expeditions, he bivouacked in a clump of mimosa trees near Kopje Alleen, where he was killed by a farmer. According to a popular legend, the man that shot him was rewarded by the then Government with £150 and a farm.

From 1843 to 1848 there was practically no Government in the region between Vaal and Orange Rivers; but, notwithstanding the existing differences in politics, people managed to live in peace until the battle of Boomplaats. The result of that battle was the annexation of the country to the Cape Colony under the aforementioned name of Orange River Sovereignty. A beneficial act of the new administration was the fixing of beacons and boundaries of occupied farms, as well as the granting of new farms in hitherto unclaimed parts. The boundaries between the Sovereignty and the two chiefs, Moshesh and Sikonyela, were beacons off at the same time. As a good many of the defeated Pretorians had fled from the country, lest they should be fined for having fought at Boomplaats, the farms they had occupied were forfeited and given to the supposed loyalists, who presented themselves as claimants before the Commission of Inspection. In later years the latter had to put up with many sneers

and taunting remarks from their disappointed clansmen regarding their so-called lip-loyalty.

In 1854 England gave the country back to the Boers, who named it the Orange Free State. The Government and the people were in indigent circumstances. The only sources of income were the export trade in cattle with the Cape Colony, wool-growing, and agriculture. There were, however, very few sheep, whilst agriculture was practised only on a small scale. But few farmers grew wheat, as the nearest corn-mill was in Pietermaritzburg. The majority had to be satisfied with mealies. Cattle, however, milk, and eggs were plentiful and cheap, whilst game of every kind roamed freely about the country. Houses, as above stated, were of a most primitive description. The only road-makers were the wind and the sun, and every traveller was supposed to be armed with a spade for the purpose of digging his vehicle out of the mud in case of necessity. Lung-sickness was not known before 1855, so that the number of cattle increased rapidly and, above all, peace reigned in the land.

That happy state of affairs was disturbed in 1856 by having to send a punitive expedition against the petty Basuto chief, Weedsie, who lived near the sources of Elands River. It ended in the annexation of his small territory to the Free State, and sufficient loot was taken from his tribe to pay the expenses of the war. In 1857 the foolish invasion of M. Pretorius, who wanted to bring the Orange Free State under his sway, was successfully resisted by the inhabitants. These two events did not, however, much affect the contented existence of the people. It was in the following year that the first Basuto war took place. This was a more serious

occurrence, and would have ended disastrously for the young Republic had not Sir George Grey, the then Governor of the Cape Colony, stepped in and said to Moshesh, "Hold, enough!"

It was, to the Free Staters, a great blessing that they were never seriously divided amongst themselves, like their relations across the Vaal, who, on the most trivial religious or political pretexts, were always flying at one another's throats.

In 1859 President Boshof resigned, after having been four years at the head of affairs. He was a wise and well-meaning man, quite fit to deal with the circumstances as well as the people of those days, and in every respect preferable to his immediate successors.

(b) 1860--1880.

Though I have now and then to refer to well-known historical incidents, I do not intend to set forth a regular chain of events. Such can be found in every school book. My aim is to describe the three generations that lived in this part of South Africa between 1840 and 1900, and how time, circumstances, and the acts of their neighbours, influenced the people's ideas and doings.

In 1860 a good many, though not all, of the "voortrekkers" were dead or too old to teach their descendants their ideas of continually being on the move and looking out for pastures new as soon as the slightest cause of discontent made its appearance. The love of trekking, however, was far from being extinguished, for, as late as 1876, a very large number of people, dissatisfied with the idea of paying quit-rent, left their fertile farms round Magaliesberg and travelled westwards, and, after enor-

mous losses, settled in Humpata, near the Atlantic shore, in Portuguese territory.

Except in the case of really excellent farms, centrally situated and possessing an abundance of wood and water, the price of land remained very low. Late in the sixties, after the Basuto war, a Bloemfontein firm, having largely speculated in ground, and being in financial difficulties, made over forty-two farms in the district of Kroonstad at the rate of ninepence per acre, in part payment of debts to its creditors. During the years 1860—1863 sheep increased enormously in number; more money, in consequence of the sale of wool, began to circulate, and, here and there, buildings of stone or burnt brick were erected. But iron roofs and plank floors were rarely indulged in, and only became general a decade later.

From 1860 the Basutos, called a "nation of thieves" by Governor Cathcart, began their depredations, which led to the second Basuto war four years later on. North of the Caledon, twenty-two farms were left unoccupied in the Wittebergen, as the Free State owners could not get sufficient protection from their Government against the sable marauders.

The scarcity of money all over the sub-continent, in 1864, affected the population of the Free State and Transvaal Republic to such an extent that anyone possessed of coin was esteemed a "*rara avis*." The Government began to issue paper money. The influence of that measure will be referred to later on. It was during this period that the people had to face a war with the Basuto nation. The conquest of the country between the Caledon River and the old Free State boundary was the result of that three years' war. Such extension

of boundaries increased the wheat-producing capacity of the Free State to a large extent, and from 1870, when the diamond fields of Griqualand West created a new market for all sorts of produce, the sale in the said market of cereals from the Free State, as well as cattle from the Transvaal, caused a time of financial prosperity never seen before north of the Orange River. As a matter of course, with wealth came an increased desire for luxury and improvement. The old "wattle-and-daub" dwellings of the voortrekkers, with their grass roofs and mud floors, had to make way for better and more comfortable structures. Soap-boiling, candle-making, and the construction of veld-shoes were abandoned, as everybody had sufficient means to buy these articles at the shops which sprang up at every cross-road. Young men sent by their parents to Kimberley in charge of one or more wagon-loads of produce, frequently returned with two or three hundred pounds sterling in their possession. They obtained, too, in Kimberley, an idea of what money could do. Many, moreover, acquired a taste for intoxicating liquor at numbers of the hundred and one places they called at on their way home. Such a trip gave them the impression that they knew a good deal more of the world than their elders, or people who had not made what may be called a "pilgrimage to Mecca." That kind of pseudo-civilization bore its fruit later on.

Undoubtedly, however, the prosperity referred to brought blessings with it. The older generation began to encourage education for their children, being convinced of their own shortcomings in that respect. For these shortcomings they were certainly not to blame, inasmuch as they had of necessity passed

most of their lifetime in the saddle and in the wilderness. Schoolmasters (though not always worthy the name) began to make their appearance on many farms. In other cases sons and daughters were sent to be educated at established institutions, where they accumulated a certain amount of elementary knowledge. The ideas they learnt were not, however, always in harmony with those of the home-circle, for it was to "home" they returned after their education was supposed to be completed. Some of the boys, whose parents could afford it, were sent to Europe for further instruction. This gave them an opportunity of acquiring broader views on many subjects, and so, in later life, they turned out useful members of society. It is a matter of fact that those who did not have the privilege of seeing more of the world, and yet had had the modicum of training referred to, somehow got the impression that they knew enough for acting in the future both as law-givers and rulers of the people. They certainly had acquired new-fangled notions which made them less fit to be peaceable and hard-working farmers like their relatives, who had not had the chance of seeing the capital, and had not therefore become imbued with ideas as to the future political possibilities of South Africa.

Late on in the seventies England claimed the Griqualand West diamond fields as her rightful possession. Such lands undoubtedly belonged to the Free State. But a question between nations is quite a different thing from one between individuals. The Volksraad was prepared to fight it out, and an armed force was accordingly sent to the border. President Brand luckily saw that these same diamond fields, with their population of thousands of

determined men, would become a white elephant to the Free State, as well as a source of unrest for the whole of South Africa. Such a community could only be ruled by a strong power, and the little Republic, with its eighty thousand inhabitants, dare not be trusted with its government. In these circumstances England afterwards came to pay £90,000 to the Republic by way of compensation. I know as a fact that numbers of Free Staters were very pleased to find that a settlement had been arrived at, as the Kimberley market continued to exist, and afforded them many chances of making money without imposing on the State the burden of maintaining rule and order.

The Government of those days certainly deserves credit for the encouragement it gave to general education. A very liberal amount was put on the yearly estimates for that purpose. Unfortunately, the centralisation idea established in the capital from the very beginning and furthered by the bureaucracy, which largely increased in numbers year by year, was a source of great injustice and discomfort to the rest of the population. The capital, to begin with, was far from being centrally situated, whilst the simplest questions of administration had to be submitted to headquarters. Every Bloemfontainer, from the President to the bell-ringer, seemed to be convinced that the Free State, geographically, politically, and economically, had to be represented by the capital, and that the other districts and their villages were merely so many outlying and disconnected settlements. The members of the Volksraad, when coming to the yearly assemblage, were soon given to understand that any favours they desired, either for their districts or their sons and cousins, in

the shape of Government appointments, had to come from the capital. They were very thankful if they could succeed in getting a grant for repairs to roads in their districts—repairs, as a rule, eminently necessary—or for a new roof over their local office. They were, in return, supposed to give their vote in favour of the erection in the capital of some “golden calf” as often as it should be proposed. Let me mention but one of a number of extravagances of these days. At an outlay of £65,000 Government offices were built in Bloemfontein when the total income of the State was £200,000. If a member of the Volksraad, at a meeting in his district, which it was customary to hold after every session, for the purpose of giving an account of his stewardship, were asked why he had voted such an amount for mere luxury, while his own district stood in sore need of many things, his answer was: “I did it for the embellishment of *our* capital!” and there the matter ended.

The said errors and weaknesses were very pardonable, especially when one comes to consider what I have hinted at elsewhere that the Press and the Bond were educating the people in the idea that they were destined to build up a future South African empire, of which Bloemfontein had every chance of being the capital. Ways and means for that grand purpose were never discussed. Singleness of aim and the justice of their cause were deemed to be all that was necessary.

During the last decade (1870—1880) a good many treaties were concluded with different European Powers. Amongst others there was one with a naval Power, in which the Orange Free State undertook to prevent piracy on the high seas. When I made my remarks on that article and pointed out that the Free

State was hemmed in on all sides and did not possess a single navigable river, my patriotism was very much suspected. The said treaties, though very harmless in themselves, created an impression in young and old Free Staters, that they had succeeded in securing a number of allies, who would be ready to assist them in future plans of conquest or of defence.

(c) 1880—1900.

The belief of the people in the idea of a possible South African empire got an immense impetus after the battle of Majuba, in which the Transvalers, assisted by about one hundred Free Staters, mostly belonging to the northern districts, covered themselves with glory by their attack on that mountain, defended as it was by some of the finest British troops. This event was made use of by agitators in order to draw the attention of young Africa to what the Boers could do. At Young Men's Associations, institutions which were established all over the country in the same year the said battle took place, the possibilities of future greatness and the independence of the whole continent, free from foreign rule and under one flag, were the favourite topics of discussion, and the Bond papers failed not to contribute many precedents of successful wars of independence between small and large nations, where the former had come out victorious. Young Boers began to talk of the eighty years' war between Holland and Spain, and the war of independence of the United States of America, in which the latter held their own against England. If wiser and better-informed people told them that South Africa, with its small population, utterly devoid of resources and lacking

the sinews of war, could not for a moment think of undergoing similar risks, they were looked upon as enemies of the African race. Certain independent newspapers, which had the courage to contradict those subsidised by the Bond or written by bread-and-butter patriots, and, moreover, to enlighten young Africa and recommend caution, were avoided as being in the pay of England. President Brand, as was to be expected, saw the folly of that feeling, wrongly called patriotism, and did not encourage it. He, no doubt, saw clearly that a country of over four hundred thousand square miles could not be properly ruled by a population of less than 350,000 white inhabitants of Dutch extraction under the above-mentioned circumstances. He accordingly availed himself of a large meeting, or "wapenschouw," to speak his mind. Some young zealots set up a Bond's flag at the place of meeting, intimating that it represented a totem of future independence of the African nation. The President, however, backed up by a goodly number of the older generation, ordered the flag to be pulled down there and then, and in a long speech convinced them of the error of their ways. It put a stop to further demonstrations of that kind, at least during his lifetime. His successor, one of the most honest Africans I ever had the honour of becoming acquainted with, though much mistaken in my eyes, also favoured the opinion that South Africa should belong to the Afrikaners and be ruled by them, even though the heavens should fall. He encouraged the Bond policy during the short period he held office. After him Mr. Steyn was elected President. He, without doubt, belonged to the Young African party, and, of course, held their views. During his term of office Dr.

Jameson's mad invasion of the Transvaal took place. It failed because it was badly planned and badly executed. However, it was the means of bringing the inhabitants of the two States nearer to each other, which the Treaty of Potchefstroom had failed in doing, for before the said filibustering event, a Free Stater was not at all a *persona grata* in the eyes of the Pretorian oligarchy, as the southern Republic was accused of being far too lenient to Englishmen and other Europeans living amongst them. The better feeling between the two peoples was caused by the prompt concentration of 1,500 Free State warriors on the banks of the Vaal for the purpose of assisting their relations in case of need. The said invasion, though it entirely miscarried, is the reason why both Republics proceeded to arm themselves to the teeth. What followed is common knowledge.

Though the Transvalers and the Free Staters undoubtedly belong to the same tribe, not to say to the same family, they had gone through a different course of education, and received different impressions.

The Free State was far more of a Republic than the sister State. Every inhabitant, with very few exceptions, was well aware as to what was going on at the seat of Government, and that same Government had no plans or transactions which it kept concealed. The Transvaal was by no means a Republic, though its form of Government was so-called. It represented a state of affairs like that of the Council of Seventeen which ruled the Cape Colony in bygone ages. I am alluding to the poor influence the bulk of the people had with their rulers. The rulers of the Transvaal of those days kept a good many of their transactions hidden from

their constituents. If a true account of what took place in Pretoria in the way of bribery and corruption, and how much of the people's money was disposed of, could be published, the said constituents would not believe it. The Press of that time, entirely in the pay of the oligarchy of the capital, told them very little of what really occurred, and it is known now to most people that even during the first months of the war, telegrams from the different battlefields were falsified, so as to keep the people in ignorance of the real state of affairs. There are different opinions as to what became of the public funds when the rulers made good their escape, so I will not venture one myself; but the truth will certainly be known later on.

There is no such uncertainty about the Free State rulers. There exists no suspicion whatever of public funds having mysteriously disappeared. If, when war was declared, the Free State Government made a mistake in joining the other Republic, such action was undoubtedly a result of the influence of the Young African party, headed by President Steyn. I have tried to describe in this chapter and elsewhere how the said party grew and developed. I still hold that, could the question of war or no war have been submitted to a plebiscite of the people instead of being left to the Volksraad, wiser heads would have been able to show that the Free State population was well off, had no cause of complaint, and could gain nothing by a war with England, even had the Afrikaners proved the conquerors. For, in that case, South Africa would have become a pandemonium and the times of Sulla and Marius of Roman history would have been repeated. A war between the Bond and the Pretorian clique, both

aiming at supremacy, would have been unavoidable. However, though President Steyn made a political mistake, he acted according to his conscience, stuck manfully to his opinions, and, through all the hardships of a long war, suffered for them, hoping against hope in a lost cause. He certainly will get a more prominent niche in the pantheon of history than other rulers, who, after setting the ball rolling, disappeared, with a more or less heavy purse, to seek safety in other countries.

The Three First Years of the 20th Century.

Should race hatred survive for a time, it will be kept up by agitators through referring to three events in history, viz., the loss of Natal, the interference of the English Government against the proposed annexation by the Free State of Basutoland in 1868, and the aggressive policy by which they lost the Griqualand West diamond fields. But the rising generation, when better educated, will honestly confess that their grandfathers and fathers could never have managed to keep those three white elephants (a term I have before applied to the diamond fields), because they would in the end have caused their ruin. Another grievance of which mothers will tell their children will be their own sufferings owing to the severity of martial law.

Whatever Miss Hobhouse and others, no doubt with the best intentions, have to say and deplore about these times, two things should be taken into consideration... 1. The women and children on the farms assisted the Boers whilst under arms (which was only natural), and if they were to escape the possibility of being destroyed as enemies, the only and more humane alternative was to bring them into

camps. 2. That martial law is a measure adopted by the most civilized belligerent nations as a matter of necessity, and that it causes many hardships, bullying, and sometimes cruelty. The classical expression, "*Vae victis*," shows that war has always been considered a grim and dreadful reality. The female victims of the Boer war, however, regarded each of these hardships as ordered by the British Government itself, not thinking that every occasional sergeant, lieutenant, or other leader, clad in temporary authority, imagined himself a Napoleon or Wellington for the time being, and knew very well that his most cruel and unjust acts would at the most be called "excess of zeal." It did not go as far as bloodshed or murder; but the sufferers could fill a volume with instances of houses being burnt, furniture being wantonly destroyed, wagons used as firewood, while they were hardly allowed to save their clothing. They and their children were put in miserable, uncovered conveyances, by means of which they were brought in all weathers to a concentration camp, there to be fed on a strange diet, which directly and indirectly was the cause of many deaths. All these calamities will be long remembered by the women, and be by them related to their future offspring. But in the course of time even these things will be forgotten, and the conquered people will, perhaps, come to see and admit that the state of political affairs, as they were at the end of the nineteenth century, could not be permitted to continue. The beau ideal of the future is that Boer and Briton will join hands in making this part of the Empire the most coveted of all, considering that the number of its possibilities cannot be surpassed by any other. It is true that there will

be uphill work at the beginning; but as both races are of Saxon origin, it is to be hoped they will persevere and conquer in the end. When once united they will find their work cut out for them, for they are threatened by the following among other calamities which have to be resisted and removed: 1. The Native Question. 2. The Asiatic Invasion. 3. The baneful influence of Capital.

HOLLANDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the European Dutch were undoubtedly wide-awake in obtaining colonies, and thereby securing markets for their trade. Though Holland as a nation kept a formidable fleet in those days, which now and then held its own against the English and French navies, even when these two were combined, the foreign commerce fell into the hands of a private syndicate called the East India Company. Chartered and protected by the Dutch Government, it exercised supreme power in the Colonies they conquered from the Portuguese and Spaniards, or from aborigines. All European nations of that time had the same ideas about colonies as the Romans had about Gaul, Egypt, and Greece, viz.: that the parent Government was justified in squeezing as much profit as possible out of the conquered countries and their inhabitants. When the East India Company occupied the southern part of Africa its principal aim, which was maintained to the end of its Administration, was to govern "on the cheap." Though the Cape and the country round it was even then admitted by all sea-faring nations to be of immense value as a half-way station between Europe and India, the local representatives of the Dutch East India Company were given to understand that the Colony was to support itself, and that the syndicate in Holland was, under no circumstances whatever, to lose money by, or even to invest in, the en-

terprise. Perhaps the English skit on the Hollanders:

“ The fault of the Dutch
Is giving too little and asking too much, ”

originated during those days.

From what I observed in conversation with South African people of Dutch extraction, since my arrival in this Continent in 1855, the very aged who remembered the Company's rule certainly did not bewail the change of Government which had taken place in 1806, and, when that event was being discussed, told their children that Holland had sold South Africa to the English in part payment for Java.

There are, even at the present day, families amongst the Boers with Dutch names; but, considering the intermarriages that have taken place during the course of two centuries with immigrants of French, English, Danish, German, and Jewish descent, I make bold to say that not a single South African family exists which can prove itself to have unmixed Dutch blood in its veins. Many family names have been mercilessly mutilated and sacrificed to euphonic spelling. To give one glaring instance: Hundreds of people, descendants of the French historical family of De Bouillon, pronounce and sign their name Van Biljon. Oh! shade of Duke Godfrey the Crusader's memory. Others, like Noirtiers, Cilliers, Viviers, and Terreblanche have come down to Nortje, Silliris, Beveje, and Terblans, etc. One can imagine what my thoughts were when these good people boasted to me of their Huguenot ancestry, adding that even now a large inheritance

was waiting for them in France, merely for the claiming.

I have often wondered how Hollanders, though South Africans could remember nothing to be grateful for in the European Dutch, succeeded in being looked upon as *personae gratae* by the Boers. Perhaps it was that their predikants had, until 1865, to be imported from Holland. It may also be that they (the Boers) professed to be delighted to hear genuine Dutch used; at least many of them said so, when they listened to my poor self and a countryman of mine discussing topics which were of sufficient moment to draw forth such eloquence as nature had endowed us with. I remember an event which took place in 1855. We were the guests of Mr. Marthinus Pretorius, the weak son of a strong father. Our host lived then on the farm Klipheuvcl in Magaliesberg. He had been chosen as Commandant of Rustenburg and Potchefstroom by the people simply for being the son of the man who made Transvaal history. I perfectly agree with the sentiment *de mortuis nil nisi bene*, and also remember that he was a very good and obliging host, but as I am trying to fill up certain gaps in the history of the two Republics, I intend to adhere to the truth.

Our said Commandant was exceedingly vain. Having been informed that we (Mr. Stuart and myself) had travelled from Holland viâ England, and had stayed in the latter country for a couple of months, he asked us what the English people said about him, and what they thought of him at headquarters. Of course, we found means of evading such questions. It would not have been pleasant to tell him that not one in a hundred thousand people in Europe knew of his existence, and that the English

Government was just then paying so much attention to the Crimean war that his person had, for the moment, fallen a little in the background. When we showed him illustrated papers in connection with the said war, he asked why England and France had omitted to engage a few hundred Afrikaners to pick off the gunners from the Sebastopol batteries, which would soon bring the war to an end. He, like all his compatriots, thought that very few Europeans could shoot straight. As we had occasion to write and draw up for him many documents and letters, for he was the head Magistrate in the said districts, and could hardly write himself, I soon found out that he could not follow our high Dutch, and that the meaning of it had very often to be explained to him before he could grasp it. He also told me once that, though he enjoyed immensely listening to a dialogue between us in proper Dutch, he could by no means follow it when we talked the least bit quickly. We were now and then invited to talk Dutch together, just in the way that people are asked to favour the company with a song, and the universal verdict was: "Though we cannot understand it, it is most pleasant to listen to."

Many of the people had the queerest ideas about Holland, and asked whether it was part of England, and if there were cows there and other similar questions. One fellow informed me his ancestors came from the town of Copenhagen in the Netherlands! But in the Netherlands, too, people had very vague and wrong ideas about the Boers of South Africa. The first complete information concerning their history was given by Mr. J. Stuart in a book he published in 1854. He had travelled two

years in their country, and collected as many particulars as he could from the old voortrekkers, who, for the most part, were alive at that time. The Volksraad entrusted him with a mission to Holland for the purpose of selling 600,000 acres of ground in the district of Lydenburg to such Hollanders or Swiss as felt inclined to come and settle as agriculturists in that part of the Republic. At first he was successful in his enterprise, and sold a good many plots of 200 acres each to Hollanders, but when his book got into the hands of the public opinions were divided. The sufferings of the Boers in the Cape Colony, which led to their exodus, their engagements and battles with the kafir tribes, and their ultimate success in founding two independent Republics in the heart of South Africa was very popular reading; but as the author described also many instances of the wrong-doing, machinations, and intrigues of the missionaries, who in Africa always sided with the blacks against the whites, and especially against the Boers, the clerical party was entirely against him, and did its utmost to wreck the enterprise. There were, in addition to this, other local reasons why his mission failed, viz.:—

1. Stuart had been asked to accept the undertaking by the old leader, General Andries Pretorius, and his adherents, who at that time formed the majority in the Volksraad. During Stuart's absence in Holland the animosity between the two parties in the Republic increased, nominally caused by a religious squabble as to "whether the Transvaal Church should acknowledge the Cape Synod or otherwise." But in reality the reason of the split in the population was a purely political one, caused by the death of the two leaders, Pretorius and Pot-

gieter, and the intrigues of the many candidates (and their followers) who wanted to fill their places.

2. There lived in Lydenburg (where the whole population were anti-Pretorians) a few Hollanders of plebeian origin, who thought they might curry favour with the inhabitants of the district in which they resided by frustrating Mr. Stuart's mission, favoured as it was by the Pretorians. With that object in view, they wrote to Holland to say it would be madness to invest money in buying the property offered by the said Stuart, as every white man, by residing for merely six months in the Republic, could get a farm for the asking.

3. Stuart furnished a report of his doings in Holland to the Volksraad of June, 1855, and such report was approved of by that body. But Stuart thought it his duty to tell the representatives of the people that it would be a mistake to expect the arrival of a single immigrant from over the sea for the purpose of settling on the land in question until the Volksraad had drawn up and proclaimed a code of law.

As I was at that time present when the Volksraad assembled, I remember the unwelcome impression the last remark made on the members, as well as on those of the public who heard the speech. They were possessed of certain rules called the thirty-three articles, which, for all I know, had been drawn up by van Riebeeck, the first Governor of the Cape. This document and the Ten Commandments were considered by the majority of the people as forming a compendium of laws sufficient for their requirements.

Some of the leading burghers, however, felt and admitted that the people were in want of written

laws, and at the next meeting of the Volksraad, in September, 1855, it was decided that a Commission should be appointed to make a concept of laws, which, according to custom, should be submitted to the approval or otherwise of the people.

Stuart never applied for, and, as a matter of fact, never received the least remuneration for the time and trouble he gave for the benefit of the Transvalers. He had met part of his travelling expenses by the sale of the aforesaid book in Holland and Africa, and ten per cent. as commission was allowed him on the sale of land plots to intending settlers. The latter had to pay the remaining ninety per cent. of the purchase price upon arrival, after being shown by the Landdrost of Lydenburg where their ground was situated. The aggregate amount of the said commission fees came, however, to very little, and it is not to be wondered at that Stuart felt disgusted, and made no secret of his plan of leaving the country.

Though they did not express it in words, a good many people became sad that a man who had done so much for them should give them up in despair. I could name mothers of families living in Potchefstroom who shed tears when they heard of Stuart's intention to leave. These mothers had lived in former years under law and order in the Cape Colony, and feared that the future of the country without established laws would bring about many troubles.

Some of the rulers tried to convince Stuart that he was too impatient. They well knew that he was the only man at that time within reach who could assist them to frame a code of law, as he had been for years in his own country connected with judicial

administration. They made him a promise, in my presence, that if he would stay until the law was drawn up and approved of by the Volksraad, they would use their influence to have it proclaimed forthwith, without going through the form of consulting the public. With this Stuart was satisfied. The Volksraad assembling, as already stated, in September, 1855, nominated J. Stuart, S. Bosman, H. Lombard, Paul Kruger, F. Wolmarans, and two others as members of the Law Commission, to assemble at Potchefstroom. On the 1st of October the said members met for the first time in a room offered for the purpose by the Rev. Van der Hoff. Stuart was elected chairman, and I was asked to act as honorary secretary. We sat daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for twenty-five days. The only guide or book of reference obtainable was a French copy of the Constitution of the United States, which the chairman happened to possess. He composed every article, which was then discussed by the members, and, if adopted or partly altered, was written down in the future code. When the concept of law was finished, the Volksraad was called together, and had that body, according to promise, adopted and promulgated the same, Stuart would have remained in the country to see the immigration plan through, but though the Volksraad was highly pleased with the law, we were told that they could not pass it until it had been submitted to the people for a term of three months. We perceived too late how cunningly we had been duped, and, accordingly, left the country in disgust. A few of the inhabitants of Potchefstroom, ashamed of the way in which we had been treated by their countrymen, provided a conveyance for us to Pietermaritzburg, at their own

expense. Three years later the same law, with a few additions, was adopted and proclaimed as the Grondwet or Constitution of the Republic.

The remark in connection with Stuart's mission, made by the Lydenburg people in Holland, to the effect that every new-comer could get a farm for the asking, was strictly true. But it was quite a rare occurrence for 600,000 acres in one block to be set aside by the Government for immigration purposes, where settlers of one nation could live together as in a district of their own. In the long run, the Hollanders were, to a great extent, losers by their opposition to the scheme, for it was discovered in later years that the grounds of Komati, which were the very ones offered to them, contained so much gold that they are being worked to the present day. According to the easy-going ideas of Transvaal honesty, the Government gave out the same grounds by way of concession to a gold prospector a few years later. This was done after having taken the precaution to buy up as many of the certificates of sale that Stuart had issued in Holland as they could get hold of, in every case refunding the paid-up ten per cent.

A good many Hollanders were brought by the late President Burgers on his return to the Transvaal, late in the seventies, under promise of getting situations. Some of them fared very well. They lived in clover, and were, therefore, even more ready to oppose English rule than many of the Boers themselves, well knowing that their influence and prosperity would come to an end under a different Government. They were very much to the fore in the agitation against the annexation, which lasted from 1877 to 1881, and used their influence

in the declaration of war against England in 1899, though it should not be overlooked that some of them bravely shed their blood for the sake of the cause they had made their own.

During and after the war immense sums were collected in Holland for charitable purposes, and loads of clothing sent to Boers in distress. I have no means of knowing or tracing if all these benevolent gifts reached the individuals for whom they were intended. At all events these acts were praiseworthy, as they certainly assisted many of the sufferers, who might have perished without them. But there is another way in which the people of Holland try to show their sympathy with a people they call their clansmen. I am told that sums of money are being sent from the Netherlands to assist in educating Boer children in the Dutch language in schools which are beyond the control of the local English Department of Education. Now there are many reasons why I wish the people of Holland would not do this, and leave well alone:—

1. If the Hollanders are beginning now to find out that they did not appreciate South Africa when they were in possession of it, and allowed the East India Company to keep this Continent, with its immense possibilities, on the cheap system, they must see it is too late now to try and mend matters by stirring up the language question.

2. The Boers are far more prepared to learn English than high Dutch. The rising generation undoubtedly prefers English to high Dutch, for the simple reason that the latter language, introduced in the schools before the war by the Education Departments of the two Republics, was looked upon by the scholars as a kind of Sanscrit, and by no

means as eloquent and handy for expressing their feelings as the vernacular they were used to. They abhorred the rules of gender and double or single vocals necessary in the knowledge of grammatical Dutch, and soon learned to make use of many English expressions which they heard in conversation as well as in business.

3. If Hollanders sympathise with the Boers and wish them to prosper, they should leave them to work out their own political and social salvation. All the materials for building up such a state of happiness are now within the grasp of the Boers. England has most generously met them more than half-way, and proved in many instances that she will not treat the Boers as a conquered people, but as fellow-subjects. Why, then, encourage the question about the language? If the Boers can live happily, contentedly, and prosperously, what does it matter in the least what language they use? Do any of the present nations of the earth talk the language of their ancestors? My humble idea is that all over the globe there is paid too much attention to the words "flag" and "country." The masses are being told by the "upper ten" that the highest ideal here below is: *Pro patria mori*. Now allow me to analyse what that means practically. According to that, a husband and father of children, living happily and in some degree of comfort, say, in Archangel, in Northern Russia, on being told that Sebastopol is in danger of being cut off from the empire by other nations, must be expected to shoulder his gun, leave his family unprovided for, and risk his life for the defence of a frontier which neither he nor ninety-nine out of a hundred of his fellow-compatriots had a hand in

establishing. If he loses his life on the battlefield, his family goes to the workhouse or dies of starvation. Some of my readers may, from the foregoing remarks, get the impression that I am a Nihilist, but I am only trying to prove that we are as yet far removed from that state of pure felicity and perfect government that many leading statesmen and rulers profess to have discovered, and that, to the very end of the chapter, the world's policy will be made up of makeshifts, *pis allers* and a judicious taking advantage of circumstances or giving in to them.

I beg to apologise for the above digression, *et je reviens a mes moutons!* The influence of Holland in South Africa has come to an end. If so inclined, the Hollanders may continue their charity towards the Boers, for there will be room for it during the next few years, but they will, without doubt, commit a crime and a folly by encouraging race-hatred, and will not, by so doing, benefit the Boers. I know the conquered people sufficiently to have a right to say that such experiments may be welcome to some enthusiasts amongst them, but the bulk of the population in both the late Republics is now prepared to submit to the situation, and to build up by honest labour a *modus vivendi*; which they know to be within reach under the new Government.

BASUTO WAR.

1865—1868.

This chapter is not going to contain much concerning military operations, such as battles, etc., but I will try to give some idea of the troubles and sacrifices the Free Staters had to contend with during a time of financial depression.

In November, 1864, Sir Philip Wodehouse, being invited by both parties, had fixed the boundary between the Free State and the Lesuto. The Chief, Moshesh, however, would not or could not restrain his subjects from depredations, cattle thefts, and even assaults within the territory of the Republic, so war was declared in May, 1865.

The border farms near Basutoland were all evacuated in a hurry, and their owners took shelter further inland or in lagers. It was, unfortunately, the beginning of winter; the majority of the disturbed population accordingly considered it the wrong time for entering on hostilities. As much of the furniture and produce as could be loaded on ox wagons were brought away; cattle, sheep, and horses, too, were driven off, but much property had to be left behind. As a rule, the house and all its contents showed nothing but a heap of ashes when, after the peace, the former owners re-occupied their farms.

Since the wars of the great Trek, another generation had grown up, as handy as their fathers with

horse and gun, but not used to war, and without officers to lead them. Powder had been expended in 1856 in the punitive expedition against Weedsie and in the first Basuto war in 1858; the former was a mere patrol, and the latter a failure. A good many months were spent in bringing about order and discipline. However, this small troop of burghers, never mustering more than 4,000 in number during the whole war, badly armed, and ill-provisioned, had to defend the Free State border along the whole length of the Caledon River against 40,000 armed and well-mounted Basutos. And what is more, though they could not prevent a couple of inroads, they managed to make their enemy sue for peace within eleven months, and conquered over one million acres of very fertile ground.

Every column, composed of the burghers of the same district, under their own chosen commandant, was provided with wagons, either commandeered or belonging to a small party of friends or neighbours, in which they slept and lived together. Government had provided tents for those that could not find room in commandeered or private wagons, the former being mostly loaded with ammunition or provisions. During the first few months food was plentiful. Everyone had brought well-baked biscuits, sausages, or dried meat (biltong). But that could not last forever. Before the commandos could succeed in taking kafir kraals and looting sufficient cattle for food, the Government had to buy stock for slaughter, which was sent to the army in the field. With an empty exchequer and nothing available but the paper money I have described in another chapter, a difficulty was created. But it did not last long, for, in September, large

troops of cattle were taken from the enemy, which kept the commandos from starving. The regular supply of groceries and clothing, however, as well as boots, was not kept up, so that the burghers had a hard time of it, especially during the siege of Thaba-Bosigo, the Gibraltar of the Basutos, where they were reduced to a meat diet for a couple of months, and sickness and death naturally appeared and lessened their numbers.

The amount of cattle and sheep the Basuto tribe lost during the first part of the war must have been considerable. I interviewed a few field-cornets on that point, and they told me that the minimum daily consumption for the men, including the host of native camp followers and Barolong allies, could not have been less than one hundred oxen, besides a good many more sheep and goats. Admitting that the Free State army subsisted on the enemy from first of September, 1865, to the third of April, 1866, when peace was concluded, 21,000 oxen, not to speak of sheep and goats, must have disappeared.

On the top of the besieged mountain 40,000 are said to have died from thirst, starvation, and cannon balls. Eight thousand were taken during the nine days' foray in the Maluti, and an equal number sent to the Winburg district to be sold. Add to that a few thousands stolen by the Barolong allies (as found out later), and the very large number smuggled away into the Orange Free State by deserting camp followers, the aggregate loss must have told severely on the Basutos, and been felt a long time after the war. I saw a good many proofs of their destitution during the last four months of 1866, being occupied in the inspection of farms in the newly conquered region along the Caledon

River. Large troops of native women crossed that river daily in search of grass seed for mere sustenance. They were very thankful for a handful of mealies or kafir corn, which I sometimes gave them to mix with that unsatisfactory foodstuff. They were so hard-pressed for something to keep body and soul together that I saw them part with some of the very few horses they had left to incoming traders for one muid (three bushels) of grain, partly to appease their hunger and partly for the purpose of sowing the next crop, for there had been no harvest during war-time, and their large underground stores had been destroyed or consumed by the horses of the commandos.

During the latter part of 1866, and until April, 1867, there was peace in the land. Many of the border farmers re-occupied their homes. The newly-inspected farms, sold for very low prices (as one of the conditions of sale was forced occupation), were being ploughed and built on. But that peaceful state of affairs came to an end in April, when a large commando had to be sent against two minor chiefs, Machela and Maracabi, living near the sources of the two Vet Rivers. There was very little bloodshed. One of the principal acts was to destroy the crops of the enemy, for which reason the campaign was afterwards known as the "corn war."

In August, 1867, the Orange Free State was again involved in a general war with the Basutos. The latter could not forget the loss of the fertile lands north of the Caledon. Three new villages had been laid out and partly occupied, so as to

show the natives that the Government meant to keep what they had conquered. The mountain stronghold, Thimee, in the eyes of the Basutos impregnable, was seized by the Free Staters, the natives thereby becoming much discouraged. Undoubtedly the whole of the Lesuto would have fallen an easy prey to the conquerors, but the English Government took the Basutos under its protection, and the war came to an end, the Free State remaining in possession of the territory acquired in 1866.

MZILIKAZI (MOSILIKATZE)

This chief is certainly worth mentioning, as he was a remarkable personage in the early history of the two late Republics. He was generally called by the white people Mosilikatze. Though he has, by some persons, been styled the "Lion of the North," he was for all that only a spoiler, as the history of his reign consists of nothing but rapine, murder, and terror. I doubt, however, whether he would have been bamboozled by Europeans into selling his country for a wagon-load of champagne and flint locks, as his successor was.

I will only mention a few of the many stories told me by traders and elephant hunters, who visited his country, after the emigrant farmers had driven him to the region subsequently known by the name of Matabeleland. From what I can learn, the first man who visited him for trading purposes was a Grahams-town trader, McCabe by name. This man was very well received, and, by bartering, soon got rid of his loads. Taking a walk one day, he came upon a threshing-floor, surrounded by huge poles. He soon became aware that these poles were nothing else but elephant tusks of the largest kind. As the chief at that time was not acquainted with the value of ivory, the trader got the whole lot for a mere song.

Another trader, who visited the royal kraal annually, had become quite a favourite with chief and people. His Majesty asked him one day whether, on his next trip, he could bring him a white spouse.

Though the King was very much married already, he wanted a "change of hair," very likely beginning to think the woolly adornments on the heads of his several queens a trifle monotonous. At the Matabele court one of the strictest rules of etiquette was never to refuse His Majesty anything, and so, of course, our friend promised that he would bring the much-coveted bride. Whether the trader considered the royal wish was only a freak of the moment, or whether he entirely forgot it, tradition does not say; but he started on his next trip without her. When crossing the southern boundary of Mosilikatze's domains, he became most unpleasantly aware that he had forgotten something, for he met a deputation of indunas, who were sent by their chief to escort the choice treasure to his palace. It would have been excusable if our friend (the trader) had fainted after hearing that news, but knowing that if the truth came out he would be killed on the spot, he kept cool and courteously invited the deputation to squat down on the grass. Procuring tobacco and a bottle of brandy, he gathered his thoughts while these good things were being indulged in, and spoke to them as follows: He had been travelling fast to bring the King the good news as soon as possible, and as he did not wish to put the bride to too much fatigue, she was coming on slowly with some other wagons of his. As it happened, he knew that another trader, of the name of Murphy, was five days behind him, and on that fact he built a plan to extricate himself from a very terrible position. He offered to send word to the bride to hurry on, as she was so ardently expected. If the deputation could provide a swift runner to carry his letter to the wagons, she would arrive in ten days. He said

he would go on to the royal kraal in the meantime and tell the King that fat oxen could be killed in anticipation of the auspicious event. The deputation considered that plan as very reasonable, and soon found the messenger. Our friend, accordingly, prepared for Murphy a long letter of explanation. Murphy was travelling in company with his wife, who, having been born in Natal, happened to know the Matabele (Zulu) language. Such knowledge was a great help to him in his dealings with the tribe.

The going and coming of the runner would take ten days, and by the end of that time the broker in brides—for he merely pretended he would go to the royal abode—might be in complete safety. He had instructed his friend in the letter to ask his wife to appear before the messenger, feast and detain him for one day, and then start him off towards home, with the joyful intelligence that the party were following with the white bride, whom he had *seen*. I suppose the writer of the letter told Murphy he would compensate him for such a change of plans, for he enlisted his services to save his own life. Be that as it may, Murphy was very much frightened, and, fearing that the deputation might have taken it into their heads to follow the runner, in order, so much the sooner, to pay homage to their future queen, he inspanned his oxen, after the messenger had departed, and performed a record trip of twenty-two hours, not halting until he had overtaken a lot of Zoutpansberg hunters, when he considered himself safe.

Both traders avoided Matabeleland in the future. Murphy must have died soon after, for I remember being at a sale in Rustenburg, in 1855, where a large number of valuable skins, karosses, and curios

belonging to his estate were disposed of. The name of the other trader, who played so prominent a part in the said drama, I cannot remember, but should he still be in the land of the living I would advise him to avoid Exeter Hall, as he is undoubtedly guilty of not keeping his promise with the King, thereby nipping in the bud a blending experiment, which might have led to fraternity and equality between the white and black races, so desirable to everyone who knows nothing of this sub-continent.

Within sight of the village of Parys there stands, on the northern bank of the Vaal River, a small hill called Moordkopje (Murder Hill). At that spot a party of emigrant Boers were encamped, late in the thirties, when they were suddenly attacked by a troop of Mosilikatze's (Mzilikazi's) warriors. The kafirs were driven from the lager by the farmers; but all the cattle fell into the hands of the natives, a few horses which happened to be in the enclosure at the time escaping. Three lads, named Bronkhorst, Erasmus, and Liebenberg, who were herding the cattle, were made prisoners. The last named one was picked up, as he lagged behind, by the few whites who followed in pursuit, and was still living in Potchefstroom two years before the war. But of the two others nothing definite was ever heard. In after years there was a rumour that hunters had come across a kafir chief with white face and body, as well as straight hair, who could speak a few words of the Dutch language, but remembered nothing of his name or early youth. It may not have been one of the missing boys at all. Kafirs did not always destroy white prisoners, for half-castes, of undoubtedly white parentage, are to be met with in the most native tribes. It is a known fact that a good

many years before the great Trek a family of the name of Buys left the Cape Colony, going north. The ruins of their wagons were found in the north of the Transvaal, and in those regions, too, were seen, here and there, half-castes of that name, so that the parents must have survived. It is, moreover, highly probable that many male and female Europeans were in the past saved from the numerous shipwrecks which took place on the dangerous east coast of South Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Not all of them could succeed in re-joining white settlements, and so were compelled to remain with the natives.

MOROKKO.

The above chief, who presided over a part of the Barolong tribe, was always on very good terms with his white neighbours. He had assisted the Boers most liberally with draught oxen after Mosilikatze had seized the whole of their cattle in his first encounter with the emigrants at Vaal River, late in the thirties. He assisted General Cathcart with a goodly number of his Barolong subjects, when that officer attacked Moshesh in 1852, for which act he was never forgiven by the said Basuto chief. Moshesh continued to harass Morokko and his subjects for many years after the abandonment of the Orange River Sovereignty, in 1854. The son of the "great house," as the kafirs call the heir to the chieftainship, was called Sibelesi, but as he died before his father, Morokko appointed Sepinare as his successor, with the consent of the majority of the people. At the death of Morokko, in 1884, some of the tribe chose as chief another candidate, called Samuel, a son of an older spouse of the late chief, whereupon the adherents of the two rivals flew to arms.

I happened to be in Bloemfontein at that time. As I had business in the Government offices and sat talking to President Brand, the sheriff of the capital, without being announced, burst into the room in a state of great excitement, saying: "Sepinare has been killed by Samuel, and Thabanchu is in flames!" It must certainly have been a great event, if one may

judge from what followed. The President instructed the State Secretary, in my presence, to call the Executive together, which was done with such despatch that I met some of them hurrying up the street. It cannot have been a long discussion, the members being probably of one mind, for on that very day the Free State artillery, with a large troop of Bloemfontein volunteers, made a move in the direction of the burning Barolong capital, and bivouacked half-way on the bank of the Mud River.

There were three reasons for quick and vigorous steps, from the Free State point of view:—

1. A good many inhabitants of Bloemfontein had received grants of land during Morokko's lifetime from that ruler, and it was far from probable that Samuel, the then chief *in posse*, would ratify these concessions.

2. As Thabanchu was only about forty miles distant, and within sight of Bloemfontein, it was not according to the fitness of things that the state of *débauche* going on in the former place, should be allowed to continue.

3. To take possession of the Barolong country before any Basuto chief could be mixed up in the quarrel, under the old plea that Morokko had been a vassal of Moshesh.

Within a week the bloodless conquest was decided. Samuel was made prisoner and banished, and the new territory annexed to the Free State under the name of the District of Thabanchu. The Barolongs were left in possession of their several agricultural plots, and such Bloemfonteiners as could prove their right got titles for the grants above referred to.

LAND GRANTS.

According to one of the earliest laws of the emigrants, every settler, after a residence of six months, was entitled to a grant of land of six thousand acres, or even more when circumstances allowed. That custom was followed until 1870 in the Free State, and much later in the South African Republic. The Orange Free State was almost entirely uninhabited when the Boer emigrants took possession of it in 1837, the few tribes living in it having been driven over the Caledon or massacred during the raids of Chaka (Tshaka) and Mosilikatze (Mzilikazi). The new arrivals, not many in number, had therefore the pick of about twenty millions of acres. The best farms along the rivers, or such as possessed good springs and wood, were first occupied.

An applicant for open ground had to go to the Landdrost's office of the district in which it was situated, giving a description of the boundaries of his claim. After this he got a copy of his statement, which was to be shown to the Land Inspection members when that body came within the neighbourhood of the coveted grant. The Commission of Inspection was composed of the District Landdrost (magistrate), the Field-Cornet of the ward, and an unofficial member. The first duty of that body was to ascertain whether the ground applied for was still open; that is to say, that it had not been granted to others during a former inspection. As beacons and boundaries were not properly erected,

and the inspectors were, therefore, ignorant as to how far former grants had extended, many disputes and lawsuits sprang up in later years. Where bones or the skeletons of game were found, an apology for a beacon was made by placing the skull or bones on an ant-hill, but in the enormous flats they did not form very conspicuous landmarks.

The members were also supposed to ascertain the length of the sides of the farm, from one corner beacon to the next. These distances were expressed in minutes, calculated on the basis of 120 ordinary man's steps to the minute. Nobody, however, volunteered to walk for sixty or seventy minutes, and the lines were "ridden off" on horseback, with watch in hand.

It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that some farms, where fresh horses had been used for the inspection, turned out, on being surveyed in later years, to contain double the size intended by law.

More than one claimant for the same ground frequently came forward. The one that could prove former occupation or labour of the smallest description on the land in question was sure to be the successful candidate. After that the clearest or minutest descriptions prevailed, and those who had simply asked for open ground in the said district were satisfied with what remained over to be disposed of.

One out of every ten grants was supposed to be Government property. Somehow they rarely were of the best. In later days, everyone of the many churches erected in Free State villages claimed one of these Government farms, and, as a rule, got it. That explains why the Orange River Colony has a very limited amount of Government property.

With a few exceptions, the inspections referred to were performed in a most reckless way. I once asked the late President N. Boshof why more time and care were not given to them in order to prevent lawsuits in the future. In reply he said that the grantees did not care to pay more than £1 10s. a day for inspection fees, and that, therefore, the work had to be hurried. Money was very scarce in those days in both Republics, and over and beyond the said expenses a few pounds had to be paid for transfer and stamps before the owner got his title deeds. Many a farm reverted to the Government, as the owner refused, at a sacrifice of four or five pounds, to become a land proprietor. Hence, one sometimes met Boers of advanced age who had no ground of their own, but who lived in hope, and expressed their belief that when some day in the future the Government should conquer Basutoland their turn would come.

When land went up in price, as it gradually did, many disputes came about regarding beacons. The wildebeest or springbok bone, specially set up by the inspectors on an ant-hill as a beacon, was found either to be missing or to have gone to dust. By taking the distance and direction by compass from another known beacon the position might have been determined, were it not that such data, as pointed out above, were totally unreliable. Under such circumstances, interested parties applied for a special land commission, expecting that their combined wisdom would solve the riddle. But the poor members, having no indications to go by, found themselves at sea. Numerous witnesses were questioned. By the light of these enquiries, a negative result was ar-

rived at, to the effect that the adjoining beacons had been recently erected by mutual consent of neighbours, and did not date from the time of the original land grants. The dispute, however, had to end somehow, whereupon the Commission cut the Gordian knot in order to save its dignity.

In the district of Harrismith 250 farms were inspected in 1860 within a period of thirty-two days. Swarms of applicants and land agents accompanied the Commission. The *modus operandi* was as follows: A long line (supposed to be straight) was followed through the veld, and, at every sixty minutes, some kind of mark or another, generally a bone or a piece of ant-hill, was set up, intended as a beacon between two adjoining farms. The rest of the ground was treated in the same way, and supposed to be divided into regular quadrangles of sixty-minute sides. When I afterwards remarked to one of the inspectors that no man could keep a straight line in an undulating country without the aid of a mathematical instrument, and that his long lines were certainly not parallel, as he appeared to anticipate, he told me that he had hunted over those parts for years, and hence knew it so well that he was sure of the correctness of his work.

The boundary of two adjoining districts was often described as running from the top of one mountain to another, sixty or more miles distant. Such a line was not traceable between the two points, unless properly beacons off. Land inspectors sometimes went beyond it, to the extent of half a farm or left open ground on their side of it. Out of these proceedings lawsuits arose at a later date.

IRRIGATION.

This is one of the great wants of South Africa, and I trust that if money can procure it we will have it at some remote period. The Home Government has spent twenty millions on its stepdaughter Egypt, for that purpose, and more than that amount on India. We have been given to understand that this sub-continent will be equally assisted. But when? Government caused a pamphlet to be printed, written by an expert, during the past year, and after that first move the man in the street, if he ever gives a thought to agriculture, dreams of a time coming when every inch of ground in the country will be under the tap of a great artificial water-supply, whereby living will be made cheaper.

I have my doubts, however, on the subject. I fail to discover in the said treatise where the great emporium of water is to be. Statistics show that south of the Zambesi we enjoy an average rainfall of over twenty inches, but we also know that the distribution of the precious fluid is very irregular and partial; so that while some parts are now and then flooded, others see their crops perishing from drought. Hence the idea of assisting nature by taking the said distribution into our own hands.

Egypt has got the Nile and India its high and extensive plateaux. The said big river is fed at a high altitude by two powerful tributaries, and in Asia the table-lands of the Himalayas are so ex-

tensive that they fill those rivers which have their sources there to overflowing at a few miles from their origin, which means that an enormous body of water is available for irrigation of the lowlands. But in South Africa we have neither rivers 4,000 miles in length nor extensive plateaux where water accumulates. Our Drakensberg has no lakes on the top to speak of. Our local rivers which have their sources in the said range flow down quickly and soon bring their contents to a lower level, and unless swelled on the way by many tributaries, they rarely present an accumulation of water worth tapping.

Of course, if money is no object, one could dig another Lake Moeris; or, if the topography of the country allows it (which I doubt), construct another Assouan dam, but the water collected by these means would have to be pumped up for irrigation of the surrounding country.

We might dam our biggest rivers in sections of a few miles long, and by that means prevent flowing on to the ocean, but even then we want engines for pumping up from the river level to the land where it is wanted.

If any of these plans were adopted, how many years would it take before completion? In the meantime we all agree that the sooner the unequal division of rain water is mended the better for the agricultural outlook during the present time of transition.

I hope I have made it clear that we cannot expect to succeed in forming a water basin of sufficient capacity to provide the whole country with the required moisture, but that several water-saving re-

servoirs are necessary and continual pumping must be resorted to in any case.

For the Orange River Colony, which I happen to know so well, I beg to submit the following plan, which, in case of success, could be imitated in the other parts of His Majesty's South African dominions, and started and partly completed on many farms during 1904.

Nature has prepared half the work for the plan in the said Colony. It is intersected by many rivers and innumerable tributaries, and the few farms not situated near or intersected by any of them have either natural waterholes or pans.

Even twenty-five years ago it was proved that the driest parts of the said Colony, viz., the Middlevelds (the local name for those parts lying between two rivers) contained water at from nine to twenty-two feet below the surface. But nature must be assisted by science before the farmers can derive any benefit. As circumstances are now, an agriculturist might see his crop perish from drought while within hearing of the waters of river or rivulet rushing down on their way to the ocean, without a drop being used. If rich enough and sufficiently enterprising, he could pump it up to his lands; but in most cases he has never seen or heard of such engines, and, perhaps, would not believe in them before seeing them at work.

I would, therefore, propose that a representative body of the farmers approach the Government to provide each applicant with a pumping apparatus or engine of British manufacture, of such power as required for the water supply at his command. The country possesses sufficient coal to provide cheap fuel, though want of enterprise has left the strata

undisturbed to the present day. The applicant could refund capital and interest in a few years, giving security by a first mortgage on his landed property.

If the said engines begin to be erected here and there I have no doubt more applicants will follow suit, after seeing how they answer.

This plan would facilitate matters during the long years we must wait, under the most favourable circumstances, for the appearance of a general irrigation system.

Somebody may ask how about necessary repairs? I answer that dams, ploughs, and all other agricultural implements are subject to breakage, wear and tear, and that the never-sleeping trade will soon provide a supply of duplicate parts. As for the working of those simple engines, most of the youngsters will soon pick it up, when once shown, as their intelligence and adaptability for such business was proved long ago.

The largest and smallest dam in the country has patiently to wait for rain, whereas by my plan every river or rivulet, even when only partly filled for a short period, not to speak of wells sunk for water supply, can be tapped, and in the non-irrigating parts of Orangia these engines might be useful in wetting the soil for ploughing if rain is not forthcoming at the time it is required.

I need scarcely add that only the best quality of machinery should be imported in order to minimise the chance of breakage, and that the introduction of inferior articles should be guarded against.

GOLD.

As early as 1855 it was known that this mineral was to be found north of the Vaal River. In the said year, travelling from Potchefstroom to Rustenburg, I called at a store belonging to a Mr. Hartley, trader and elephant-hunter, who showed me a heap of flat brass rings (which he had bartered in Mashonaland) known to contain a fair percentage of gold. The inhabitants of Magaliesberg told me that Yokeskei River and other Witwatersrand streams contained gold dust, but too little to induce them to extract it, especially for want of proper machinery. Now and then I was shown very promising quartz, which, in these days, I would certainly have caused to be analyzed, but, at that time, considered it contained iron pyrites. The people who possessed and showed the ore always tried to approach me in a mysterious way; they did not object to letting me keep the samples, but would never tell where they had been picked up or unearthed. If it were gold, which they were anxious to ascertain, they objected to have it made known, as their instinct told them this knowledge would attract a foreign population they did not want. They were perfectly contented with their then isolated mode of existence, did not covet riches, and feared the introduction of new-fangled ideas. Their descendants, however, were of a different opinion. Their fathers had managed to live happily without money, perhaps not being fully aware as to how many things money could buy.

and, when the time came that unheard of sums were offered for farms known to contain the precious metal, every one of the later generation of land-owners willingly sold the ground for which his father had fought and bled. This is not at all surprising. It is the history of the human race repeating itself. These several land sales formed, in the aggregate, a considerable part of the inhabited Republic, and it seemed to have struck none of the sellers that the purchasers might one day claim the rights of citizens.

In the meantime the new owners, possessing capital, skill, and a spirit of enterprise, all of which the former possessors of the ground lacked, turned their invested thousands into millions. When that became known, the former owners of the ground considered themselves as being robbed, forgetting, or, at least, not being honest enough to confess, that during their ownership not an ounce of gold would have been extracted.

With these feelings of general spite and jealousy towards the successful explorers, the idea gained ground that it was after all possible to eat the pudding they had sold in their poverty. I am bound to believe that the average Transvaal Boer would have been too honest to come to that, but he did not rule the roost. The Government, consisting of comparatively few persons, assisted by a great many time-servers and place-hunters from the Cape Colony and abroad, could not stomach the idea that foreigners, and not they, were reaping such a harvest. These agitators tried to curry favour with the masses by adopting the name of "patriots," and in the name of patriotism they managed to get hold of lucrative appointments and paying conces-

sions to an enormous extent. The Boer population remained in profound ignorance of the state of corruption, and would not have believed it if told that patriots could fall so low. They never got any part of the proceeds, but were constantly told by paid patriotic newspapers to keep their powder dry.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the gold companies, though terribly annoyed by the said concessions, were not such immaculate people as a Press in their pay tried to make the European public believe. They described themselves as living here as "helots," in the meantime managing to send Home, as pure profit during 1897, £6,500,000 extracted from the soil of the country of their voluntary bondage.

Whatever the future historian may think fit to say about the justice of the late war, by which the Boers lost their independence, he will have to admit that there were no other means of destroying completely the Pretorian Augean stables, as an effort to clean them would have been hopeless.

For those people who believe in experts, it must be encouraging to know the latter predict it will take another century before the gold mines are exhausted, always excepting an Asiatic invasion of the whole Continent.

RAILWAYS.

It was after 1870 that railways were first mentioned in the Republics. The inhabitants, however, would not hear of them. Nearly everybody was a land-owner in those days, and feared that the building of them would necessitate an increase of quit rent.

Colonial hawkers and cattle dealers, fearing the introduction of the new idea would interfere with their trade, spread the most gloomy tales about the financial fiasco of the Cape Colony's experience with the iron-horse, which had rendered necessary an increase in ground dues.

At meetings throughout the land the opposition to railways ran in these terms:—

1. As capital for the construction had to be lent by foreign countries, the independence of the State might be threatened in case of financial failure.

2. Horses and draught animals would lose their value and become unsaleable.

3. A stream of undesirables would enter the country and imperil our morals.

4. An invading army might cross our borders before we were aware of any danger.

About 1888, other interests had to be considered. The Transvaal gold mines and the Johannesburg produce market had appeared.

Capetown, though as a harbour farther away from the gold mines than any of its rivals, had to use its wits in order to save the situation. I do not say

that she bought over Bloemfontein, but I do say she flirted with that town. It was soon made clear that if the Orange Free State could facilitate matters for a Cape-Pretoria line, Bloemfontein would be no loser. Very likely house property would double in value in the latter town, and, as the inhabitants had fought bravely for years against dust and abominable drinking water, it was high time fate smiled on them by way of change. The political and carrying lines between Capetown and Pretoria viâ Bloemfontein were, accordingly, agreed upon.

It was, however, a great injustice to the other parts of the Orange Free State. Formerly all over the world railways were first built where transport required to be facilitated. Now Bloemfontein, not being an agricultural district, had no produce to speak of. The parts of the country worth tapping for the purpose of freight were very far to the east of it. The only line that would have benefitted the Orange Free State should have run from Aliwal, in a northerly direction through the grain-producing districts, to the Vaal River. But as far as Capetown was concerned, that would have been too near Natal, which Colony supplied at that time the eastern part of the Free State and the whole of Basutoland, and might easily have connected itself by a branch line in order to maintain her trade. From the junction she could have used the main line to bring her merchandise on to the Rand.

A few months ago the "Friend of the Free State," edited in Bloemfontein, referring to railway-planning by the late Volksraad, observed: "What a mess can be made of railway construction by fifty or sixty gentlemen, each of whom urges a line to

be brought as near as possible to his own back door." That is quite true; but as Bloemfontein cut the Gordian knot of all these disputes by using its influence to get a line to its own back door, which was of no benefit to the other parts of the country, it might have been better taste to leave such remarks unsaid or change its name first into "The Friend of the Capital."

As a kind of consolation to the disappointed grain growers, there was a big talk of building a grain line between Bloemfontein and Clocolan. This would have been a further mistake, as the latter place is only the *Ultima Thule* of the real grain districts, and out of the way for produce destined for the gold fields market.

The largest articles of export in the Orange River Colony are, and will be for some years, wheat, forage, and mealies. The great bulk of wheat is grown in the districts of Bethlehem, Ficksburg, Ladybrand, and Harrismith, all being under the influence of the Drakensberg range. Forage, which requires regular irrigation, is grown where springs exist. Mealies, calling for many hands in cleaning and reaping, are mostly produced in populous Basutoland. A look at the map will prove that, especially during the period of paucity in draught cattle, a Harrismith-Bethlehem-Vaal River line would be of great benefit to the growers. Of course, a Ladybrand-Ficksburg-Fouriesburg-Bethlehem line would be more so, but that branch line will come in time. The Basutos, having plenty of oxen left, will be perfectly satisfied in having to bring their mealies to Bethlehem, as the nearest railway station for such of their produce as is bound north,

LABOUR SUPPLY IN THE PAST.

In the early days the Transvaal, Natal, and the eastern part of the Orange Free State had a sufficient supply of native labourers. The Natal Zulu wanted money to pay his hut-tax to the Natal Government. The Basuto was satisfied with a heifer for one year's service, and, in case he remained for years with his master, the progeny of the heifers earned made him sufficiently rich to buy a wife in his country.

Kafir girls rarely left their kraals to work for the whites. On farms the labour of a kafir was limited to cattle herding, water-carrying, and the gathering of fuel. He spent very little in clothing. A karosse (dried hide) or kombaars (blanket) was sufficient protection against rain or to cover him during the night; and in daytime or in fair weather he walked about much as he was born.

In the other parts of South Africa, where sheep and goat breeding were mostly practised, the servants were Hottentots, Bastards, and, here and there, Bushmen, and, when none of these were obtainable, a Griqua or Koranna. All the natives of South Africa hate work, but for laziness and dirt the Koranna is the worst. He has an abhorrence of water, and will prefer going without food to cooking it himself.

The yearly wages for labourers in the parts referred to were a few goats or a mare.

After the discovery of the diamond fields there came a great change. To attract labour, higher wages were offered, and another inducement was

that natives coming to the mines were allowed to buy alcoholic liquors, as well as guns and ammunition, which they were not permitted to do in the two Republics or in Natal.

Thousands of natives travelled from all parts of South Africa to Kimberley and Dutoitspan, and those that did not spend their earnings in drink and dissipation in these townships generally returned home well provided with money, a gun, ammunition, and one or more stolen diamonds, which they sold in Natal or exchanged for mares at country shops along the Orange Free State main road. Bakers and butchers in the towns they had to pass on their way home flourished, and a good deal of money came into circulation. That went on until the different Governments found out that far too many natives became possessed of fire-arms, and the result was that no more arms and ammunition were obtainable at the diamond fields. It also became known that many kafirs perished in the mines; and that, through the amalgamation of the claims, fewer hands were wanted.

These facts, however, had no influence on the rate of wages. Hundreds of natives kept on going to Kimberley for employment, and, when told they were not wanted, walked home again rather than accept the lower wages offered in towns or on farms along the road. I have frequently met whole gangs of these disappointed natives in a state of semi-starvation and sore-footed crawling slowly home, but positively refusing to accept other work at lower payment than the usual Kimberley rates. Not knowing anything about the law of cause and effect, they had it that "there was no more money at the diamond fields."

Natives are born lazy. They try to put all the necessary work on their wives, who enjoy very little rest by that arrangement. The latter have to prepare the soil for sowing by the slow process of hoeing. Weeding is their work. They also collect the crop and bring the yield, in the shape of bread and beer, to their husbands, who recline in the enjoyment of the sun's rays and a pipe in front of the hut. The children, too, are not idle, for they act for four months at least as a kind of local police against birds and locusts.

I was very well convinced that I could do nothing against a system that has been kept up for centuries, and I am of opinion that it will take another hundred years to do away with it. But, happening to be a white man, I naturally detested the idea that a woman, even with a black skin, should play the part of a slave and a beast of burden. I now and then indulged in showing my protest in a small and, I am bound to admit, a ridiculous way; but I could not resist when opportunity offered.

When kafir families, living as squatters on farms, have occasion to move to another farm, the boys drive on the cattle, sheep, and goats, belonging to the caravan. The married women carry the *lares et penates* on their heads, and, frequently, young children as well on their backs. Younger women totter under enormous burdens, and the train is closed by the pater on horseback enjoying his pipe.

When I met such a procession I would stop my vehicle in the road, and, descending, make for the pater, pull him from his horse, and cause the oldest or the most burdened woman to take his place in the saddle, telling her discomfited husband that he had better carry her load by way of a change. And

the crowd moved on again. I am perfectly well aware that the whole company, including my native servant, who held the horses, thought me demented, and that round the first turn in the road the order of the caravan would be reconstructed *in statu quo ante*, but I went my way rejoicing.

Since kafirs became acquainted with the plough, the fate of the women has improved a good deal, as the hoeing, of weeks' or months' duration, is done away with. But the plough is far from being adopted everywhere by the coloured tribes.

After the discovery of gold in the Transvaal (1886) a new labour centre with paying wages appeared. During the nineties, before the war, a hundred thousand natives were employed in mining. As the wages at that time averaged £3 a month, £300,000 ought to have been brought into circulation in South Africa. But a great portion of that sum remained in Johannesburg. The natives, perfectly satisfied in the past with their *min* "tshwala," a kind of mead, were taught to indulge in alcoholic liquors of the vilest description. There was a written law in the Statute Book which prohibited the sale of liquor to the natives, but the enormous profits possible in the sale of methylated spirits induced thousands of white men of all nations, assisted by African and Asiatic natives, to risk detection in the sale of these horrible adulterations.

Many of the natives returned home confirmed drunkards, and some of them with empty purses, after many months' labour.

The new Government shows a firmer hand in dealing with smugglers and liquor law-breakers than

the former plutocracy of Pretoria, and, for a time, we may hope that native labourers coming to the gold fields of the Transvaal will carry home their earnings in full, and be perfectly satisfied with the native drink they are used to at their kraals, which is now obtainable by them at some of the mines.

There is another inducement to the natives for parting with their money, but not so dangerous or chronic as the former: namely, to disguise themselves in the clothes of the white man. Geese look ridiculous when covered with ostrich feathers; but our natives do not seem to be aware of the fact. Besides, when coming home, they stow away these fineries and walk about in semi or perfect nudity.

The mania of the natives in aping the whites is sometimes highly amusing. I now and then met a kafir, whose ordinary garment consisted of nothing but a loin-cloth, adorning his person with a cast-away paper collar or a woman's dilapidated bonnet. A black servant girl, in the town of Winburg, whose friends called her "plain" and her enemies "hideous," was going to be married, and while preparing her trousseau induced a shopkeeper to order a wig for her from the Cape Colony; for which she paid two pounds sterling. She wore it for a couple of hours during the wedding ceremony, and was proud and happy at being seen with straight hair (*pro tem.*) like white people.

I am of opinion that if the trade could invent and introduce a kind of white enamel, by which the Ethiopian could temporarily hide his black skin, it would find a ready sale among those bent on becoming civilized.

THE PRESENT LABOUR QUESTION.

Many people are of opinion that Africa contains a sufficient number of natives to provide labourers for the mines and for agricultural purposes, if all the tribes were only properly canvassed, and especially when those willing to enlist could be sure of bringing their earnings home in safety. I know that one of the objections of the Basutos to coming *en masse* to the mines in search of work is not so much the lowering of the wages as the danger they experience in bringing back their hard-earned money to their native land. Wages have been increased, as we know; or, rather, have been brought to the standard existing before the war; but the said danger along the road remains. Steps ought to be taken by employers to see that natives returning to their kraals are protected against being plundered, either by whites or by their black fellow-travellers. If the comparatively near Basutos and Zulus complain of that danger, how much more chance of being imposed upon and being robbed is there in the case of the home-coming kafir from Portuguese settlements or Central African territories. Every native arriving home with his earnings in safety will be a far better advertisement to his friends and acquaintances than all the promises of touts and labour agents at the kraals by way of inducing more hands to come to the mines for employment. And what a trifling outlay it would cause to the mines to have periodical

batches of home-going natives accompanied by a few reliable white men, to prevent the above-stated dangers of imposition, robbery, or even murder. When these precautions are taken, I do not doubt that sufficient hands will be found south of the Zambesi for labour; and not before the contrary be proved would we have an excuse to risk the introduction of Asiatics. In another chapter I have given some reasons against such a desperate step, and unless the Governments of the different South African Colonies are willing to make strict laws (and enforce them) to repatriate every Asiatic when he has served his time, I would still vote against the introduction of a single one.

If the mining public were not in such a terrible hurry to get rich, by exploration of old and new mines, the stock of money earned during the war by a good many natives would be pretty well exhausted, and as they have learned long since the value of money, they will flock to the mines to get more. The failure of crops here and there will not, as a rule, bring hands to the mines, for a South African native does not fear a little starvation as long as he is allowed to bear his sufferings in a horizontal attitude; but should it be true, as some people have it, that the harvest has failed all over the Continent, we may expect a large influx of natives to the Rand, which will save us from the "yellow" invasion for another year, or, perhaps, for ever. The public of this sub-continent is divided into two parties on the question of introducing Asiatic labour for mining purposes.

1. The mine-owners and mine shareholders, mostly living abroad, have for their motto *Profitons de l'instant*. In comparison with the other

white inhabitants of South Africa they form a small minority, but their capital and industry have brought South Africa to its present position. Once having started on the profitable and successful enterprise of gold mining, they care very little about the ultimate fate of a country in which they do not intend to live, their sole aim being to get all the gold out of the ground as cheaply and as quickly as possible.

2. The other inhabitants of South Africa, viz., the original white Africans, and the large number of English and others of European, American, and Australian descent, all of whom hope to make a living for themselves and their descendants by hard work, be it agriculture, trade, or profession, and who are all convinced that should the invasion of the yellow undesirables into this country of their birth or of their adoption be allowed to take place, their future will be utterly and hopelessly spoilt, as South Africa will then become impossible for them and their progeny.

In the game of "To be or not to be," the said minority undoubtedly holds the trump cards, for money is considered trumps all the world over, and has been known in history to influence even Governments and common sense. On the other hand, if this part of the Empire is to be more than a jerry-building, erected for the temporary abode of a single generation of gold speculators, the Home Government ought to protect the majority of its subjects against the *permanent* invasion of Asiatics, to save this valuable part of the Empire from becoming the dumping-ground of Asia's over-population. South Africa, with its splendid climate, unlimited possibilities, and thousands of square miles of unoccupied

ground, is certainly far more suited for present and future Anglo-Saxon emigrants than those from overcrowded and unhealthy Hindustan; and, at any rate, too valuable and too dearly paid for in the shape of blood and treasure to be sacrificed to the interest of a body of speculators, whose *raison d'être* may disappear in another forty or fifty years.

At the time I write the foregoing, meetings are being held all over the new Colonies about the labour question, and the upshot has been that the Government will be asked to appoint a Commission to ascertain whether South Africa contains a sufficient number of natives to furnish a constant supply of hands for mining, agriculture, and other purposes. It is certainly deplorable that at the late Bloemfontein Conference, where the delegates of all the Colonies were assembled, a regular census of the different kafir populations south of Zambesi was not provided for. As it is, the consensus of opinion of people who ought to know brings the said number to six millions. If that is fairly near the mark, one might safely conclude that five per cent. of that number, i.e., 300,000, would be males of between seventeen to forty years of age, all fit for the labour above referred to. But according to the old adage, that "You can bring a horse to water, etc.," I am not prepared to say how many out of that number will come to the mines. However, I should think there is reason to believe that the present number of 66,000 now employed at the mines would be increased, especially if conditions were made more agreeable to them in the way I have hinted at before.

At the said meetings it was also discussed that, should the supply of African natives be inadequate or their services be unobtainable, some other means

must be found, as the mining industry cannot go on for many more months unless the present number of hands be doubled; and, as the shutting up of the gold mines would spell ruin for the whole of South Africa, even the strongest opponents to the introduction of the undesirable Asiatics must admit them as a *pis aller* to save the situation. By way of gilding the pill, these opponents are told that strict laws will be made enforcing the return of the Orientals to their native land after the expiration of their period of service, to avoid the calamity of their settling down as permanent inhabitants. That sounds well; but unless that law be made as strong and as unalterable as the Magna Charta, or the laws of the Medes and Persians, the wily Orientals will find means to remain here, and the future historian of this Continent will be justified in dating the fall of the country from the present year of grace, 1903, when South Africa sold its future for a mess of gold.

ASIATICS.

There are few people in Africa who do not admit that the country will prosper far better without Asiatics, and those few would only wish to introduce them as a *pis aller* against the indolent kafir population.

Why do we look upon them as undesirables?

1. They are exceedingly immoral, which is no small danger to our immense kafir population.

2. They resist as much as possible sanitary and hygienic rules and laws.

3. They avoid spending their wages where they are earned; they send or take them out of the country.

4. Being accustomed to exist in their native land on next to nothing, they can work for wages on which our white labourers would starve and consequently be driven away, and as we want Africa to become a white man's country that does not suit us.

5. When once admitted here we are of opinion that neither legislation nor other measures will rid us of them.

6. Their presence amongst us, especially when we open the door for as many as are willing to come, causes an immense outlay to the State in the way of ruling and keeping them from becoming a social danger to the other inhabitants.

Though we have spoilt the kafir population in many ways, let us at least protect them against the

“yellow” danger, which is poison to all the good qualities still left in our black fellow-subjects.

We know very well that the Indian Government is only too eager to get rid of its surplus population, but we positively refuse to receive it here, looking upon it as a *damnosa hereditas*, and we have the same opinion about the “Celestials.” We will feel far happier without any Asiatic visitors.

If the curse of Cato on Carthage was meant for the whole of the dark Continent, we would assist in its fulfilment by opening the eastern door to millions of Asiatics, and invade it from south and west with missionaries and traders. In the carrying out of these experiments, the Bantu race is sure to succumb and disappear. Such calamity can be prevented by a little firmness shown in time by a white Government and a white population. Since Vasco da Gama’s discovery we have invaded South Africa, always professing our intrusion would prove a boon to the population we found here. What black ingratitude it would be to allow over-populated Asia to throw millions of their undesirables on to our shores, we, in the meantime, being perfectly aware of the consequences. By means of conquests, punitive expeditions, and the creation of spheres of influence, Europe has taken possession of the whole Continent, or nearly so. The whites brought the aborigines Bibles, brandy, and boots, for which they ought to be duly thankful. But let time be given them to enjoy those benefits, and let them be protected against total destruction by an introduction of the “yellow peril.” I am, moreover, convinced that, when our native wood-choppers and water-carriers disappear, we whites will not be able to remain.

ORANGE RIVER AND TRANSVAAL COLONIES.

When the emigrant farmers left the Cape Colony to find a new home north of the Orange River, a good many of them settled between that stream and the Vaal. The bulk of them, however, crossed the Drakensberg, whilst a smaller part went further north. The first mentioned began to call their country the Orange Free State in 1854, at which time its extent was about twenty-five million acres. In course of time it increased to thirty-one millions, by the addition of the "Conquered Territory," the Barolong grounds, and Griqualand; the two first by conquest and the latter by purchase from Adam Kok's people.

From the very beginning of their occupation they were more prosperous than their tribesmen beyond the Vaal and the Drakensberg. They had less fighting with kafirs, and were constantly being joined by more emigrants from the Cape Colony. When the Boers lost Natal a number re-crossed the Drakensberg and settled between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. Notwithstanding the thefts of the Basutos, the troops of cattle of the emigrants were always increasing, until 1855, when lung-sickness appeared for the first time in this sub-continent.

After the battle of Boomplaats, in August, 1848, the country became English, under the name of the Orange River Sovereignty, which state of affairs lasted until 1854, when it was restored to the inhabitants. At first the Home Government met with

difficulty in inducing the people to take it back. Many English people had settled in the towns and invested in property, and among the Boers there were men who had more faith in the continuation of the English rule than in a Government composed of their own people. All kinds of expedients were resorted to to convince Her Majesty's representatives that the country was not such a howling wilderness as Sir George Clerk had declared. A commission was sent Home to see whether the decision could not be altered. At that time, too, a rumour was started that alluvial gold had been found in the vicinity of Smithfield. Afterwards it came out that a few schemers had filed down some sovereigns and distributed the gold dust over the ground, taking care that a gathering of people should be present at the moment of their lucky discovery. There may be old Smithfield people alive at the present day who remember this incident. There is no doubt as to its truth.

On the whole the people of the Free State lived happily and contentedly during the first years. They had no civil wars or faction fights like their relations beyond the Vaal. The war with Weedsie took no more than a couple of weeks, whilst in the later three years' war with the Basutos, the Boers again proved successful.

Cattle breeding was the principal occupation of the people before much attention was given to sheep farming. Prior to the late war, numbers owned large troops and flocks of both animals.

The only direct taxation in the land was the yearly quit-rent, amounting to half a farthing per acre, independently of the value or the use of the ground.

Anthracite coal is known to exist on many farms, but the Dutch landowners are, as a rule, not given to spending money or trouble in experiments. Rather than open up strata and follow outcrops, which would require a small outlay, with doubtful prospects, they think it wiser to get cash in hand for options from more enterprising people. The same idea obtained in the Transvaal after 1886, when gold farms were sold for heaps of coin, the like of which the sellers had never seen before, and which they thought would make them rich for life. *Hinc illae-lachrymae!*

Agriculture, practised on a very small scale in the early days, got an impulse when the Kimberley market came into existence, and far more so after the goldfields round Johannesburg were obliged to procure the bulk of their food from the Free State. Knowing the agricultural districts as I do, I think that at no period were more than 400,000 acres of ground ploughed in one year, and, as of the afore-said thirty-one million acres forming the present Orange River Colony two-thirds are arable, there is some room left for a number of enterprising farmers from over the sea, especially if general irrigation ever becomes a fact, or when, in the immediate future, other means of saving and distributing water are taken in hand.

The Boers of the Orange River Colony bewail their lost independence, which is only natural, but they will gradually come to the conclusion that many things have improved under the new Government in comparison to the state of affairs before the war. Their mothers and wives, however, will require a far longer time to forgive and forget. For a score of years or more they will tell their children of the

treatment they suffered under martial law. These good women, being heroines in many instances, did not know, or did not consider, that in all countries war is cruel. They took it that the unnecessary bullying and hardships they were subjected to were ordered by the English Government as a special punishment, not being acquainted with the fact that, during martial law, subalterns clad in temporary power are apt to overdo their zeal for the cause they represent, and sometimes lose sight of the fact that the Home Government would prefer to annex to the Empire a possibly friendly population and a self-supporting country than a desert inhabited by irreconcilable paupers. It was certainly an error of judgment on the part of some of the Boers to prolong the war after the capitals of the two Republics had fallen; but precedents can be found in history where nations defended every inch of their ground until the whole had been lost. Besides, at the beginning of the war, were the Boers not told by so-called friends, who were well aware such statement was false, that armies of Frenchmen, Russians, and Germans were ready to come to their assistance?

The generation of older Boers, who were compelled by the misgovernment of Colonial Governors, based on ignorance, as well as by false reports of missionaries to leave the Cape Colony, are all dead. Thanks to the Press and the telegraph, a repetition of similar abuses is now impossible; but the English public has still to learn a great deal about this new portion of the Empire. There is much they do not know, and much that will surprise them when they do.

The later generation now living in the two Republics, those who belong to the Saxon race, are

just the kind of people to combine with English immigrants for turning South Africa into a happy and prosperous abode for white men. There will be difficulties, however, in the immediate future, on account of mixed population, which cannot be overcome without the full assistance of the parent Government. Among these difficulties are the following:—

1. The injustice that a combination of capitalists should be allowed to use the country as if it were a guano-island, namely, that the valuable deposit is removed in the shortest possible time, the fate of the island after that being nobody's concern.

2. The danger of South Africa being made a lumber room or dumping ground for Asiatic overpopulation, for the single reason that cheaper labour may enable mine-owners, who do not live in the country, to enjoy further dividends.

Though the labour question is, at the present time, far more pressing and serious for the Transvaal than for the Orange River Colony, most people are of opinion that the latter country possesses mines as well, and that the time may be close at hand when there will be a demand for labour equally as strong as it is now in the country beyond the Vaal. The inhabitants of both the late Republics have a common belief that if the door is once opened for the Oriental to enter the country, he will never again leave, notwithstanding all the laws that are being promised to provide for his return. Every white man in South Africa is at one in saying that such a calamity would make the country uninhabitable for the European as well as the native races.

YOUNG AFRICA.

This idea came into existence at the time the doctrine of the rights of man, originated by the French Revolution of the eighteenth century, became known in South Africa. The said event, which gave almost the death-blow to the feudal system, encouraged the white serfs of the Dutch East India Company to speak out now and then. Had the English Government, after bartering the Cape Colony for Java, and something else to boot, been rightly informed about the Dutch Boers, their views and expectations, this small population, being the only white people in the continent of European descent, could have been forever made into the most loyal subjects of the Crown. For it should be remembered they were sick of Dutch rule, as represented by its locum tenens, the said East India Company. Had not the new Government preferred to listen to the reports of the Syndicate, called the Mission, rather than thoroughly investigate matters for itself, many calamities which South Africa has had cause to deplore would not have occurred. The exodus known as the big Trek would not have taken place, and much blood and treasure, which later on had to be sacrificed to mend mistakes caused by ignorance and indifference, would have been saved. Had there, in those days, been a Colonial Minister of sufficient wisdom to study the wants of the white population, and with enough foresight to look upon South Africa, not only as a halfway station to

India, but as a most welcome addition to the Empire—worthy of being colonized and protected for the sake of its immense possibilities, its fine climate, its place on the map of the world, and the already known fertility of the soil—things might certainly have turned out differently in this continent. The omissions and mistakes referred to were the cause of the “Young Africa” idea taking root and growing. As the Home Government failed to exercise its usual liberality and justice towards the white Africans, which makes it so different from other mailed-fist and partly feudal Governments in Europe, there grew up a feeling of great discontent in the minds of some of its new subjects. They thought themselves neglected, if not ignored. Young Africa never took the shape of an association or a league, and certainly less of a Mafia, owing, perhaps, to its grievances not being so serious, and its subjects more law-abiding and easy-going than those of the Latin races; but, though dormant, the said discontent was by some continually nursed.

The Boer was, and is, more or less suspicious of every European. The townspeople found out that the average man from over the sea was better educated, and possessed of more worldly wisdom than they had had the means of acquiring; and the farmer, born and living in the country, though looking on the new importation as a “tenderfoot,” who could neither ride nor shoot, became aware that the latter could score off him in various transactions. Add to this the misrule of certain Colonial Governors, due to ignorance, indifference, and a most incomplete intelligence department, as well as the pronounced partiality of the Home Government and

the people for the aborigines, can it, therefore, be wondered at that the Boers were not Anglicised during the first half of the nineteenth century? And, when we take a retrospective view of these times, how cheaply might it not all have been done. The great Trek late in the thirties and the establishment of the two Republics in 1852 and 1854 acted as safety valves on a great deal of South African discontent. The Boers had found new pastures, and the more developed young African townspeople, though not all educated beyond the three R's, were given appointments in the Civil Service of the two new Administrations. Some of them were ornaments to the services, and were promoted to the highest positions; but from 1880 the Republics found a local supply in their own youth, educated either abroad or in South Africa. The French have a proverb: "Paris c'est la France," and, from the beginning, the Bloemfontein people kept up a similar idea that the Free State consisted of the capital and outlying suburbs. Centralisation was strictly adhered to, the smallest as well as the most important appointments being made at headquarters. After Majuba the dormant idea of Africa for the white Africans became more pronounced, and the leaders of the Bloemfontein bureaucracy were very careful, as far as new nominations and promotions went, to ascertain whether the candidate was fit to augment the ranks, or assist in the recruiting of the future army of "conquistadores." During the rule of that wise statesman, President Brand, the fever was a little suppressed, but it was ever epidemic, thanks to the Bloemfontein and Bond Press, and after his death it became endemic. However, I remember meeting old grey-beards, who

never studied newspapers, but had heard the talk of some of the rising generation, shaking their heads, and remarking: "If these youngsters think they can fight England they will find out their mistake!"

I, for one, do not blame the young and ignorant part of the population which was carried away by the idea of empire-building, especially as it was limited to South Africa. Other empire-builders are not so modest! But what puzzled me was that not a single one of the better educated amongst them ever started the question: "What will it lead to?" It should be borne in mind that the *beau idéal* of the agitators was that South Africa should be entirely free of English inhabitants. But nobody seems to have contemplated the consequences. Let me try and sketch some parts of the *débauche* in case they had been successful:—

1. A country 400,000 square miles in extent with one defender for every four of these miles against European or native invaders.

2. No navy to defend the harbours.

3. An exhausted treasury, and no means of replenishing it.

4. An unavoidable civil war between Pretoria and the Bond for the supremacy of the sub-continent.

5. Every inhabitant in arms, and crops neglected, for conquistadores have no time for ploughing.

6. Food and other supplies from the paper-allies not forthcoming, as John Bull would blockade the harbours.

7. Hence a period of universal starvation.

8. The black population indulging in raids and murders over the hundreds of miles of border, and

the Federal army too much occupied with their own quarrels to defend it, besides being very short of ammunition.

Had a real friend of the Boers mentioned this other side of the question at one of their feverish meetings, he would have been expelled from their councils; and even now, after all the experiences of the late war, such an individual would, by some agitators or irreconcilables be looked upon as a very unwelcome croaker.

I am not an Englishman by birth but by conviction. I did not even take the oath of allegiance. I, however, wish for English rule and supremacy in this country for two reasons: (1) That under English Government the people's voice has its influence, hence temporary fads and fancies of the ruling political party of the moment are not allowed to hold on for an indefinite period, but have to give in to common sense; and (2) that the English people will never submit to the military slavery system of the continent. I could mention more reasons for wishing for a continuation of English Government, but the above will be sufficient. It does not follow, however, that I applaud every measure taken in the past or the present by the said Government. On the contrary, many ideas about the conquered people ought to be changed, laws altered and new ones made, and after a time local government introduced. After the peace, a good many grievances were added to the list of real and imaginary ones already in the possession of Young Africa.

Most of the rural population have, in many respects, been met by the Home Government in a most charitable and generous way, partly to enable

them to start afresh in a pastoral line, and partly to efface the traces of vandalism indulged in by the military during the period of martial law; and considerable treasure has been spent in the same benevolent way, to save hundreds of the new subjects from starvation. But Young Africa, residing for the most part in towns, has been somewhat ignored, not having the same facilities as the rural population of recovering from the effects of the war. It is true that some amongst them are breeders of discontent; but, considering the immense amount of money and trouble that has been spent during and after the war by intelligence and police departments (to know exactly who is who), it cannot be denied that a good many worthy people have been overlooked who never handled a gun or fired a shot during the hostilities; who were placed by the late Government in positions where they were useful because of their knowledge of the country, the people, the laws, etc., and whose only fault (?) was that they did not at once begin to sing "Rule Britannia" when the first "khaki" entered the town.

Young Africans have been told "ad nauseam," that nepotism, favouritism, and Tammany cannot exist under English rule, having disappeared forever at the time the Union Jack was hoisted on Pretoria and its forts. They are now doubtful whether they heard aright, for what do they see? A continual importation of persons lacking in a knowledge of local conditions, causing the new Colonies to be turned into very expensive nurseries—as often as not incurables being sent. This has become so glaring that an English judge recently made a remark on the bench about the unfitness and inca-

capacity of some magistrates, and how the general public was a constant loser by having such square people squeezed into round holes. Young Africa not being very busy just now, finds plenty of time for discussing the situation, and asks whether such an introduction of unskilled labour is not nepotism? And whether it is one of the means of fusing the races? As most of them have read the log of the ship called South Africa, they are conversant with the fact that many Scyllae, before 1850, injured the ship through the ignorance of the captain, and, being passengers on board, they fervently hope that his successor may have the skill to avoid the Charybdes looming in the distance.

The future historian of South Africa should avoid mentioning Young Africa and the Bond in the same breath. The two ideas are vastly different. Young Africa is by no means irreconcilable. Its members, spread over the whole continent, if properly handled, will prove to be valuable workers in the great enterprise of amalgamating the two white races and for making this part of the continent a happy abode for a large European population. The Bond, on the other hand, is a purely political institution, and would not see cause to dissolve even during the millennium.

II. SOCIAL.

THE OX WAGON.

Had not the ox wagon been invented by the Dutch settlers, more than 200 years ago, I do not see how they could have penetrated into the interior of Africa. That vehicle did service for a house on wheels. It held all the possessions, food for months, arms and ammunition, besides all the members of the family, in case a change of quarters was resolved upon. When, at the end of the seventeenth century, the Colonists began to increase in number, new pastures had to be found for the flocks, and the owners thought it no hardship to remain for months at the same spot, cut off from all intercourse with their white fellow-creatures, provided grass and water were plentiful. The wagon had, on many occasions, to be turned into a fortress and held against lions, tigers, and Bushmen. When the *entourage* became too dry, it was pulled in the direction in which the last lightning had been observed, for there surface water and green grass might be reasonably expected.

It is on record that families have stuck to that nomadic and patriarchal mode of existence for years, which would have been impossible but for the said wagon. Two hundred years later it is remarkable how little was thought by their descen-

dants of leaving home and comfort when circumstances made a move necessary, in case of war or drought, provided always that one or more wagons could be found.

A wagon was very practically constructed. The upper storey formed the sleeping compartment for the whole family, on an immense feather bed, resting on a horizontal trellis-work of ropes. Women and children sat on that same structure as long as the wagon was on the move, the men being employed in driving or roaming about with their guns. The sides, in the olden days, were made of bamboo or grass matting, but later on wood was introduced, sometimes neatly worked in panel form and painted. The said bed was secured between the sides about thirty inches above the floor of the wagon, made of planks two inches thick. On that platform stood all the possessions of the travellers, including provisions, and, fore and aft, a stout wooden box, well fixed to the sides, kept these movables from slipping off. On the front box sat the driver with his enormous whip, in company with one of the male members of the family.

On the outside, boxes were fixed, containing forks, spoons, tin plates, and pannikins, to be near at hand at every outspan (resting place).

The front oxen were guided by a native fore-looper, by means of a rope tied round their horns. He was supposed to pilot the team so as to avoid boulders, holes, and all other difficulties of these natural roads, rarely improved by human hands.

A water barrel and a contrivance to act as a brake were fixed under the wagon.

The rate of travelling rarely exceeded three miles an hour, so that a pedestrian could keep up with it.

Bridges being unknown, the rivers had to be crossed by wading. If the water was high the oxen had to swim. In that case, all articles which had to be kept dry were put on the bed. On the bed, too, sat all travelling in the wagon. The men had often to swim through the stream to encourage and direct the oxen across, and accidents and loss of lives of men or beasts were frequent.

In case the water was extraordinarily high, as sometimes occurred in the summer after long rains, there was nothing else possible but to remain on the bank until the river had gone down. As time was no object, the only anxiety was lest some of the provisions should give out, especially coffee or salt; but there was no fear of starvation, as game was generally abundant, and in an emergency a draught ox could be sacrificed.

Under such circumstances time could only be whiled away by smoking, eating, drinking, and watching the river. Books and newspapers were unknown luxuries in the early days, and did not make their appearance until after bridges did. It was, however, a time of rest for the cattle, and when it lasted long they got fat, which was no small consolation to the owners.

Except such forced delays, a trip in an ox wagon, though painfully slow to a generation accustomed to railway travelling, has its pleasant side. One sleeps and lives in perfectly pure air, enjoys a splendid appetite, can indulge in hunting, swimming, and fishing, to which, in later days, the chance of prospecting was added. If well provided with books and preserved food, as is possible in our days, many an invalid would, after an excursion of this kind, come home a strong man.

The days of the ox wagon as a means of transport or for regular travelling are numbered; but it will remain in use for hunting expeditions and prospecting trips, where the motor, on account of the absence of roads, cannot be used, and where the railway has not been constructed.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

It stands to reason that during the first decades of the two late Republics learning was at a low ebb. The nomadic life and occupation of the people were against it, and teachers were rarely obtainable. After 1850, when the people began to settle on farms, a demand for schoolmasters set in. The supply that arrived from the Cape Colony and other regions was small in number and smaller in quality. On some farms a deserted sailor or soldier, hardly able to express himself in the vernacular, was installed as teacher for the rising generation. The curriculum in those days was not very extensive. A little writing and reading, a thorough knowledge of the historical part of the Bible, especially names and numbers, the committing to memory of the articles of the Creed and particulars regarding the rites of the Dutch Reformed Church, and especially the singing of hymns and psalms at sight, unassisted by a musical instrument, formed the complete training of the pupil. The pedagogue was supposed to lead his disciples to that state of development within a period of three months. A child that had enjoyed such training was called "learned." Well-to-do parents when blessed with a large family of boys and girls of ages ranging from five to twenty years, sometimes kept the schoolmaster for six or more months in their houses. But the seniors all left school after three months, for the simple reason that they were either sufficiently full of knowledge or that

their teacher had nothing else to impart to them. Geography, arithmetic, and foreign languages did not fall within the curriculum, and were not taught before regular schools were established, about 1870.

Some individuals of the genus "schoolmaster" managed to become quite popular and in great demand with parents. A teacher with a trumpet-voice and using the rod liberally in school stood, in their estimation, at the top of the ladder, even when not sufficiently developed in the other sciences. In the estimation of the family and their circle of acquaintances, he ranked next to the parson in learning and respectability, and some of them managed, after years of toil, to get hold of a farm and marry into a well-to-do family.

But such successes were exceptions. Most of them succumbed to the monotony of such an existence and took to drink. Newspapers and books were rarely obtainable. New ideas and food for the mind, if he belonged to a class that appreciated the latter, did not come to the house of his employer. The stock of brandy now and then became exhausted, and, owing to the distance the village was off, supplies, when not uncertain, were long in coming. He might have formed a plan to conquer the heart of one of his elderly pupils, a comely girl of seventeen, but soon found out there was no hope for him in that direction. Such an accumulation of drawbacks and miseries made him desperate, and he would tell the farmer that he felt himself compelled to go to the nearest village for medical advice, as he did not feel at all well.

The earnings of many months, consisting of a few pounds sterling at the utmost, as well as horse and saddle, were soon sacrificed on the altar of Bacchus,

and the learned man woke on a fine morning in the gutter in a state of destitution. In case his contract for training the children at his last place of residence had not been completed, his employer was sure to look him up and carry him home. The latter soon became acquainted with all the particulars of the late spree, but as he wanted the teacher to give the finishing touch to the education of his children he smoothed over the whole escapade. A fresh supply of brandy was put on board, and the pair went home, apparently rejoicing, wife and children being told that he had been very ill and had lost his horse.

As already stated, it was not easy in those days to get a teacher who possessed even the rudiments of knowledge, with sufficient steadiness and respectability. A farmer had, in consequence, to put up with a great deal of vexation in that direction. In 1860 I passed a night at a farmhouse which the schoolmaster had left a few days previous. The owner was a man of means, who had tried to get a good teacher for his only daughter. He got hold of a married European, recommended to him as an educated man and very fit for such a position. The schoolroom was put in order and the teacher and his wife soon arrived. The first thing that struck the farmer as rather strange (he told me the whole story) was that the new teacher fixed a hammock, which he had used on board ship, to the rafters of the schoolroom. During school hours he poured from that elevation his wisdom into the ears of his solitary pupil, only descending from the clouds during the writing lesson, when he walked round the room, at every turn peeping over the child's shoulders to judge of her progress.

As long as she was not supposed to be in want of his personal guidance in her studies, he killed time by reading novels or periodicals, never contradicting the impression of the family that he was studying all the time.

His salary was five pounds sterling per month, and all found. After the expiration of three months he asked for an increase, stating that such a remuneration was ridiculously low for a man of his talents. His employer was of a different opinion, and only too glad to get rid of the man by not acceding to his wishes. The farmer did not doubt that the teacher was a very learned man, but had found out that his ideas were far from being orthodox, and that he was very inferior in the accomplishment of singing hymns and psalms, which knowledge in his (the farmer's) estimation stood much higher than that of the three R's.

After his departure, his late pupil, delivered of the terror of his presence, confessed to her parents that he had tried to poison her mind by two abominable falsehoods, the first of which was that he wanted her to believe the earth turned round, and, second, that the Prophet Jonah could never have seen the inside of a whale, as the throat of that mammal was too small to admit the tiniest baby. After due consultation, the parents struck on the happy idea of uprooting these heretical impressions for ever from the child's mind by showing her a pictorial Bible representing the foundation of the earth on four pillars, as well as the safe arrival of Jonah from his nautical trip. The latter looked a little fatigued and upset, but as the snapshot, taken at the moment of landing, undoubtedly showed the whale, the point was settled in the young mind.

The said pupil (now a respectable grandmother) is still living.

Since 1870 the Government of the late Orange Free State gave most liberal assistance to education in the shape of grants to schools. The lion's share of these grants, however, always went to the educational institutions of the capital, partly caused by the centralisation idea, and not a little facilitated by mutual jealousy of the country members, who would rather see Bloemfontein benefitted than a rival district. Hence, well-to-do farmers, objecting to send their children to the distant capital for a higher class of education, not always obtainable at the district schools, thought it better and cheaper to engage a competent Nonconformist teacher, so that before the outbreak of the late war there was a constant demand for such persons.

Though many individuals all over the country are totally or nearly ruined through the war, the late Republicans during the last thirty years became convinced that education could not be withheld from their children; hence, when a period of prosperity sets in, there will again be a demand for private teachers. One of the benefits of the change of Government will certainly be the disappearance of centralisation, nepotism, and the favouring of one district above the other, and schools will be more equally spread over the country; but as distances cannot be altered, many families will follow the old plan of having their children educated under their own roof or that of their immediate neighbour.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

There were not many attractions for medicos to settle in the late Republics, except in towns. The widely spread country population, the healthy climate, and the wholesome food then in use did not promise much of a practice. Most matrons considered themselves as fit as doctors for curing the ordinary ailments children are heir to. In severe cases a meeting of the neighbouring mothers was held, as a rule in the sick room, so that the patient could have the benefit of these *colloquia*, not always very cheery.

Most families were provided with very simple medicines of a harmless, if salutary, quality. Every visitor had his own notions about the efficacy of a certain drug, and hence everyone of them was administered to the sufferer. It was considered a bad omen if he did not feel inclined to swallow the same amount of coffee or consume the same quantity of roast meat as he took in his days of health. If no improvement set in, he had to go through a course of most wonderful trials, such as a few drops of blood drawn from a dog's ear, the droppings of a wolf, or the liver of a water-turtle. The next step was to send for a kafir doctor.

As a rule, all access of fresh air was guarded against, being considered harmful to the patient. As the rooms were usually small and sometimes crowded with visitors, it is no wonder that the first act of a medical man, when called in for

advice, was to open doors and windows and to hint that the sufferer would get on better without visitors. That sounded like rank blasphemy in many ears, so that in some instances his medicines, to the detriment of the patient, were not considered worth taking. The breaking of arms and legs was seldom thought much of, as many of the male population knew from experience how to act in setting the broken limb. As many missionaries had gone through a medical training, long-lingering patients were sometimes brought to them, and frequently cured. Some of them acquired name and fame, and were for the most part better trusted than a new arrival from Europe with ever so many diplomas, as the latter was more or less regarded as having no knowledge of local diseases.

At last a law was made that only medical men possessed of a diploma could enforce payment for surgical or medical services. But quackery and the sale of wonderful drugs was far from being extinct, as people kept their ears open for stories of marvellous cures that were told from time to time,

THE HAWKER.

In 1855 the Transvaal had only three inhabited villages, and the Orange Free State five. In the almost total absence of country stores, the farmers made it a rule to go every three months to the nearest village for the purchase of their household necessities, as well as for religious purposes, namely, Holy Communion and to hear the gospel preached. It stands to reason that in the interval between such trips many housewives ran short of supplies. Hence, the visit of the hawker was, as a rule, a very welcome event. He was supposed to have every possible thing on his wagons, from a pin to a wedding dress, medicines, coffee, sugar, and brandy. He brought, besides, all the news picked up along the road from far away in the Cape Colony, and was sometimes the bearer of letters from family relations, scattered far and wide over South Africa. He was rarely in a hurry, as he could not over-work his draught oxen, considering the hundreds of miles he wanted them to pull the wagons on his return trip. During his stay these animals lived on the best part of the farm, whilst his native drivers and foreloopers consumed as much game as they thought fit.

When he was at last pumped dry, as far as news and politics went, the moment had arrived for starting business. He gave a verbal list of the articles he had for sale, or, rather, for barter. From that moment a most interesting dialogue began, in

which both parties displayed their natural shrewdness. The farmer did not mind parting with fat cattle at his own price, but objected to taking nothing but goods in payment, being fully aware that the hawker had it in his power to increase the price of every article the family might want to buy later on. The Boer desired to get some cash out of the transaction, and also hinted that his wife only wanted a few things, as they had lately been to the village. The hawker, who wanted the cattle badly, as he came a great distance to get hold of them, pleaded that he could not give such a high (imaginary) price for oxen, especially as the market in Cape Colony was overstocked, and prices, accordingly, very low.

After all this fencing, the hawker generally brought out his trump card. Knowing the weakness of his customers of desiring to buy articles they had never seen before, he would order his people to off-load the wagons and to place the merchandise on sails or mats on the ground. After that he invited the whole family to come and look at his wares, adding that he did not mind the little trouble of unpacking, even if they did not want to buy anything.

His goods generally consisted of the unsaleable articles from the Cape drapery shops, perhaps looking new, but out of fashion, and for that reason sent to auction sales to be sold to the highest bidder.

In the eyes of the wife and daughters, who had seldom seen much variety in the drapery line in their village, most things looked lovely and worth possessing, and a good many articles were put aside as being purchased. He encouraged them by saying that their aunt in the old Colony had bought, for her

five daughters and herself, a good deal of a certain stuff he proceeded to point out, because it was new and wore so well. That settled all doubt as to price, quality, and fashion, and the piece was bought. So it went on until the father thought it time to interfere. He did not like to see the account swell to such an extent that the balance between it and the price of the span of oxen he had sold to the trader, and which was to be paid in cash, should be reduced to a minimum. The foregoing is a fair specimen of what took place on most of the farms visited by the hawker. All parties went their ways rejoicing. The trader had got rid of a lot of his merchandise at an enormous profit, and the farmer got a high price for his cattle. The daughters of the family were much pleased with the new bonnets, dresses, and boots, in which they calculated to eclipse all other rivals at the next three-monthly gathering in their village.

Another subdivision of the genus hawker was the so-called gold hawker, who began to appear about 1861, when ostrich feathers came into demand and rose in price accordingly. He brought mostly rings, ear-pendants, brooches, and also watches. What the eye could see—that is to say, the surface—was certainly gold, but of the thinnest possible layer spread over baser metal. As he was very welcome to the female part of the population, he sold a good deal of his *golden* novelties. Wool fetched a high price that year, and as a war of extermination of the wild ostrich had set in, most of the farmers had a good supply of money.

I happened to visit a farm near Brandfort where such a trader had called the day before. Of course, the treasures bought on that occasion were exhibited

to me. Among the lot was a *golden* race-cup, of no use whatever to the purchasers. They had spent £110 cash on mere ornaments, and, when they found out later on that the cup was far from being gold, as the trader had made them believe, he had got beyond the border, pursuit after him being impossible.

In 1879, during the Zulu war, oxen became very dear, and money plentiful. Of course, the gold hawker came on the scene and had a good innings.

The hawker as described above belongs to history. At the present time, when there is a shop at almost every cross-road, he has lost his chance. Now and then, however, a heavily-loaded Scotch cart is seen travelling from farm to farm full of things in the drapery line. As this hawker buys his articles at large auction sales at most ridiculous prices, he can afford to sell them far cheaper than the shopman the family deals with, and soon manages to dispose of his load at a good profit. Sometimes the farmer makes a good bargain. But the war and the general poverty of the inhabitants following it has brought the chapter of hawkers of every description to an end.

GAME.

I have known the country between the Orange River and the Limpopo since 1855. To the present generation a description of the quantities of game to be seen at that time in those regions would appear exaggerated. A good many farmers are still living who complained to me in those days of their grass being consumed and their dams being emptied by such unwelcome invaders as wildebeest, blesbok, and springbok, the latter species' advancing so far into civilization as to visit the crops at night-time, compelling owners to be on guard and sacrifice their night's rest in order to save their harvest. Wire-fencing was unknown in those days, and when introduced, some twenty-five years later, had to be made very strong and high, to keep blesbok and springbok from breaking or leaping over it.

The extensive undulations of the then Orange Free State were mostly visited by the last-mentioned antelopes. In the eastern part quagga abounded. This kind of game being the favoured food of lions, these lords of the animal creation were never far away, and, as they did not object to a change of diet now and then, draught oxen and travellers horses were far from safe. Staying one night, in 1856, in the village of Harrismith, at the house of the late Magistrate, Mr. P. Cauvin, that gentleman laughed a good deal when he heard me ordering my driver to tie up the team to my travelling wagon, standing in the street, so as to secure them for the night. He told me that, as a rule, lions patrolled the township every

night, and that the oxen would only be safe behind the high stone walls of a kraal.

Where Vrede is situated at present I have counted 400 ostriches in one troop. In the wild state these birds are now very rare. They were mostly exterminated between 1860 and 1863. As prime feathers then fetched £60 per pound on the Port Elizabeth market, hunters provided themselves with good rifles and horses, and the fate of the birds was sealed.

The majority of elephants were driven over the Limpopo since 1865. Other game—like koodoo, eland, buffalo, rhinoceros, giraffe, and seacow (hippopotamus)—were rarely seen in large numbers. With the exception of the elephant, rhinoceros, and full-grown giraffe, every kind of game was eaten by the white man. The blacks consumed all kinds.

I have heard many yarns of hunters, especially about lion and buffalo shooting. I shall only repeat here what I remember being told by one of the Lydenburg elephant-hunters. A solitary white man went with two to three hundred kafirs on such an expedition, for the purpose of collecting ivory. All went on foot, as horses and draught oxen could not live in a country infested with the poisonous "tsetse," a kind of fly sure to be found in those regions where the elephant and the buffalo abound. The white hunter did not require so many followers to carry his guns, ammunition, provisions, water, etc., as well as the coveted ivory, and a limited number would have served his purpose. But the additional blacks volunteered to go with him for the sake of the good cheer they expected to enjoy for a few months, by the abundant supply of meat at their disposal on such a hunt. As soon as an elephant was killed the tusks were chopped out with the axe. Some hunters looked

upon the trunk as a dainty dish for their own consumption, but the remainder of the enormous animal was consumed by their followers. During the process of dissection the fight over favourite morsels of the animal sometimes caused kafir, as well as the elephant's, blood to colour the assegai. The feast did not come to an end until every particle of flesh had been consumed. It lasted through the night. There never was lack of fuel, as the regions where the big game was to be found were generally well-wooded. Sleep was not indulged in at a time when only gorging oneself was thought of, and no time lost at that. It would be interesting to know what the average amount consumed at such a feast per man would be. I have had, however, one chance of forming an idea of the power of accommodation by blacks in respect to their stomach. Travelling in the so-called lion-field, between the Drakensberg and Heidelberg, one of our people killed a wildebeest (gnu). Our caravan consisted of eleven wagons, and when we halted for the night, the victim of the chase was given to the eleven leaders, or "foreloopers," of the teams. In the morning nothing was left but skin and bones. As a male gnu at that time of the year (April) would not very well weigh less than 350 lbs. nett, each individual must have put himself outside of over thirty pounds of meat during the night.

When the first white man crossed the Orange River, the few blacks living in the country north of that stream possessed very indifferent weapons for killing game. The kafir had his assegai, and the Bushman his poisoned arrows, but both weapons could only act in case the victim was surprised and closely approached.

Bechuanas and other tribes north of the Vaal

River made use of slightly covered pits, dug in the wooded parts of the country where elephants, buffaloes, and other big game abounded, but by that mode of hunting a comparatively small amount of game was destroyed.

In the level country, between the large rivers, where the smaller kind of game generally accumulated during the winter months, when the water pools were dry in the more mountainous parts, a different way of killing game was followed. A row of square pits, from twelve to twenty in number, were dug in the ground, to a depth of ten feet, with perpendicular walls. Between every pit and the next the natural ground was left standing for two feet, so as to leave a wall. The first pit being filled, the frightened animals were driven by their pursuers over the corpses of their dying fellows, to fill the second and following pits, in the same way, and perish in their turn.

To drive the game to those pits, a regular *battue* was organised. Two long rows of mimosa branches were stuck in the ground, so as to form a funnel-shaped avenue. Hundreds of Korannas and Bushmen surrounded the droves of game from the early morning, and gradually pushed them to the wider part of the funnel. Once between the two rows of branches, nothing could save them from those fatal holes. One pit after the other got filled with dead, dying, or wounded animals. The living ones, if not soon suffocated, were dispatched, but the rear columns managed to gallop over the full pits, towards the open country and freedom.

And now the feast began. The smoke of the lighted fires were so many signals to the women and children at the distant kraals that they were expected, and not a soul refused to answer the call, as there was

a chance of exchanging a diet of corn, or perhaps wild roots, for an unlimited supply of meat. Sometimes the feast lasted a week. The choice pieces were first consumed, followed by the rest, including the entrails; but no part of the spoil was washed, as that was considered to be a waste of time. Besides, fire was supposed to purify everything. Wood ashes did service for salt. The marrow-bones formed the desert. The skins were stretched out on the ground to dry, and afterwards exchanged for brandy or tobacco.

After that everyone went back to the huts strengthened, pro tem., to face another period of semi-starvation, until the game, having forgotten the big slaughter, re-visited the same grazing grounds.

During this process a good many gnu, blesbok, springbok, and even ostrich were killed. But game began to disappear much faster in the sixties. Before that it was killed for food, but from that time, the value of skins having risen considerably, an indiscriminate slaughter set in, and great quantities of meat, meant for human food, fell to the share of vultures, jackals, and wolves. (What a fine opportunity there would have been for a bovril manufactory!) Skins became quite a medium of exchange, and, in some parts, hunting the principal occupation. During the year 1866 a firm in Kroonstad exported 152,000 skins of blesbok and wildebeest. Those of springbok were not in demand. It stands to reason that game disappeared gradually under such measures. Here and there owners of ground tried to enclose groups of antelope, but without much success. The camps were either on too small a scale for the game to roam about in, being used to the open veld, or drought and rinderpest, and frequently poachers,

reduced the numbers to a minimum, causing the owner to give up the enterprise. In the Orange River Colony wildebeest are rarely seen now-a-days, but blesbok, and especially springbok, are still to be met with in some parts.

During the late Orange Free State rule, laws were made against wanton destruction of game, as well as for its preservation; but proper persons for guarding against poachers, or other breakers of the law, were never appointed. Neither was any provision made in the yearly estimates for spending money on its observance, and prevent it from becoming a dead letter.

HOSPITALITY.

The good habit of hospitality, not to call it a virtue, was practised by most of the South Africans. Not every one is provided with a good travelling wagon, enabling him to face hail, rain, or cold, and one can only know from experience what a joyful sensation it creates to discover a column of smoke rising from a chimney, at a reasonable distance, when one travels on horseback or in an open buggy, and the clouds are preparing for a heavy downpour. In the olden days the father of the family considered it his duty to meet the traveller on his stoep and invite him to enter his dwelling, after having said that he expected him to off-saddle, or to unyoke or unharness his team. As a rule, the housemother's first question to her guest was whether he had had breakfast or dinner, as the case might be, and, if not, such a meal was soon provided. Payment was never asked for or expected, except when forage was supplied to the horses. The visitor, however, had to submit, at every house he entered, to be squeezed dry of every bit of news he had heard during his trip. Politics, scandal, market prices, state of crops—all were welcome and thankfully listened to.

After the circumstances of the land changed, through increase of traffic, as well as of population, a traveller ceased to be looked upon as a godsend in the news line, and in some parts was regarded as a nuisance, especially at farmhouses along the main roads, where the owners rarely happened to be with-

out guests. It was a relief for many farmers so situated when half-way houses began to spring up in their neighbourhood; but there always remained room for practising hospitality, as many travellers, compelled by bad weather or accident, or for the sake of economy, rather preferred the farmhouse to the hotel.

I remember the time when the State was young, and the inhabitants were few in number, and that some farmers looked upon hospitality as one of the commandments of the Bible. They practised it even on the natives, and made it a rule that a stray kafir, calling hungry at their gate, should be accommodated with a mess of boiled mealies, or a piece of mutton or game, and a drink of the ever-abundant milk. But these times have passed! Sometimes, travelling with my wife, I was ashamed to find out in the morning that the owner of the house and his spouse had given us their bedroom, and managed to shift in another part of the house.

Even at land cases, where three members of the Commission, their secretary, two law agents, and a host of witnesses found themselves sometimes at sundown under the roof of one of the litigants, the housewife would not allow any of them to go for food and shelter to far-off neighbours, but took a pride in accommodating the whole party, amongst whom, as a matter of course, must have been some who were unfavourable to her husband's case.

Sometimes, however, the feeling of hospitality was driven a little too far. In 1877 I was instructed by a large land-owner to survey a very extensive property. As he gave me to understand there was no house, I made it a condition that he should send his horse wagon to the said farm, for me to sleep in, to which he agreed. A farmer friend of mine, who was

present when I talked to the said owner, gave me the hint that the wagon which was to be my temporary sleeping compartment was known to be inhabited by what I shall call, for the sake of politeness, "insomnia insects." On arrival I discovered the said vehicle standing near a house made of wattle-and-daub, with a grass roof, inhabited by squatters. The occupants were, of course, expecting me, being told by the natives who brought the wagon what it was intended for.

Knowing what I did about the danger, I told the people that I was not going to sleep in the wagon, and would prefer sleeping in the open air, as I understood at once that there would be no question of a shake-down for me in the one-roomed hut, occupied by father, mother, and three daughters. Though they were to all appearance very poor, it was very clean and tidy, which made me accept their invitation to supper. I was also informed that their own wagon was expected every minute to return from town, and that I was quite welcome to sleep in it. I accepted with thanks, and when the wagon came a clean-looking bed was soon put ready on a wooden stretcher, fastened half-way up the sides, leaving an open space of a couple of feet under as well as above the said stretcher. It looked very inviting when the old man, at the proper time, courteously brought me to my sleeping-place, leaving me his lantern. I omitted to state that the owner of the farm had sent his son, a young man of about twenty years of age, to point out the boundaries. He was to be my bed-fellow, but there was plenty of room, the wagon being a large one. While lying on the bed, waiting for my companion, and enjoying the last smoke before closing my eyes, I caught the sound of an accordion, and, peeping out

through the front flap, became aware of the young man and the three maidens enjoying a dance in front of the hut. I consoled myself with lighting my pipe again; after a while, hearing a noise at the back of the wagon, I said, "Who's there?" to which a female voice answered: "It is I, coming to sleep in the wagon." Now, to say the least of it, that was startling, if not interesting, news; but my astonishment was not a little increased when I heard another female voice say, "I think, Nelly, it is high time for *us* to come in, too!" I do not remember whether I made any remarks, but we must have got up a kind of conversation, for they told me that the wagon was their regular bedroom, and they lost no time in making themselves comfortable in those lower regions on the bottom plank of the wagon, two feet below yours truly. I could not help thinking a good deal about a certain Mrs. Grundy. I had no means of ascertaining what amount of blushing was taking place underneath, though I became aware of a suppressed giggle now and then, as was only natural, considering the unique and most ridiculous *ensemble*. I know that Joseph or St. Anthony are quoted as precedents in such cases; but the former simply took to his heels, sacrificing part of his pyjamas; and the latter must have been made of cast-iron to be able to face the music. Besides, I was all the time expecting my bed-fellow, whose arrival would have saved at least sixty per cent. of the decorum. However, after burning tobacco *ad infinitum*, I must have fallen into a sound sleep, and I did not awake until after sunrise. The young man had not slept on the bed, and, taking a peep at the lower regions, I found they had been evacuated.

At breakfast not a word *was* said about a subject

which I at least thought remarkable enough never to forget, but I had the satisfaction of learning from the young fellow who deserted me in my time of peril that he, having gone into the dangerous horse wagon for a shake-down, had never enjoyed a wink, as he had to fight the army of invaders during the whole night. I managed to find accommodation at a near farmhouse for the other nights I was busy with the survey.

ON A FREE STATE FARM.

I am a European by birth, and have visited several of the countries of Europe. I have read of all the other countries, and have come to the conclusion that nothing can surpass the climate of the late Free State during the month of April. The summer heat has passed away, the army of flies has dwindled down to a few representatives; mosquitoes begin to suffer from cold and go to winter quarters. Cattle, sheep, and game are in their prime, and milk and butter in plenty everywhere. The mud holes in the roads, caused by the summer rains, have for the most part dried up, and the dust still too moist to form clouds. Rivers are generally passable, and in the clear air one breathes just a small suspicion of ozone. The grass is everywhere at its best, and most nutritious, so that even horses used to stable fare condescend to fill themselves with it. In the sixties I was invited by one of my Boer friends to come and spend a part of the said month, for the purpose of hunting and fishing. His was a very large property, on both sides of a river, partly covered with mimosa bush. Troops of game were generally visible from the house. At that period very little ploughing was indulged in by the inhabitants. As far as wheat-growing goes, it was limited to their own household consumption. They grew forage to a certain extent, to supply the market of the nearest village. Very few built decent stables. My host put his favourite riding-horse under a kind of loft, where it was partly sheltered from the

inclemency of the weather. He covered it up when severe frost set in with an old blanket, and allowed it a few pounds of mealies or millet, or half a bucket of bran, forage being considered too expensive. The other horses in his possession were supposed to rough it in the open veld, and consequently were in a very poor condition at the end of the winter. However, they were not entirely exempt from work, having frequently to carry a couple of carcasses of wildebeest or buck from the hunting field to the homestead. But few draught horses were kept, as all the ploughing and other farm work was done by oxen and Cape carts; horse wagons were very rarely used at that time. The latter began to be introduced in 1863, and only became general after the conclusion of the Basuto war (1868).

My host's principal occupation was rearing sheep. I have heard Europeans describe the life of a sheep-farmer as one of the easiest or laziest in existence; it is far otherwise. A flock-master has continually to watch his sheep. As they rarely go in one single troop, orders are given in the morning where each herd has to go, and, as natives are of a social turn of mind, there was always the danger that, for the sake of a chat or a smoke, the herds would bring their flocks too near each other or to that of a neighbour. In the latter case there was the trouble of catching them again, a process of long duration, and very disturbing to the animals. To prevent these calamities the farmer had to be in the saddle from morning till sundown. A watch had also to be kept on the native herds and their friends, to see that they did not devour a particularly fat member of the flock by way of afternoon tea; or lose a good few of the number through their straying. Many farmers had found out

that such straying was not always caused by negligence, but often premeditated, and cleverly planned with other natives. As it was out of the question to make the culprit pay for the loss out of his wages, the only remedy was to give him a sound thrashing when the theft was found out on counting the sheep next day, as was sure to take place on every well-regulated farm. That treatment was perhaps not according to law, but undoubtedly just, and the native knew it to be so.

At the time of my visit (1863) the wanton destruction of game for the sake of the skins had not begun; but it was quite different with ostriches. Their fate was sealed in the said year, as there was a great demand for their feathers at the time. A good male bird meant a profit of between ten and fifteen pounds, so that hunters bought swift horses, with sufficient staying power to follow their quarry for miles upon miles over the undulating country, where the birds were generally to be found.

As April happened to be the month of half-yearly shearing of the sheep, I saw them prepared to go through the process of washing. It was, of course, not so thorough in the way of cleaning the wool as was done afterwards in wool-washing establishments, which made their appearance some fifteen years later in this country; but the considerable difference in price between so-called washed wool and the uncleared shearings from the skin of the sheep, full of dust and mud, induced the farmers to try whether it paid or otherwise to let their flocks swim through a river or a seacow hole two or three times, to get rid of the said dust and mud. During my stay at the farm I was present at the forced immersion of 1,600 sheep. As these animals are not very fond of bathing, a good

many hands had to be employed to make them enter the water. The custom was to put a goat at the head of the procession, as such an animal rather enjoys the water, and the sheep were supposed to follow his lead, which most of them generally did. But there were always backsliders, and in order to make them follow the others, the farmer's sons and as many natives as could be collected caught and pushed the said backsliders "nolens volens" into the stream, swimming through three or four times with them. After that the flock was kept on clean grass-land for a few days, until the wool got dry. If the animals did not look sufficiently clean, the bathing process was repeated, and, after a further period of drying, the shearing commenced.

A kind of shed or a large wagon-house was generally arranged for the said shearing. As that employment generally paid well there were always natives to be found who were only too glad to do it. At shearing time a good many gangs of them went through the country to offer their services. They were paid at the rate of one penny for every sheep sheared. The Bastards and Korannas were preferred for that work, as they had been accustomed to shearing for generations, and some of them could manage to clip a hundred sheep in one day. The kafirs, as a rule, could not finish more than thirty or forty, besides mutilating the animals most atrociously during the process. Sometimes poor white men, who happened to be well up to that trade, and not too proud to work in the company of coloured people, offered to take a hand, as there was a chance of earning about eight or nine shillings a day and good food, which was considered very good pay in those days. They were all acquainted with the Griqualand story of a white man

and a Bastard having challenged each other to a trial as to who could shear the largest number in a day, and that the conqueror had finished one hundred and twenty without mutilating one sheep. Each new hand accordingly tried to beat that record.

The shearing was generally performed at the end of March or the beginning of April, so that the wool had time to grow a little on the sheep's back before the cold weather set in. The clipped animals were generally washed immediately after the performance with extract of tobacco, that being considered a preventive against scab. At that period there was no scab law, neither were patent medicines for that disease known or obtainable. These improvements came more than a decade later.

Goats were not kept to any great extent, and were rarely met with in the eastern districts, where nature provided nothing but grass. Towards the west more nutritious food was available for these animals, in the shape of small bushes and herbs, and consequently large flocks were kept by the farmers who bought the properties of Griquas, after that tribe had shifted over the Drakensberg to occupy the country south of the Umzimkulu. With the rage for wool, sheep became universal, goats were neglected, and rarely seen in herds.

My host frequently hunted. In the first place, meat was wanted at three meals a day as a diet for white and black. When properly cooked, game is wholesome food and some housewives managed to make very palatable dishes of it. In the second place, skins had risen in price since 1863, and had, at the time I write of, a marketable value of 1s. 6d. for a wildebeest, and 2s. for a blesbok skin, and, as an average day's hunt produced from ten to twelve skins, business was com-

bined with pleasure. The day after my arrival we started for the hunting-field. After an early breakfast, we mounted, mustering four white men and three natives, leading two extra pack-horses to bring the carcasses home. Only the whites carried guns. I happened to have one of the then recently imported Terry breech-loaders, an arm of precision better than the guns of my companions, which were muzzle-loaders, carrying balls of twelve to the pound. But the latter had more driving power than mine, and caused larger wounds. We met large troops of game, but my host, who was, of course, the leader of the expedition, did not consider locality and wind in our favour—secrets of the hunt which I do not pretend to be able to explain. Soon after, however, we came upon a troop of gnus, and I was politely invited to fire the first shot. Of course, my friends were of opinion that my new-fangled gun would either burst or prove harmless to my quarry. I put all my chances on one animal, and boldly announced that I intended to hit the leader of the troop. I had been told long ago that aiming hap-hazardly at a troop of such large antelopes was a very bad plan, and avoided by hunters, for the reason that, even if you hit any, the immense impetus of the troop carries a wounded beast with it to a great distance (unless the missile enters the brain). I was lucky enough to hit the bull I had indicated, and, as we discovered later on, the ball had entered above the hip. My friends aimed at the three last of the troop. Two came down on their knees, but were up again at once, and joined the troop. Now the moment came to see the Boer in his glory as a marksman and horseman. Of course, we had all dismounted, for firing from the saddle is only practised in South Africa when hunting the eland, or

when a posse of neighbours club together for destroying the wild dogs (kind of hyena) or wolves, when these become too large in number for the safety of the flocks. Loading their guns and jumping in the saddle took only a few seconds, and I saw them tearing away after the wounded animals at a tremendous pace. Unaccustomed to such proceedings, I lagged behind, but had the satisfaction of coming in at the death of the first victim, and was present at the last moments of the two others. The three wounded animals were overtaken, as loss of blood compelled them to go much slower, and they were soon out of their misery by a ball being planted in a vital part. Our sable followers soon beheaded and disembowelled them; two horses were loaded with the spoil and sent home, led by a native. We kept at it for the better part of the day, without a bite or drink, and turned homewards at about 3 a.m. My next performance was wounding a blesbok, high up in the leg. He was soon out of his misery. I could not help considering I had done very well for a tenderfoot. They did not tell me so; but I found that the breech-loader had risen in their estimation, as I received an offer of three bullocks for it, which, as I had begun to get used to it, I declined with thanks. Our whole bag for the day came to seven wildebeest and three blesbok—value of skins for my host 37s. 6d. at the next shop. That day we passed, when coming home, a very large flock of tame geese, near a small lake. They were herded by a young kafir. I was told they belonged to my hostess, and that their number reached three hundred. Alluding to them afterwards, she told me that she thought as much of her venture as her husband did of his sheep, as she could pluck them every six weeks, eight geese producing one pound of feathers.

That explained to me why there were such delicious beds to be found in most of the Boer houses. I was also informed afterwards that whatever number of children might be in a family, every one of them was provided with a good-sized feather bed at the time of their marriage, including four pillows, in most cases forthcoming from the local flock of geese.

About sundown that day we refreshed ourselves with a dip in the river, except the old man. The youngsters were in the habit of going into the water almost daily, but the older generation enjoyed that luxury very sparingly. Whether it was only so on this particular farm, or whether it was a general custom, I do not know, but Doctor Krause, sen., who lived for many years in Bloemfontein, used to tell the following story:—"A farmer came to me one day for advice about the state of his wife's health. After telling me the symptoms I gave him some medicine, with due directions how to use it. I also added that she should take a tepid bath occasionally, to which my client answered: 'Look here, doctor, she will swallow anything you think fit to prescribe, but as for a bath, I want you to know that during the forty-three years we have been married my wife has never indulged in such a luxury, and she is now too old to begin.'"

A little before supper a kafir girl made her appearance with a wooden basin of lukewarm water, and began to wash the old man's feet; next performing on my feet as well. That custom was repeated every evening, and, though I thought it very quaint, and certainly not very stylish, I must admit that it is undoubtedly a clean and healthy habit. It did not take long either, as none of the company, myself ex-

cepted, wore socks or stockings, such an extravagance being only indulged in when going to church.

The old lady offered us, by way of an appetiser, a glass of brandy, in which cloves, cinnamon, and buchu had been steeped for a long time and which was very palatable. She must have considered it a rare favour, for the offer was not repeated during my stay. Supper was good and plentiful, but as the table was only the size of a card-table, the younger folks had to wait until we had finished. There certainly were not many courses, but as the farmer belonged to the very few who had made a contrivance for grinding his own corn into meal by water power, generated by a kind of turbine, we had plenty of bread of so superior a description that a certain queen we all know of might have relished it with the honey in her parlour. Of course, it was baked on the premises. Furniture was not much in evidence. Father and mother each enjoyed a kind of armchair, made of stinkwood, which, judging by the shape and the colour, seemed as if it had been in use for quite a century. The owner told me they had been brought as heirlooms at the time of the great Trek. The rest of the family, as well as the visitors, found seats on front and hind boxes of the ox-wagon, being moved from the wall to the table for every meal the family sat down to. In this particular house there was a piece of furniture which I will honour by the name of sofa, constructed by my host from local wood, the seat made of a network of small reims cut from an ox-hide. It, too, was moved to the table at meal times, and did service in an emergency as a single bedstead. Very few houses had panes of glass in their small windows, the wind being kept out by a piece of calico nailed over the opening, so that there was rarely

sufficient light in the compartment, which served as dining, sitting, and drawing room. Sufficient air was provided, in case the front door had to be closed, through the immense fireplace, under the chimney, taking up the whole of one side of the room, and where the scantily-dressed native servants of house and farm were congregated after sunset.

Well, to say the least of it, the whole *entourage* was very patriarchal; but one could not expect even well-to-do Boers early in the sixties to spend much in house-building, seeing that kafir wars or hostile invasions might compel them to go into lager, with all their movable property, at a moment's notice, with the chance of finding their homestead on their return reduced to a heap of ashes. Their houses, such as they were, offered most welcome shelter to any traveller in a country totally devoid of hotels or half-way houses, who, moreover, was sure of being hospitably received, enjoying plenty of nourishing food, and a good sleep on one of their luxurious feather beds, especially when the hostess happened to be continually on the warpath against the myriads of insects to be found in most houses. It required much perseverance in a housemother to keep such an enemy down, as insect-powder and other materials were unknown at that period, and a constant application of hot water from roof to floor and airing of the furniture formed her only means of defence.

As there were no newspapers in those days, a sensible visitor was doubly welcome to the family. I mean by the word "sensible" a man that could talk of many subjects of local and general interest, avoiding new-fangled topics which would have been Hebrew to his hearers, and taking care not to wound their prejudices and ideas, to which they had certainly

a right to be partial, apart from the fact that they were the hosts. I am afraid many travellers lost sight of that part of their duty, and imagined that by sneers and remarks, and telling how much better things were managed in their own country, they would within a few hours bring their hearers into a higher state of civilization, but thereby only left the impression behind them that they were cads and fools. Avoiding discussing what was to them Latin and Sanscrit, I generally managed to be of some benefit to the people I visited, and certainly to my present company, and in return I must say I got a large amount of information about the unwritten history of the country from my host, one of those who had taken part in the great Trek in 1836-37, and had fought in the wars with Mosilikatze and Dingaan. Amongst a hundred other things worth recording (were my space not limited), I may mention the description he gave me of the part he took in the final battle between the Boers and the Zulus at Blood River, late in the thirties. His own words ran as follows:—"Between our own lager and the enemy ran the Blood River. When the host of Zulus came in sight I put a belt round my waist, containing 240 balls of twelve to the pound. As I had only to ride a couple of hundred yards, the twenty pounds of lead hanging about my body told neither on myself nor my horse. Meeting the enemy on the banks, we saw them enter the water, and began shooting them down. As they were only a few yards from us, every shot told, but the brave fellows, only minding the order of their king to destroy our lager and kill every living thing it contained, did not think of stopping in their mad rush. I soon came to the end of my ammunition, and my last shots consisted of nothing but powder

and a plug—quite sufficient to kill a man. I mounted my horse, to fetch more powder and some buckshot at the near wagon-lager. My comrades, of course, had not been idle during my absence, and the water below the heap of dead native bodies had turned red, this being the reason why, ever since, the river has been known as Blood River. The enemy, however, made a final rush, and my buckshot came in very handy. Though we were only three hundred in number, our incessant firing broke the spirit of the enemy, and when the whole affair was over, we counted three thousand dead bodies in the water and on the banks, exclusive of those carried away by the stream. In our evening service in the lager we did not forget to praise the Lord for delivering us from the great danger of falling into the hands of a merciless foe; for if the enemy had not retreated when he did, we would have become helpless, as our guns had become so hot from incessant firing that we could hardly hold them in our hands, and to give them time to cool was entirely out of the question.”

My host was certainly of an enterprising turn of mind in a small way. He showed me how he did his own tanning to provide shoe-leather for his family. It caused him but little outlay. He got the skins from the game he killed in the hunting field, the bark for tanning from certain trees within easy reach, and the process was performed on one or more quagga skins, suspended on four poles fixed in the ground. Sometimes a few skins of domestic goats or of calves were added to the collection, as, when tanned, they formed good material for women's or children's shoes. The tanning process rarely took more than from four to six weeks. He told me that tanned skins of that kind had a very

good marketable value, as even then there were districts where game was very scarce, and, consequently, skins. Sole leather was procured from ox-hides in the same way. I could not help asking my friend why he never thought of tanning on a larger scale, seeing it was so profitable; but he objected to the outlay a larger venture would have involved. However, he must have thought better of it, for about eighteen months later I met him on the high road with a lot of sheep, coming from the Cape Colony. He told me that he had acted on my suggestion, had caused a water-tight tank to be built on his ground, and had managed to tan four hundred and thirty blesbok and goat skins, which he had exchanged south of the Orange River for a sheep a piece.

As I have stated above, the housemother also kept her eyes open where a possible profit could be made. She showed me four full bags of dried fruit of her own curing. Peach and apricot trees were in abundance on the farm, and if the fruit escaped an untimely frost in the spring, and hail in the summer, the trees would bear so abundantly that the swine on the farm grew fat on the quantity of the fruit that fell on the ground. When the time for drying had arrived mother and daughters proceeded to the orchard, started peeling, and kept at that during the whole day. For the process of drying, large portable frames of reed were prepared, on which the peeled fruit was exposed to the sun's rays, being placed under shelter during the night. In later years, when corrugated iron was being used for flat roofs, housewives availed themselves of these clean surfaces for the drying, but frequently all available hands had to be called to gather in

the fruit, if the clouds threatened rain. As peeled dried peaches fetched ninepence per pound, and apricots one shilling, it was considered worth the trouble.

One day the youngsters talked me over to go fishing, but I soon had enough of it. The only fish worth angling for in Free State rivers is the yellow-fish, which is not found everywhere; it is principally met with in large streams with clear water. Eel are never found in rivers running westwards (the same applies to crocodiles); another fish promising sport is the barbel. Few Boers eat barbel as there exists a prejudice against it. Some people have it that the barbel is related to the puff-adder, and I must say its appearance about the head is far from inviting. However, when pickled in vinegar it makes a palatable dish. They are said to live to a great age, but I was never told how people got that idea. Many farmers have told me that they had caught specimens of such a size that their heads being put over the saddle the tail touched the ground. After being present at the weighing of one of these ugly creatures, caught in Vet River, which turned the scale at seventy-three pounds, I have no hesitation about believing the foregoing statement.

Evening prayers were always said after supper. The father of the house read them. A chapter of the Bible was also read, and a psalm or hymn sung. At most farms the service was also performed in the morning, but at such an early hour that I never was present, though the sun, as a rule, rarely found me a-bed. In winter and summer it was started in candle-light. On Sundays the home worship was considerably prolonged, as a printed sermon was

read by the head of the family. Now-a-days everyone can obtain well-written sermons, fit for Protestants, to which denomination the Boers all belonged. But the sermons available in the days I am writing of were of no benefit whatever to readers or listeners, for they were written in the Dutch of the 16th and 17th centuries, full of Latin quotations and discussions about the merits or otherwise of different sections of the Protestant Church—in fact, mostly hair-splittings, and not of the slightest edification to the hearers. The youngsters generally fell asleep, and their elders had to hide their own yawnings. I remember a Sunday on a farm in the Transvaal, where I was invited to read such a sermon to an auditory of perhaps twenty old and young people. It did not take one long to discover that the sermon I was asked to read belonged to the class I have described, and it struck me that it would be a real charity to shorten the torture of all concerned by turning over two pages at a time.

After the sermon, hymns and psalms were sung. Every member of the company was courteously invited to propose one—even children of the age of twelve and upwards were supposed to do so. Luckily, it was limited to one verse from each proposed hymn. Quite sufficient, though, to turn the whole company hoarse until dinner.

And the good people were under the impression that going through the above forms meant religion!

Another idea of these times was that the very young should be kept as quiet as possible on the Sabbath. No games, no laughing, no frolicking, and no walking in the open. I should think that the straight-lacedness their parents insisted on brought about on the youthful minds the impression

that there were far too many Sundays in a year. The older people, however, after having gone through those two hours of worship, thought themselves entitled to mundane enjoyments. One minute after the hymn-books had disappeared from the table, pipes were produced (mine as well, oh! reader), and you could have heard such questions put as: "How are your sheep, Uncle John?" or, "Have you had rain this week, Cousin Philip?" and, "Is it true that wool has come down in price?" I am far, however, from condemning or trying to ridicule those people. Do not the majority of us Europeans go to our club after having gone to listen to a popular preacher, and do not our better halves on their way home discuss, not the sermon, but the lovely blouses and bonnets of their intimate friends? In writing down the above remarks I merely intend to prove that human nature is much the same all over the world, and always will be so to the end.

As a rule, on the Sunday the housewife provided a better dinner than she did on week days. Fowls or turkeys, fattened up in coops for a long time, formed the "*pièces de resistance*," instead of the usual game or mutton. African cooks, I am sorry to say, never could produce a good soup. Their nearest approach to it was a French *potage* in which your spoon could have been planted without toppling over. But the said fowls were splendid eating—never roasted, but stewed. Vegetables were rarely offered, except green peas in season, and then spoiled by the addition of sugar. Patatas (a kind of sweet potato) were much in favour, and on grand occasions, dumplings or rice mixed with curry-powder, were sent in as *hors-d'œuvres*.

After dinner, the Sabbath being understood to be a day of rest, we all prepared for forty winks. But, as there was no control, I plead guilty to going beyond the number, sometimes to 45, if not more.

After dinner there was endless smoking and coffee-drinking, time being killed by talking about all subjects; but, out of respect for the Sabbath, mammon was not directly discussed, though hints might have been passed as to what should take place on the morrow. The idea of celebrating the Sabbath by moving about as little as possible was (at that time) universal. Travellers stopped in those days at a convenient spot, but managed to make up for lost time by a forced march on the Saturday evening, and by inspanning their cattle for a pull of many miles the moment the sun went down on the Sunday; so that, after all, the draught animals did not gain much by that pious arrangement. I often heard the remark that the game seemed to have some idea of the day of rest, as it was observed they were less shy and approached a wagon much nearer, knowing from experience that they were tabooed. I have observed it myself frequently, but put the cause down to the general quietness of the bipeds on the said day, as smoking, eating, and sleeping do not make much noise.

I have already remarked that newspapers were not known; still it is remarkable that local gossip spread about as if Marconi lived in the country. It can be partly explained if one takes into consideration that every wagon and every horseman was sure to call at every farmhouse on the road, and that he, out of gratitude for a meal or a cup of coffee, delivered himself of all the news he was possessed of. No two travellers or party of travellers ever passed

each other on the road without exchanging news. I had frequently to confess that, with all my book-learning and classical education, there were now and then other things worth taking notice of; that there is a mind's-eye, but that you might as well employ your natural eyes to take in immediate as well as other surroundings. I added experience to my philosophy when I occasionally, on my many peregrinations, met a farmer on horseback looking for cattle that had strayed. He sometimes asked me whether I had passed a lot of cattle going in the direction I had come from, and how they looked—which meant a precise description of their colour and number. Now, I might have seen cattle to the right and left of the road, but they might have worn spectacles for all I knew, and I would not have taken notice of it. Luckily, I always travelled with a native boy, who could tell my friend that he had seen such a troop, consisting of a black bull with two white feet, and six others, white-bellied ones, and one of the troop having only one horn; that they appeared to be in good condition, and so on. With a look of contempt on the tender-foot he had met, he raced away after his property and left me, very likely deploring that there still existed such ignorant people in the 19th century.

Sometimes ghost stories formed the subject of conversation, and, as in most other countries, were frequently discussed by the young people. A very favourite one in every family ran as follows:—“When my grandfather came back from Capetown to Stellenbosch, after having disposed of his farm produce on the market at the first-mentioned place, he walked along the road a short distance in front of his team, after sundown. Seeing a small fire a

little ahead, he filled his pipe, intending to light it at the said fire (matches not being known in those days). On arrival, he found a lot of natives sitting round it, and applied for a light. Nobody obliging him, or taking the least notice of his request, he lost his temper, and gave one of the company a small kick in the ribs. He immediately received a slap in the face, natives and fire disappeared as if by magic, and he kept the mark of the fingers on his face to the day of his death." That was held to be sufficient proof for all young and many older people that uncanny things existed. A number of years later, stopping on a farm, I was informed that a few days previous a dragon, with a long tail, had been seen in the neighbourhood. Of course, opinions differed a good deal as to what it could be, but that it portended evil was generally believed. When enjoying a smoke on the verandah in the afternoon with my host, we saw a horseman coming towards us at a break-neck speed. He brought a report that the dragon had passed the adjoining farm in a direction which made him think that it would come in sight of where we were sitting. As, according to my idea, that terrible dragon was nothing else but a kite, escaped from the hands of boys, I thought it would be a fine opportunity of curing the people of their superstition if I could get hold of it, and therefore asked my old friend to lend me a shot-gun. He went to his room and brought it, but when it was handed to me his wife asked what I wanted it for. My prompt reply was: "To kill the dragon!" She actually turned livid, and said: "Are you not aware that this dragon is not a good thing?" thereby implying that it might be anything from a hobgoblin to the Prince of Darkness himself.

I tried to reason with her by saying that whatever it might be, it certainly belonged to the class of undesirables, and the sooner it was sent to "kingdom come" the better. However, as she almost became hysterical, and as I was her guest, I generously gave up my chance of becoming a modern St. George, and did not load the fowling-piece. As I knew sufficient history to have caught the proverb: "Put not your trust in princes," I never expected that the individual in question would do me a good turn for saving his life; at all events, I am sorry to say he never called. Ingratitude is the way of the world.

According to the Puritanical ideas of religion amongst the Boers, very few parents allowed their children to take part in a dance, and, though dancing was not classified with the seven capital sins, it was considered as very bad and to be avoided. However, it was indulged in here and there on the sly, the partakers living for a long time afterwards in fear and trembling lest a bolt from the blue should fall on them, in the shape of an exhortation from the parson or the elders of the Church. Still, it was innocent enough, and very seldom of long duration. The young girls and women who took part in dancing had no cause to be in a fever during the preceding week as to their dresses, for they went in their daily attire, and were not inclined to expose part of their graces, as is supposed to be the right thing in civilized Europe. As none of the houses were provided with ballrooms, the wagon-house was generally prepared for the amusement. Tallow candles were fixed somehow to the walls, and a Hottentot fiddler engaged to represent the band. Wooden floors were very rare in those

days, and certainly not to be found in wagon-houses, so that the dust created by the dancers often gave rise to the idea of shifting into the open air, weather permitting. One great reason for not keeping late hours was that the person representing the band, who was, according to custom, entitled to a dose of medicine at least every hour, collapsed, and disappeared with his fiddle before midnight. It was tacitly understood that the news of such dissipation should be bruited about as little as possible, for fear of the spiritual censor, as youngsters who wanted to join the Church were occasionally prohibited from doing so when it became known that they had been at such parties.

My host did not patronise hawkers and avoided as much as possible buying at local shops. For his household necessities he went once a year to Pietermaritzburg or Ladysmith, in Natal. As Free State cattle were subject to bush-sickness as soon as they crossed the Drakensberg, the trip was always performed in a hurry, so that man and beast had little rest on the road. Frequently forty miles were travelled within twenty-four hours, going night and day, which is very severe on oxen; but after reaching home they were often allowed a year's rest, i.e., until the next season. Well-to-do farmers were possessed of hundreds of these animals before rinderpest and redwater became known, so that there were sufficient teams for all the other farm work. As few farmers had money to spend on their purchases, wool or other produce was taken when bartering. In case they wanted articles out of the usual way, a couple of tubs of butter or a few oxen were taken to pay for them; but the yearly necessities for the family did not form a long list. A bag of coffee

beans, some yards of coloured print for the wife and daughters, a quantity of moleskin for male attire, a limited stock of medicine, powder and lead, and a new hat for the leader of the expedition, were generally considered to be sufficient for the wants of the family for the next twelve months. The native servants were not forgotten. If there happened to be a Hottentot amongst them he was sure to be made happy with a violin (not necessarily a Stradivarius), and the kafirs were presented with strings of beads. Sight-seeing in the civilized town was never indulged in, and luxuries never bought. As a rule, the business was ended in the shortest possible time, in order to start on the return trip—so much so that the work of off-loading the produce and the placing of the purchased articles in the wagon was performed whilst the oxen were still in the yoke. As these trips were generally made in autumn, there was little chance of being detained by full rivers. People travelling during the summer were often terribly disappointed by coming to a stream with the water up to the banks. There were no bridges at that period in the “Garden” Colony, so that people are known to have passed three months on the banks of the Tugela, waiting to cross, being disappointed by rain continuing to fall incessantly. Such a state of affairs was really a calamity, as the few provisions on board, intended for a comparatively short trip, were soon exhausted, and in the total absence of funds, the only way to avoid starvation for whites and blacks was to kill one or more oxen. I have heard of instances when, driven by necessity, the team was so reduced in number that the traveller could not think of proceeding, even after the river had become fordable,

and was obliged to send a native to his distant farm for a fresh one. Luckily, these times have passed, as there are now bridges over most rivers.

Twenty-Five Years Later.

The old man I have referred to, as well as his wife, died before 1870, and consequently never saw the changes that came over land and people after the discovery of diamonds. I had always kept up a kind of acquaintance with the younger members of the family, and paid them a lengthy visit in 1888. Many things had altered since the death of the old people. The cattle and money of the parents had been divided amongst the heirs, and the farms (for the old man had been the owner of two) had been willed away to the two sons at a ridiculously low price, which they had to pay to the estate, and by which arrangement they also got back part of the purchase price of the said farms. That way of disposing of their worldly goods, by which the sons profit far more than the daughters, seems to be almost a rule with many African parents, though there are exceptions to it. I could name parents who owned so much land that they could give each of their children a farm during their own lifetime; but even then the sons were sure to get hold of the most valuable. Approaching that subject once, as delicately as possible, in general terms, during a confidential talk with an old farmer, he remarked: "I know my sons, but I have yet to learn of what stuff my sons-in-law are made."

The eldest son Peter, now unavoidably called "Old Peter," though still on the sunny side of forty-five, was the father of a hopeful juvenile

Peter; he had gradually got rid of all the patriarchal furniture, which had been good enough for his parents. More rooms had been added; the thatched roof had made way for corrugated iron; in one corner a large seraphina stood, on which hymns and psalms were played. There was a parlour, with a decent table in the middle, on which were to be seen a musical box and a few books, which were sometimes taken in hand, but never read. Old Sabina of former days, clad in skins, had disappeared, and a well-dressed half-caste girl had taken her place. The stoep had been changed into a verandah. The younger children were under the care of a Colonial governess, and I heard plans discussed about buying a piano.

Much had changed outside as well. Peter did not possess as many cattle and sheep as his late father had done, but he had provided himself with a better quality, and, as soap-boiling, tanning, shoe-making, and reim-preparing had been abandoned, as belonging to former ages, he had more time on hand to devote to his flocks, and also to his very extensive plantations, which had become very remunerative since the Johannesburg market had sprung up. He had built a stable; kept very good horses and a splendid Cape cart—all articles which his late father had done without; but these old people did not know what they were about. His farm was mortgaged for £600.

A few years ago an institution had made its appearance in the Free State called “Young Men’s Association.” Had that been properly managed, it might have turned out a blessing for the people. The experiments in agriculture and cattle-breeding, in both of which pursuits there was vast room for

improvement, could have been collected and considered. But from the beginning the most abstract and puerile topics were discussed, interlarded with religious hair-splitting. And soon politics became the most favourite subject at those meetings of young as well as old people, who had not the slightest knowledge of the doings and aspirations of other nations, and still less of the history of their past or the present time. A leading Bloemfontein paper encouraged them by publishing their unprofitable discussions under the name of "debate," instead of giving them the charitable advice to limit their discussions to subjects of which they had at least some knowledge.

My friend Peter was very much taken up with these meetings, and told me that they were patronised by his fellow-burghers to keep up a spirit of nationality, and to imprint on the minds of the rising generation that Africa should belong to the Afrikaners. He favoured me with a long and very incorrect history of the war of independence of the United States in the "nineteenth" century. Knowing very well that it would not have been of the least use to try and correct his statements about history, I simply put two questions, in the hope that they might set him thinking:—(1) Whether he did not admit that the people of the Free State were sufficiently happy and prosperous to leave well alone? and (2) Whether he could possibly enlighten me on what had been the resources of the North American people in numbers, wealth, allies, etc., when they started on their enterprise? In his reply to my remarks, I, for the first time, heard mentioned the infatuation which caused so much mischief in later years, namely: that all the other nations were ready

to assist the Boers whenever it came to pass that the latter should take up arms to free South Africa from English supremacy. I was too polite to tell my host that seven out of every ten Europeans did not know of the existence of the two Republics, and cared less about them. The said absurd idea had been brought into circulation by a Hollander in Pretoria, and was continually fanned by newspapers and people who certainly knew that they were not stating the truth. By the time the Boers found out that they had been misled, the originator of the idea was over the sea and safe; but that occurred many years after my visit to the farm.

Peter considered himself fit to discuss every subject under the sun, considering that he had been a dozen times in his younger days to the diamond-fields to sell produce, had been a twelvemonth at the Grey College in Bloemfontein, took in one or two South African newspapers, and regularly attended the aforesaid debates. The Free State Government of that time caused a paper to be circulated gratis to every farm containing a translation of a monthly report about agriculture and cattle-breeding, in which all the improvements in the former subject and all the diseases and the proposed remedies concerning the latter were discussed; but Peter told me that he never read that paper, as he was a born farmer and knew all about it. Happy man! I must say, however, that many of his compatriots differed from him, and tried the experiments recommended in the said paper. However much I avoided political controversies with a man so prejudiced and possessed of so little information, I was compelled one night to listen to a detailed account of what Peter called the principal

grievances of the Boers against the English Government. As was to be expected, they were:—(1) The seizure of Natal. (2) The interference of the English Government when the Boers were about to annex the Lesuto. (3) The seizure of the diamond-fields. The two first subjects had been threshed out by a former generation within my hearing *ad nauseam*, but the third took place when Peter was a full-grown man. I, therefore, limited my remarks to asking him whether he did not acknowledge that Natal and Basutoland would have proved to be untenable, and hence undesirable, as territories for the Republican farmers? He professed to agree with me, as many of his countrymen had before done, but remarked that, for all that, these were unjust acts. About the third complaint he had, however, a good deal to advance. I tried the same arguments as before, and strove to make him see that, according to the fitness of things, the Orange Free State, with a white population of less than two inhabitants to the square mile, and an empty exchequer, could never keep rule and order over thousands of miners, composed of all nationalities, determined to let no law or regulations stand in the way of making their fortunes in the shortest time possible. He did not contradict my arguments, but said that they did not take away the injustice of the annexation. He condemned very strongly what he called the foul arguments employed by Sir H. Barkly in telling the Colonial Secretary that the Boers were in the habit of making slaves of the Griquas, while he all the time was aware, as everybody in Africa was, that there had never been slaves in the Orange Free State; and England, for the sake of lucre, did not mind robbing a weak

nation of their rightful possessions. I thought it a good opportunity to make him better acquainted with some rules of policy, in the hope that he might communicate them to his friends at the next meetings:—

(1) That the copy-book maxim we all came across at school, "Honesty is the best policy," is only meant for private individuals, and not applicable to nations.

(2) That Sir Henry Barkly, even if he were aware of uttering what Peter called an untruth, acted perfectly straight as a statesman, for, having regard to the end of the transaction, he was entitled to the thanks of his Government and people for adding such a valuable slice to the Empire.

(3) That disputes between nations and peoples are not judged by the book of common law; but, since Joshua to the present day, according to another code.

Had my conversation with Peter taken place a few years later, I would have mentioned and explained to him such expressions as empire-building, sphere of influence, and punitive expedition.

During my stay on the farm a happy event took place, namely, a baby was born. As such a thing is of hourly occurrence all over the globe, it would hardly be worth mentioning were it not I observed something that set me thinking. Of course, the moment came that the nurse found an opportunity of introducing the new arrival to me, proudly remarking how white it was. Now, these simple words have an enormous significance in South Africa. The first inquiry of a happy mother, after being told she had given birth to son or daughter, as the case might be, is about the complexion of the in-

fant. The reason is that now and then in families of the purest European stock, and for many generations possessed of Saxon complexions, a decided brunette makes its appearance. As it is one of the virtues of the Boers, which even their most inveterate enemies admit, that they always kept severely aloof from intermixture with the black races, there must be another reason for the advent of such a *lusus naturae*. In my humble opinion, it can be explained by the employment of wet nurses a few generations back, when black women were, as a rule, chosen, especially during the restless days of frontier life, and whilst standing in lagers. Complexion was always a delicate point with the Boers. Talking about their families, you were invariably told that originally three brothers had come out with the first Europeans, bearing the present family name. Suppose that name to be van Hout, and you were sufficiently indelicate and inquisitive as to ask whether the coloured van Houts in the next village were any of their relations, you were told that many years afterwards a fourth brother had landed in Capetown and gone to live in Namaqualand, had never married, as no white people lived there, but, for all that, had an enormous progeny (accidents will happen), and that therefore the van Houts alluded to by no means belonged to their immaculate family.

Whether Peter ever had fulfilled his heart's wish of becoming a member of the Volksraad I do not know, and, I am sorry to say, subsequent events made me lose sight of him.

THE LOWER COURTS.

During the genesis of the Republics the Bench and the Bar were filled by tyros. Cape Colony people or foreigners who could speak the vernacular were almost certain of getting a situation under the Government, and when that failed they hired a room, invested a few shillings in paper, ink, and a couple of law books, and made themselves known as General Agents.

A magistrate was sure of popularity if he attended church, practised politeness towards everyone visiting his office and kept up *suavitur in modo* on the Bench. Notwithstanding his lack of knowledge of the law, he could hold such a position for years.

The agent made a kind of existence by writing letters, making out title deeds, defending kafir cases, and holding small auction sales. The larger auctions were usually held by rich or apparently rich shopkeepers, the general public regarding them as safer.

If the village increased in size and the inhabitants became more numerous, a second law agent was sure to make his appearance, and a new attraction arose for visiting the Court, which could be done free of charge, for the purpose of enjoying the eloquence and learning of the two limbs of the law opposed to each other in some cause of dispute.

The lowest authority outside the towns and villages was the Field-Cornet of the ward, elected as such

by the inhabitants. He drew a very small salary and enjoyed very little rest, as he was called away night and day to settle small disputes or enquire into police cases. For these trips he was rarely, if ever, remunerated. When laying down the law in disputes between natives he was generally paid, either in money or cattle. Later on, when the kafirs residing within the Free State had to pay hut-tax, which was collected by him, he earned more, as the black taxpayers who could not produce the money paid in cattle *at the valuation of the tax-gatherer*. His zeal in benefiting the public was sometimes boundless. In one instance the Government had to interfere, as he began to act as attorney, notary-public, orphan-master, and judge. He went even as far as to wind up estates and decide divorce cases. Of course, he was dismissed, much to the disappointment of his clients, for though he did not administer justice gratis, there was in his court no question of stamps, fees, or paid pleaders. Everyone defended his own case.

A position of higher rank was that of resident Justice of the Peace. As he enjoyed a salary of only £100 a year he was allowed private practice. It is to be feared that his duty as an official sometimes clashed with his private interests. A good story, which is perfectly true, for I could give the name of the man and the place where it happened, runs as follows: A transport rider had allowed his oxen free grazing during the night. Of course, they had strayed. Rising very early the man had found them in a piece of cultivated land, apparently very happy, but at all events well filled. He yoked them immediately, and moved on. The owner of the

land, however, being in the habit of visiting his outlying crops early in the morning, soon found out that there had been unwelcome visitors. Following the trail, he came to the place of outspan and understood what had happened. As it chanced to be near a main transport road, which the wagon had soon taken, the many spoor (trails) bewildered him. But keeping on he discovered a wagon with unyoked oxen near the village. Cross-questioning the natives in charge led to nothing, as the owner had lost no time in preparing them on all points. The case was brought before the resident Justice, but as plaintiff could prove nothing, and defendant maintained he had not outspanned at the said spot, the Judge did not know how to act. Whilst in that dilemma one of the public exclaimed: "Fine them drinks all round." That was an inspiration for our modern Solomon, and, soon perceiving that the idea was most popular, he consented. Plaintiff was satisfied that he could not prove his case, whilst the defendant rejoiced that he came out of the matter so cheaply. Judge, litigants, Clerk of the Court, as well as the public, marched in procession to the only tap-room in the village and indulged in rum and water at the expense of the two parties. What a pity it is that Dame Justitia is clad in that cumbersome toga, and always travels about with a pair of scales, otherwise she might, in some instances, creep through such narrow and undignified holes, as a hint to litigants and their counsel.

PRISONS AND PUNISHMENTS.

From the earliest days of the occupation every township had a kind of lock-up where vagabonds, criminals, and others were confined. In the country districts the Field-Cornet was the head of the police. When he caught a cattle thief he generally brought him to his own house, and there locked him up, and when the culprit was accused of murder the Field-Cornet had to provide a guard to watch him. But in the forties and fifties it was generally understood that a malefactor did not stay longer in durance vile than he pleased as there was only a mud wall between him and liberty. In case of capital offences, the prisoners, white or black, were guarded by a batch of burghers, commandeered for that purpose, until the culprits could be tried by the Circuit Court. This, until 1876, was composed of three magistrates, the local one and two of his colleagues from adjoining districts. After that period one judge proceeded on circuit to the northern districts and another to the southern portion of the State. Appeals from their decisions were brought before the High Court at Bloemfontein, which consisted of three judges. From the very beginning the Boers rightly understood that fine or imprisonment was not the kind of punishment to make an impression on native evil-doers. The latter were rarely provided with money, and as for imprisonment, they did not object much to the fare obtained at the Government hotel, from which, as a rule, they went back to

liberty in a remarkably sleek and healthy condition. Even so-called "hard labour" was a great farce. I remember forming such an opinion when passing gangs of convicts on the public roads, which they were supposed to be repairing. As often as not I noticed the whole crowd peaceably enjoying a chat, and their warders (mostly natives) a smoke, all sitting on stones or ant-hills. Those who were condemned to hard labour wore chains, fastened on both legs above the foot. These were allowed to neutralise the weight of the chain to a certain extent by lifting it up with a rope fastened above the hips.

About 1880 all prisoners, whites and natives, were provided by the Government with canvas clothing, but before that time one could see whole gangs of native convicts wearing nothing but a loin-cloth. It was their natural and national dress, as it had been for fifty centuries that of their ancestors, but ideas of civilization could not admit of ninety per cent. of nudity to continue, even though the change subjected natives to pneumonia and pleurisy to an enormous extent. It was, however, good for trade. Under the late Government in both Republics native evil-doers (for the above-stated reasons) were frequently punished with the cat-o'-nine tails. Every black man is acquainted with whipping. Kafir parents do not fine or lock their children up by way of punishment, but they keep a rope or rod in pickle for use as often as occasion arises. It is a kind of punishment which the Ethiopian malefactor remembers long enough to make him shrink from a repetition of evil deeds—far better than the modern way of locking him up in company with other and, perhaps, worse criminals, from

whose society he is in danger of learning ideas which will make him a good deal worse than he was before going to prison. And what, after all, is there against moderate corporal punishment of natives? It cannot be called degrading to their position, as they enjoy no social status, and they certainly lose no prestige amongst their fellows for having been sufferers under the white man's laws.

Under the Boer Administration a native criminal got from fifteen to twenty-five lashes, according to the magnitude of his guilt. In serious crimes they got more, but never more than forty. When adjudged to receive forty lashes the culprit had the advantage of receiving them in two instalments, viz., twenty on entering and the same amount on leaving the goal. Before the new-fangled ideas as to the administration of justice were introduced into South Africa, namely, in 1860, I saw a Zulu kafir on the market square in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, receive seventy-five lashes at the whipping-post, and this in the month of August, two days before Prince Alfred and Sir George Grey visited the said town. A surgeon, who stood by, examined him when he had received the first half, but found him quite fit to stand the remainder.

According to Free State prison rules, a white prisoner's fare was porridge for breakfast. For dinner, soup, one pound of cooked meat, and one kind of vegetables. For supper, bread and tea. The native got about the same, except the soup and vegetables; and, for meat, he had to be satisfied with the *bouilli* of which the white man's broth had been made.

POSTAL SERVICE IN FORMER DAYS.

How we grumble nowadays when the mail train is one or more hours late, or when a holiday interferes with the delivery of letters. In former days the people had to practice more patience.

The main postal route through the then Orange Free State ran from Colesberg to Harrismith. The Government received a yearly subsidy for carrying the Natal letters overland.

Somebody got hold of the tender for that long line for £700. The post came and went once a week, and as post packets were seldom sent that way one pack-horse managed to carry the limited load. The contractor placed relay horses at various places, and as long as grass was plentiful and the animals had not strayed or were not absent when wanted, the post arrived more or less regularly at the several offices along the road.

Full rivers were considered a sufficient excuse for late arrivals, and the public was perfectly content when told at the Post Office that the mail was lying on the other side of a swollen river.

When such excuses were wanting, the contractor was fined 2s. 6d. for every hour late. During the winter months the horses at the different stations were never fed, but had to subsist on the dry grass, and were frequently not to be found when wanted. No wonder that the post was often days late. Now and then a postmaster considered it his duty to hire horses on account of the contractor in order to send

forward the local post, but owners of horses did not like to trust their animals to the tender mercies of Hottentot drivers, who, for the most part, were those employed in the service and famous for living in a chronic state of intoxication. In 1863 the Cape mail arrived three days late in Winburg on the back of a pack-ox, horses not being obtainable along the road. In that year the fines on the contractor exceeded the amount of his tender, but, as he had a large family and many friends, a largely-signed petition was sent to headquarters praying for a remission of the fines, and, as the Government had no family, the request was granted.

Later on, tenders were called for over shorter distances, these being more controllable, with the stipulation that post carts should be used for the conveyance of mails along the main roads. The public sometimes made use of that mode of travelling, but no one tried it a second time. The vehicle often was a mere box on wheels, the seat was on the post bags, and as often as not there was no tent or covering—the driver full of spirits and horses the reverse. Very often the traveller had to seize the reins when the Jehu became too dazed from frequent potations. I remember once being a victim to that mode of travelling over a distance of sixty miles. We called on the road at the contractor's house, where the driver got hold of a fresh supply of the "eratur." I talked to him, but that had the effect of making him sulky. I was fully aware that according to the latest ideas of civilization and education I should have provided him with a tract on total abstinence and a hymn book, but through not having these articles about me, I thought of a shorter cut of improving his morals, and gave him a

sound thrashing. As is the case with most natives when convinced that they deserve punishment, he took it without grumbling, and tried to behave and do his duty during the rest of the trip, and leave the bottle alone.

In the days I refer to rarely were shops or public houses to be found along the road, and, when arriving on the banks of a full river, a traveller felt most uncomfortable, especially when rain set in. When there was a house in view, one could, in most cases, be sure of the well-known South African hospitality being offered and the sufferer saved a night in the open.

But, on the whole, a trip by post cart was a lesson for life, and strictly to be avoided by those who were in possession of cart and horses.

STOCK-FARMING AND AGRICULTURE

Much is written and published about war and politics concerning the late Republics; but, with an eye to future possibilities and developments, and especially to a much-discussed influx of immigrants and military settlers from the United Kingdom, the Cape Colony, and other parts of His Majesty's Empire, a short account, with statistics, relating to this subject may be novel and interesting to some readers.

The late Governments never paid much attention to statistics, all the more reason why the following observations by one who for forty years travelled about these regions should be of some value.

In former days the Boers paid far more attention to cattle breeding than to agriculture. The boundless pasturage, their love of a roving life, and the frequent kafir wars, which kept them constantly on the move, did not encourage settlement and home-building, consequently ploughing and sowing were somewhat neglected. Even at a later period of comparative peace, the great distance from markets and the very limited means of transport reduced the work of agriculture to the requirements of personal consumption.

The happy-go-lucky mode of cattle breeding then in vogue required large farms or ranches where the flock could roam at liberty in search of food. The idea of collecting fodder for the winter months was out of the question, especially by owners of thousands of animals. The cattle were supposed to pro-

vide for themselves, and it often took weeks to collect the flock of one farmer, especially after a snow storm, for the purpose of counting or branding. When the grass—always unsatisfying as food in the winter—totally disappeared through fires, on account of locusts or insufficient rain in summer, new pastures were sought for and occupied.

But that patriarchal state of affairs could not last for ever. When the first form of government was established, Commissioners were appointed to fix boundaries and beacons for each land-claim, after which every cattle-owner was *supposed* to keep his flock within the limits of his property. To many of the older generation, accustomed to the idea that their animals should be entitled to free grazing wherever Nature allowed grass to grow, these new-fangled ideas were unbearable. The only remedy was to buy ground from their neighbours, a few head of cattle being sacrificed for that purpose. Hence there were instances of an individual being possessed of twenty to forty thousand morgen of ground (one hundred acres are equal to forty-seven morgen).

At a still later period, the increase of population and the rise in value of ground caused most of these large properties to be subdivided. A father blessed with many sons could not provide each of them with such an extensive farm as he himself owned. By the said subdivision, the smaller land-owners were at once compelled to follow a mode of cattle farming different to what they had been accustomed to on the comparatively boundless pasturage of their parents. Some of them began to pay more attention to agriculture, very likely encouraged by the appearance of markets in the num-

erous villages beginning to spring up in both Republics.

The cattle breeder turned his oxen into money by driving them to the northern markets of the Cape Colony, except those he bartered away at his homestead to hawkers. From 1850 to 1855 two pounds sterling was considered a fair price for a full-grown ox fit for the butcher. Landing in Natal in 1855, I wanted a team of draught oxen for a trip to the interior, and had to pay 50 shillings apiece for *trained* animals. In 1857 the same animals cost me £4 10s. per head. From that period oxen have steadily advanced in price, this owing to two causes: firstly, the immense increase of transport, and, secondly, the many diseases that made their appearance amongst horned animals in South Africa.

Soon after the occupation of the two Republics by the emigrant farmers, wool-sheep began to be introduced from the Cape Colony. The very few kafirs who had survived the massacres of Chaka (Tshaka) and Mosilikatze (Mzilikazi), and lived between the Orange and the Limpopo rivers, were possessed of small troops of very indifferent sheep, covered with hair, and, therefore, unfit for shearing, though very hardy, and thriving under conditions where the merino sheep would have perished. The Boers soon found out that sheep breeding could be made a paying business. Neither imported rams nor their immediate progeny were known before 1863. Local ewes were to be had for 12s. to 16s. each; the best sheep farm at a good deal under 10s. per acre. Kafir wages were low, and food abundant. But though the number of sheep was fast increasing, nothing was done to improve the quality of the wool, and as little to provide shelter

and fodder for the winter. In the year 1870, farmers began to buy lambs from rams imported from Europe or Australia in order to introduce new blood, but the majority of flockmasters objected to the outlay, arguing that shopkeepers did not seem to give a better price for a better quality of wool. However, it became gradually known that the fleece of an imported merino ram weighed from eighteen to twenty-five pounds, and their male lambs could readily find purchasers at the rate of £5 each in the then Free State. Since that period the quality of the wool has improved. Some well-to-do farmers went to the trouble and expense of going to Europe to select their own rams and ewes, whilst others sent orders by post. The nursing and treatment of the sheep, however, by no means kept pace with the improvement of blood.

Though the diseases of cattle, sheep, and horses were legion, the average Boer did not believe in the usefulness of veterinary surgeons. Every flock-owner thought himself the best expert regarding all ailments that quadrupeds are heir to. In the Volksraad discussions of 1898, as to the advisability of appointing a Veterinary Surgeon for the whole State, the opponents argued that, notwithstanding most Governments indulged in that luxury, cattle diseases were on the increase all over the world, and all their knowledge did not render these professionals fit judges about ailments of cattle in Africa.

It was entirely overlooked that these professionals were in a far better position to study the diseases than the average Boer, the former having preliminary study, Government aid, and time at his disposal, all of which the farmer lacked.

As before stated, the necessary subdivision of the properties (land) induced many farmers to pay more attention to agriculture, whilst the discovery of the diamond fields, with their subsequent produce markets, gave a new stimulus to extensive ploughing in the seventies. Before that time so little was grain grown in the Orange Free State that meal was continually brought from Lydenburg for consumption. It commanded a high price, as its quality was generally appreciated until it began to be adulterated. At that time the "Conquered Territory" farms began to develop, growing sufficient for the population of the whole land, as well as for export to the diamond fields, and later on to the gold fields of the Transvaal.

The superior quality of Lydenburg wheat was produced under widely different circumstances from those existing in the Orange River Colony. In Lydenburg, irrigation and manuring were resorted to, but the extent of land ploughed was very limited. Water for irrigation purposes was only obtainable from casual springs or where a waterfall afforded a favourable opportunity for tapping the water from a high level on to the adjoining lands. The supply of manure was also small, in consequence of cattle grazing over large areas.

In the eastern portion of the Orange River Colony irrigation is seldom required. Periodical spring rains are regular. The wheat is put in the ground during the last autumnal rains, between March and May, and the crop lingers on during the winter. Exceptionally severe frost sometimes retards the growth, and even destroys the shoots above the surface; but the crop is sure to rally when spring sets

in and the usual rains make their appearance in August or September.

During unusually dry spring weather, when no moisture descends before October, the crops suffer terribly; and, should the drought keep on to the end of November, it becomes too late for mealie sowing as well, the result giving rise to disappointment for the farmer. However, a general drought, as in 1862, is a very rare calamity. There was, for instance, no repetition until 1903, though crops now and then have failed in parts from want of rain.

People do not hesitate to plough on the highest table lands or a mountain slope, if good deep soil is to be found. I have seen and bought wheat, grown near Van Reenen's Pass in the Drakensberg, on Bingham's farm, at an elevation of 8,000 feet above the sea-level. It was of the finest quality, sown in virgin soil, and not manured. At such altitudes, of course, irrigation is impossible, but the crops in the valleys could be assisted artificially in the early spring by a very cheap system of irrigation, if one takes into consideration that the part of country I am speaking of is intersected by watersheds, in which rivers and rivulets take their origin. Even in the driest seasons these watersheds are visited by terrific thunder-storms, accompanied by tremendous downpours, causing millions of tons of water to flow down the dried-up courses without benefiting the crops on the lowlands.

In the western part of the Orange River Colony, where the air is drier, no crops succeed without irrigation. Surface water is collected in dams, and, in rare instances, a powerful spring is taken advantage of, but the rivers, even when full, are of no benefit, owing to the total absence of pumping machinery.

With very few exceptions, the general idea is to produce the maximum of crop at a minimum of labour and expense. In the non-irrigating part of the Orange River Colony the ground is merely scratched, as deep ploughing would take too much time. This is certainly the wisest plan when autumn or winter rains have failed to appear, and advantage has to be taken of the very first spring showers for the purpose of ploughing, even though the rain has gone down only a few inches, for the farmer dare not wait for later showers, lest he should be too late for the proper sowing period. But even under more favourable circumstances, deep ploughing is not considered preferable to extensive ploughing, land being unlimited and irrigation being provided by the clouds.

Should the dream of universal irrigation ever become a reality, the whole of the Orange River Colony might become the granary of South Africa, as climate and soil are favourable. But, during the next ten years, the bulk of wheat and mealies will continue to be produced by the eastern part of the said Colony and Basutoland.

The grain-producing districts contain thousands of kafirs, mostly of the Basuto tribe, living on the farms of the white land-owners. They prefer that state of affairs to living close by in Basutoland, which is over-populated as well as over-stocked. As a rule, the land-owner allows them free grazing for their (sometimes large) flocks of sheep, cattle, and horses, and gives them land for crops and the erection of huts. For these privileges they pay by ploughing for their landlords and weeding and reaping his crops. They also do the sheep-shearing, but are paid for that work at the rate of one penny

per sheep, with their food. Even this voluntary system has been called slavery and oppression of the blacks by the Missionary societies or by travellers, who paid visits to this country and rushed at once into print, hoping to regale the European public on their adventures in and impressions about South Africa, as likely as not collected during a post-cart trip of one month's duration.

As a matter of fact, the employer of these black squatters paid, indirectly, very high wages for their services. The real farm-work did not extend over five months of the year. But he had constantly to be on the watch so as to preserve his spare winter pasturage from being consumed by the cattle of his so-called tenants; and, notwithstanding his greatest vigilance, his slaughter sheep became remarkably reduced in numbers in an unaccountably short period of time.

Some of the grain growers have no kafir families on their farms, and have to do their own ploughing, etc. They hire Basutos for cutting and bringing in the crops. During the last ten years, before the war, a good many farmers bought reaping and threshing engines, not only for their own use but to work on the farms of those neighbours who could not afford the outlay. For such assistance they were paid in kind at the usual rate of eight to ten per cent. of the harvest. As a hundred bags a day can be dealt with by these engines under favourable circumstances, it must have been rather profitable for the owners, as the man to whom the crop belonged had to pay and find the hands both to feed the thresher and fill the bags.

The maximum of wheat produced on a single farm of three thousand acres in the "Conquered Terri-

tory " was two thousand five hundred bags, which shows that there is room for improvement.

African-born farmers do not compute the yield at per acre. They only know the amount of seed put into the ground and how much they reap. In the region between the Caledon and the projected railroad from Harrismith to Bethlehem, comprising a large slice of the " Conquered Territory," the yield averages from twenty to forty muids for every muid sown, depending on the amount of rain. As one muid of seed is generally spread over eight acres of plough land, these figures work out at from two-and-a-half to five muids per acre, produced without irrigation and without manure.

Except on virgin soil, mealie lands have to be weeded. The Basutos, thanks to the plurality of wives, can always keep their lands remarkably clean, but the white farmer has to hire labourers for that work. Should he fail to get hands, his harvest will be considerably reduced, if not a total failure. The method of sowing in drills, so that the weeding could be done by pony plough, though not unknown, is considered a loss of time, and not regarded with favour by either the farmers or the Basutos.

A crop ready for reaping is a fine sight, but the owner has to go through many anxieties and risks beforehand; and, even when all danger of drought, locusts, rust, etc., is past, a hail storm can in ten minutes' time destroy all his hopes.

Wheat and oats, requiring less space and, consequently, less ploughing than mealies, and being far more easily reaped than the latter, are favoured ventures among the white farmers.

Tobacco, wherever tried north and south of the Vaal River, has answered well. Under the most slovenly and indifferent treatment the plants seem to prosper. But the quality, through want of care, is of the lowest. Some thirty years ago the Transvaal produced a weed of prime quality, quite different from the chaff now known as Magaliesberg tobacco. There are many reasons for this deterioration. The grower of the present time has no encouragement from the trade to do his best in the culture and the preparation of the article. The shopkeeper pays for weight and not for quality. The smoking public seems to be perfectly satisfied with tobacco scented with essential oils as long as it burns and produces smoke, whilst the original article is only remembered by a few old hands, and is not procurable.

Tobacco is planted now on many farms, but no more trouble is taken with the plant than one would give to a crop of mealies. The parasites or suckers are not regularly destroyed, and, when the crop seems generally fit for reaping, ripe, over-ripe, and half-green leaves are mixed together, and, after a time, subjected to the sweating or fermentation process. No good smoking tobacco can be expected of such a mixture. The fact, however, remains that soil and climate are favourable for tobacco growing, and the reason why I put down the foregoing remarks is to draw the attention of some enterprising individual or syndicate to the fact.

Assuming that the same weed, which was manufactured some thirty or forty years ago, and caused Transvaal tobacco to be known for its fine quality and odour, were produced, such enterprise, even

though only partially successful, would prove a paying concern.

With better opportunities of getting artificial manure and facilities in transport than the primitive growers ever commanded, there is even a possibility that a weed could be produced still better than that referred to.

As His Majesty's Government may decide to give large locations to the Zoutpansberg tribes, which some people expect, I would draw the attention of future growers to that part of the Colony. The climate is semi-tropical, water abundant, guano for manure plentiful in rocks and caves, and, owing to the vicinity of the kafir locations, labour will be cheap and plentiful for a good many years to come; that is, until civilization spoils the people.

TREE PLANTING.—For many reasons this industry was neglected in the late Republics. The old farmers were perfectly satisfied with a solitary willow tree near the water-hole where the linen of the household was washed. Those of a later generation planted fruit trees in their gardens, provided they could get them for nothing. In favourable seasons the yield of peaches and apples was miraculous, so that farmers living sufficiently near a market actually paid their yearly quit-rent to the Government from the proceeds of one tree. When too far from a market the superabundant harvest was consumed by pigs and poultry, unless the landlord could command sufficient native labour to dry the fruit for future consumption or sale. Generally, the fruit was of sundry nondescript varieties. Only recently have facilities sprung up for getting a better class of tree from foreign parts, and some have availed themselves of that opportunity. Cli-

mate and soil are favourable for fruit-tree planting. I have seen bearing peach-trees on the tops of high mountains, very likely grown from pips thrown away by strolling kafirs, which have come to maturity notwithstanding the lack of care and regular moisture, manuring, etc.

In the late Free State there were no forests. Along the rivers a belt of mimosas and other thorny trees were seen, and here and there small groups of the same growth in the middelvelds. All, however, fast disappeared, in order to supply the demand for enclosure-poles and firewood. It is quite different in the Transvaal, where forests exist containing large quantities of the most valuable kinds of wood.

The planting on a large scale, of trees other than fruit trees, has only been tried on one or two farms in the Orange River Colony, and round Johannesburg in the Transvaal, both with very satisfactory results, at an outlay, however, beyond the means of the average farmer. Wherever planted, the blue-gum has answered well. The black wattle was introduced in 1873, but though a quick-growing tree, was never cultivated on a large scale. The whole of the fir family is also represented, and thrives.

Though the suitability of soil and climate for trees was known and admitted by the inhabitants, tree-planting was rarely indulged in. The trouble and expense of getting young trees, of planting, watering, nursing, and especially enclosing them, was not considered worth while, even in districts totally devoid of firewood. It seems to have struck nobody that a small plantation on the top of a hillock might have grown in a few years to a very welcome shelter for cattle and sheep against sun, hail, and wind.

I hope my frequent remarks on present circumstances will not be taken as an effort on my part to ridicule or criticize the present inhabitants of the late Republics. They acted according to their gifts, and many of them will hold their own in the expected period of amalgamation. It should be borne in mind that I put my observations in writing to facilitate matters for new settlers. The principles underlying farmers' experiences, which new-comers will have to seek for, are certainly deserving of notice, leaving it entirely to their own choice whether they follow in the old grooves or introduce modern European ideas.

YIELD.—I have hinted already at the total absence of statistics in the late Republics. Perhaps their Governments were not to blame, as far as agriculture goes. It would not have led to the knowledge of an average yield of the different crops, as there are so many chances of total or partial failure, caused by drought, hail, locusts, etc., though there have been many years when at least the larger part of the country was free from the said misfortunes.

My profession kept me continually on the move, and, as the chief topics of conversation in the houses or at camp-fires were always "weather" and "crops," I could not help becoming acquainted with a good many data and particulars. They are certainly too few in number to build up an average, but they show what Nature and soil can do, assisted by primitive art, with a minimum of human toil.

In the eastern part of the Orange River Colony, where irrigation is not practised, I know of the following yields:—

1. On the farm Bloemhof, near Ficksburg, land was ploughed for sixteen years without manuring,

The last crop yielded twenty-two muids to every muid of wheat sown.

2. On the same farm the owner broke up virgin soil on two different parts of a hillock, after a good rain in 1884. On each plot he sowed one muid of wheat. The yield was forty-three and forty-seven muids respectively. The cause of such success is attributable to the fact that the timely rain had made deeper ploughing possible.

3. As I have explained before, the uncertainty of the duration of autumn rains compels the farmer to turn up as much ground as possible whilst the rain lasts, sacrificing depth to area of ploughing. Could the ground be prepared for ploughing by irrigation the crops would very likely double. Under the present system, the average yield is rather under than above twenty-fold in the wheat country proper.

Cape oats, which are only sown where irrigation is possible, are supposed to yield thirteen hundred sheaves for one muid sown. When threshed, from twenty-six to forty muids of clean oats is the result.

The bulk of the mealies brought to market come from Basutoland. The white farmer does not grow mealies (for reasons already stated) if his other crops (wheat and oats) promise well. In the beginning of November he can judge pretty well how his ventures will turn out, always excepting those marauders hail and locusts. Should any mishap take place with his enterprise, he has time to sow enormous quantities of mealies during the said month, provided always that rain sets in at that period. Between November and April the rainfall is not so uncertain as during the other parts of the year; he is, therefore, fairly certain of a harvest.

The yield of mealies is, of course, as uncertain as that of other cereals that depend entirely on rain. It ranges between forty and one hundred and twenty-fold where broadcast sowing is practised.

Alfalfa or lucerne, has only been tried in gardens here and there on a small scale. It has answered well. The reason why it did not become a general favourite is, in the first place, because it requires irrigation and manuring, and, secondly, because very few farmers were possessed of cows of sufficient value to nurse and feed through the winter months. I have frequently heard, as an objection to generous feeding of milk cows, that it would be like *making them eat money*. Thanks to better markets for butter and milk and increase of population in the towns, a better class of beasts has during the last decade been introduced from the Cape Colony and Natal, and proper care is being taken of them. I am sure lucerne will be in demand in the future, as largely-populated centres in South Africa begin to be surrounded by small dairy farms, too limited in extent to grow the food they require.

Carrots, turnips, and mangel-wurzel have been tried by amateurs, and gave splendid returns. The latter article is certainly worth the attention of enterprising men for the manufacture of beet-sugar. It may be tried near large kafir locations, where land and labour should be cheap for a long time to come. As every native from babyhood to dotage adores sugar, the demand promises to be unlimited. Besides, it can be sold cheaper than cane-sugar, and may, therefore, be patronised by white householders as well.

HORSE BREEDING.

One may take it for granted that a Boer was a judge of horse flesh and knew a good horse when he saw it. Only the real article was rarely obtainable. What he mostly preferred was a strong and hardy animal, one that could rough it. Thoroughbreds he seldom came across. In the infancy of the Republics a connoisseur talked about a horse of the "Hantam" breed, from a stud belonging to a man of the name of Pienaar, who had secured foals from stallions imported by Lord Somerset in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and had taken pains to keep up both the name and the breed. Neither the Paris Missionary Society, which made its appearance amongst the Basutos about 1850, nor Exeter Hall endeavours in that line could cure the Basuto nation of horse thieving. They were very successful in learning to sing hymns, but the amusement of stealing horses was indulged in at the same time. They managed to procure the very best from the Cape Colony farmers, and from such enterprises dates the appearance of what is now called the "Basuto pony." The Lesuto was, perhaps, the healthiest part of South Africa for horses. Horse-sickness seldom made its appearance in those high altitudes. Horses were broken in to the saddle at two years of age, and those that survived could stand almost everything their cruel owners subjected them to.

From 1850 to 1865 the Basutos robbed farmers of the Southern Free State of the very best mares they could get, so that they were provided with any amount of horses when the Basuto war set in. But that same war brought about the destruction of thousands of these animals.

The wish for improvement in horses was not given effect to by Free Staters before 1874. From that date imported stallions were bought at round sums, not so much for directly improving the stud for racing purposes as with the immediate object of making money. The local mares were very indifferent, and not likely to improve, as they had to roam over the veld during the six winter months devoid of shelter and artificial food. The progeny turned out failures as a matter of course. However, the average Boer horse of the present time has an enormous amount of toughness or staying power. They are satisfied with almost anything in the way of food, and I know from personal experience that they can travel sixty miles a day in an emergency.

SHOPS AND STORES

From the middle of the last century to about 1880 shops were very primitive undertakings, supposed to contain everything in the grocery and drapery line required by the generation of those days. New villages were mostly laid out with a view to facilitating matters for the church-goers of a certain district, who found it very inconvenient to leave home for a week or a fortnight in order to attend one of the distant churches for the purposes of baptism of children, weddings, or worship.

When such a new centre was agreed upon and cut up into building plots, a subscription was raised for the purpose of erecting a church, but before that building was finished, one saw one or more shops spring up at promising corners of streets in the vicinity of the said church, which was always erected on a church square, unavoidably surrounded by four streets. Well-to-do people bought building plots as near as possible to the place of worship, and generally started small dwelling houses, with an apology for a stable, sufficient for sheltering man and beast from Saturday night to Monday morning.

It was supposed that shops could only be visited during week days; the front door was, accordingly, strictly kept closed on the Sabbath. But there was also that convenient contrivance called the "back door," and letters as well as medicine for all diseases, required for the return journey, found their way through it in the early hours of Sunday for

patients suffering from thirst or for the sufferers at home.

Visitors to the village during week days always went at once to the shop, that being the emporium for news, and where they were sure to find every one who had recently arrived.

The wise and obliging owner of the shop had provided a long wooden bench beside the counter, where his customers could sit for hours discussing politics, the price of wool, the state of the crops, cattle diseases and their cures, the newly-arrived parson and doctor, or quack, and last, but not least, the *chronique scandaleuse* of the district.

Everybody entering the shop was supposed to shake hands all round. An omission to comply with that custom would have branded the delinquent as proud and unaware of the manners of polite society. The introducing of strangers was considered superfluous. If a man from the antipodes had happened to take a seat on that bench, conversation and cross-examining would soon have pumped him dry on the questions: Where he came from? what he thought of the country? and what was his errand or business? etc. Such new arrivals were very welcome, giving fresh subjects for discussion, and swelling the epitome of news to be carried home. It was as good as reading a newspaper. Time was no object. As a matter of course, the shopkeeper asked everyone on arrival whether he would not off-saddle and stable his horse; but, as a rule, the invitation was declined with thanks, on the plea that he was too much in a hurry to go home, having only come to the village to buy a few necessities. But the irresistible attractiveness of the discussion on the said bench made him forget his hurry, and

he remained for hours in the shop, his horse all this time standing patiently either tied up to a pole in front of the building or held by the owner's after-rider, the latter also, in the meantime, laying in a stock of news in conversation with his coloured colleagues. Though wine and brandy were to be had in every shop, it was not partaken of by all comers, so that drunkenness was rarely seen in the early days of the two Republics. There were, however, a few toppers who could not go home without a taste of the "cratur," but in strict moderation. They knew the way to the place where wine and brandy were kept in large hogsheads, and after quenching their thirst made for the back door, preferring that mode of exit to passing the company assembled in the front shop, where somebody might have called attention to the escapade. They never rushed into the street through the said back door, but always indulged in a preliminary peep to see whether the coast was clear from parson or elder.

In my profession I had often to meet farmers when they came into town, and had to visit the shop or shops as the most likely place to find them, hence I am able from personal observation to state what took place there. I explain in detail in order to show how, in the absence of newspapers, these people were able to know much of what was going on in the outside world, as well as to point out that the use of alcohol was indulged in on the sly, and certainly had not become a universal habit.

With the blessings (?) of civilization, other ideas arose. The Government made a law that shops should neither sell nor offer alcoholic drinks to their customers, and, as a matter of course, bars were established in all townships as well as hotels. The

idea of the "back door" disappeared, and, after a few years of civilization, I noticed boys of sixteen and upwards, undeterred by the shyness of their fathers, walk up to the bar, treat their chums, and partake themselves. *Sic transit* one of the Arcadian customs of the old Boers!

There was no difficulty in those early days about starting a shop. Credit was easily obtained from firms in the coast towns. The said firms were acquainted with the enormous profits of the retail trade, and did not hesitate to trust the new ventures with a couple of thousand pounds' worth of goods. As a rule, principal and shopkeeper prospered under those conditions, and some of the latter got rich. But there were exceptions. Some of the large firms on the coast came to grief through giving too long and too extensive credit to up-country traders and shopkeepers, and, when the estates of the former were wound up, immediate settlement was insisted upon. That brought some of the inland debtors into difficulties. Their own customers were used to at least twelve months' credit, paying their debts after shearing or off and on during the year with ostrich feathers and dried skins. To press for payment of debt all of a sudden would have annoyed the Boer customer and driven him to deal with other shopkeepers in the future. The landed property accumulated by the country debtor could not be disposed of in a hurry without heavy loss, and, as there were no banks in those days, these sudden demands for settlement were known to ruin shopkeepers. But the majority managed to gain time by offering a certain amount of cash down and the title deeds of land as security for future payments.

In 1864 money became very tight, not only in the two Republics, but in the whole sub-continent. The Volksraad decided to have paper money printed of the face value of one pound sterling to the amount of £30,000, at the same time stipulating it should be legal tender. That Act pressed severely on shopkeepers. The ruling exchange value of the said paper money, in the first years, was not more than ten to twelve shillings in the Cape Colony; and, though the Free State shopkeepers doubled the prices of their articles to make up for that loss, they had to take them at face value when customers offered to square their old book debts.

During the Basuto war—1865-1868—the Free State Volksraad issued a hundred thousand more, this time on the security of the territory conquered from the Basutos, which was cut up into farms and eagerly bought by the white inhabitants. That gave the Government an opportunity of destroying a large portion of these debentures. In one or two more years they disappeared totally from circulation, as the discovery of the diamond mines in Griqualand West revived trade to such an extent that specie became abundant.

With the return of prosperity, landed property went up in price, and a good many of the shopkeepers who had been fortunate enough to keep their farms during the war accumulated money. They could send their children abroad to get better education, and had ample means for building substantial houses and shops.

As Kimberley had to rely on the two Republics for cattle and cereals, as well as for most food-stuffs, i.e., before the Cape-Kimberley railway was

built late in the eighties, the farmers enjoyed a state of prosperity never before known.

There are a good many yarns told about shopkeepers and their customers of those early days. One of the oldest is related as taking place in Natal at a time when most farmers living in the eastern parts of the two Republics sold their produce and bought their requisites in that Colony. It runs as follows:—

On the evening of a very busy day the owner of a shop remembered having delivered to one of his Umvoti customers a saddle and bridle on credit. He could not recall the name, and went through the ledger to assist his memory. He had twenty-seven customers in that district, but failed to fix on the name of the one to whom he had sold the saddle. He instructed his book-keeper to debit every one of the twenty-seven with the said item. As I have before remarked, shopkeeper and buyer squared their accounts once a year. The said book-keeper, who afterwards settled in the Orange River Colony (then the Free State), told me that only twelve of the twenty-seven customers raised the objection that they had never bought a saddle at his place; but fifteen settled their accounts without grumbling. Very likely they could not read the account written in German-English, for the shopkeeper was a Teuton.

Another trader, in the township of Winburg, deducted twelve pounds from the weight of every bale of wool he bought from a customer on the plea that wind was blowing while the bales were being weighed in the open. Nor, according to history, were the customers always immaculate in their dealings, and some of them suffered from kleptomania. When discovered, it was generally hushed up, and

the shopkeeper, threatening exposure, was always a gainer in the arrangement of letting bygones be bygones. Weighty iron-stones were now and then found in bales of wool; these, too, for a consideration, were admitted to be mistakes, attributable to the native shearers when engaged in filling the bales.

FOOD AND DRINK.

The favourite beverage of the Boers is certainly coffee. They are as ready to take it at any hour and at every meal as the Anglo-Saxon and the Teuton are their beer. The poor amongst them sometimes adulterated it with burnt rye or barley and chicory, for the sake of economy, but the well-to-do housewife took a pride in brewing you a cup of the real article. The green coffee bean was bought wholesale, and she saw to the proper roasting of it. She did not believe (nor, for the matter of that, do her descendants) in the abominations sold by the trade as real coffee and labelled as such, at railway stations or boarding houses, and swallowed by thousands of modern families as genuine coffee. The said matrons were so anxious that the aroma of the roasted bean should not evaporate that it was only ground as it was required in a little hand-mill standing in the kitchen. They had plenty of time for superintending their household, not being sufficiently advanced to go on a daily round of shopping or taken up with "at homes," etc. Coffee plants were first introduced into the Transvaal by President Marthinus Pretorius, these being sent to him by the Natal firm of Evans & Churchill. They were planted on the north side of Magaliesberg, and prospered. But when the Boers were told that the trees did not bear before the fourth season, most of them gave up coffee growing.

In the same semi-tropical district sugar-cane was tried a few years later. It answered well; but as the farmers had not the machinery for crystallizing,

they could only produce a kind of juice. For this reason, and also because the sugar sold by store-keepers was cheap, the industry was abandoned.

Tea was to be found in most houses, but in the olden days was looked upon as a medicine for colds or for convalescents. When, later on, the wild tea of the Cape Colony got known, it became a general beverage, as it was very cheap and beneficial, belonging to the sarsaparilla family; but it never displaced coffee.

As far as strong drink goes, alcohol was rarely to be found at farms, and only indulged in by men when visiting towns, and then, with few exceptions, in moderation. Now and then, when a Cape Colony hawker visited the farm, a small stock was bought. This was chiefly used in the preparation of certain famous medicines with local roots, which were supposed to cure every ailment the human race is heir to. I could not help noticing that very often round a farm, where such a stock of wholesome medicine was known to exist, many patients made their appearance complaining of all sorts of indispositions, and that a good many doses had to be applied before they became themselves again. But the benevolent matron had the satisfaction, when her stock was exhausted, of ceasing to hear of complaints.

As to food, people were, from their youth, used to plenty. Starvation was unknown even among the very poorest. Up to the early seventies there was an abundance of game in most parts, and the Game Law existed only on paper. When game was wantonly destroyed for the sake of the skins, sheep and cattle had so much increased in number that the poorest had meat at least twice a day at his meals.

Few people cared about vegetables, and they cultivated them chiefly to sell at the nearest market, except pumpkin, which was eaten all over the country. Every housewife was possessed of an oven in which she baked loaves of bread. Bread was provided at every meal ever since corn mills made their appearance in the country. Before that, mealies and milk were its substitute, and sometimes kafir corn or manna. Pork dated from the time when pigs became saleable on the Kimberley market; and, as it formed such a savoury dish, combined with lean beef or mutton in the winter months, every one tried to keep one or more pigs. Few farmers were without poultry or butter. With such possibilities for a well-stocked larder, it is no wonder that most Afrikaners were so stalwart and healthy.

In the way of preserved food, two articles should be mentioned: dried biscuits and biltong. Both, when properly prepared, would last for months, and were invaluable when going on a trip or on commando. The biltong, made of the best parts of oxen or game, differed from the American bucan, inasmuch as it remained far more juicy. The former was slowly dried in the open air, after being slightly salted, whereas the drying of bucan was forced, the meat being drawn through the flames of a wood-fire. As long as game was abundant, biltong-drying was quite an industry in the northern part of the late Free State. I remember, in the early sixties, a mud-sack of that commodity being sold for half a crown on the local market. Though these days are past, we ought to console ourselves that civilization and trade, in introducing tinned meat, has brought about a change of taste, of health, and also imported thorough-bred microbes.

III. GENERAL.

SLAVERY.

The above word was always used as a trump card by missionaries and other enemies of the Boers. There are still many Europeans living who have seen, just as I have done, those so-called slaves in Boer houses. We of the nineteenth century abhor slavery as it was practised by our ancestors as late as the preceding generation; but with all our civilization there are more slaves now than formerly. We only changed the name of the evil, gilded the fetters, and succeeded in making the victims believe they were free.

Whatever may have taken place in other parts of South Africa before the emancipation of slaves (1833) does not belong to my present subject, as I only intend to write about the two late Republics. From what I have personally seen and heard I do not hesitate to describe the so-called slavery under the two defunct Governments as a humane and charitable institution.

In the incessant inter-tribal wars of the blacks, the males of the conquered party were, as a rule, massacred, whilst their women and children became the slaves of the conquerors. The greatest misery in the fate of these prisoners was the certainty of being starved as long as they remained in the hands of their coloured conquerors. Food in these regions was never abundant, as the crops suffered much from locusts, drought, etc., and, in favourable seasons, no provision was made for the future, as the corn was

generally used for brewing beer, and not for food. It stands to reason that under such circumstances the diet of the poor slaves was reduced to a minimum. I was told by a Grahamstown trader—a brother of John Macabe, of Durban, Natal—who travelled every year to Mosilikatze (Mzilikazi) for the sake of bartering ivory, that he counted near the kraal of that Chief 700 of these slaves. He saw them digging edible roots in a swamp, on which they were supposed to find sufficient to keep body and soul together. He described them to me as living skeletons. As these roots lasted only for a season, death from starvation stared them in the face, unless the Chief happened to be in want of powder and lead, when the lives of the unfortunates were saved by being exchanged for the said articles to Portuguese traders. They were no losers in the transaction. It saved a boy or girl of about twelve years old from starvation at a flint-lock apiece (of which the wholesale trade price at that time was twelve shillings sterling). The older and younger individuals were bartered for powder and lead. They were re-sold to the Boers at from three to eight pounds sterling each, according to their age and usefulness. I have seen such purchases. The best assorted stock of slaves was in Lydenburg, at a shop kept by a Portuguese, a certain Mr. Albicini. Most of the above information I got from Boers as well as a countryman of mine, who died a good many years ago in the Orange Free State. Adverse circumstances had compelled him to accept the situation of clerk in the said store, but as he did not like that particular line of business he turned Boer school-master.

From the moment the slave got a Boer master he was saved from starvation.

I have called the practice a charitable institution for the following reasons: The Boer who bought such an individual was perfectly well aware that he or his wife could expect very little service from him for the first year or two. His skeleton was to be brought into shape by much food. That process is always successful with a black man, but especially in those days, when meat, meal, and milk were abundant at every farm, and the patient was not in want of artificial appetisers. After that his brains were exercised by learning a few words of Dutch to render him of use in kitchen work or for herding the flock. But as soon as food and rest had put him into shape it was feared he might renounce the flesh-pots and run away to some kafir town in the neighbourhood, in which case his master would lose the purchase money and all the trouble he had been put to. If, on the other hand, he resigned himself to his fate and remained with his master, he had little to complain of. He was not aware that he was a slave. He knew himself only as Jonas. His highest wishes, viz.: sufficient food and an unlimited supply of dagga (hemp) were daily fulfilled. Home-sickness he never felt, as the land of his birth could only be remembered by him as a scene of bloodshed and starvation. He was also within a sphere of religious instruction, as every Boer in those days was in the habit of holding morning and evening service or prayers, to which the servants were also admitted. Such custom was far more beneficial to their souls, I believe, than what was later on derived by their fellows from gospel-preaching in churches built for that

purpose, where, unfortunately, pomp and vanity and other faults of the white population were brought to their knowledge, and could not but find willing imitators. Jonas and the like of him escaped such dangers, as his attire was conspicuously simple, cheap, always dark-brown, and requiring very little repair. Though he was frequently presented with the worn-out coats or nether garments of his master, Jonas and his contemporaries of the same class never seemed to like these luxuries, quite different in that respect from the later generation of blacks, who spend every penny of their earnings in aping the whites.

According to law, Jonas was supposed to remain a bondsman until his majority. Though his master did not pay him any wages, it was the universal custom to present him now and then with a heifer or she goat. These animals remained with the flock of the master, and, if fortune smiled on him, Jonas became gradually a man of means. At a proper age he married Sabina, his fellow-slave, with whom he had grown up for years, and when, in course of time, a miniature Jonas made his appearance, his parent adopted the honourable title of "old" Jonas, and certainly with such an epithet thought himself as much distinguished as a white individual does when he has been knighted.

It stands to reason that Jonas was now and then flogged. He would have been very much surprised if that part of his education had been neglected. However, that punishment was never administered in the cruel way we Europeans thought proper to inflict on soldiers or sailors, even while we boasted about our civilization. Besides, Jonas escaped the

degrading part of the punishment, as he had no status in society to lose, and nobody afterwards thought the worse of him.

What's in a name? The world calls the state of "apprenticeship" I have tried to describe "slavery," at the same time maintaining that people in a workhouse are free, if not happy. I am sure all the latter institutions would lose their inmates if they had the option of exchanging their boasted state of liberty for Jonas's slavery. And what of the free *personnel* employed under the sweating system in our manufacturing towns, or our free miners spending the better part of a lifetime underground? How would my friend Jonas appreciate such freedom?

Were it not for modern prejudice, common sense might propose that every black be subjected to a kind of apprenticeship from the age of twelve to eighteen. He or she should be left free to choose his own kind of labour. Strict laws should protect him against all cruelty or injustice on the part of his employer. It would save the individual from many false impressions our boasted civilization gives under present misrule, and teach him the value of time and order. Protect the males from being drunkards at the age of sixteen, and the girls from leading irregular lives.

I am aware that there would be strong opposition against this plan.

1. It would be called "interfering with the liberty of the subject" by Englishmen, who allowed slavery in its worst form during part of the nineteenth century, when the press-gang was in full swing, and by continental European nations where military conscription is law. If compelling an individual to fight

and risk his life in a cause he either does not understand nor cares about, and does not consider of sufficient importance to shed one drop of his blood for, is not slavery in its worst form, I do not know what is.

2. Though the apprentices in my scheme would be made acquainted with the Christian religion (undenominational), the rival Churches would for once be united in opposing the plan, as it would interfere with their touting and canvassing for members of their particular sects. The zealots of the Church militant are well aware that the average employer of the apprentices would not allow the boy or girl under his care to run to church twice a day and three times on Sunday. Religious doses in such quantities should be restricted to densely populated kafir centres, where no practical white Christian wants blacks for his service, and where those impressionable individuals, of from twelve to eighteen years of age, would be left at liberty to divide their time between idleness and singing hymns.

3. A far stronger opposition than the Church could raise must be looked for from the Trade. We all know that for two centuries Jupiter has abdicated in favour of Mercury. The latter monarch was sufficiently intelligent to appoint Bacchus, Venus (female rights being acknowledged in Olympus), and Silenus as his Ministers. They all adopted the Christian religion (à la Hlodowig or Clovis). Mercury, as the true protector of trade, with the advice of his Councillors, laid down the following rules in the true spirit of our advanced age:—

- a. Pioneers, under the name of missionaries, shall be sent into all heathen countries to

make the inhabitants thereof acquainted with the gospel, and also with our power and our royal intention to save their souls and improve their earthly happiness.

- b. As there are several denominations amongst our subjects, every one of which professes to teach the real truth, we order and command that every missionary professing the Christian religion, and going on the said errand, shall have our royal support and protection.
- c. We give our royal permission to this enterprise from a real Christian motive, but expect the trade to support it by its wealth.
- d. Should the heathen inhabitants of the said countries fail to see and believe that we act in this matter in a true Christian and benevolent spirit, thereunto instigated by our royal desire to improve their spiritual and worldly interest, and should they be so ungrateful (which Heaven forbid) as to oppose our good intentions and go so far as to molest or kill any of the said missionaries, we shall, *vi et armis*, take possession of five thousand square miles of their country by way of fine to show them the power we possess for carrying out our Christian-like intentions.
- e. We will take it as an unfriendly and hostile act if a chief or ruler of any of the said countries should resist or obstruct the importation of any article of trade whatever brought within his boundaries for sale or

barter. The same applies to the modern weapons of offence and defence, being convinced in our royal mind that what is good and considered necessary for our loyal subjects in their present high state of civilization should not be withheld from our black brethren, but brought to their knowledge and within their reach as soon as possible, and so on.

To these rules the European traders have adhered as the most paying. I, therefore, expect opposition and protest from that side, as my scheme would allow the rising black generation to grow up without intoxicating drinks, without the excesses in dress and style, without overdone forms of religion and their inevitable results, cant and hypocrisy. But a generation of blacks brought up under Spartan simplicity as regards their temporary requirements and with undenominational ideas of the Christian religion would by no means suit either commerce or the Church. Seeing the price consists of millions of customers or proselytes, I think the two combined organisations will muster sufficient force to maintain things *in statu quo ante*. History teaches us that that results in extermination of the masses and degradation of the few survivors, but our manufactories and distilleries must be kept going, and the other part of the enterprise is for the greater glory of God.

In the preceding sketch I had in view, and have tried to describe, things as they were in the Transvaal Republic. In the late Orange Free State apprentices were very rare, and slavery was totally unknown, as well as impossible. The latter Republic

had no kafir tribes within her borders. The kafir population consisted of the remnants left after Chaka's and Mosilikatze's raids, swelled by a sprinkling of Fingoes and Basutos, and, all told, never numbered more than 30 000. There was never a question or a chance of buying slaves from the independent tribes of Basutos or Barolongs across the southern border, and, after the conquest of Weedsie's Hoek in 1856, and of other territory in 1866, no man got an apprentice or a slave from the defeated tribes.

The Orange Free State kafirs did not live in locations, except in Weedsie's Hoek. They were spread over the farms of the Boers wherever they could find room, and were welcomed by the owners, who gave them lands for ploughing, and cattle grazing. For these favours they were supposed to pay by ploughing the owners' lands in due season, and to do the reaping as well as the weeding, in which duties the women usually assisted. The Boer was perfectly satisfied with these conditions from 1850 to 1878, as by that arrangement he avoided cash expenditure. The native, too, was satisfied; but after the discovery of the diamond fields, the liberal wages obtainable there drew many of the young kafirs away. These left their cattle in the care of their parents or wives grazing on the grass of the owner of the farm, while he (the kafir) was earning money in other people's service. The Boer did not think that fair, and he was quite right. From that period the idea was introduced that the kafir squatters should deliver part of their crops to the owner of the ground, and that was kept up to the satisfaction of both parties until the late war.

All male natives paid hut-tax of twenty shillings yearly to the Government. The Boers never inter-

ferred with the religious rites and customs of the kafirs within their boundaries, except that they did not countenance "lobola," for they considered it was one of the worst forms of slavery. They did not take the trouble to oppose it. Any Free State magistrate, however, would have assisted and defended a girl running away from her parents when being compelled to become the wife of a kafir whom she disliked, but who happened to have sufficient cattle to buy her from her father or guardian. With circumcision or the rites followed when boy or girl came to the age of puberty the Boer Government never interfered. The spreading of the gospel in towns, as far as the erection of kafir schools and chapels went, was encouraged, whilst a missionary in Weedsie's Hoek received a stipend from the Government.

THE SPREADING OF THE GOSPEL.

Since the time our grandfathers gave up slave-dealing and loads of negroes ceased to be sent to America, some of their descendants began to move in opposite directions by thinking it right to pet and hug the black man, Christianize and civilize him, all in so many years as it had taken the European peoples centuries to do.

The kafir and the negro, and especially the Hottentot, were told, and are still being told to the present day, that they are quite as good as—if not better than their natural superior, the white man. That idea has created a kind of *Jacquerie*, of far longer duration than the same phenomena presented in Europe in the middle ages, to the detriment of both parties; for, in the latter Continent, Jacques was starved into submission, or ended his days on the battlefield, but our native never starves, and, as yet, we have not come to a general and universal war between white and black.

Volumes have been written and circulated by the clergy and others belonging to Missionary Societies to prove that the Boers were much opposed to the preaching of the gospel to natives; whereas they, as well as every European of whatever nation acquainted with the coloured people of South Africa, only object to the way in which it is communicated to them.

There must be something wrong somewhere if we cannot succeed, after one hundred years' trial, in

spreading the pure gospel to the millions of blacks of this Continent, without the bottle, as well as baneful ideas about luxuries in clothing and other allurements of the trade, slipping in at the same time (as far at any rate as my own experience goes), so that while saving the souls of a few hundreds we destroy thousands, or cause, by teaching them the many vices of the white man, a pandemonium worse than cannibalism, for the sake of what we call civilization. If that process is to go on the time will come when this vast Continent will be full of churches, shops, and canteens, but devoid of aborigines, these having disappeared from the same cause as did the South American Indian, the red man, and the Maori; that is to say, the destroying contact of the white man.

It is not very clear to the white people in Africa why the Church should insist on social equality between white and black, unless it be because of the old ruse of acquiring temporal power by ruling the ignorant masses. We are aware that no European will condescend to ask his butler to take a hand at whist, or to introduce his coachman at his club, though these are his fellow-Christians, fellow-subjects, and fellow-creatures, while it is expected that we white Colonists should be prepared to hobnob with odoriferous kafirs, differing from us in social habits and ideas, who are never called upon to make sacrifices for position, have no status in society to keep up, no *lares* and *penates* to defend, who are allowed plurality of wives, while we are taught that one is sufficient, and punished if we should happen to forget. Besides, no Colonial Government has ever had the courage to abolish the "slavery" practised amongst these our black fellow-

subjects. We write and talk a good deal about propriety and Christianity, but know all the time that we cannot, or will not, prevent them from buying their wives and selling their daughters.

I wonder how far that idea of equality would be appreciated in England could the machinations of Exeter Hall be successful in creating a black Colonial Secretary, a black Lord Chief Justice, or a black Archbishop of York. I think it would look uncanny to the average layman; and why should we white people of South Africa tolerate the giving over of our Colonies to the Church for experimentalizing on the question as to how far the Caucasian and Ethiopian races can be fused socially, economically, and, afterwards, physically?

Luckily, powerful communities like Australia and the United States are beginning to oppose that idiotic theory of equality of white and black, and I do not doubt that the present century will succeed in limiting the clergy of the whole civilized world to the preaching of the gospel, and nothing else.

As they claim to be the successors of the apostles, it is clear that all intermingling on their part in the other questions of the world, which the said apostles left severely alone, is pure usurpation, and the sooner the nations combine in bringing them to their bearings the more useful will the clergy become. Some missionaries, through excess of zeal and lack of wisdom, are doing an immense deal of harm to the coloured population of South Africa. When a new part of country is agreed upon for the preaching of the gospel, the chief of the tribe is generally approached to ask his permission, and when obtained the first move is to build a chapel. Our Saviour and His disciples managed, in most in-

stances without such a building, and there are potent reasons why the missionary of the present day should try the same. I have noticed that such a house of worship makes a wrong impression on a good many coloured people.

In the first place, his or her idea when entering it is that half his conversion is achieved by that very act. As the white people do the same, he considers himself at least half their equal. A second mistake is that the preacher does not discourage from the outset the mania of the members of his flock, especially the female part of them, of making their appearance at church in most ridiculous bodily adornments, trying in every way to imitate the whites in dress. He ought to know to what that might lead with a people for the most part poor and for centuries accustomed to semi-nudity. He also should have sufficient information to be aware that medical men all over the world are of opinion that one of the ways to kill a native is to dress him. There are now few tribes in existence which do not, in common decency, cover their nakedness. That should be sufficient in the eyes of white people who intrude on the territory of the natives on the plea of saving their souls. But no! Trade must make its way and march hand in hand with the gospel!

A few months ago one of the Johannesburg papers reported a speech delivered by a parson in one of the eastern villages of the Transvaal. The subject was equality between white and black. He is certainly a man of courage, worthy of a better cause, for it is no joke to address a crowd of white men who are either born in South Africa or have lived longer than a month in the country, and talk to them about equality with the native. Perhaps.

his utter ignorance of the state of affairs roused his congregation into amusement, as well as pity, especially when he threatened to place himself at the head of a movement of blacks to obtain *vi et armis*, with the assistance of Exeter Hall, what he could not get hold of by means of platform speeches or the Press. He ought to have known that whenever such a calamity should come to pass, Briton, Boer, and the white stranger in the land will stand shoulder to shoulder to uphold the only possible *modus vivendi* in this Continent, viz.: a community formed of white people as rulers, and a happy crowd of justly and wisely governed blacks as wood-choppers and water-carriers. Some people will argue that there are black bishops, black lawyers, and black doctors. I know there are. But do they feel happy and grateful for being brought up as exotics? Would they follow these careers if it were possible to live life over again? I fancy not. We all remember the fable of the fox minus a tail.

There is another instance of misplaced zeal and total lack of wisdom. That is the indiscriminate increase of kafir schools in our towns. People in favour of such a measure plead that the kafir must be educated. Are they so sure of that? Do they not know that society offers no place for educated natives? Certainly not in Africa. If education is indispensable to become a Christian, I am sorry for the bulk of our ancestors who died some centuries ago and could neither sign their names nor read a single word. Still, a good many well-meaning but ignorant people think they do a good work by encouraging and assisting the erection of native schools. Let us see how they answer. When one

happens to be built in your neighbourhood you may be sure it will be kept open for the greater part of the day. Your cook and your kitchen boy are sure to slip away, if not exactly with a thirst for education, certainly to discuss their employers, and for other gossip with a crowd of native friends. While they are so usefully employed, your wife will not object to doing the cooking, the washing, and the scrubbing, at the same time keeping an eye on baby, whilst you can clean and feed the horses, etc. Do not lose your temper because your servants are going through the process of becoming your social equals. Besides, it gives easy employment to numbers of whites as teachers, particularly fit for that work if for nothing else.

TWO WEDDINGS.

In 1856, I passed a few days on a farm in Houtboschrand, about thirty miles to the north-west of Pietermaritzburg, Natal. My own kafir told me that preparations were going on for a native wedding, and that the bride and bridegroom would feel honoured by the presence of white visitors. Though the atmosphere was very depressing and the ceremony was to take place in the open air and in the sun, I decided not to miss an opportunity that might not again present itself. I was not expected to appear in full dress, and therefore put on my coolest suit.

At 2 p.m. five hundred of both sexes had assembled. They soon formed two rows of dancers. It will not take long to describe the toilettes. Every lady and gentleman was *décolleté* to the very soles of the feet; in fact, almost à la Adam and Eve before the latter discovered the apple tree. It was, I am bound to confess, a very unusual sight to an European. It might have been interesting to a surgeon or a sculptor, for the Zulus are splendidly built and proportioned, but I soon had enough of the sight.

The style of dancing was very like the "minuet" of earlier days. It was solemn and performed apparently without much exertion. The event lasted for hours. Every now and then the monotony of the performance was interrupted by one of the male dancers indulging in a "pas-seul," remarkable for a series of high leaps and contortions of the body.

He was generally rewarded by smiles or applause from the marriageable ladies. *Maitresses-de-ballet* were in evidence in the form of elderly matrons, walking round the dancing groups, carrying long sticks as symbols of office. As a rule, they were the reverse of attractive in appearance, but less nude than the younger ones, for they wore a few rags and skins. Refreshments were not offered to the ladies at any bar or buffet. How they kept up strength for the enormous and continuous exertion of stamping and dancing through the night until dawn I do not know. Zulu females are rarely seen to feed or drink in the presence of males, and it may be that etiquette was also kept up during the feast. The weaker sex may have found sufficient opportunities of eating and drinking on the sly. The gentlemen, however, fared very well. The father of the bride, according to custom, had killed a fat ox for the occasion, and provided an unlimited supply of kafir beer; both kinds of refreshment were continually partaken of by the hungry and thirsty. A piece of meat was torn or cut from the dead ox, was partly roasted, sprinkled with ashes in the absence of salt, and then eaten. After a good pull at the beer new strength accrued for again joining in the dance.

As artificial light was out of the question, the event, as a rule, took place about full moon. There was a total absence of such noise as, on occasions of this kind, is produced by the tribes of Central Africa—in courtesy called music. Since commerce has brought the concertina to the knowledge of the Zulus, I do not doubt they belabour that instrument nowadays at wedding festivals, but at the time I write of the only sound by which the time or measure of the dance was regulated consisted of

the stamping of feet, accompanied by a kind of guttural sound produced by the middle-aged or elderly warriors seated on the ground at a distance. These would have thought it *infra dig.* to take part in so stale a performance, for they could still remember the glorious war dances of Chaka's and Dingaan's time. They did not object, however, to visiting the dead ox and the beer pots now and then.

In case the bride's father belonged to the well-to-do class, the feast sometimes lasted a week. The young couple, not being acquainted with the custom of a wedding trip, were present during the whole feast. During the first day they were expected to go round the crowd to exhibit their comeliness, so that their beauty (which, according to the ideas of the tribe, meant obesity) could be admired or criticised. Through the almost total absence of clothing the only remaining subjects for discussion were their limbs and proportions, and, it may be taken for granted, the unmarried lady judges amongst the guests exhibited the same amount of generosity and wisdom as their white European sisters do in a ball-room when discussing the "belle" of the evening.

After the halcyon days, the bridegroom generally went away in search of work in order to earn money for buying the oxen required by his father-in-law as the price of his daughter. The young wife remained during his absence with her own parents. She and her future children were regarded and held as security for the debt that had been incurred. Prices for marriageable girls varied between ten and twenty cattle in those days, not according to the beauty of the bride, but to the rank her father held in Zulu society.

Thirty years later I resided in a township in the late Orange Free State, and enjoyed the privilege of seeing another wedding. A Zulu had won the love of a Basuto maiden. As proof of their conversion to *Christian forms*, they had adopted white people's names, and were now going to give yet stronger proofs of civilization by going through the ceremony of a Christian marriage under the names of Mr. Paul and Miss Philippine. A white missionary was to tie the knot in a kafir church, assisted by a catechist, called Brother Hieronymus, who six months before enjoyed the billet of bottle-washer in a canteen, but suddenly got converted from his spirited surroundings to an ecclesiastical black coat and a sanctimonious face. The bride was dressed in white silk, and as a set-off bedecked with many coloured ribands. A few bridesmaids accompanied her, also dressed like Europeans. The happy groom, as well as his best man, had spared no expense to look like Christians in dress. The ladies had been successful in hiding their chocolate complexion under veils and gloves, and the only possible suspicion, to a casual observer, that they might belong to the Ethiopian race was the strong odour that surrounded them, neutralized by a generous application of lavender. As feet of No. 12 could not be coaxed into boots of size No. 10 (the largest number obtainable in local shops), it soon became clear that the bride and her maids could not walk to church in such "torments," and that the only practical plan was to go bare-footed. But that again was too shocking to their newly-adopted religion and civilization. It would look as if they were still kafirs. Luckily, the difficulty was overcome. A local shopkeeper came to the rescue by offering his spider and horses. That

real Samaritan took compassion on the new converts for two reasons. In the first place, his humanity would not allow the duel between No. 10 and No. 12 to go on if it could be avoided, and, secondly, it was such a good advertisement to show that trade and civilization understood each other in spreading fashions and forms amongst the blacks.

The reverend missionary, after performing the ceremony, reported to his superiors that he had married two most promising members of his flock, and that he could not but think that the pomp and ceremonies of St. Nicephorus Church would attract more customers in that line, to the dismay of the opposition. The trade hoped that the stylish performance of the wedding would induce future brides and grooms to follow suit and buy liberally at shops, as Mr. Paul had done. As the latter, however, had bought mostly on credit, the time came round when he was asked to pay up. In that emergency he reaped the first fruits of his education. Having been taught reading and writing, he forged passes and drink permits for less advanced fellow-kafirs, and got twelve months' hard labour and fifteen lashes for his trouble. His beloved spouse, on the other hand, having had a taste of luxury and civilization, found herself suddenly in straitened circumstances, but was too proud to return to the parental home, where luxury and fashions were unknown quantities. She committed theft, not of food, but of a silk gown and a stylish pair of boots, so that the Landdrost gave her free board and lodging for a year. *Sic transit gloria!*

JERUSALEM-GOERS.

In the fifties I, and two others, travelled in what was then called the Transvaal. After a short stay in Potchefstroom, the capital, I went to Rustenburg, which place was more than usually crowded, as the Volksraad was to hold a sitting there in a few days. We had some difficulty in finding accommodation, and, but for the kindness of Mr. W. Robinson, a local storekeeper and proprietor of a large house, would have been obliged to live in our travelling wagon. Hospitality was one of the virtues of the African people in those days—a good deal reduced since the discovery of diamonds and gold and the introduction of pseudo-civilized manners.

I doubt whether Rustenburg could boast of more than thirty houses at that period. The rumour that three “thoroughbred” Hollanders had arrived was, therefore, quickly known to everybody in the place. After supper the parlour was fairly filled with visitors, mostly, if not all, Africans, who in those days were far from holding a favourable opinion in regard to Hollanders, though sufficiently full of curiosity to meet them. The said impression was caused by the few Hollanders then resident in the republic having taken different sides in the abstract question agitating everybody’s mind as to “whether the Transvaal Church should acknowledge the supremacy of the Cape Synod or otherwise.” In the absence of other topics, that subject was thrashed out *ad infinitum*.

Travellers meeting in the road never omitted, in a land in which newspapers did not exist, to tap each other for news. The vehicles were brought to a standstill and the usual questions were put: Who are you? whence do you come? where going? After replying, the next was always: What is your opinion about the Synod? We soon got disgusted with that quasi-religious conversation, and made our interrogators understand we did not care a brass farthing about the matter, not then aware we were in danger of being taken for rank infidels.

A second reason for suspicion was that some Hollanders had tried to make the Boers believe that a Dutch fleet would land an army of troops in Natal, under the command of the Prince of Orange (afterwards William II.), to assist them in reconquering Natal. As many years had passed since that promise, and neither Prince nor fleet had turned up, the veracity of Hollanders in general had become suspicious in the eyes of the population. Hence, it took some time before confidence was established between us. They then found out that we had no particular *penchant* to talk about Prince or Synod, and the conversation became a great deal easier. Each of the three Hollanders became the centre of a group of Boers, who put all sorts of questions with the view to seeking information. To my share fell the question: How far is Jerusalem from here? To save my readers from the astonishment I felt at the oddity of that geographical query, I shall have to make the following digression:—

The most northerly kafir tribe visited by the emigrant farmers was that of Manikos (Manukuza), apparently in the vicinity of what is now called Gasaland, where they had met Arabian traders and

seen Arabian horses, from which fact they drew the conclusion that the sons of Ishmael could not live far from the sons of Abraham, and that, therefore, Jerusalem, the capital of the latter, could not be very distant.

Only a good many years later could I form an idea of what possible interest the emigrants had in Jerusalem, and why they wanted to know whether it was within possible reach of their abodes. It seems that expressions in the Bible, such as "the land of promise," "the gigantic bunch of grapes of Joshua and Caleb," "the abundance of milk and honey," "the balm of Gilead," etc., had given rise to the impression in their minds that Palestine was a real El-dorado, free from English influence, free from taxes, where one could exist peaceably with the minimum of exertion and in perfect freedom. The idea of an exodus to that country had been for a long time discussed by them, but they still wanted information as to distance and the difficulties of the road thither.

When preparing a suitable answer to their question, I at once came to the conclusion that it would be of no use to talk about degrees of latitude or distance in miles, these being unknown quantities to my questioners. Addressing an old man, whose age convinced me that he must have taken part in the "great Trek" from the Cape Colony, I asked him whether he could tell me the distance from Rustenburg to Capetown. His answer was: Six weeks to two months by ox wagon, if all conditions were favourable. That gave me a standard of distance within the comprehension of my questioners. Quickly drawing a rough sketch of the African Continent on the white-washed wall, with two dots

indicating Capetown and Rustenburg, and showing the Red Sea and Palestine in Asia, I proceeded to answer them as follows:—

1. That Jerusalem was about seven or eight times the distance from Rustenburg to Capetown.

2. That the difficulties of rivers, climate, hostile tribes, forests, swamps, fever, and tsetse were insurmountable.

3. That there was "no Moses amongst them to facilitate the crossing of the Red Sea.

4. That Palestine was at present a semi-desert; the rivers mostly dried up, the population the reverse of friendly towards all strangers, and Jerusalem an accumulation of miserable houses, built on the ruins of the old town.

This description was not palatable or encouraging to the would-be Jerusalem-goers, and the greater part of them were unwilling to believe it. They argued that I must be mistaken in the distance. They were sure of crossing the big rivers, even if they had to wait for months on the banks until the water ran down. They would build or find flat-bottomed boats on the shores of the Red Sea. One of them had a pictorial Bible at home where Jerusalem was represented as a city of palaces and large buildings. Their Bible, of course, told them nothing of the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. Aunt Mita, one of their famous quack doctresses, had long previously invented a remedy against the bite of the tsetse fly, consisting of a concoction of rue and ammonia; and last, but not least, the Arabs, Turks, and other tribes occupying the promised land knew as little as all foreigners did of the handling of a gun, and could be easily overcome.

I felt that further discussion was useless. A few months later I heard that the plan was far from being abandoned, that a certain Mr. Ensels, Commandant of Marico District, had been chosen leader of that New Exodus, and that the Widow Gouws, owner of a splendid and well-stocked farm on the south side of Magali's mountain range, was busy preparing wagons and food for the trip.

It stands to reason that had the enterprise been actually carried into effect not a living soul would have reached Jerusalem. It was, therefore, a blessing that the death of the said Ensels put an end to the scheme.

By the Treaty of Sand River, in 1852, the emigrant Boers had become undisputed owners of what was then called the Transvaal. But a great number were not satisfied with the situation, and wanted to move north or westwards, and this for many reasons. They found themselves cut-off from the sea by English and Portuguese Colonies. To the north and west the country was comparatively open. The large native tribes, though stirred up by the missionaries against the Boers, did not cause the latter any alarm. There were thousands of burghers alive who had fought and conquered the famous warriors of Dingaan (Dingana), and the Bechuana tribes were as nothing in comparison to Zulus.

Hence the whole Continent was open to them to the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts. The interior of Africa had not been appropriated at that time by European Powers under the plea of creating a "sphere of influence." Had the whole Boer population moved on to the west, as some of them did

twenty-five years later towards Humpata, their dream of establishing a South African State might have been realised, provided always a discovery of gold mines in their new fatherland did not corrupt their rulers and cause an influx of overwhelming numbers of foreigners.

THE UNICORN.

The majority of white inhabitants in South Africa held, and possibly hold to the present day, that such an animal used to exist, as its fac-simile is to be seen on the English national coat-of-arms. A popular legend has it that the Crown once offered £40,000 for a living specimen. I never saw this confirmed in print, perhaps owing to the irregularity of the "Government Gazette" coming to hand in the early days.

In 1860, the Natal public discussed the feasibility of hunting up the said animal. I was there at the time, and remember very well the pros and cons on the subject.

The arguments in favour were:—

1. Sketches of the unicorn are to be found in many caves and on rocks in South Africa, especially in the Cape Colony, together with pictures of other living and known animals, drawn by Bushmen.

2. A Zulu in the service of Mr. A. Osborn, a Natal Colonist, told his employer that he, in company with five other kafirs, had explored the plateau of the Drakensberg proper, where they had come to a swamp of the extent of one day's travelling,* and there and then found six animals of dark-brown colour

*In February, 1866, during the Basuto war, a strong column of the Free State Army patrolled the said plateau, which before that time had been *terra incognita* to white people and discovered such a swamp (or vley), but no unicorns.

about the size of a blesbok, having a long tail, with a long, straight horn on the head. They proved to be of a very ferocious nature, as they attacked at once, with the result that his five mates were killed, and he only survived by scaling a rock which luckily happened to be within reach.

3. A Basuto in the service of Daniel Bezuidenhout, then living in the district of Bethlehem (who died in 1894), had offered to show his master (for a cow and calf as remuneration) a kind of animal on the Drakensberg, which he described as the Zulu had done, adding that it was so fierce as to attack its own shadow! The said Bezuidenhout, who visited Natal every year for trading purposes, had communicated these particulars.

4. As no white man had ever explored the Drakensberg plateau between the sources of the Tugela and Cornetspruit, where the Zulu referred to had located the said swamp, it is just possible that the unicorn thrives there, prevented by its natural shyness from migrating to lower and less lonesome pastures.

The opponents argued as follows:—

1. Supposing the animal existed at one time in South Africa, why has nobody ever found a petrified carcass or even a single bone, as is the case with all other species?

2. None of the black tribes have a name for it in their language.

3. That it is not extinct, like the dodo, mastodon, or mammoth, which have all left evidences of their existence, but is a mere popular fiction like the satyr and the dragon.

4. That the pictures to be found in Bushmen's caves are unsuccessful profile sketches of the rhinoceros.

As the enterprise was not a very costly affair, those in favour of it might have persevered, and taken shares in a Natal Unicorn Company (limited), but for the hostile attitude at that time of the Paramouat Chief, Moshesh. The country to be explored, though only occupied by a few Bushmen, was undoubtedly within his domain. It was not approachable from the Natal side, as passes through the Drakensberg were not known at that time. The gap through the mountains, by which the Griqua Chief, Adam Kok, managed to enter Griqualand East, was only discovered at a later period. Hence, the only possible road was up the Namagazi (Elands River) and through Weedsie's Hoek. From there Basuto guides would have been indispensable; but, considering the unfriendly feeling of their Chief and the known dread of the tribe for the few Bushmen still to be found on the mountain, the Natalians despaired of procuring a specimen. For these reasons the plan was abandoned.

My humble opinion is that the unicorn never existed in the flesh, and that the sketches on rocks originated from the following event:—

According to historical records, the then Dutch Government sent, at some time in the eighteenth century, two scientists from Capetown northward to explore the interior for geological and zoological purposes. Having passed the region occupied by whites they had to employ Bushmen as guides. As likely as not they were provided with pictures of all known and unknown animals. These were shown to

the servants to explain the errand of their masters, very likely promising extra remuneration for specimens found. The Bushman, being provided with a much-developed bump of imitation, like his cousin, the monkey (according to Darwin), copied them afterwards on rocks, and thereby immortalized them for the instruction and bewilderment of future generations.

KISMET.

Newly occupied countries generally offer better opportunities of making a fortune than old settled ones with their millions of competitors. Two conditions, however, have to be fulfilled viz.: There must be sufficient wealth in the land, and the individual bent on becoming rich must have luck as well as aptitude for the realisation of his wish.

Before 1870 very few people made their fortune in South Africa. One may be sure that many tried, but the fulfilment of the first condition was wanting. There was very little money in circulation. Banks started in Natal and the Cape Colony with a capital of £10,000. The trading portion of the community paid from ten to twelve per cent. on temporary loans without grumbling. Farmers handled very little money. Household necessities were, as a rule, bartered for with the produce of the land. If now and then a large troop of oxen was sold for cash the money was deposited in a box or other safe place, and, perhaps, not touched for years, unless a friend came to borrow it in order to add to his own hoardings to make up the purchase price of a farm or a new wagon. If any interest were charged, it was not over three per cent., but very frequently the borrower got it without any being demanded. An individual owner of outstanding sums, in the aggregate amounting to one or two hundred pounds, soon became known by the name of "rich" Peter or Henry, "a man who did not know the end of his wealth."

More money began to circulate after the Kimberley market was established. Food was supplied entirely by the two Republics, and this continued until the Cape railway was built. Had it not been for the discovery of diamonds in that region, and, consequently the demand for oxen and cereals to feed its population, probably there would not have been sufficient money in the country to pay for the farms recently sold to the public in the "Conquered Territory," at the rate of from £15 to £40 each.

Many a new-comer from over the sea has made the remark to me that if he had lived in this country he would, while they were cheap, have bought as many farms as his means allowed, and then kept them until land rose to a good price. It is all very well to say so now, when farms are being sold at a higher price per morgen than whole properties of from 3,000 to 4,000 morgen changed hands for in the early days. I shall give a few prices later on for which farms were sold. It will thereby become plain that only fate or kismet prevented people possessed of sufficient means from speculating largely in ground when the prices were so low. There were a few speculative people in those days who bought up property, but they sold out when a reasonable profit was offered. Nobody had any idea that land would ever run up to its present value, for nobody was aware that two inheritances were in store for South Africa, namely, the diamond fields and gold fields, which discoveries, though they have spoiled and ultimately ruined the original inhabitants, have enormously increased the price of land. Other reasons were the uncertainty of a continued peaceful occupation, as so many kafir tribes surrounded

both Republics. Hence, everybody admitted the possibility of a forced exodus or a removal to lagers. Under such difficulties and fears speculators were very ready to part with their property as soon as a moderate profit could be made.

In 1859 I resided in Bloemfontein. A merchant in that place, hearing I had made ready for a trip to Natal, asked me to buy twelve farms for him in the Harrismith district. I got hold of eleven for £25 apiece and one for £40. Their average area was 6,000 acres. Within twelve months he disposed of them, on the average, for £60 to a group of farmers from Riversdale, in the Cape Colony, who desired to settle close to one another. Except for that wind-fall he might have had to keep them many years. They are now worth £3,000 apiece. It was the man's kismet that he did not wait until better times.

During the same trip I met, on the Drakensberg range, a young man who bought burgher rights, which meant the rights or titles every inhabitant of six months' residence had to open ground in the Orange Free State. By attending all Land Commissions in person, he managed to become the owner of eighty-three farms before 1865. From that period until 1868, as the Civil Courts in the country were closed, he could not be pressed for the quit-rent which every land-owner was supposed to pay to Government once a year. After the peace with the Basutos, he owed between three and four hundred pounds in the shape of land taxes, for which he had to sell some ten or twelve of his farms. This clearly demonstrates that land had not much value, though everyone was convinced that the country had entered upon a period of peace and prosperity.

In 1859 I measured seven farms along Kaalspruit, near Bloemfontein. The owners offered their property to me at from £200 to £300 per farm on ten years' credit. They were very large, near the capital, and cultivated. They gave as their reasons for not remaining any longer, the abundance of game which ate up the grass, as well as the heavy taxes on landed property, in those days amounting to £1 10s. for every farm per annum, independently of its area. I declined with thanks. Within twelve months one of those religious quarrels, so often seen in the world, took place in the district of Burgersdorp, causing a good many families to migrate. They settled down between Reddersburg and Bloemfontein, purchasing the very farms for as many thousands as I had been asked hundreds. Here was kismet with a vengeance!

In June of that year I was entrusted by the Government of the Orange Free State with beaconing a straight line between Ramah and Davidsgraf (David's Tomb). It took me a fortnight, during which time I must have walked over diamondiferous ground without being in the least aware of it. This is not so wonderful after all, if one takes into consideration that, ten years later, experts with half-a-dozen letters after their names, reported to the Cape Government that there was no reason for thinking that precious stones were to be found in that country.

Before 1860, stands or building plots were obtainable at public auctions in Bloemfontein for five pounds sterling each. Some changed hands in 1883 for over a thousand. Why did I not buy a few at the proper time? The reason is very clear. Fate whispered in my ear: "Do not!"

The most ungenerous trick Dame Fortune played me, one which has caused me to cut her entirely, is as follows: I brought more than one gun with me for hunting purposes when visiting the Transvaal in the fifties. One of them, a rifle of large calibre, attracted the attention of the Boers, who only had seen and used flint-locks. When they saw it could throw a conical ball a thousand yards, wounding or killing game, I was offered tempting prices for it: First a span of oxen, but as I was neither a trader nor an ox-buyer I kept my gun. The next offer was half a farm on the southern slope of Magaliesberg. Even that I courteously refused. Had there not been such a thing as kismet, or had the above-mentioned lady not taken a dislike to me, I might have been moved to exchange the coveted gun for a Witwatersrand farm, in those days a drug in the market, as very few people liked its cold climate and coarse grass. Nobody had the least suspicion that gold reefs abounded there, and I again missed the opportunity of becoming a millionaire.

I promised above to give a few instances of prices of landed property in the early days. A few farmers are still alive who paid two oxen or equivalent value for a well-wooded farm along the Vet or Sand River. The farm Bloemhof, joining the town lands of Winburg, was the property of a man who removed to the north of the Vaal River in order to escape the unsettled state of affairs after the battle of Boomplaats. He was offered £7 10s. for his land, and to the surprise of his friends declined to sell at that price. Its market value is now from two to three pounds per morgen. I will not go on enumerating other transactions, though I know of many more, but close the

-list by mentioning the lowest price on record for which land changed hands.

After the death of Surgeon-Major Fraser, instructions reached Bloemfontein in 1859 to the effect that all the landed property he had bought during his stay in the Orange River Sovereignty (1848-1854) was to be sold. One of these properties, situated near the confluence of Modder River and Kaalspruit, and well provided with wood, fetched what was considered a record price in those days. Before that time landed property changed hands simply on the strength of a written document between seller and buyer, and the incomplete land registry of the times only mentioned to whom the farm was originally granted by the Land Commission. Inconvenience arose in tracing the successive owners who were required to pay the fees due on the different sales. Each of them had to declare for what amount he had parted with his property. During that investigation it came to light that the original grantee, the then Sheriff of Bloemfontein, had sold the said farm on the very day it was granted to him for a bottle of brandy!