

ФРЕДЕРИК МАРРИЕТ

THE MISSION

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The Mission

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Frederick Marryat

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CHAPTER I. THE EXPEDITION

It was in the autumn of the year 1828, that an elderly and infirm gentleman was slowly pacing up and down in a large dining-room. He had apparently finished his dinner, although it was not yet five o'clock, and the descending sun shone bright and warm through the windows, which were level with the ground, and from which there was a view of a spacious park, highly ornamented with old timber. He held a newspaper in one hand, and had the other behind his back, as if for support, for he was bent forward, and looked very feeble and emaciated.

After pacing for some time, he sat down in an easy chair and remained in deep thought, holding the newspaper in both his hands.

This old gentleman's name was Sir Charles Wilmot. He had in early life gone out to India as a writer, and after remaining there for a few years, during which he had amassed a handsome fortune, was advised to leave the country for a time on account of his health. He returned to England on furlough, and had not been there more than six months when the death, without issue, of his eldest brother, Sir Henry Wilmot, put him in possession of the entailed estates and of the baronetcy.

This decided him not to return to India for his wife and three daughters, whom he had left out there, but to write, desiring them to return home by the first ship. The reply which he received was most painful; his wife and two of his daughters had been carried off by the cholera, which had been very fatal during the previous rainy season. His remaining daughter was about to sail, in obedience to his wishes, in the *Grosvenor* East-Indiaman, under the care of Colonel and Mrs. James, who were near connections.

This was a heavy blow with which it pleased God to visit him in his prosperity, and was almost a total wreck of all his hopes and anticipations. But he was a good man and a religious one, and he bowed in humility to the dispensation, submitting with resignation to his loss, and still thankful to Heaven that it had graciously spared one of the objects of his affections to console him, and to watch his declining years.

Sir Charles Wilmot took possession of the family mansion and estate in Berkshire, in which he was still residing at the time our history commences. By degrees he became more resigned, and waited with anxiety for the return of his only daughter, who now seemed more dear to him than ever. He employed himself in making preparations for her reception, fitting up her apartments in the Oriental style which she had been accustomed to, and devising every little improvement and invention which he thought would give pleasure to a child of ten years old.

But it pleased Heaven that Sir Charles should be more severely chastised; the *Grosvenor's* time of arrival had elapsed, and still she was not reported in the Channel; week after week of anxiety and suspense passed slowly away, and the East-India ship did not make her appearance. It was supposed that she had been captured by the enemy, but still no tidings of her capture were received. At length, however, this state of anxiety and doubt was put an end to by the dreadful intelligence that the ship had been wrecked on the east coast of Africa, and that nearly the whole of the crew and passengers had perished. Two men belonging to her had been brought home by a Danish East-Indiaman, and shortly after the first intelligence, these men arrived in London, and gave a more particular detail of what had occurred.

Sir Charles, in a state of feverish anxiety, as soon as he heard of their arrival, hastened up to town to question these men; and the result of his interrogatories fully convinced him that he was now quite bereaved and childless. This was the last blow and the most severe; it was long before he could resign himself to the unsearchable dispensations of Providence; but time and religion had at last overcome all his repining feelings,—all disposition to question the goodness or wisdom of his Heavenly Father, and he was enabled to say, with sincerity, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

But although Sir Charles was thus left childless, as years passed away, he at last found that he had those near to him for whom he felt an interest, and one in particular who promised to deserve all his regard. This was his grand-nephew, Alexander Wilmot, who was the legal heir to the title and entailed property,—the son of a deceased nephew, who had fallen during the Peninsular war.

On this boy Sir Charles had lavished those affections which it pleased Heaven that he should not bestow upon his own issue, and Alexander Wilmot had gradually become as dear to him as if he had been his own child. Still the loss of his wife and children was ever in his memory, and as time passed on, painful feelings of hope and doubt were occasionally raised in Sir Charles's mind, from the occasional assertions of travelers, that all those did not perish who were supposed so to do when the *Grosvenor* was wrecked, and that, from the reports of the natives, some of them and of their descendants were still alive. It was a paragraph in the newspaper, containing a renewal of these assertions, which had attracted the attention of Sir Charles, and which had put him in the state of agitation and uneasiness in which we have described him at the opening of this chapter.

We left him in deep and painful thought, with the newspaper in his hands. His reveries were interrupted by the entrance of Alexander Wilmot, who resided with him, being now twenty-two years of age, and having just finished his college education. Alexander Wilmot was a tall, handsome young man, very powerful in frame, and very partial to all athletic exercises; he was the best rower and the best cricketer at Oxford, very fond of horses and hunting, and an excellent shot; in character and disposition he was generous and amiable, frank in his manner, and obliging to his inferiors. Every one liked Alexander Wilmot, and he certainly deserved to be liked, for he never injured or spoke ill of any body. Perhaps his most prominent fault was obstinacy; but this was more shown in an obstinate courage and perseverance to conquer what appeared almost impossible, and at the greatest risk to himself; he was of that disposition that he would hardly get out of the way of a mad bull if it crossed his path, but risk his life probably, and to no purpose; but there is no perfection in this world, and it was still less to be expected in a young man of only twenty-two years of age.

"Well, uncle, I've conquered him," said Alexander, as he came into the room, very much heated with exercise.

"Conquered whom, my boy?" replied Sir Charles.

"The colt; I've backed him, and he is now as gentle as a lamb; but he fought hard for two hours at least."

"Why should you run such risk, Alexander, when the horsebreaker would have broke him just as well?"

"But not so soon, uncle."

"I did not know that you were in such want of a horse as to require such hurry; I thought you had plenty in the stable."

"So I have, uncle, thanks to you, more than I can use; but I like the pleasure—the excitement."

"There you state the truth, my dear Alexander; when you have lived as long as I have, you will find more pleasure in quiet and repose," replied Sir Charles, with a heavy sigh.

"Something has disturbed you, my dear uncle," said Alexander, going up to Sir Charles and taking his hand; "what is it, sir?"

"You are right, Alexander; something has unsettled me, has called up painful feelings and reminiscences; it is that paragraph in the newspaper."

Alexander was now as subdued almost as his uncle; he took a chair and quietly read the paragraph.

"Do you think there is any foundation for this, my dear sir?" said he, after he had read it.

"It is impossible to say, my dear boy; it may be so, it has often been asserted before. The French traveler Le Vaillant states that he received the same information, but was prevented from ascertaining the truth; other travelers have subsequently given similar accounts. You may easily credit the painful anxiety which is raised in my mind when I read such a statement as this. I think I see my poor Elizabeth, the wife or slave to some wild savage; her children, merciful Heaven! my grandchildren, growing up as the brutes of the field, in ignorance and idolatry. It is torture, my dear Alexander—absolute torture, and requires long prayer and meditation to restore my mind to its usual tone, and to enable me to bow to the dispensations of the Divine will."

"Although I have long been acquainted with the general statement, my dear uncle, respecting the loss of the ship, I have never yet heard any such details as would warrant this apprehension of yours. It is generally supposed that all perished, perished indeed most miserably, except the few men who made their way to the Cape, and returned to England."

"Such was the supposition, my dear boy, but subsequent reports have to a certain degree contradicted it, and there is reason to believe that all did not perish who were accounted as dead. If you have nothing particularly to engage you at this moment, I will enter into a detail of what did occur, and of the proofs that the fate of a large portion, among which that of your aunt Elizabeth, was never ascertained."

"If it will not be too painful to you, my dear uncle, I will most gladly hear it."

"I will not dwell longer upon it than is necessary, Alexander; believe me, the subject is distressing, but I wish you to know it also, and then to give me your opinion. You are of course aware that it was on the coast of Caffraria, to the southward of Port Natal, that the *Grosvenor* was wrecked. She soon divided and went to pieces, but by a sudden—I know not that I can say a *fortunate*—change of wind, yet such was the will of Heaven,—the whole of the crew and passengers (with the exception of sixteen who had previously attempted to gain the shore by a hawser, and one man who was left on board in a state of intoxication) were all safely landed, even to the little children who were coming home in the vessel; among whom was my poor Elizabeth."

Alexander made no observation when Sir Charles paused for a while: the latter then continued:

—
"By the time that they had all gained the shore, the day was far spent; the natives, who were of the Caffre race, and who had been busy in obtaining all the iron that they could from the mainmast, which had drifted on shore, left the beach at dark. The wretched sufferers lighted fires, and having collected some casks of beef and flour, and some live stock, they remained on the rocks during that night. The next morning the captain proposed that they should make their way to Cape Town, the Dutch settlement, to which they all unanimously consented; certainly a most wild proposition, and showing very little judgment."

"Could they have done otherwise, my dear uncle?"

"Most certainly; they knew that they were in a country of lawless savages, who had already come down and taken by force every thing that they could lay their hands upon. The Captain calculated that they would reach Cape Town in sixteen or seventeen days. How far his calculation was correct, is proved by the fact that those who did reach it at last were one hundred and seventeen days on their journey. But even admitting that the distance could have been performed in the time stated by the captain, the very idea of attempting to force their way through a country inhabited by savage people, with such a number of helpless women and children, and without any arms for their defense, was indeed an act of folly and madness, as it eventually proved."

"What then should have been their plan?"

"Observe, Alexander, the ship was wrecked not a cable's length from the shore, firmly fixed upon a reef of rocks upon which she had been thrown; the water was smooth, and there was no difficulty in their communication. The savages, content with plundering whatever was washed on shore, had to the time of their quitting the rocks left them uninjured. They might have gone on board again, have procured arms to defend themselves and the means of fortifying their position against any attempt of the savages, who had no other weapons but assaguays or spears, and then might have obtained the provisions and other articles necessary for their support. Armed as they might have been, and numerous as they were, for there were one hundred and fifty souls on board at the time of the wreck, they might have protected themselves until they had built boats or small vessels out of the timber of the wreck; for all their carpenters and blacksmiths were safely landed on shore with them. By taking this course they might have coasted along shore, and have arrived without difficulty at the Cape."

"Most certainly, sir, it would have been the most judicious plan."

"The captain must have been very deficient in judgment to have acted as he did. He had every thing to his hand—the means—the men to build the boats, provisions, arms, sails and cordage, and yet he threw all these chances away, and attempted to do what was impossible."

"He was not one of those who were saved, I believe, sir?"

"No, he is one of those who have not been heard of; but to proceed: The first day of their march from the site of the wreck ought to have been a warning to them to turn back. The savages robbed them of every thing and threw stones at them. A Dutchman of the name of Trout, who had fled to the Caffre country for some murder he had committed in the colony, fell in with them and told them the attempt was impracticable, from the number of savage nations, the width of the rivers, the desert countries without water, and the number of wild beasts which they would encounter; but still they were not persuaded, and went on to their destruction. They were not five miles from the wreck at the time, and might have returned to it before night."

"May it not fairly be supposed that after such a dreadful shipwreck any thing was considered preferable by the major portion of them, especially the passengers, to re-embarking?"

"It may be so; but still it was a feeling that was to be surmounted, and would have been, had they been counseled by a judicious leader; for he might fairly have pointed out to them,—without re-embarkation, how are you to arrive in England?"

"Very true, uncle. Pray continue."

"From the accounts given by the seamen who returned, before they had traveled a week they were attacked by a large party of natives, to whose blows and ill-treatment as they passed along they had hitherto submitted; but as in this instance the natives appeared determined to massacre them, they resisted as well as they could, and, being nearly one hundred men in force, succeeded in driving them off, not without receiving many severe wounds. After a few days' more traveling, their provisions were all expended, and the seamen began to murmur, and resolved to take care of themselves, and not to be encumbered with women and children. The consequence was, that forty-three of the number separated from the rest, leaving the captain and all the male and female passengers and children (my dear Elizabeth among them), to get on as they could."

"How cruel!"

"Yes! but self-preservation is the first law of nature, and I fear it is in vain to expect that persons not under the influence of religious principles will risk their lives, or submit to much self-denial, for the sake of alleviating the miseries of others. The reason given for this separation was, that it was impossible to procure food for so large a number, and that they would be more likely to obtain sustenance when divided. The party who thus proceeded in advance encountered the most terrible difficulties; they coasted along the seashore because they had no other food than the shell-fish found on the rocks; they had continually to cross rivers from a mile to two miles wide; they were kept from their slumbers by the wild beasts which prowled around them, and at length they endured so

much from want of water, that their sufferings were extreme. They again subdivided and separated, wandering they hardly knew where, exposed to a burning sun, without clothing and without food. One by one they sat down and were left behind to die, or to be devoured by the wild beasts before they were dead. At last they were reduced to such extremity, that they proposed to cast lots for one to be killed to support the others; they turned back on their route, that they might find the dead bodies of their companions for food. Finally, out of the whole crew, three or four, purblind and staggering from exhaustion, craving for death, arrived at the borders of the colony, where they were kindly received and gradually recovered."

"You now speak of the first party who separated from the captain and the passengers, do you not, uncle?"

"Yes."

"And what became of the captain's party?"

"No tidings were heard of them; their fate was unknown; it was long supposed that they had all perished; for if the sufferings of the seamen, inured to toil and danger, had been so great, what chance was there for helpless women and children? But after some years, there was a report that they had been saved, and were living with the savages. Le Vaillant first mentioned it, and then it died away and was not credited; but since that, the reports of various travelers appear to give confirmation to what Le Vaillant asserted. The paragraph you have now read in the newspaper has again renewed the assertion, and the parties from whom it proceeds are by all accounts worthy of credence. You may imagine, my dear boy, what a pang it gives me when I read these reports,—when I reflect that my poor girl, who was with that party, may at this moment be alive, may have returned to a state of barbarism,—the seeds of faith long dead in her bosom,—now changed to a wild, untutored savage, knowing no God."

"But, my dear uncle, allowing that my aunt is alive, she was not so young at the time of the wreck as to forget entirely what she had been taught."

"That is possible; but then her condition must be still more painful, or rather I should say must have been, for probably she is dead long before this, or if not dead, she must be a woman advanced in life; indeed, as you may observe in the account given by the traveler in the paragraph you have read, it speaks only of the *descendants* of those who were lost in the *Grosvenor*. The idea of my grandchildren having returned to a state of barbarism is painful enough; I wish it were possible that I could discover the truth, for it is the uncertainty which so much distresses me. I have but a few years to live, Alexander; I am a very old man, as you know, and may be summoned to-morrow or to-night, for we know not what a day may bring forth. If I were only certain that my child had died, miserable as her death must have been, it would be happiness, to the idea that she was one of those whose descendants they speak of. If you knew how for the last thirty years this has preyed upon my mind, you would comprehend my anxiety on this account; but God's will be done. Do not let me detain you longer, Alexander; I should prefer being alone."

Alexander, at this intimation, took the proffered hand of his grand-uncle in a reverential and feeling manner, and, without saying any more, quitted the room.

CHAPTER II

The conversation which he had had with his grand-uncle made a very forcible impression upon Alexander Wilmot; it occasioned him to pass a very sleepless night, and he remained till nearly four o'clock turning it over in his mind. The loss of the *Grosvenor* Indiaman had occurred long before he was born; he was acquainted with the outline of what had taken place, and had been told, when a child, that a relation of his family had perished; but although the narrative had, at the time, made some impression upon his young mind, he had seldom, if ever, heard it spoken of since, and may have been said to have almost forgotten it. He was therefore not a little surprised when he found how great an influence it had upon his grand-uncle, who had never mentioned it to him before; indeed it had escaped Alexander's memory that it was his grand-uncle's only surviving daughter who had been lost in the vessel.

Alexander Wilmot was warmly attached to the old gentleman; indeed he would have been very ungrateful if he had not been, for it was impossible that any one could have been treated with more kindness and liberality than he was by Sir Charles. It was but the week before, that he had expressed a wish to travel on the continent, and Sir Charles had immediately given his consent that he should remain abroad, if he pleased, for two years. When he approved, however, of Alexander's plans, he had made a remark as to his own age and infirmity, and the probable chance that they might not meet again in this world; and this remark of his grand-uncle left such an impression upon Alexander, that he almost repented having made the request, and had been ever since in a state of indecision as to whether he should avail himself of his grand-uncle's kindness and disregard of self shown toward him in thus having granted his permission.

The conversation with Sir Charles had brought up a new idea in his mind; he had witnessed the anxiety and longing which his good old relation had shown about the fate of his daughter; he had heard from his own lips how long the ignorance of her fate had preyed upon his mind, and that to be satisfied on this point was the one thing wanting to enable the old man to die happy,—to permit him to say with sincerity, "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace." Why, then, should he not go to discover the truth? It would not, perhaps, occupy him so long as the two years of traveling on the continent, which had been consented to by his grand-uncle, and, instead of traveling for his own pleasure, he might be the means of satisfying the mind and quieting the anxiety of one who had been so kind to him. Indeed, he should actually prefer a journey into the interior of Africa to a mere sojourn of some time on the continent; the very peril and danger, the anticipation of distress and hardship, were pleasing to his high and courageous mind, and before he fell asleep Alexander had made up his mind that he would propose the expedition, and if he could obtain his uncle's permission would proceed upon it forthwith. Having come to this resolution, he fell fast asleep and dreamed away, till eight o'clock in the morning, that he was hunting elephants and having hand-to-hand conflicts with every variety of beast with which he had peopled Africa in his fancy. When he was called up in the morning, he found his determination of the night before rather strengthened than otherwise, and accordingly, after breakfast was over, he opened the subject.

"My dear sir," said he to Sir Charles, "you were kind enough to give me your permission to travel on the continent for two years."

"I did do so, Alexander; it is natural at your age that you should wish to see the world, and you have my full permission. When do you think of starting?"

"That depends upon circumstances, sir, and I must be altogether guided by you; to tell you the truth, I do not think that one sees much of the world by following in the beaten track made by so many of our countrymen."

"There I agree with you; in the present high state of civilization there will be found little or no difference in the manners and customs of people; in the courts, none; very little in the best society,

in which you will of course mix; and not so very much as people may imagine among the mass of population; but the scenery of the countries and the remains of ancient times are still interesting, and will afford pleasure; it must be your own reflections and comments upon what you see which must make it profitable; most people, however, travel from the love of change added to the love of excitement."

"I grant it, sir, and I do not mean to say but that I should receive much pleasure from a continental tour; perhaps I may add that I should derive more profit if I were to delay it till I am a little older and a little wiser; do you not think so?"

"I certainly do, Alexander. What then? do you propose remaining in England for the present?—if so, I am sure it is on my account, and I am very grateful to you for your sacrifice."

"If you wish it, sir, I will undoubtedly remain in England; at all events, if I do not go elsewhere. I have abandoned my continental tour for the present; but I have another proposal to make, which I hope will meet with your approbation."

"Why, my dear Alexander, on what expedition would you now proceed? Do you wish to visit the United States or South America?"

"No, sir; I wish to make a voyage of still more interest—I wish to go to Africa,—that is, to embark for the Cape of Good Hope, and from thence proceed to the northward, to ascertain, if possible, what now is a source of sad disquiet to you, the actual fate of those who were wrecked in the *Grosvenor*, and have not since been heard of with any degree of certainty."

Sir Charles was for a time silent. He pressed his hands to his forehead; at last he removed them, and said,—"I can not, much as I wish it, no,—I can not consent, my dear boy; the danger will be too great. You must not risk your life. It is very kind of you—very kind; but no, it must not be."

"Indeed, sir, I think, on reflection, you will alter your mind. As for danger—what danger can there be when missionaries are permitted to form their stations, and reside uninjured among the very savages who were so hostile when the *Grosvenor* was lost? The country, which was then a desert, is now inhabited by Europeans, within 200 miles of the very spot where the *Grosvenor* was wrecked. The continual emigration since the Cape has fallen under British government, and the zeal of those who have braved all dangers to make known the Word of God to the heathen and idolater, have in forty years made such an alteration, that I see no more danger in the mission which I propose than I do in a visit to Naples; and as for time, I have every reason to expect that I shall be back sooner than in the two years which you have proposed for my stay on the continent."

"But if some accident were to happen to you, I should never forgive myself for having given my consent, and the few days that are left to me would be rendered miserable."

"My dear sir, we are in the hands of God; and (short-sighted as we are) in running away from danger, as often run into it. What we call an accident, the fall of a brick or a stone, the upsetting of a vehicle, any thing trivial or seemingly improbable, may summon us away when we least expect it: 'In the midst of life we are in death,' and that death I may meet by staying in this country, which I might have avoided by going on this expedition. Difficulties may arise, and some danger there may be, I admit; but when prepared to encounter both, we are more safe than when, in fancied security, we are taken unawares. Do not, I entreat you, sir, refuse me this favor; I have considered well, and shall be most unhappy if I am not permitted to obtain the information for you which you have so much at heart. Let my travels be of some advantage to you as well as to myself. Do not refuse, I entreat you."

"You are a good boy, Alexander, and your kindness makes me still more unwilling to part with you. I hardly know what to say. Let us drop the subject for the present; we will talk of it to-morrow or next day. I must have time for reflection."

Alexander Wilmot did not fail to renew his entreaties on the following day, but could not gain Sir Charles's consent. He was not, however, discouraged. He had taken from the library all the works he could find relative to Southern Africa, and continually enforcing his arguments by quotations from various authors, all tending to prove that he might travel through the country without much risk, if he

took proper precautions, his grand-uncle's objections grew daily more feeble, and at last Sir Charles gave his unwilling consent. In the meantime, the books which Alexander had read had produced a great effect upon him. When he first proposed the mission, it was more from a feeling of gratitude toward his old relative than any other, but now he was most anxious to go on his own account. The narratives of combats with wild beasts, the quantity and variety of game to be found, and the continual excitement which would be kept up, inflamed his imagination and his love of field sports, and he earnestly requested to be permitted to depart immediately, pointing out to Sir Charles that the sooner he went away, the sooner he would be back again. This last argument was not without its weight, and Alexander was allowed to make every preparation for his journey. Inquiries were made, and a passage secured on board of a free-trader, which was to touch at the Cape, and in six weeks from the time that the subject had been brought up, Alexander Wilmot took leave of his grand-uncle.

"May God bless you, sir, and keep you well till my return," said Alexander, pressing his hand.

"May the Lord protect you, my dear boy, and allow you to return and close my eyes," replied Sir Charles, with much emotion.

Before night Alexander Wilmot was in London, from thence he hastened down to Portsmouth to embark. The next day, the *Surprise* weighed anchor and ran through the Needles, and before the night closed in was well down the Channel, standing before the wind, with studding sails below and aloft.

CHAPTER III

A melancholy feeling clouded the features of Alexander Wilmot as, on the following morning, the vessel, under a heavy press of sail, was fast leaving the shores of his native country. He remained on the poop of the vessel with his eyes fixed upon the land, which every moment became more indistinct. His thoughts may easily be imagined. Shall I ever see that land again? Shall I ever return, or shall my bones remain in Africa, perhaps not even buried, but bleaching in the desert? And if I do return, shall I find my old relation still alive, or called away, loaded as he is with years, to the silent tomb? We are in the hands of a gracious God. His will be done.

Alexander turned away, as the land had at last become no longer visible, and found a young man of about his own age standing close to him, and apparently as much lost in reverie as he had been. As in turning round Alexander brushed against him, he thought it right to apologize for the unintentional act, and this occasioned a conversation.

"I believe, sir," said the other party, who was a tall, spare, slight-built man, with a dark complexion, "that we were both indulging in similar thoughts as we took leave of our native shores. Every Englishman does the same, and indeed every true lover of his country, let the country be what it will. We find the feeling as strong in the savage as in the enlightened; it is universal. Indeed, we may fairly say that it extends lower—down to the brute species, from their love of localities."

"Very true, sir," replied Alexander; "but with brutes, as you say, it is merely the love of locality; with men, I trust, the feeling is more generous and noble."

"So it ought to be, or else why are we so much more nobly endowed? This is not your first voyage, I presume?" continued the stranger.

"Indeed, it is," said Alexander; "I never was out of England, or on board of a vessel, before yesterday."

"I should have imagined otherwise," remarked his companion: "the other passengers are all suffering from sea-sickness, while you and I only are on the deck. I presumed, therefore, that you had been afloat before."

"I did feel very giddy yesterday evening," observed Alexander, "but this morning I have no unpleasant sensation whatever. I believe that some people do not suffer at sea."

"A very few; but it appears that you are one of those most fortunate, for by experience I know how painful and distressing the sickness is for some time. Breakfast will soon be ready; do you think that you can eat any?"

"Yes, a little—not much; a cup of tea or coffee," replied Alexander; "but I can not say that I have my usual appetite. What bird is that which skims along the water?"

"It is the *procellarius*, as we naturalists call it, but in English, the stormy petrel; its presence denotes rough weather coming on."

"Then I wish it had not made its appearance," said Alexander, laughing; "for with rough weather, there will of course be more motion in the vessel, and I feel the motion too much already."

"I think if you eat your breakfast (although without appetite), and keep on deck, you may get over any further indisposition," replied the stranger.

"Have we many passengers on board?"

"No; nine or ten, which is considered a small number, at least by the captain, who was complaining of his ill-luck. They are mostly females and children. There is a Cape gentleman who has long resided in the colony, and is now returning there. I have had some conversation with him, and he appears a very intelligent person. But here is the steward coming aft, to let us know that breakfast is ready."

The person who had thus conversed with Alexander Wilmot was a Mr. Swinton, who, as he had accidentally observed, was a naturalist; he was a person of some independent property, whose ardor

for science had induced him to engage in no profession, being perfectly satisfied with his income, which was sufficient for his wants and to enable him to follow up his favorite study. He was now on his passage to the Cape of Good Hope, with no other object than to examine the natural productions of that country, and to prosecute his researches in science there, to a greater extent than had hitherto been practicable.

Before they had arrived at Madeira, at which island the ship remained three days to take in wine and fresh provisions, a great intimacy had been established between Alexander and Mr. Swinton, although as yet neither knew the cause of the other's voyage to the Cape; they were both too delicate to make the inquiry, and waited till the other should of his own accord impart his reasons.

We have mentioned that there were other passengers, one of whom was a gentleman who resided in Cape Town, and who held a lucrative situation under the government. He was an elderly gentleman, of about sixty years of age, of a very benign and prepossessing appearance; and it so happened that Alexander found out, on looking over his letters of introduction when at anchor at Madeira, that he possessed one to this gentleman. This of course he presented at once, although they were already on intimate terms; and this introduction made Mr. Fairburn (for such was his name) take an immediate interest in his welfare, and also warranted his putting the question, as to what were Alexander's views and intentions in visiting the Cape: for Mr. Fairburn knew from the letter that he was heir to Sir Charles Wilmot, and therefore that he was not likely to be going out as a speculator or emigrant.

It hardly need be said that Alexander made no hesitation in confiding to one who could so materially assist him in the object of his voyage.

The other passengers were three young ladies bound to their friends in India, and a lady returning with her two marriageable daughters to rejoin her husband, who was a colonel in the Bengal army. They were all pleasant people, the young ladies very lively, and on the whole the cabin of the *Surprise* contained a very agreeable party; and soon after they left Madeira, they had fine weather, smooth water, and every thing that could make a voyage endurable.

The awnings were spread, chairs brought up, and the major portion of the day was spent upon the quarter-deck and poop of the vessel, which for many days had been running down before the trade-winds, intending to make Rio, and there lay in a supply of fresh provisions for the remainder of her voyage.

One morning, as Alexander and Mr. Fairburn were sitting together, Alexander observed—

"You have passed many years at the Cape, Mr. Fairburn, have you not?"

"Yes; I was taken prisoner when returning from India, and remained a year in Cape Town during the time that it was in the hands of the Dutch; I was about to be sent home as a prisoner to Holland, and was embarked on board one of the vessels in Saldanha Bay, when they were attacked by the English. Afterward, when the English captured the Cape, from my long residence in, and knowledge of, the country, I was offered a situation, which I accepted: the colony was restored to the Dutch, and I came home. On its second capture I was again appointed, and have been there almost ever since."

"Then you are well acquainted with the history of the colony?"

"I am, certainly, and if you wish it, shall be happy to give you a short account of it."

"It will give me the greatest pleasure, for I must acknowledge that I know but little, and *that* I have gleaned from the travels which I have run through very hastily."

"I think it was in the year 1652 that the Dutch decided upon making a settlement at the Cape. The aborigines, or natives, who inhabited that part of the country about Cape Town, were the Hottentots, a mild, inoffensive people, living wholly upon the produce of their cattle; they were not agriculturists, but possessed large herds of cattle, sheep and goats, which ranged the extensive pastures of the country. The history of the founding of one colony is, I fear, the history of most, if not all—commencing in doing all that is possible to obtain the goodwill of the people until a firm footing has been obtained in the land, and then treating them with barbarity and injustice.

"The Hottentots, won over by kindness and presents, thought it of little consequence that strangers should possess a small portion of their extensive territory, and willingly consented that the settlement should be made. They, for the first time in their lives, tasted what proved the cause of their ruin and subsequent slavery—tobacco and strong liquors. These two poisons, offered gratuitously, till the poor Hottentots had acquired a passion for them, then became an object of barter—a pipe of tobacco or a glass of brandy was the price of an ox; and thus daily were the colonists becoming enriched, and the Hottentots poor.

"The colony rapidly increased, until it was so strong, that the governor made no ceremony of seizing upon such land as the government wished to retain or to give away; and the Hottentots soon discovered that not only their cattle, but the means of feeding them, were taken from them. Eventually, they were stripped of every thing except their passion for tobacco and spirits, which they could not get rid of. Unwilling to leave the land of their forefathers, and seeing no other way of procuring the means of intoxication which they coveted, they sold themselves and their services to the white colonists, content to take care of those herds which had once been their own, and to lead them out to pasture on the very lands which had once been their birthright."

"Did they then become slaves?" inquired Alexander.

"No; although much worse treated, they never were slaves, and I wish to point that out; but they became a sort of feudal property of the Dutch, compelled to hire themselves out, and to work for them upon nominal wages, which they seldom or never received, and liable to every species of harsh treatment and cruelty, for which they could obtain no redress. Yet still they were not bought and sold as were the slaves which were subsequently introduced into the colony from the east coast of Africa and Madagascar. The position of the slave was, in my opinion, infinitely superior, merely from the self-interest of the owner, who would not kill or risk the life of a creature for whom he had paid two or three hundred rix-dollars; whereas, the Dutch boors, or planters, thought little of the life of a Hottentot. If the cattle were to be watched where lions were plentiful, it was not a slave who had charge of them, but a Hottentot, as he had cost nothing, and the planter could procure another. In short, the life of a Hottentot was considered as of no value, and there is no denying that they were shot by their masters or employers upon the most trifling offense."

"How dreadful! but did the Dutch government suffer this?"

"They could not well help it, and therefore were compelled to wink at it; the criminals were beyond its reach. But now I will proceed to give you some further insight, by describing the Dutch boors, or planters, who usurped and stood in the shoes of the poor Hottentots.

"The Dutch government seized upon all the land belonging to the Hottentots, and gave it away in grants to their own countrymen, who now became herdsmen, and possessed of a large quantity of cattle; they also cultivated the ground to a certain extent round about their habitations. As the colony increased, so did the demand for land, until the whole of the country that was worth having was disposed of as far as to the country of the Caffres, a fine, warlike race, of whom we will speak hereafter. It must not, however, be supposed that the whole of the Hottentot tribes became serfs to the soil. Some few drove away their cattle to the northward, out of reach of the Dutch, to the borders of the Caffre land; others, deprived of their property, left the plains, and took to the mountains, living by the chase and by plunder. This portion were termed boshmen, or bushmen, and have still retained that appellation: living in extreme destitution, sleeping in caves, constantly in a state of starvation, they soon dwindled down to a very diminutive race, and have continued so ever since.

"The Dutch boors, or planters, who lived in the interior, and far away from Cape Town, had many enemies to contend with: they had the various beasts of the forest, from the lion to the jackal, which devastated their flocks and herds, and also these bushmen, who lived upon plunder. Continually in danger, they were never without their muskets in their hands, and they and their descendants became an athletic, powerful, and bulky race, courageous, and skilled in the use of fire-arms, but at the same time cruel and avaricious to the highest degree. The absolute power they possessed over the

slaves and Hottentots demoralized them, and made them tyrannical and blood-thirsty. At too great a distance from the seat of government for its power to reach them, they defied it and knew no law but their own imperious wills, acknowledging no authority,—guilty of every crime openly, and careless of detection."

"I certainly have read of great cruelty on the part of these Dutch boors, but I had no idea of the extent to which it was carried."

"The origin was in that greatest of all curses, slavery; nothing demoralizes so much. These boors had been brought up with the idea that a Hottentot, a bushman, or a Caffre were but as the mere brutes of the field, and they have treated them as such. They would be startled at the idea of murdering a white man, but they will execute wholesale slaughter among these poor natives, and think they have committed no crime. But the ladies are coming up, and we shall be interrupted, so I will not task your patience any more to-day. I shall therefore conclude what I may term part the first of my little history of the Cape colony."

CHAPTER IV

Alexander Wilmot was too much pleased with Mr. Swinton not to cultivate his acquaintance, and they soon became very intimate. The conversation often turned upon Mr. Swinton's favorite study, that of natural history.

"I confess myself wholly ignorant of the subject," observed Alexander one day, "though I feel that it must be interesting to those who study it; indeed, when I have walked through the museums, I have often wished that I had some one near who could explain to me what I wished to know and was puzzled about. But it appears to me that the study of natural history is such an immense undertaking if you comprehend all its branches. Let me see,—there is botany, mineralogy, and geology—these are included, are they not?"

"Most certainly," replied Mr. Swinton, laughing; "and perhaps the three most interesting branches. Then you have zoology, or the study of animals, ornithology for birds, entomology for insects, conchology for shells, ichthyology for fishes; all very hard names, and enough to frighten a young beginner. But I can assure you, a knowledge of these subjects, to an extent sufficient to create interest and afford continual amusement, is very easily acquired."

"The proper study of mankind is man," says the poet,"—observed Alexander, smiling.

"Poets deal in fiction, Mr. Wilmot," replied Mr. Swinton; "to study man is only to study his inconsistencies and his aberrations from the right path, which the free-will permitted to him induces him to follow; but in the study of nature, you witness the directing power of the Almighty, who guides with an unerring hand, and who has so wonderfully apportioned out to all animals the means of their providing for themselves. Not only the external, but the inward structure of animals, shows such variety and ingenuity to surmount all difficulties, and to afford them all the enjoyment their nature is capable of, that after every examination you rise with increased astonishment and admiration at the condescension and goodness of the Master Hand, thus to calculate and provide for the necessities of the smallest insect; and you are compelled to exclaim with the Psalmist, 'O God, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all!'"

"You certainly do put the study in a new and most pleasurable light," replied Alexander.

"The more you search into nature, the more wonderful do you find her secrets, and, by the aid of chemistry, we are continually making new discoveries. Observe, Mr. Wilmot," said Swinton, picking up a straw which had been blown by the wind on the quarter-deck, "do you consider that there is any analogy between this straw and the flint in the lock of that gun?"

"Certainly, I should imagine them as opposite particles of nature as well might be."

"Such is not the case. This piece of wheat-straw contains more than sixty per cent. of silica or flint in its composition; so that, although a vegetable, it is nearly two-thirds composed of the hardest mineral substance we know of. You would scarcely believe that the fibers of the root of this plant were capable of dissolving, feeding upon, and digesting such a hard substance; but so it is."

"It is very wonderful."

"It is, but it is not a solitary instance; the phosphate of lime, which is the chief component part of the bones of animals, is equally sought by plants, dissolved in the same manner, and taken into their bodies; barley and oats have about thirty per cent. of it in their composition, and most woods and plants have more or less."

"I am less surprised at that than I am with the flint, which appears almost incomprehensible."

"Nothing is impossible with God; there is a rush in Holland which contains much more silex than the wheat-straw, and it is employed by the Dutch to polish wood and brass, on that very account. We know but little yet, but we do know that mineral substances are found in the composition of most living animals, if not all; indeed, the coloring-matter of the blood is an oxide and phosphate of iron."

"I can now understand why you are so enthusiastic in the science, Mr. Swinton, and I regret much that the short time which will be occupied in the remainder of our voyage will not enable me to profit as I should wish by your conversation; for when we arrive at the Cape, I fear our pursuits will lead us different ways."

"I presume they will, for I am about to penetrate as far as possible into the interior of the country," replied Mr. Swinton, "which of course is not your intention."

"Indeed, but it is," replied Alexander; "I am about to do the same, although perhaps not in the same direction. May I ask your intended route, if not too inquisitive?"

"Not at all; I can hardly say myself. I shall be guided by the protection I may fall in with. Africa is a wide field for science, and I can hardly go any where without being well rewarded for my journey; and I will say, that should it meet both our views, I should be very glad if we were to travel in company."

Mr. Fairburn, who had come on deck, had been standing close to them at the latter portion of the conversation, and made the observation—

"I think it would be a very good plan if Mr. Swinton would venture to go where you are bound, Mr. Wilmot, but you can talk of that another day, when you have been longer together. There is nothing that requires more deliberation than the choice of a traveling companion; any serious imperfection of temper may make a journey very miserable. Now, Wilmot, if you are tired of natural history, and wish to change it for the painful history of human nature, I am ready to continue my observations."

"With great pleasure, sir."

"I hope you have no objection to my reaping the benefit also?" said Mr. Swinton.

"Oh, most certainly not," replied Mr. Fairburn, "although I fear you will not gain much information, as you have been at the Cape before. In a former conversation with Mr. Wilmot I have pointed out the manner in which the Cape was first settled, and how the settlers had gradually reduced the original possessors of the land to a state of serfdom; I will now continue.

"The Dutch boors, as they increased their wealth in cattle, required more pasture, and were now occupying the whole of the land south of the Caffre country: the Caffres are wild, courageous savages, whose wealth consists chiefly in cattle, but in some points they may be considered superior to the Hottentots.

"The weapon of the Hottentot may be said to be the bow and arrow, but the Caffre scorns this warfare, or indeed any treachery; his weapons are his assaguay, or spear, and his shield; he fights openly and bravely. The Caffres also cultivate their land to a certain extent, and are more cleanly and civilized. The boors on the Caffre frontier were often plundered by the bushmen, and perhaps occasionally by some few of the Caffres who were in a lawless state on the frontier; but if any complaint was made to the Caffre chiefs, every redress in their power was given: this, however, did not suit the Dutch boors.

"They had entered the Caffre country, and had perceived that the Caffres possessed large herds of cattle, and their avarice pointed out to them how much easier it would be to grow rich by taking the cattle of the Caffres than by rearing them themselves. If the bushmen stole a few head of cattle, complaints were immediately forwarded to Cape Town, and permission asked to raise a force, and recover them from the Caffres.

"The force raised was termed a *Commando*, and was composed of all the Dutch boors and their servants, well armed and mounted; these would make an incursion into the Caffre territory, and because a few head of cattle had been stolen by parties unknown, they would pour down upon the Caffres, who had but their assaguays to oppose to destructive fire-arms, set the kraals or villages in flames, murder indiscriminately man, woman, and child, and carry off, by way of indemnification for some trifling loss, perhaps some twenty thousand head of cattle belonging to the Caffres.

"The Caffres, naturally indignant at such outrage and robbery, made attacks upon the boors to recover the cattle, but with this difference between the Christian boor and the untutored savage: the boors murdered women and children wantonly, the Caffres never harmed them, and did not even kill men, if they could obtain possession of their property without bloodshed."

"But how could the Dutch government permit such atrocities?"

"The representations made to the government were believed, and the order was given in consequence. It is true that afterward the government attempted to put a stop to these horrors, but the boors were beyond their control; and in one instance in which the home government had insisted that punishment should be inflicted for some more than common outrage on the part of the boors, the Cape governor returned for answer, that he could not venture to do as they wished, as the system was so extensive and so common, that all the principal people in the colony were implicated, and would have to be punished.

"Such was therefore the condition of the colony at the time that it fell into the possession of the English—the Hottentots serfs to the land, and treated as the beasts of the field; the slave-trader supplying slaves; and continual war carried on between the boors and the Caffres."

"I trust that our government soon put an end to such barbarous iniquities."

"That was not so easy; the frontier boors rose in arms against the English government, and the Hottentots, who had been so long patient, now fled and joined the Caffres. These people made a combined attack upon the frontier boors, burned their houses to the ground, carried off the cattle, and possessed themselves of their arms and ammunition. The boors rallied in great force; another combat took place, in which the Hottentots and Caffres were victorious, killing the leader of the boors, and pursuing them with great slaughter, till they were stopped by the advance of the English troops. But I can not dwell long upon this period of the Cape history; these wars continued until the natives, throwing themselves upon the protection of the English, were induced to lay down their arms, and the Hottentots to return to their former masters. The colony was then given up to the Dutch, and remained with them until the year 1806, when it was finally annexed to the British empire. The Dutch had not learned wisdom from what had occurred; they treated the Hottentots worse than before, maiming them and even murdering them in their resentment, and appeared to defy the British government; but a change was soon to take place."

"Not before it was necessary, at all events," said Alexander.

"It was by the missionaries chiefly that this change was brought about; they had penetrated into the interior, and saw with their own eyes the system of cruelty and rapine that was carried on; they wrote home accounts, which were credited, and which produced a great alteration. To the astonishment and indignation of the boors, law was introduced where it had always been set at defiance; they were told that the life of a Hottentot was as important in the eye of God, and in the eye of the law, as that of a Dutch boor, and that the government would hold it as such. Thus was the first blow struck; but another and a heavier was soon to fall upon those who had so long sported with the lives of their fellow-creatures. The press was called to the aid of the Hottentot, and a work published by a missionary roused the attention of the public at home to their situation. Their cause was pleaded in the House of Commons, and the Hottentot was emancipated forever."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Alexander; "my blood has been boiling at the description which you have been giving. Now, when I hear that the poor Hottentot is a free man, it will cool down again."

"Perhaps it will be as well to leave off just now, Mr. Wilmot," said Mr. Fairburn; "we will renew our conversation to-morrow, if wind and weather permit, as the seamen say."

CHAPTER V

The next day the ship was off Rio, and immediately sent her boats for provisions and supplies; the passengers did not land, as the captain stated that he would not stay an hour longer than was necessary, and on the second evening after their arrival they again made sail for the Cape.

The gulls were flying in numbers astern of the ship, darting down and seizing every thing edible which was thrown overboard, and the conversation turned upon aquatic birds.

"What difference is there in the feathers of aquatic birds and others?" inquired Alexander; "a hen, or any land bird, if it falls into the water, is drowned as soon as its feathers are saturated with the water."

"There is, I believe, no difference in the feathers of the birds," replied Mr. Swinton; "but all aquatic birds are provided with a small reservoir, containing oil, with which they anoint their feathers, which renders them water-proof. If you will watch a duck pluming and dressing itself, you will find it continually turns its bill round to the end of its back, just above the insertion of the tail; it is to procure this oil, which, as it dresses its feathers that they may carefully overlap each other, it smears upon them so as to render them impenetrable to the water; but this requires frequent renewal, or the duck would be drowned as well as the hen."

"How long can a sea-bird remain at sea?"

"I should think not very long, although it has been supposed otherwise; but we do not know so much of the habits of these birds as of others."

"Can they remain long under water?"

"The greater portion of them can not; ducks and that class, for instance. Divers can remain some time; but the birds that remain the longest under water are the semi-aquatic, whose feet are only half-webbed. I have watched the common English water-hen for many minutes walking along at the bottom of a stream, apparently as much in its element as if on shore, pecking and feeding as it walked."

"You say that aquatic birds can not remain long at sea,—where do they go to?"

"They resort to the uninhabited islands over the globe, rocks that always remain above water, and the unfrequented shores of Africa and elsewhere; there they congregate to breed and bring up their young. I have seen twenty or thirty acres of land completely covered with these birds or their nests, wedged together as close as they could sit. Every year they resort to the same spot, which has probably been their domicile for centuries,—I might say since the creation. They make no nests, but merely scrape so as to form a shallow hole to deposit their eggs. The consequence of their always resorting to the same spot is that, from the voidings of the birds and the remains of fish brought to feed the young, a deposit is made over the whole surface, a fraction of an inch every year, which by degrees increases until it is sometimes twenty or thirty feet deep, if not more, and the lower portion becomes almost as hard as rock. The deposit is termed guano, and has, from time immemorial, been used by the Peruvians and Chilians as manure for the land; it is very powerful, as it contains most of the essential salts, such as ammonia, phosphates, etc., which are required for agriculture. Within these last few years samples have been brought to England, and as the quantities must be inexhaustible, when they are sought for and found, no doubt it may one day become a valuable article of our carrying trade. Here comes Mr. Fairburn; I hope he intends to continue his notices of the Cape settlement."

"They have interested me very much, I must confess; he appears well acquainted with the colony."

"He has had the advantage of a long residence, and during that time an insight into all the public documents: this you may be certain of, that he knows more than he will tell."

As soon as Mr. Fairburn joined them, Alexander requested him to continue his narrative, which he did as follows.

"You must not suppose, Mr. Wilmot, that because the English had now possession of the colony, every thing went right; governors who are appointed to the control of a colony require to be there some time before they can see with their own eyes; they must, from their want of information, fall into the hands of some interested party or another, who will sway their councils. Thus it was at the Cape.

"It is true that much good had already been done by the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of the Hottentot; but this was effected, not by the colonial government, but by the representations of the missionaries and an influential and benevolent party at home. The prejudices against the Hottentots, and particularly the Caffres, still existed, and were imbibed by the colonial authorities. Commandoes, or, as they should be more properly termed, marauding parties, were still sent out, and the Caffre was continually oppressed, and, in defiance of the government orders, little justice could be obtained for the Hottentot, although his situation was somewhat improved.

"I will give one instance to show how the rights of the Hottentots were respected by the Cape authorities in 1810,—previous to the emancipation, it is true, but still at a time when the position of the Hottentots and their sufferings had been strenuously pressed upon the colonial authorities by the government at home.

"When the conduct of the Dutch boors had roused the Caffres and Hottentots to war, there were three brothers by the name of Stuurman, Hottentots, who were the leaders. Peace was at length restored, which was chiefly effected by the exertions of these men, who retired peaceably with their own kraal to Algoa Bay; and the government, being then Dutch, appointed Stuurman as captain of the kraal. This independent horde of Hottentots gave great offense to the Dutch boors,—the more so as the three brothers had been the leaders of the Hottentots in the former insurrection. For seven years they could find no complaint to make against them, until at last two of his Hottentots, who had engaged to serve a boor for a certain time, went back to the kraal at the expiration of the term, against the wish of the boor, who would have detained them; the boor went and demanded them back, but Stuurman refused to give them up; upon which, although justice was clearly on the side of the Hottentots, an armed force was dispatched to the kraal. Stuurman still refused to surrender the men, and the armed men retired, for they knew the courage of the Hottentots, and were afraid to attack them.

"By treachery they gained possession of Stuurman and one of his brothers (the other having been killed hunting the buffalo), and sent them to Cape Town, from whence, against all justice, they were sent as prisoners to Robin Island, where malefactors are confined. They made their escape, and returned to Caffreland. Three years afterward, Stuurman, anxious to see his family, returned to the colony without permission. He was discovered and apprehended, and sent as a convict to New South Wales; for the government was at that time English.

"Such was the fate of the first Hottentot who stood up for the rights of his countrymen, and such was the conduct of the English colonial government; so you will observe, Mr. Wilmot, that although the strides of cruelty and oppression are most rapid, the return to even-handed justice is equally slow. Eventually the gross injustice to this man was acknowledged, for an order from the home government was procured for his liberation and return; but it was too late,—Stuurman had died a convict.

"I have mentioned this circumstance, as it will prepare you for a similar act of injustice to the Caffres. When the colony was in possession of the Dutch there was a space of about thirty thousand square miles between the colonial boundary (that is, the land formerly possessed by the Hottentots) and the Great Fish River. This extent of thirty thousand square miles belonged to the Caffres, and was the site of continual skirmishing and marauding between the Dutch boors and the Caffres.

"In 1811 it was resolved by the colonial government that the Caffres should be driven from this territory, and confined to the other side of the Great Fish River. This was an act of injustice and great hardship, and was proceeded in with extreme cruelty, the Caffres being obliged to leave all their crops, and turned out with great and unnecessary slaughter.

"It may be proper, however, to state the causes which led to this Caffre war with the English. At this time the colonial governor had entered into negotiations with a Caffre chief of the name of Gaika. He was a chief of a portion of the Caffres, but not the principal chief, and although the English treated with him as such, the Caffres would not acknowledge his authority. This is a very frequent error committed in our intercourse with savage nations, who are as pertinacious of their rights as the monarchs of Europe. The error on our part was soon discovered, but the government was too proud to acknowledge it.

"It so happened that the other Caffre chiefs formed a powerful confederacy against Gaika, who, trusting to the support of the English, had treated them with great arrogance. They fought and conquered him, carrying off, as usual, his cattle. As this was a war between the Caffres, and confined to their own land, we certainly had no business to interfere; but the colonial government thought otherwise, and an expedition was prepared.

"The Caffres sent forward messengers declaring their wish to remain at peace with the English, but refusing to submit to Gaika, who was only a secondary chief, and whom they had conquered. No regard was paid to this remonstrance; the English troops were sent forward, the Caffres attacked in their hamlets, slaughtered or driven into the woods, 23,000 head of cattle taken from them, of which 9,000 were given to Gaika, and the rest distributed to the Dutch boors, or sold to defray part of the expenses of the expedition.

"Deprived of their means of subsistence by the capture of their cattle, the Caffres were rendered furious reckless, and no sooner had the expedition returned, than they commenced hostilities. They poured into the frontier districts, captured several detached military forts, drove the Dutch boors from the Zurweld, or neutral territory, and killed a great many of our soldiers and of the Dutch boors. All the country was overrun as far as the vicinity of Algoa Bay, and nothing could at first check their progress."

"Why, it really does not appear that the colonial government, when in our hands, was more considerate than when it was held by the Dutch," replied Alexander.

"Not much, I fear," said Mr. Fairburn.

"The councils of the Caffre chiefs were at that time much influenced by a most remarkable personage of the name of Mokanna. In the colony he was usually known by the sobriquet of 'Links,' or the left-handed. He was not a chief, but had by his superior intellect obtained great power. He gave himself out to be a prophet, and certainly showed quite as much skill as ever did Mahommed or any other false prophet. He had often visited Cape Town, and had made himself master of all that he could acquire of European knowledge.

"This man, by his influence, his superior eloquence, and his pretended revelations from heaven, was now looked up to by the whole Caffre nation; and he promised the chiefs, if they would implicitly obey his orders, he would lead them to victory, and that he would drive the English into the ocean. He resolved upon the bold measure of making an attack upon Graham's Town, and marched an army of between nine and ten thousand men to the forest bordering on the Great Fish River.

"According to the custom of the Caffres, who never use surprise or ambush on great occasions, they sent a message to the commandant of Graham's Town, stating that they would breakfast with him the next morning. The commandant, who had supposed the message to be a mere bravado, was very ill prepared when on the following morning he perceived, to his great astonishment, the whole force of the Caffres on the heights above the town.

"Had the Caffres advanced in the night, there is no doubt but that they would have had possession of the place, and that with the greatest ease. There were about 350 regular troops and a small force of Hottentots in Graham's Town, and fortunately a few field-pieces. The Caffres rushed to the assault, and for some time were not to be checked; they went up to the very muzzles of the field-pieces, and broke their spears off short, to decide the battle by a hand-to-hand conflict.

"At this critical moment, the field-pieces opened their fire of grape and canister, and the front ranks of the Caffres were mowed down like grass. After several rallyings under Mokanna, the Caffres gave way and fled. About 1400 of the bravest remained on the field of battle, and as many more perished from their wounds before they could regain their country. Mokanna, after using every exertion, accompanied the Caffre army in their flight."

"It certainly was a bold attempt on the part of the Caffres, and showed Mokanna to be a great man even in the failure."

"It was so unprecedented an attempt, that the colonial government were dreadfully alarmed, and turned out their whole force of militia as well as of regular troops. The Caffre country was again overrun, the inhabitants destroyed, without distinction of age or sex, their hamlets fired, cattle driven away, and when they fled to the thickets, they were bombarded with shells and Congreve rockets. Mokanna and the principal chiefs were denounced as outlaws, and the inhabitants threatened with utter extermination if they did not deliver them up dead or alive. Although driven to despair, and perishing from want, not a single Caffre was to be found who would earn the high reward offered for the surrender of the chiefs."

"The more I hear of them, the more I admire the Caffres," observed Alexander Wilmot; "and I may add—but never mind, pray go on."

"I think I could supply the words which you have checked, Mr. Wilmot, but I will proceed, or dinner will be announced before I have finished this portion of my history."

"The course adopted by Mokanna under these circumstances was such as will raise him much higher in your estimation. As he found that his countrymen were to be massacred until he and the other chiefs were delivered up, dead or alive, he resolved to surrender himself as a hostage for his country. He sent a message to say that he would do so, and the next day, with a calm magnanimity that would have done honor to a Roman patriot, he came, unattended, to the English camp. His words were 'People say that I have occasioned this war: let me see if my delivering myself up will restore peace to my country.' The commanding officer, to whom he surrendered himself, immediately forwarded him as a prisoner to the colony."

"What became of him?"

"Of that hereafter; but I wish here to give you the substance of a speech made by one of Mokanna's head men, who came after Mokanna's surrender into the English camp. I am told that the imperfect notes taken of it afford but a very faint idea of its eloquence; at all events, the speech gives a very correct view of the treatment which the Caffres received from our hands."

"'This war,' said he, 'British chiefs, is an unjust one, for you are trying to extirpate a people whom you have forced to take up arms. When our fathers and the fathers of the boors first settled on the Zurweld, they dwelt together in peace. Their flocks grazed the same hills, their herdsmen smoked out of the same pipe; they were brothers until the herds of the Amakosa (Caffres) increased so much as to make the hearts of the Dutch boors sore. What those covetous men could not get from our fathers for old buttons, they took by force. Our fathers were men; they loved their cattle; their wives and children lived upon milk; they fought for their property; they began to hate the colonists, who coveted their all, and aimed at their destruction."

"'Now their kraals and our fathers' kraals were separate. The boors made commandoes for our fathers; our fathers drove them out of the Zurweld, and we dwelt there because we had conquered it; there we married wives; there our children were born; the white men hated us, but could not drive us away; when there was war, we plundered you; when there was peace, some of our bad people stole; but our chiefs forbade it."

"'We lived in peace; some bad people stole, perhaps; but the nation was quiet; Gaika stole; his chiefs stole; you sent him copper; you sent him beads; you sent him horses, on which he rode to steal more; to *us* you only sent *commandoes*. We quarreled with Gaika about grass;—no business of yours;

you send a commando; you take our last cow; you leave only a few calves, which die for want, and so do our children; you give half the spoil to Gaika; half you kept yourselves.

"Without milk; our corn destroyed; we saw our wives and children perish; we followed, therefore, the tracks of our cattle into the colony; we plundered, and we fought for our lives; we found you weak, and we destroyed your soldiers; we saw that we were strong, and we attacked your headquarters, and if we had succeeded, our right was good, for you began the war; we failed, and you are here.

"We wish for peace; we wish to rest in our huts; we wish to get milk for our children; our wives wish to till the land; but your troops cover the plains, and swarm in the thickets, where they can not distinguish the men from the women, and shoot *all*. You wish us to submit to Gaika; that man's face is fair to you, but his heart is false; leave him to himself; make peace with us: let him fight for himself; and we shall not call upon you for help; set Mokanna at liberty, and all our chiefs will make peace with you at any time you fix; but if you still make war, you may indeed kill the last man of us, but Gaika shall not rule over the followers of those who think him a woman.'

"If eloquence consists (as it does not in the English House of Commons) in saying much in few words, I know no speech more comprehensive of the facts and arguments of a case than the above. I am sorry to say it had no effect in altering the destination of Mokanna, or of obtaining any relief for his countrymen, who were still called upon to deliver up the other chiefs *outlawed* by the government."

"I before remarked the absurdity of that expression," said Mr. Swinton; "we outlaw a member of our own society and belonging to our own country; but to *outlaw* the chiefs of another country is something too absurd; I fear the English language is not much studied at the Cape."

"At all events, every attempt made to obtain possession of these *outlawed* chiefs was unavailing. After plundering the country of all that could be found in it, leaving devastation and misery behind, the expedition returned without obtaining their object, but with the satisfaction of knowing that by taking away 30,000 more cattle, they left thousands of women and children to die of starvation. But I must leave off now. The results of the war, and the fate of Mokanna, shall be the subject of another meeting."

"We are much obliged to you, Mr. Fairburn, for the interesting narrative you have given us. It is, however, to be hoped that you will have no more such painful errors and injustice to dwell upon."

"As I before observed, Mr. Wilmot, it requires time for prejudice and falsehood to be overthrown; and until they are mastered, it can not be expected that justice can be administered. The colonial government had to contend with the whole white population of the colony who rose up in arms against them, considering, from long habit, that any interference with their assumed despotism over the natives was an infringement of their rights.

"You must also recollect how weak was the power of the colonial government for a long time, and how impossible it was to exert that power over such an extensive country; and to give you some idea of this, I will state what was the reply of some of the Dutch boors to the traveler La Vaillant, when the latter expressed his opinion that the government should interfere with an armed force to put an end to their cruelty and oppression.

"Are you aware,' said they, 'what would be the result of such an attempt?—Assembling all in an instant, we would massacre half of the soldiers, salt their flesh, and send it back by those we might spare, with threats to do the same thing to those who should be bold enough to appear among us afterward.' It is not an easy task for any government to deal with such a set of people, Mr. Wilmot."

"I grant it," replied Alexander; "and the conviction makes me more anxious to know what has been since done."

CHAPTER VI

The following morning the wind was very slight, and before noon it fell calm. Two sharks of a large size came under the stern of the vessel, and the sailors were soon very busy trying to hook one of them; but they refused the bait, which was a piece of salt pork, and after an hour they quitted the vessel and disappeared, much to the disappointment of both passengers and ship's company, the former wishing very much to see the sharks caught, and the latter very anxious to cut them up and fry them for their suppers.

"I thought that sharks always took the bait," observed Alexander.

"Not always, as you have now seen," replied Mr. Swinton; "all depends upon whether they are hungry or not. In some harbors where there are plenty of fish, I have seen sharks in hundreds, which not only refused any bait, but would not attempt to seize a man if he was in the water; but I am surprised at these Atlantic sharks refusing the bait, I must confess, for they are generally very ravenous, as are, indeed, all the sharks which are found in the ocean."

"I can tell you, sir, why they refused the bait," said the boatswain of the vessel, who was standing by; "it's because we are now on the track of the Brazilian slavers, and they have been well fed lately, depend upon it."

"I should not be surprised if you were correct in your idea," replied Mr. Swinton.

"There are many varieties of sharks, are there not?" inquired Wilmot.

"Yes, a great many; the fiercest, however, and the largest kind is the one which has just left us, and is termed the white shark; it ranges the whole Atlantic Ocean, but is seldom found far to the northward, as it prefers the tropics: it is, however, to be seen in the Mediterranean, in the Gulf of Lyons, and is there remarkably fierce. In the English Channel you find the blue shark, which is seldom dangerous; there is also a very large-sized but harmless shark found in the north seas, which the whalers frequent. Then there is the spotted or tiger-shark, which is very savage, although it does not grow to a large size; the hammer-headed shark, so called from the peculiar formation of its head; and the ground shark, perhaps the most dangerous of all, as it lies at the bottom and rises under you without giving you notice of its approach. I believe I have now mentioned the principal varieties."

"If a man was to fall overboard and a shark was nigh, what would be the best plan to act upon—that is, if there would be any chance of escape from such a brute?"

"The best plan, and I have seen it acted upon with success, is, if you can swim well, to throw yourself on your back and splash as much as you can with your feet, and halloo as loud as you can. A shark is a cowardly animal, and noise will drive it away."

"When I went out two or three years ago, I had a Newfoundland dog, which was accustomed to leap into the water from almost any height. I was very partial to him, and you may imagine my annoyance when, one day, as we were becalmed along the Western Islands, and a large shark came up alongside, the dog, at once perceiving it, plunged off the taffrail to seize it, swimming toward the shark, and barking as loud as he could. I fully expected that the monster would have dispatched him in a moment; but to my surprise the shark was frightened and swam away, followed by the dog, until the boat that was lowered down picked him up."

"I don't think the shark could have been very hungry."

"Probably not; at all events I should not have liked to have been in Neptune's place. I think the most peculiar plan of escaping from sharks is that pursued by the Cingalese divers, and often with success."

"Tell me, if you please."

"The divers who go down for the pearl oysters off Ceylon generally drop from a boat, and descend in ten or twelve fathoms of water before they come to the bed of pearl oysters, which is upon a bank of mud: it often happens that when they are down, the sharks make for them, and I hardly

need say that these poor fellows are constantly on the watch, looking in every direction while they are filling their baskets. If they perceive a shark making for them, their only chance is to stir up the mud on the bank as fast as they can, which prevents the animal from distinguishing them, and under the cover of the clouded water they regain the surface; nevertheless, it does not always answer, and many are taken off every year."

"A lady, proud of her pearl necklace, little thinks how many poor fellows may have been torn to pieces to obtain for her such an ornament."

"Very true; and when we consider how many pearl-fisheries may have taken place, and how many divers may have been destroyed, before a string of fine pearls can be obtained, we might almost say that every pearl on the necklace has cost the life of a human creature."

"How are the pearls disposed of, and who are the proprietors?"

"The government are the proprietors of the fishery, I believe; but whether they farm it out yearly, or not, I can not tell; but this I know, that as the pearl oysters are taken, they are landed unopened and packed upon the beach in squares of a certain dimension. When the fishing is over for the season, these square lots of pearl oysters are put up to auction, and sold to the highest bidder, of course 'contents unknown;' so that it becomes a species of lottery; the purchaser may not find a single pearl in his lot, or he may find two or three, which will realize twenty times the price which he has paid for his lot."

"It is, then, a lottery from beginning to end; the poor divers' lottery is shark or no shark; the purchasers', pearls or no pearls. But Mr. Fairburn is coming up the ladder, and I am anxious to know what was the fate of Mokanna."

Mr. Fairburn, who had come on deck on purpose to continue the narrative, took his seat by his two fellow passengers and went on as follows:—

"I stated that Mokanna had been forwarded to the Cape. You must have perceived that his only crime was that of fighting for his native land against civilized invaders; but this was a deep crime in the eyes of the colonial government; he was immediately thrown into the common gaol, and finally was condemned to be imprisoned for life on Robben Island, a place appropriated for the detention of convicted felons and other malefactors, who there work in irons at the slate-quarries."

"May I ask, where is Robben Island?"

"It is an island a few miles from the mainland, close to Table Bay, upon which the Cape Town is built."

"Mokanna remained there about a year, when, having made his intentions known to some Caffres who were confined there with him, he contrived out of the iron hoops of the casks to make some weapons like cutlasses, with which he armed his followers, rose upon the guard and overpowered them; he then seized the boat, and with his Caffres made for the mainland. Unfortunately, in attempting to disembark upon the rocks of the mainland, the boat was upset in the surf, which was very violent; Mokanna clung some time to a rock, but at last was washed off, and thus perished the unfortunate leader of the Caffres."

"Poor fellow," said Alexander; "he deserved a better fate and a more generous enemy; but did the war continue?"

"No; it ended in a manner every way worthy of that in which it was begun. You recollect that the war was commenced to support Gaika, our selected chief of the Caffres, against the real chiefs. The Caffres had before been compelled to give up their territories on our side of the Fish River; the colonial government now insisted upon their retiring still further, that is, beyond the Keisi and Chumi rivers, by which 3,000 more square miles were added to the colonial territory. This was exacted, in order that there might be a neutral ground to separate the Caffres and the Dutch boors, and put an end to further robberies on either side. The strangest part of the story is, that this territory was not taken away from the Caffre chiefs, against whom we had made war, but from Gaika, our ally, to support whom we had entered into the war."

"Well, it was even-handed—not justice, but injustice, at all events."

"Exactly so; and so thought Gaika, for when speaking of the protection he received from the colonial government, he said, 'But when I look upon the large extent of fine country which has been taken from me, I am compelled to say, that, although protected, I am *rather oppressed* by my *protectors*.'"

"Unjust as was the mode of obtaining the neutral ground, I must say that it appears to me to have been a good policy to put one between the parties."

"I grant it; but what was the conduct of the colonial government? This neutral ground was afterward given away in large tracts to the Dutch boors, so as again to bring them into contact with the Caffres."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; to men who had always been opposed to the English government, who had twice risen in rebellion against them, and who had tried to bring in the Caffres to destroy the colony. Neither were the commandoes, or excursions against the Caffres, put an end to: Makomo, the son of Gaika, our late ally, has, I hear, been the party now attacked. I trust, however, that we may soon have affairs going on in a more favorable and reputable manner; indeed, I am sure that, now the government at home have been put in possession of the facts, such will be the case.

"I have now given you a very brief insight into the history of the Cape up to the present time. There are many points which I have passed over, not wishing to diverge from a straightforward narrative; but upon any questions you may wish to ask, I shall be most happy to give you all the information in my power. I can not, however, dismiss the subject without making one remark, which is, that it is principally, if not wholly, to the missionaries, to their exertions and to their representations, that what good has been done is to be attributed. They are entitled to the greatest credit and the warmest praise; and great as has been the misrule of this colony for many years, it would have been much greater and much more disgraceful, if it had not been for their efforts. Another very important alteration has been taking place in the colony, which will eventually be productive of much good. I refer to the British immigration, which every year becomes more extensive; and as soon as the British population exceeds and masters that of the old Dutch planters and boors, we shall have better feeling in the colony. Do not suppose that all the Dutch boors are such as those whose conduct I have been obliged to point out. There are many worthy men, although but few educated or enlightened.

"I know from my own observation that the failings and prejudices against the natives are fast fading away, and that lately the law has been able to hold its ground, and has been supported by the people inhabiting the districts. The Dutch, with all their prejudices and all their vices, will soon be swallowed up by the inundation of English settlers, and will gradually be so incorporated and intermingled by marriage that no distinction will be known. Time, however, is required for such consolidation and cementation; that time is arriving fast, and the future prospects of the Cape are as cheering, as you may think, from my narrative, they have been disheartening and gloomy."

"I trust in God that such will be the case," replied Alexander. "If this wind continues, in a few days we shall be at the Cape, and I shall be most anxious to hear how affairs are going on."

"I had a letter just before I set out from England, stating that the Zoolu tribes, to the northward of the Caffres, are in an unquiet state; and as you must pass near to these tribes on your journey, I am anxious to know the truth. At all events, Chaka is dead; he was murdered about two years back by his own relations."

"Who was Chaka?" inquired Alexander.

"That I have yet to tell you; at present we have only got as far as the Caffres, who are immediately on our frontiers."

CHAPTER VII

The wind continued fair, and the vessel rapidly approached the Cape. Alexander, who had contracted a great friendship for Mr. Swinton, had made known to him the cause of his intended journey into the interior, and the latter volunteered, if his company would not be displeasing, to accompany Alexander on his tedious and somewhat perilous expedition.

Alexander gladly accepted the offer, and requested Mr. Swinton would put himself to no expense, as he had unlimited command of money from his grand-uncle, and Mr. Swinton's joining the caravan would make no difference in his arrangements.

After it had been agreed that they should travel together, the continued subject of discourse and discussion was the nature of the outfit, the number of wagons, their equipment, the stores, the number of horses and oxen which should he provided; and they were busy every day adding to their memoranda as to what it would be advisable to procure for their journey.

Mr. Fairburn often joined in the discussion, and gave his advice, but told them that, when they arrived at Cape Town, he might be more useful to them. Alexander, who, as we have before observed, was a keen hunter, and very partial to horses and dogs, promised himself much pleasure in the chase of the wild animals on their journey, and congratulated himself upon being so well provided with guns and rifles, which he had brought with him, more with the idea that they might be required for self-defense than for sport.

At last, "Land, ho!" was cried out by the man who was at the mast-head in the morning watch, and soon afterward, the flat top of Table Mountain was distinctly visible from the deck. The *Surprise*, running before a fresh breeze, soon neared the land, so that the objects on it might be perceived with a glass. At noon they were well in for the bay, and before three o'clock the *Surprise* was brought to an anchor between two other merchant vessels, which were filling up their home cargoes.

After a three months' voyage, passengers are rather anxious to get on shore; and therefore before night all were landed, and Alexander found himself comfortably domiciled in one of the best houses in Cape Town; for Mr. Fairburn had, during the passage, requested Alexander to take up his abode with him.

Tired with the excitement of the day, he was not sorry to go to bed early, and he did not forget to return his thanks to Him who had preserved him through the perils of the voyage.

The next morning Mr. Fairburn said to Alexander—

"Mr. Wilmot, I should recommend you for the first ten days to think nothing about your journey. Amuse yourself with seeing the public gardens, and other things worthy of inspection; or, if it pleases you, you can make the ascent of Table Mountain with your friend Swinton. At all events, do just as you please; you will find my people attentive, and ready to obey your orders. You know the hours of meals; consider yourself at home, and as much master here as I am. As you may well imagine, after so long an absence, I have much to attend to in my official capacity, and I think it will be a week or ten days before I shall be comfortably reseated in my office, and have things going on smoothly, as they ought to do. You must therefore excuse me if I am not quite so attentive a host at first as I should wish to be. One thing only I recommend you to do at present, which is, to accompany me this afternoon to Government-house, that I may introduce you to the governor. It is just as well to get over that mark of respect which is due to him, and then you will be your own master."

Alexander replied with many thanks. He was graciously received by the governor, who promised him every assistance in his power in the prosecution of his journey. Having received an invitation for dinner on the following day, Alexander bowed and took his leave in company with Mr. Fairburn.

On the following day Alexander was visited by Mr. Swinton. Mr. Swinton was accompanied by a major in the Bengal Cavalry, whom he introduced as Major Henderson. He had arrived a few

days before from Calcutta, having obtained leave of absence for the recovery of his health, after a smart jungle-fever, which had nearly proved fatal. The voyage, however, had completely reinstated him, and he appeared full of life and spirits. They walked together to the Company's gardens, in which were a few lions, and some other Cape animals, and the discourse naturally turned upon them. Major Henderson described the hunting in India, especially the tiger-hunting on elephants, to which he was very partial; and Alexander soon discovered that he was talking to one who was passionately fond of the sport. After a long conversation they parted, mutually pleased with each other. A day or two afterward, Mr. Swinton, who had been talking about their intended journey with Alexander, said to him:—

"You must not be surprised at the off-hand and unceremonious way we have in the colonies. People meeting abroad, even Englishmen occasionally, throw aside much ceremony. I mention this, because Major Henderson intends to call this afternoon, and propose joining our party into the interior. I do not know much of him, but I have heard much said in his favor, and it is easy to see by his manners and address that he is a gentleman. Of course, when he stated his intention, I could do nothing but refer him to you, which I did. What do you think, Wilmot?"

"I think very well of Major Henderson, and I consider that, as the journey must be one of some peril, the more Europeans the better, especially when we can find one who is used to danger from his profession, and also to dangerous hunting, which we must also expect. So far from not wishing him to join us, I consider him a most valuable acquisition, and am delighted at the idea."

"Well, I am glad to hear you say so, for I agree with you. He is hunting mad, that is certain, and I hear, a most remarkable shot. I think with you he will be an acquisition. It appears that it was his intention to have gone into the interior, even if he went by himself; and he has two Arab horses which he brought with him from India with that view."

"If you see him before he comes, you may say that you have stated his wishes to me, and that I am quite delighted at his joining our party,—it being perfectly understood that he is at no expense for any thing connected with the outfit."

"I will tell him so," replied Swinton; "and I think the sooner we begin to collect what is necessary the better. We must have Major Henderson in our councils. Depend upon it, he will be very useful and very active; so, for the present, farewell."

Mr. Swinton and Major Henderson called together that afternoon, and the latter, as soon as he was admitted into the party, began to talk over the plans and preparations.

"My suite is not very large," said he; "I have two horses and two dogs, a Parsee servant, and a Cape baboon. I should like to take the latter with us as well as my servant. My servant, because he is a good cook; and my monkey, because, if we are hard put to it, she will show us what we may eat and what we may not; there is no taster like a monkey. Besides, she is young and full of tricks, and I like something to amuse me."

"The baboons have another good quality: they give notice of danger sooner than a dog," observed Swinton. "I think, Wilmot, we must admit the monkey into the party."

"I shall be most happy," replied Alexander, laughing; "pray give her my compliments, Major Henderson, and say how happy I shall be."

"I call her Begum," said Major Henderson; "because she is so like the old Begum princess whom I was once attending, when in India with my troop, as guard of honor. You must look out for some good horses, Mr. Wilmot; you will want a great many, and if you do not wish them to have sore backs, don't let the Hottentots ride them."

"We have been discussing the point, Major Henderson, as to whether it will not be better to go round in a vessel to Algoa Bay, complete our equipment there, and make that our starting place."

"If you do, you will save a long journey by land, and find yourself not very far from what I understand are the best of hunting-grounds, near to the country of the Vaal River."

The topics then dwelt upon were what articles they should procure in Cape Town, and what they should defer providing themselves with until their arrival at Algoa Bay. They agreed to provide all their stores at Cape Town, and as many good horses as they could select; but the wagons and oxen, and the hiring of Hottentots, they put off until they arrived at Algoa Bay.

Mr. Fairburn was now more at leisure, and Alexander had more of his society. One evening after dinner Mr. Fairburn had opened a map of the country, to give Alexander some information relative to his projected journey. He pointed out to him the track which appeared most advisable through the Caffre country, and then observed that it was difficult to give any advice as to his proceedings after he had passed this country, governed by Hinza, as every thing would depend upon circumstances.

"Do you know any thing of the country beyond?"

"Not much; we know that it was overrun by the Zoolus, the tribe of which Chaka was the chief; and last year our troops went to the assistance of the Caffres, who were attacked by another tribe from the northward, called the Mantatees. These were dispersed by our troops with immense slaughter. The Zoolu country, you perceive, is on the east side of the great chain of mountains, and to the northward of Port Natal. The Mantatees came from the west side of the mountains, in about the same parallel of latitude. It is impossible to say what may be going on at present, or what may take place before you arrive at your destination, as these northern irruptions are continual."

"You promised me the history of that person, Chaka."

"You shall have it now: he was the king of the Zoolu nation—I hardly know what to call him. He was the Nero and the Napoleon of Africa; a monster in cruelty and crime, yet a great warrior and conqueror. He commenced his career by murdering his relatives to obtain the sovereignty. As soon as he had succeeded, he murdered all those whom he thought inimical to him, and who had been friends to his relatives."

"But are the Zoolus Caffres?"

"No; but there are many races to the northward which we consider as Caffre races. You may have observed, in the history of the world, that the migrations of the human race are generally from the north to the south: so it appears to have been in Africa. Some convulsion among the northern tribes, probably a pressure from excessive population, had driven the Zoolus to the southward, and they came down like an inundation, sweeping before them all the tribes that fell in their path. Chaka's force consisted of nearly 100,000 warriors, of whom 15,000 were always in attendance to execute his orders. In every country which he overran he spared neither age nor sex; it was one indiscriminate slaughter."

"What a monster!"

"He ruled by terror, and it is incredible that his orders met with such implicit obedience. To make his army invincible, he remodeled it, divided it into companies, distinguished by the color of their shields, and forbade them to use any other weapon but a short stabbing-spear, so that they always fought at close quarters. He weeded his army by picking out 1000 of his veteran warriors, who had gained his victories, and putting them to death. Any regiment sent out to battle, if they were defeated, were instantly destroyed on their return; it was, therefore, victory or death with them; and the death was most cruel, being that of impalement. Well he was surnamed 'the Bloody,'"

"Yes, indeed."

"His tyranny over his own people was dreadful. On one occasion, a child annoyed him; he ordered it to be killed; but the child ran among seventy or eighty other children, and could not be distinguished, so he ordered the whole to be put to death. He murdered two or three hundred of his wives in one day. At the slightest suspicion he would order out his chiefs to execution, and no one knew when his turn might come. His will was law: every one trembled and obeyed. To enter into a detail of all his cruelties would fill volumes; it will be sufficient to mention the last act of his life. His mother died, and he declared that she had perished by witchcraft. Hundreds and hundreds were

impaled, and, at last, tired of these slow proceedings, he ordered out his army to an indiscriminate slaughter over the whole country, which lasted for fourteen days."

"How horrible!"

"He was a demon who reveled in blood; but his own turn came at last. He was murdered by his brother Dingaam, who knew that he was about to be sacrificed; and thus perished the bloody Chaka. His brother Dingaam is now on the Zoolu throne, and appears inclined to be quiet. There is another great warrior chief named Moselekatsee, who revolted from Chaka, and who is much such another character; but our accounts of these people are vague at present, and require time to corroborate their correctness. You will have to act and decide when you arrive there, and must be guided by circumstances. With the caravan you propose to travel with, I think there will not be much danger; and if there is, you must retreat. The favor of these despots is easily to be obtained by judicious presents, which of course you will not be unprovided with. I have ordered your letters to the authorities to be made out, and you will have the governor's signature to them. When do you propose to, start?"

"We shall be ready in a few days, and have only to find a vessel going to Algoa Bay."

"You will be asked to take charge of several articles which are to be sent to the missionary station which you will pass on your way. I presume you have no objection?"

"Certainly not; they deserve every encouragement, and any kindness and attention I can show them will give me great pleasure."

Alexander received many proposals from different parties who wished to join the expedition, but they were all civilly declined. In a few days a vessel arrived, which was about to go round to the settlement at Algoa Bay. Their stores, horses, and dogs, not forgetting Begum the baboon, were all embarked, and, taking leave of Mr. Fairburn and the governor, Alexander, Major Henderson, and Mr. Swinton embarked, and on the evening of the fourth day found themselves safe at anchor in company with ten or twelve vessels which were lying in Algoa Bay.

CHAPTER VIII

The vessels which lay at anchor in Algoa Bay had just arrived from England, with a numerous collection of emigrants, who, to improve their fortunes, had left their native land to settle in this country. Many had landed, but the greater proportion were still on board of the vessels. The debarkation was rapidly going on, and the whole bay was covered with boats landing with people and stores, or returning for more. The wind blowing from the westward, there was no surf on the beach; the sun was bright and warm, and the scene was busy and interesting; but night came on, and the panorama was closed in.

Alexander and his companions remained on the deck of their vessel till an undisturbed silence reigned where but an hour or two before all was noise and bustle. The stars, so beautiful in the southern climes, shone out in cloudless brilliancy; the waters of the bay were smooth as glass, and reflected them so clearly that they might have fancied that there was a heaven beneath as well as above them. The land presented a dark opaque mass, the mountains in the distance appearing as if they were close to them, and rising precipitately from the shore. All was of one somber hue, except where the lights in the houses in the town twinkled here and there, announcing that; some had not yet dismissed their worldly cares, and sought repose from the labors of the day. Yet all was silent, except occasionally the barking of a dog, or the voice of the sentry in Fort Frederick, announcing that "all was well."

"What a gathering in a small space of so many people with so many different histories, so many causes for leaving their native land, and with so many different fortunes in store for them, must there be on board of an emigrant ship," observed Mr. Swinton.

"Yet all united in one feeling, and instigated by the same desire,—that of independence, and, if possible, of wealth," rejoined Major Henderson.

"Of that there can be no doubt," said Alexander; "but it must be almost like beginning a new life; so many ties broken by the vast ocean which has separated them; new interests usurping the place of old ones; all novelty and adventure to look forward to; new scenes added to new hopes and new fears; but we must not remain too long even to watch these beautiful heavens, for we must rise at daylight, so I shall set the example, and wish you both good-night."

At daylight on the following morning the long-boat was hoisted out, and the horses safely conveyed on shore. After a hasty breakfast, Alexander and his two companions landed, to see if it were possible to obtain any roof under which they could shelter themselves; but the number of emigrants who had arrived put that out of the question, every house and every bed being engaged. This was a great disappointment, as they had no wish to return on board and reoccupy the confined space which had been allotted to them.

Having found accommodation for their horses, they proceeded to examine the town and resume their search for lodgings. The streets presented a bustling and animated scene; wagons with goods, or returning empty with their long teams of oxen; horses, sheep, and other animals, just landed; loud talking; busy inquirers; running to and fro of men; Hottentots busy with the gods, or smoking their pipes in idle survey; crates and boxes, and packages of all descriptions, mixed up with agricultural implements and ironware, lining each side of the road, upon which were seated wives and daughters watching the property, and children looking round with astonishment, or playing or crying.

Further out of the town were to be seen tents pitched by the emigrants, who had provided themselves with such necessities before they had quitted England, and who were bivouacking like so many gipsies, independent of lodgings and their attendant expenses, and cooking their own provisions in kettles or frying-pans. As Alexander perceived the latter, he said, "At all events, we have found lodgings now; I never thought of that."

"How do you mean?"

"I have two tents in the luggage I brought from Cape Town; we must get them on shore, and do as these people have done."

"Bravo! I am glad to hear that," replied Major Henderson; "any thing better than remaining on board to be nibbled by the cockroaches. Shall we return at once?"

"By all means," said Mr. Swinton; "we have but to get our mattresses and a few other articles."

"Leave my man to do all that," said the Major; "he is used to it. In India we almost live in tents when up the country. But here comes one that I should know;—Maxwell, I believe?"

"Even so, my dear Henderson," replied the military officer who had been thus addressed; "why, what brought you here?—surely you are not a settler?"

"No; I am here because I am not a settler," replied Henderson, laughing; "I am always on the move; I am merely on my own way with my two friends here to shoot a hippopotamus. Allow me to introduce Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Swinton. But I see you are on duty; are you in the fort?"

"Yes; I came from Somerset about a month back. Can I be of any use to you?"

"That depends upon circumstances; we are now going on board for our tents, to pitch them on the hill there, as we can get no lodgings."

"Well, I can not offer you beds in the fort, but I think if you were to pitch your tents outside the fort, on the glacis, you would be better than on the hill; your baggage would be safer, and I should be more able to render you any attention or assistance you may require."

"An excellent idea; if it were only on account of the baggage," replied Henderson; "we accept your offer with pleasure."

"Well then, get them on shore as quick as you can; my men will soon have them out for you and assist in transporting your luggage; and don't distress yourself about your dinner, I will contrive to have something cooked for you."

"A friend in need is a friend indeed, my good fellow. We will accept your offers as freely as they are made: so farewell for an hour or so."

As they parted with Captain Maxwell, Henderson observed, "That was a lucky meeting, for we shall now get on well. Maxwell is an excellent fellow, and he will be very useful to us in making our purchases, as he knows the people and the country: and our luggage will be safe from all pilferers."

"It is indeed very fortunate," replied Mr. Swinton. "Where did you know Captain Maxwell?"

"In India. We have often been out hunting tigers together. How he would like to be of our party; but that is of course impossible."

"But how shall we manage about our living, Major Henderson?" observed Wilmot; "it will never do to quarter ourselves on your friend."

"Of course not; we should soon eat up his pay and allowance. No, no; we will find dinners, and he will help us to cook them first and eat them afterward."

"Upon such terms, I shall gladly take up my quarters in the fort," replied Alexander. "But which is our boat out of all these?"

"Here, sir," cried out one of the sailors; "come along, my lads," continued he to the other men, who were lounging about, and who all jumped into the boat, which pushed off, and they were soon on board of the ship.

As the master of the vessel was equally glad to get rid of his passengers and their luggage as they were to leave, the utmost expedition was used by all parties, and in a few hours everything was landed, Begum, the baboon, being perched upon the stores conveyed in the last boat. A party of soldiers sent down by Captain Maxwell assisted the seamen to carry the various packages up to the fort, and before the evening closed in, the tents were pitched, their beds made up, and their baggage safely housed, while they were amusing themselves after dining with Captain Maxwell, leaning on the parapet and watching the passing and repassing of the boats which were unlading the vessels.

As there was little chance of rain in the present season, they lay down on their mattresses in perfect security and comfort, and did not wake up the next morning until breakfast was ready. After

breakfast they sallied out with Captain Maxwell to look after wagons and oxen, and as, on the arrival of the emigrants, a number of wagons had been sent down to take them to their destinations, Captain Maxwell soon fell in with some of the Dutch boors of the interior with whom he had been acquainted, and who had come down with their wagons; but previous to making any bargains, Alexander went with Captain Maxwell to the landroost, for whom he had brought a letter from the governor.

This gentleman immediately joined the party, and through his intervention, before night, four excellent wagons with their tilts and canvas coverings, and four span of oxen of fourteen each, were bought and promised to be brought down and delivered up in good order, as soon as they had carried up the freights with which they were charged.

As these wagons could not return under four days, the next object that they had in view was to procure some more horses, and here they met with difficulty; for Major Henderson, who, as an excellent judge of horses, was requested to select them, would not accept of many that were offered. Still they had plenty of time, as the wagons would require fitting out previous to their departure, and this would be a work of some days; and many articles which they had decided to procure at Algoa Bay, instead of the Cape, were now to be sought for and selected.

At the time appointed, the wagons and teams were delivered over and paid for. Carpenters were then engaged, and the wagons were fitted out with lockers all round them, divided off to contain the luggage separate, so that they might be able to obtain in a minute any thing that they might require. While this work was proceeding, with the assistance of the landroost, they were engaging Hottentots and other people to join the expedition, some as drivers to the wagons, others as huntsmen, and to perform such duties as might be required of them. Some very steady brave men were selected, but it was impossible to make up the whole force which they wished to take of people of known character; many of them were engaged rather from their appearance, their promises, and the characters they obtained from others or gave themselves, than from any positive knowledge of them. This could not be avoided; and as they had it in their power to dismiss them for bad conduct, it was to be presumed that they could procure others.

It was more than three weeks before every thing was ready for their departure, and then the caravan was composed as follows:—

The persons who belonged to it were our three gentlemen; the servant of Major Henderson; eight drivers of the teams of oxen; twelve Hottentot and other hunters (for some of them were of a mixed race); two Hottentots who had charge of the horses, and two others who had charge of a flock of Cape sheep, which were to follow the caravan, and serve as food until they could procure oxen by purchase or game with their guns: so that the whole force of the party amounted to twenty men: two Hottentot women, wives of the principal men, also accompanied the caravan to wash and assist in cooking.

The animals belonging to the caravan consisted of fifty-six fine oxen, which composed the teams; twelve horses, as Major Henderson could only procure six at Algoa Bay, or they would have purchased more; thirteen dogs of various sizes, and Begum, the baboon, belonging to Captain Henderson: to these were to be added the flock of sheep.

The wagons were fitted out as follows, chiefly under the direction of Major Henderson and Mr. Swinton.

The first wagon, which was called Mr. Wilmot's wagon, was fitted up with boxes or lockers all round, and contained all the stores for their own use, such as tea, sugar, coffee, cheeses, hams, tongues, biscuits, soap, and wax candles, wine and spirits in bottles, besides large rolls of tobacco for the Hottentots or presents, and Alexander's clothes; his mattress lay at the bottom of the wagons, between the lockers. The wagon was covered with a double sail-cloth tilt, and with curtains before and behind; the carpenter's tools were also in one of the lockers of this wagon.

The second wagon was called Mr. Swinton's wagon; it was fitted up with lockers in the same way as the other, but it had also a large chest with a great quantity of drawers for insects, bottles of

spirits for animals, and every thing necessary for preserving them; a ream or two of paper for drying plants, and several other articles, more particularly a medicine-chest well filled, for Mr. Swinton was not unacquainted with surgery and physic. The other lockers were filled with a large quantity of glass beads and cutlery for presents, several hundred pounds of bullets, ready cast, and all the kitchen ware and crockery. It had the same covering as the first, and Mr. Swinton's mattress was at night spread in the middle between the lockers.

The third wagon was called the armory, or the Major's wagon; it was not fitted up like the two first. The whole bottom of it was occupied with movable chests, and four large casks of spirits, and the Major made up his bed on the top of the chests. In the chests were gunpowder in bottles and a quantity of small shot for present use; tobacco in large rolls; 1 cwt. of snuff; all the heavy tools, spades, shovels, and axes, and a variety of other useful articles.

The tilt-frame was much stouter than that of the two other wagons, for the hoops met each other so as to make it solid. It was covered with a tarred sail-cloth so as to be quite water-proof, and under the tilt-frame were suspended all the guns, except the two which Alexander and Mr. Swinton retained in their own wagons in case of emergency. The back and front of this wagon were closed with boards, which were let down and pulled up on hinges, so that it was a little fortress in case of need; and as it could be locked up at any time, the Hottentots were not able to get at the casks of spirits without committing a sort of burglary. Begum was tied up in this wagon at night.

The fourth wagon was called the store wagon, and contained several articles which were not immediately wanted; such as casks of flour and bags of rice: it also held most of the ammunition, having six casks of gunpowder, a quantity of lead, two coils of rope, iron bars, bags of nails of various sizes, rolls of brass wire, and the two tents, with three chairs and a small table. Like the wagon of Major Henderson, it was covered with water-proof cloth.

Such was the fit-out which was considered necessary for this adventurous expedition, and the crowds who came to see the preparations for the great hunting-party, as it was called, were so great and so annoying that the utmost haste was made to quit the town. At last the wagons were all loaded, the Hottentots collected together from the liquor-shops, their agreements read to them by the landroost, and any departure from their agreements, or any misconduct, threatened with severe punishment.

The horses and oxen were brought in, and the next morning was fixed for their departure. Having taken leave of the landroost and other gentlemen of the town, who had loaded them with civilities, they retired to the fort, and passed the major part of the night with Captain Maxwell; but to avoid the crowd which would have accompanied them, and have impeded their progress, they had resolved to set off before daylight. At two o'clock in the morning the Hottentots were roused up, the oxen yoked, and an hour before day-break the whole train had quitted the town, and were traveling at a slow pace, lighted only by the brilliant stars of the southern sky.

CHAPTER IX

The plans of our travelers had been well digested. They had decided that they would first prosecute the object of their journey by proceeding straight through the Caffre country to the borders of the Undata River, near or whereabouts it was reported that the descendants of the whites would be found located; and as soon as Alexander had accomplished his mission, that they would cross the chain of mountains, and return through the Bushmen and the Koranna country. Their reason for making this arrangement was, that throughout the whole of the Caffre country, with the exception of lions and elephants in the forest, and hippopotami in the rivers, there was little or no game to be found, the Caffres having almost wholly destroyed it.

This plan had been suggested by Major Henderson, and had been approved by Alexander and Mr. Swinton,—Alexander being equally desirous as the Major to have plenty of field-sport, and Mr. Swinton anxious to increase his stock and knowledge of the animal kingdom. There was little to be feared in their advance through the Caffre country, as the missionaries had already planted two missions, one at Butterworth and the other at Chumie; and the first of these Alexander had decided upon visiting, and had, in consequence, several packages in his wagon, which had been entrusted to his care.

It was on the 7th of May, 1829, that the caravan quitted Algoa Bay for Graham's Town. The weather had been for some weeks fine, the heavy rains having ceased, and the pasturage was now luxuriant; the wagons proceeded at a noiseless pace over the herbage, the sleepy Hottentots not being at all inclined to exert themselves unnecessarily. Alexander, Swinton, and Henderson were on horseback, a little ahead of the first wagon.

"I don't know how you feel," said the Major; "but I feel as if I were a prisoner just released from his chains. I breathe the air of independence and liberty now. After the bustle, and noise, and crowding together of the town, to find ourselves here so quiet and solitary is freedom."

"I had the same feeling," replied Alexander; "this wide-extended plain, of which we can not yet discern the horizontal edge; these brilliant stars scattered over the heavens, and shining down upon us; no sound to meet our ears but the creaking of the wagon-wheels in the slow and measured pace, is to me delightful. They say man is formed for society, and so he is; but it is very delightful occasionally to be alone."

"Yes; alone as we are," replied Swinton, laughing; "that is, with a party of thirty people, well armed, in search of adventure. To be clear of the bustle of the town, and no longer cooped up in the fort, is pleasant enough; but, I suspect, to be quite alone in these African wilds would be any thing but agreeable."

"Perhaps so."

"Neither would you feel so much at ease if you knew that your chance of to-morrow's dinner was to depend wholly upon what you might procure with your gun. There is a satisfaction in knowing that you have four well-filled wagons behind you."

"I grant that also," replied the Major; "but still there is solitude even with this company, and I feel it."

"A solitary caravan—but grant that there is some difference between that and a solitary individual," rejoined Swinton; "however, we have not come to solitude yet, for we shall find Dutch boors enough between this and Graham's Town."

"I think, Wilmot," observed Henderson, "that I should, if I were you, proceed by slow stages at first, that we may get our men into some kind of order and discipline, and also that we may find out whether there are any who will not suit us; we can discharge them at Graham's Town, and procure others in their place, at the same time that we engage our interpreters and guides."

"I think your plan very good," replied Alexander; "besides, we shall not have our wagons properly laden and arranged until we have been out three or four days."

"One thing is absolutely necessary, which is, to have a guard kept every night," said Swinton; "and there ought to be two men on guard at a time; for one of them is certain to fall asleep, if not both. I know the Hottentots well."

"They will be excellent guards, by your account," said Alexander; "however, the dogs will serve us more faithfully."

"I do not mean my remark to include all Hottentots; some are very faithful, and do their duty; but it comprehends the majority."

"Are they courageous?" inquired Alexander.

"Yes, certainly, they may be considered as a brave race of men; but occasionally there is a poltroon, and, like all cowards, he brags more than the rest."

"I've a strong suspicion that we have one of that kind among our hunters," replied Henderson; "however, it is not fair to prejudge; I may be mistaken."

"I think I know which you refer to, nevertheless," said Alexander; "it is the great fellow that they call Big Adam."

"You have hit upon the man, and to a certain degree corroborated my opinion of him. But the day is dawning, the sun will soon be above those hills."

"When we stop, I will have some grease put to those wagon-wheels," said Alexander.

"I fear it will be of little use," replied the Major; "creak they will. I don't know whether the oxen here are like those in India; but this I know, that the creaking of the carts and hackeries there is fifty times worse than this. The natives never grease the wheels; they say the oxen would not go on if they did not hear the music behind them."

"Besides, the creaking of the wheels will by and by be of service; when we are traveling through grass higher than our heads, we shall not be able to stop behind a minute, if we have not the creaking of the wheels to direct us how to follow."

"Well, then, I suppose we must save our grease," said Alexander.

"In a very few days you will be so accustomed to it," said the Major, "that if it were to cease, you would feel the loss of it."

"Well, it may be so; use is second nature; but at present I feel as if the loss would be gain. There is the sun just showing himself above the hill. Shall we halt or go on?"

"Go on for another hour, and the men can thus examine the traces and the wagons by daylight, and then, when we stop, we can remedy any defects."

"Be it so; there is a house, is there not, on the rising ground, as far as you can see?"

"Yes, I think so," replied the Major.

"I know it very well," said Swinton; "it is the farm of a Dutch boor, Milius, whom we saw at Algoa Bay. I did not think that we had got on so fast. It is about three miles off, so it will just be convenient for our breakfast. It will take us a good hour to arrive there, and then we will unyoke the oxen. How many have we yoked?"

"Ten to each wagon. The other sixteen are following with the sheep and horses; they are as relays."

"Let us gallop on," said the Major.

"Agreed," replied the others; and putting spurs to their horses, they soon arrived at the farmhouse of the Dutch planter.

They were saluted with the barking and clamor of about twenty dogs, which brought out one of the young boors, who drove away the dogs by pelting them with bullock-horns, and other bones of animals which were strewed about. He then requested them to dismount. The old boor soon appeared, and gave them a hearty welcome, handing down from the shelf a large brandy-bottle, and

recommending a dram, of which he partook himself, stating that it was good brandy, and made from his own peaches.

Shortly afterward the wife of the boor made her appearance, and having saluted them, took up her station at a small table, with the tea apparatus before her. That refreshing beverage she now poured out for the visitors, handing a box, with some sugar-candy in it, for them to put a bit into their youths, and keep there as they drank their tea, by way of sweetening it. The old boor told them he had expected them, as he had been informed that they were to set out that day; but he had concluded that they would arrive in the afternoon, and not so early.

We may as well here give a description of a Dutch farmer's house at the Cape settlement.

It was a large square building, the wall built up of clay, and then plastered with a composition made by the boors, which becomes excessively hard in time; after which it is whitewashed. The roof was thatched with a hard sort of rushes, more durable and less likely to catch fire than straw. There was no ceiling under the roof, but the rafters overhead were hung with a motley assemblage of the produce of the chase and farm, as large whips made of rhinoceros-hide, leopard and lion skins, ostrich eggs and feathers, strings of onions, rolls of tobacco, bamboos, etc.

The house contained one large eating-room, a small private room, and two bedrooms. The windows were not glazed, but closed with skins every night. There was no chimney or stove in the house, all the cooking being carried on in a small outhouse.

The furniture was not very considerable: a large table, a few chairs and stools, some iron pots and kettles, a set of Dutch teacups, a teapot, and a brass kettle, with a heater. The large, brass-clasped, family Dutch Bible occupied a small table, at which the mistress of the house presided, and behind her chair were the carcasses of two sheep, suspended from a beam.

Inquiries about the news at the Cape, and details of all the information which our travelers could give, had occupied the time till breakfast was put on the table. It consisted of mutton boiled and stewed, butter, milk, fruits, and good white bread. Before breakfast was over the caravan arrived, and the oxen were unyoked. Our travelers passed away two hours in going over the garden and orchards, and visiting the cattlefolds, and seeing the cows milked. They then yoked the teams, and wishing the old boor a farewell, and thanking him for his hospitality, they resumed their journey.

"Is it always the custom here to receive travelers in this friendly way?" observed Alexander, as they rode away.

"Always," replied Swinton; "there are no inns on the road, and every traveler finds a welcome. It is considered a matter of course."

"Do they never take payment?"

"Never, and it must not be offered; but they will take the value of the corn supplied to your horses, as that is quite another thing. One peculiarity you will observe as you go along, which is, that the Dutch wife is a fixture at the little tea-table all day long. She never leaves it, and the tea is always ready for every traveler who claims their hospitality; it is an odd custom."

"And I presume that occasions the good woman to become so very lusty."

"No doubt of it; the whole exercise of the day is from the bedroom to the teapot, and back again," replied Swinton, laughing.

"One would hardly suppose that this apparently good-natured and hospitable people could have been guilty of such cruelty to the natives as Mr. Fairburn represented."

"Many of our virtues and vices are brought prominently forward by circumstances," replied Swinton. "Hospitality in a thinly-inhabited country is universal, and a Dutch boor is hospitable to an excess. Their cruelty to the Hottentots and other natives arises from the prejudices of education: they have from their childhood beheld them treated as slaves, and do not consider them as fellow-creatures. As Mr. Fairburn truly said, nothing demoralizes so much, or so hardens the heart of man, as slavery existing and sanctioned by law."

"But are not the Dutch renowned for cruelty and love of money?"

"They have obtained that reputation, and I fear there is some reason for it. They took the lead, it must be remembered, as a commercial nation, more commercial than the Portuguese, whose steps they followed so closely: that this eager pursuit of wealth should create a love of money is but too natural, and to obtain money, men, under the influence of that passion, will stop at nothing. Their cruelties in the East are on record; but the question is, whether the English, who followed the path of the Dutch, would not, had they gone before them, have been guilty of the same crimes to obtain the same ends? The Spaniards were just as cruel in South America, and the Portuguese have not fallen short of them; nay, I doubt if our own countrymen can be acquitted in many instances. The only difference is, that the other nations who preceded them in discoveries had greater temptation, because there were more riches and wealth to be obtained."

"Your remarks are just; well may we say in the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation,' for we are all too frail to withstand it."

At noon they again unyoked, and allowed the cattle to graze for an interval; after which they proceeded till an hour before dark, when they mustered the men, and gave them their several charges and directions. At Alexander's request the Major took this upon himself, and he made a long speech to the Hottentots, stating that it was their intention to reward those who did their duty, and to punish severely those who did not. They then collected wood for the fires, and had their supper,—the first meal which they had taken out of doors. Mahomed, the Parsee servant of Major Henderson, cooked very much to their satisfaction; and having tied the oxen to the wagons, to accustom them to the practice, more than from any danger to be apprehended, the watch was set to keep up the fires: they then all retired to bed, the gentlemen sleeping in their wagons, and the Hottentots underneath them, or by the sides of the fires which had been lighted.

It will be unnecessary to enter into a detail of the journey to Graham's Town, which was performed without difficulty. They did not arrive there until eight days after their departure from Algoa Bay, as they purposely lost time on the road, that things might find their places. At Graham's Town they received every kindness and attention from the few military who were there and the landroost. Here they dismissed three of the men, who had remained drunk in the liquor-houses during their stay, and hired nine more, who were well recommended; among these were two perfectly well acquainted with the Caffre language and country; so that they were serviceable both as interpreters and guides. The day after their arrival, when they were out in the skirts of the town, Mr. Swinton perceived something moving in the bushes. He advanced cautiously, and discovered that it was a poor little Bushman boy, about twelve years old, quite naked, and evidently in a state of starvation, having been left there in a high fever by his people. He was so weak that he could not stand, and Mr. Swinton desired the Hottentot who was with him to lift him up, and carry him to the wagons. Some medicine and good food soon brought the little fellow round again, and he was able to walk about. He showed no disposition to leave them; indeed he would watch for Mr. Swinton, and follow him as far as he could. The child evidently appeared to feel attachment and gratitude, and when they were about to depart, Mr. Swinton, through the medium of one of the Hottentots who could speak the language, asked him if he would like to stay with them. The answer was in the affirmative, and it was decided that he should accompany them, the Major observing that he would be a very good companion for Begum.

"What name shall we give him?" said Swinton.

"Why, as my baboon is by title a princess, I think we can not create him less than a prince. Let us call him Omrah."

"Omrah be it then," replied Mr. Swinton, "until we can name him in a more serious way."

So Omrah was put into the wagon, with Begum to amuse him, and our travelers took their departure from Graham's Town.

CHAPTER X

It was in the afternoon that they moved from Graham's Town. They had intended to have started earlier, but they found it impossible to collect the Hottentots, who were taking their farewells of their wives and their liquor-shops. As it was, most of them were in a state of intoxication, and it was considered advisable to get them out of the town as soon as possible. Late in the evening they arrived at Hermann's Kraal, a small military fort, where they remained for the night to give the Hottentots an opportunity of recovering from the effects of the liquor. The next morning they again started, and the landscape now changed its aspect, being covered with thick bushes, infested with wild beasts.

A barren and sterile country was soon spread before them, the sun was oppressively hot, and not a sign of water was to be observed in any direction. At last they arrived at a muddy pool, in which elephants had evidently been enjoying themselves, and the oxen and horses were but too glad to do the same. At night they halted as before, having lighted fires to keep off the wild beasts and the elephants.

The following morning they renewed their journey at daylight, and the scene again changed; they now plunged into the dense forests bordering on the great Fish River, which they forded in safety. The prospects all around were very beautiful, the river smoothly gliding through stupendous mountains and precipices, with verdant valleys on each side of its banks. In the afternoon they arrived at Fort Wiltshire, the outermost defense of the colony, situated on the banks of the Keiskamma. English troops were stationed there, to prevent any marauding parties from passing the river, or to intercept them on their return with their booty.

As this was the last spot where they could expect to see any of their countrymen, and they were kindly received by the officers, they agreed to remain two days, that they might obtain all the information which they could, and rearrange the stowing of the wagons before they started. The original plan had been to direct their course to Chumie, the first missionary station, which was about twenty-five miles distant; but as it was out of their way, they now resolved to proceed direct to Butterworth, which was forty miles further in the Caffre country, and the more distant of the two missions. Our party took leave of their kind entertainers, and, having crossed without difficulty at the ford the Keiskamma river, had passed the neutral ground, and were in the land of the Caffres.

Up to the present they had very little trouble with the Hottentots whom they had hired. As long as they were within reach of the law they behaved well; but now that they had passed the confines of the Cape territory, some of them began to show symptoms of insubordination. The dismissal of one, however, with an order to go back immediately, and threatening to shoot him if he was ever seen in the caravan, had the desired effect of restoring order. The country was now a series of hills and dales, occasionally of deep ravines, and their route lay through the paths made by the elephants, which were numerous. A Hottentot of the name of Bremen, who was considered as their best man and most practiced hunter, begged Alexander and his companions to be careful how they went along, if they preceded the rest on horseback; as the elephants always return by the same path at evening or after nightfall, in whatever direction they may have been feeding, and it is very dangerous to intercept them.

For two days they continued their course in nearly a straight line for the missionary establishment. On the second evening, just about dusk, as they were crossing a woody hill, by the elephants' path, being then about 200 yards in advance of the wagons, they were saluted with one of the most hideous shrieks that could be conceived. Their horses started back; they could see nothing, although the sound echoed through the hills for some seconds.

"What was that?" exclaimed Alexander.

"Shout as loud as you can," cried the Major; "and turn your horses to the wagons."

Alexander and Swinton joined the Major in the shout, and were soon accompanied by the whole mass of Hottentots, shouting and yelling as loud as they could.

"Silence, now," cried the Major; every one was hushed, and they listened for a few seconds.

"It was only one, sir, and he is gone," said Bremen. "We may go on."

"Only one what?" inquired Alexander.

"An elephant, sir," replied the Hottentot; "it's well that he did not charge you; he would have tumbled you down the precipice, horse and all. There must be a herd here, and we had better stop as soon as we are down the other side of the hill."

"I think so too," replied the Major.

"I shall not get that shriek out of my ears for a month," said Alexander; "why, the roar of a lion can not be so bad."

"Wait till you hear it," replied Swinton.

They had now arrived at the bottom of the hill which they had been passing, and by the light of the stars they selected a spot for their encampment. Whether they were near to any Caffre kraals or not it was impossible to say; but they heard no barking of dogs or lowing of oxen. Having collected all the cattle, they formed a square of the four wagons, and passed ropes from the one to the other; the horses and sheep were driven within the square, and the oxen were, as usual, tied up to the sides of the wagons.

It should here be observed, that the oxen were turned out to graze early in the morning, yoked in the afternoon, and they traveled then as far as they could after nightfall, to avoid the extreme heat of the day, the continual visits of the Carries, and the risk of losing the cattle if they were allowed to be loose and fed during the night.

On the night we have been referring to, a more than usual number of fires were lighted, to keep off the elephants and other wild animals. The hyenas and wolves were very numerous, and prowled the whole night in hopes of getting hold of some of the sheep; but as yet there had not been seen or heard a lion, although an occasional track had been pointed out by the Hottentots.

When the Hottentots had finished their labor, our travelers had to wait till the fires were lighted and a sheep killed before they could have their suppers cooked by Mahomed. Begum, the baboon, had been released from her confinement since their crossing the Fish River, and as usual, when they sat down, came and made one of the party, generally creeping in close to her master until supper was served, when she would have her finger in every dish, and steal all she could, sometimes rather to their annoyance.

Our little Bushman had now quite recovered not only his strength but his gayety, and was one of the most amusing little fellows that could be met with.

He could not make himself understood except to one or two of the Hottentots; but he was all pantomime, trying, by gestures and signs, to talk to Mr. Swinton and his companions. He endeavored to assist Mahomed as much as he could, and appeared to have attached himself to him, for he kept no company with the Hottentots. He was not more than three feet and a half high, and with limbs remarkably delicate, although well made. His face was very much like a monkey's, and his gestures and manners completely so; he was quite as active and full of fun. The watch had been set as soon as the fires were lighted; and close to where Alexander and the others were seated, Big Adam, the Hottentot we have mentioned as having raised doubts in the mind of the Major as to his courage, had just mounted guard, with his gun in his hand. Omrah came up to where they were sitting, and they nodded and smiled at him, and said, "How do you do?" in English.

The boy, who had already picked up a few sentences, answered in the same words, "How do you do?" and then pointing to Big Adam, whose back was turned, he began making a number of signs, and nodding his head; at last he bent down, putting his arm in front of him, and raising it like an elephant's trunk, walking with the measured steps of that animal, so as fully to make them understand that he intended to portray an elephant.

Having so done, he went up behind Big Adam, and gave a shriek so exactly like that which the elephant had given an hour before, that the Hottentot started up, dropped his musket, and threw himself flat on the ground, in order that the supposed animal might pass by him unperceived.

The other Hottentots had been equally startled, and had seized their muskets, looking in every direction for the approach of the animal; but the convulsions of laughter which proceeded from the party soon told them that there was nothing to apprehend, and that little Omrah had been playing his tricks. Big Adam rose up, looking very foolish; he had just before been telling his companions how many elephants he had killed, and had been expressing his hopes that they soon should have an elephant-hunt.

"Well," observed Swinton, after the laugh was over, "it proves that Adam is an elephant-hunter, and knows what to do in time of danger."

"Yes," replied the Major; "and it also proves that our opinion of him was just, and that with him the best part of valor is discretion."

"The most wonderful escape from an elephant which we have on record here," observed Swinton, "is that of Lieutenant Moodie; did you ever hear of it? I had it from his own lips."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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