

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Jasper Lyle, by Mrs. Ward

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Jasper Lyle

Author: Mrs. Ward

Release Date: February 17, 2011 [EBook #35307]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JASPER LYLE ***

Harriet Ward

"Jasper Lyle"

Chapter One.

The Travellers.

Kafirland!

People are beginning now-a-days to know where Kafirland is!

Verily they have paid dearly for their knowledge!

It is a beautiful land, with its open savannahs, its wooded glens, its heathy mountains, its green and undulating parks—nature's plantations! Pleasant to the eye is the sight of the colonists' sheltered farms, surrounded by waving cornfields, and backed by noble mountains, ascending in the distance, one above another, assuming every hue it is possible to imagine, and finally blending their purple heights with clouds all radiant with gold, or shaping themselves into canopies of sombre colouring, and veiling the glories of heaven from the upturned gaze of man.

But from these scenes the traveller may suddenly find himself translated to the most sterile moors, stretching out in apparently illimitable space, or bounded by bald rocks, which offer no "shadow from the heat," no "refuge from the storm." In these tracts, the earth, resembling lava, is bare of all but stones, except where some bright-flowering bulb has struggled with its destiny, only to waste its beauty on the desert. There is nothing living to be seen in these inhospitable regions, save when the hungry travellers pause to "to kill and eat," and lo! as the scent of blood rises in the atmosphere, a solitary speck hovers in the sky, another, and another, and, like airy demons waiting for their prey, the asphogels, the gigantic vultures of South Africa, keep watch over the bivouac, in anticipation of the feast for which their instinct has prepared them.

It was in the centre of an unsightly plain that three travellers were arrested on their journey by one of those appalling storms which, in the loveliest spots of Southern Africa, disenchant the mind, impressed with the beauty of the wooded tracts, or the grandeur of even the solitary wastes, with the sweet influence of balmy mornings, or the nights serene and clear, sometimes shining more brilliantly than day.

All the morning symptoms in the air had warned the attendant of our travellers, a knowing little bush man, of an approaching storm, and he had urged his masters to advance with all the speed they could drive into their patient and active steeds. But the lightning soon played in all its horrible brightness, piles of clouds like snow began to rise in front; to the unpractised ear all was silent, but the bushman called a halt, and dismounting, led the others with their horses behind a heap of stones.

Thus partially screened, they awaited the mighty tempest.

The giant of the storm advanced as with a trumpet-blast from that part of the horizon whence the lightning had telegraphed his approach. He came with a rushing sound resembling the passage of an invisible but powerful host, the desert shook with the terror of his presence, the clouds came slowly floating on, growing darker and darker, till their hue was of a leaden aspect, and in a few moments, as with a roar of many waters, the rains poured down their torrents, the winds whistled an unearthly chorus to the plashing of the floods, the great stones rocked and moaned, the thunder pealed, now muttering in ill-subdued wrath, and now clattering overhead in ungovernable fury, then passing by to burst its bolts on some far mountain-top, or on fair pasture-lands, where cattle stood huddled together in terror and dismay. There was silence at length upon the plain. "The earth trembled and was still," the horses lifted their heads and snuffed up the refreshing air; the little bushman groom, whom I shall describe by-and-by, drew the covers from the saddles, and the two young men, his masters, shook themselves like dogs on reaching land after a long swim.

"Well," said the younger, a man of slender frame, but not the less manly in his appearance for that, "here is a precious specimen of an African climate!"

"Yes, my good fellow; you are able to judge of it now," replied his companion, Major Frankfort, whose darkened complexion and tanned gloveless hands proved his experience in the country, and who solaced himself and his friend moderately with a *sopie* (dram), from the flask stuck in his leather waist-belt, to which other appendages were fixed. Neither did he forget the shivering but smiling bushman, May. The name is not in keeping with this very original little groom, but he had been so named not without reason.

These two travellers, Major Frankfort and Mr Ormsby, were officers of an English regiment employed on the frontier of the British possessions in South Africa, and had obtained leave of absence for the purpose of journeying together on a shooting excursion beyond the Orange River.

The younger one had never seen any sport beyond his father's moors, and, albeit rather indolent and luxurious of habit, he found himself tempted to accompany Frankfort into the interior of the country, where he was told that droves of large game, of manifold species, were to be seen herding together on the mountain slopes and spacious plains to the north-east.

And now the sun burst forth, the clouds rolled away in heavy masses, the plain stretched wider and wider in the clear expanse, and in the distance the hills loomed large, till at length the peaks and tableland stood out strongly defined against the sky.

The horses were well rubbed down and re-saddled, the travellers resumed their route, and in another hour some signs of vegetation promised comfort and repose.

Clumps of bush adorned either side of the road, the large starry jessamine, the glowing geranium, the golden-blossomed green mimosa, emitting a delightful odour from the bowers formed by nature's graceful hand, were doubly agreeable to the eye that ached with gazing on a barren space, and ere long the ripple of water sounded musically among the trees; in another moment a clear stream delighted the eyes of men and beasts.

Pleasant it was in that cool drift (ford) to feel the gentle gale fanning the heated brow, pleasant to lift even the light felt hat from the head, and halt beneath the over-arching boughs of willows and trees of statelier growth, in which the monkeys chattered, frightening the poor guanias from their hiding-places among the stones into the sanctuary of the tall grasses and plants, prodigal of beauty in the deep solitude.

They crossed the stream, and after threading a defile thickly studded with euphorbias and prickly-pear bushes, the honey-bird hovering about them and striving to beguile them to those delicious nooks where bees make their nests, and the coney has colonies in the cliffs, they found themselves upon another plain, dotted like a park with clumps of trees. Here the bushman guide halted, and placing the open palm of his right hand above the left, he measured the space between the sun and the horizon, and, announcing that "it wanted one hour to sunset," gave his horse the rein, and cantering on at a smarter pace than before, was followed by his masters.

They soon came upon the track of waggon-wheels, next they found the remains of fire and the *débris* of a meal; at a little distance lay the carcass of a poor ox, which had died probably from exhaustion, and round it were assembled, in greedy conclave, what appeared to Ormsby's unpractised eye a flock of sheep. It was a company of vultures, seated in a circle round their prey, and while some still ate, the rest, unwilling or unable to move from the scene of the repast, kept close order, and dosingly watched their hungry comrades with a ludicrously stupefied air.

Unwilling to disturb these scavengers of nature, the three horsemen moved on, and soon looked down upon a valley, the quiet of which was relieved by a farm-house of regular proportions; but the shingle roof, bare white walls, and ill-tended garden had nothing picturesque about them, although the valley was rich in corn, and a grove of fruit-trees proved the capabilities of the soil; but these were planted without taste or order.

Beyond, the scene was charmingly pastoral; a clear stream, a branch of the river they had lately forded, wound through the vale, and from the banks opposite the settlement was a gently-sloping hill, thickly wooded in some parts. On the open spaces cattle were browsing, unmindful of the call of the Hottentot herds, too indolent to climb the steep and drive them down. The call was unheeded till it was accompanied by the shrill whistle of a little Kafir boy, that whistle which acts like magic on the cattle of South Africa; with one accord the creatures paused, lifted up their heads to listen, and then the largest ox of the herd turning to descend the hill, the rest wended their way after him to meet these impish guards, while other herdsmen went to collect the great flocks of sheep and goats, whose approach along the course of the river was continuously audible enough to charm the most Arcadian taste and ear. The lowing of the cattle, the bleating of the smaller but more numerous "creatures of the fold," the Kafir whistle, and the song and laughter of the Hottentot girls, floated together in a sort of wild harmony along the vale, and met the travellers in their descent; but not the least agreeable part of the picture to the latter, was the sight of their waggons drawn up upon a miniature prairie, or flat on the margin of the stream, and the smoke, curling upwards from the bush, announced the preparation for cookery, to which they were disposed to do ample justice. Their tents were pitched, they were evidently expected, and the Hottentot courier, who had preceded them by a day, had done his bidding and "made ready."

The hospitable Dutchman, the owner of the farm, was on the look-out for them, for he stood leaning over his wicker gate and watching their advance.

They cantered up, and replied to his "Good morrow,"—Frankfort cordially, Ormsby with cold civility; but the Dutchman invited them within, and Frankfort, feeling himself indebted for the permission to *outspan* (unyoke) on the farm-land, accepted the proffered attention, much to Ormsby's disgust, for he was hungry, tired, and thoroughly uncomfortable from the effects of the drenching he had got.

So was Major Frankfort; but these two men, though friends and companions, were very different in habits and opinions. Indeed, Ormsby, had it been practicable, would gladly have faced about and given up that expedition, so utterly annoyed was he with many *désagrémens en route*; indeed, he had been first induced to accompany Frankfort, because his brother-officers had offended his manly pride by doubting his powers of endurance on a *trek* (journey) through the depopulated wilderness.

"You lazy dog, Ormsby," his colonel had observed to him one morning, "how can *you* talk of going up the country with Frankfort? he will never make a sportsman of you,—you are always late for parade."

"I am never *last*, sir," replied the youngster to his commanding officer, who happened that very day to have kept the parade waiting; a thing commanding officers constantly do themselves, though they punish their subordinates for the error.

"Humph!—You know nothing of sporting—you talk of the moors; why, Frankfort has shot his five-and-twenty lions; besides, you would be breakfasting at his dinner-hour, and grumbling that you have no cream for your coffee as muddy as the water of the Fish River. Tell us, now, what time you got up this morning."

"I confess, that is rather a poser, sir; but I will ask my servant, if you particularly desire to know," answered Ormsby, with a demure look, which set some of the subs laughing.

"Can you tell when the sun rose?" asked Colonel J.

"No, sir," replied the saucy Ormsby, gravely; "he was up before I was."

It was the manner, not the matter, that made every one laugh, and Ormsby, running his hand through his shining, but carelessly-arranged hair, called to his servant to bring him his cigar-case, and the last new novel he had received from England, in Hookham's box; then, stretching himself at full length across a window-sill of the mess-room, he took up a paper, declaring it was too hot for billiards; next he ordered some pale ale, with which he solaced himself while he waited for his novel and cigar, and having obtained these, began to long for luncheon.

In great contrast to him was his friend Major Frankfort. Though possessed of attractions which would render many a man vain, Frankfort was sadly insensible to the charms of a society in which he would have been flattered and caressed. The principal features in his character were generosity, and its sister attribute, bravery; but there was withal a certain reserve in his nature, which prevented him from being appreciated, except by friends, and these were not numerous; for he was neither a person to seek, or be sought—he was one who could not be gratified by the commonplaces of every-day life. His love of adventure had its impulses, not in the excitement of the gay world, but in the beauties, harmonies, and sublimities of nature.

The winter season had passed away without realising the expectation formed by the colonists of a war with the savage tribes on their border, and the months succeeding the rains were looked forward to by sportsmen as a season of relief and enjoyments, after the *désagrémens* of a life "under arms," without the excitement of "an enemy in sight."

How often it happens, especially in the naval and military professions, that two men of totally opposite natures will become the most intimate friends of the community to which they belong. No two characters could be more strongly contrasted than those of Edward Frankfort and Charles Ormsby. Characters may differ where natures may have attributes in common.

Frankfort was generous and brave, so was Ormsby; but the latter was often more generous than just, for he had never been taught the value of money or opinion, nor how to discriminate between the faults arising from folly, or those originating in misfortune. Equally brave with Frankfort, he was hasty in his judgments and impetuous in his decisions, forgetting that fool-hardiness is no proof of courage, and that valour is not thought the less of for being coupled with discretion. But, unlike Frankfort, whose candour was never obtrusive, Ormsby's openness of manner often degenerated into egotism.

Frankfort was careless of appearances as far as mere fashion went; nevertheless, his attire was always suited to the occasion. Ormsby, while he affected to despise those outward adornings which render men effeminate, and consequently despicable in the eyes of those they most seek to please, displayed a certain affectation in the tie of the loose cravat which showed to advantage the beauty of his throat; the straw hat he wore in the morning lounge was coarse, but of becoming shape, and his shooting-coat, or loose jacket, hung on his shoulders as they would have hung on no other's.

Pretending to despise the uniform of the soldier, he "sporting" a costume as little like an officer's and as much like a settler's as possible; but to see him enter a hall-room in all the pride of scarlet and gold, it was clear that he thought himself the finest there. So Colonel J said; but Ormsby was perpetually vexing Colonel J, the most selfish of men, the most exacting of commanding officers.

This dash of conceit, however, was rather becoming to one so handsome, so agreeable, and so open-hearted; and Major Frankfort found himself making allowances for the young sub's faults, and at last taking sufficient interest in him to endeavour to correct them. Early indulgences made this a difficult matter; but Frankfort saw, that though the surface was overrun with weeds and rubbish, there was something below worth getting at. Little rays of light gleamed up at times, and showed that there was good ore in the mine.

Unaccustomed to bestow his regard too readily, Frankfort might never have yielded to the outward attractions of this fine young man, but duty brought them together, and Major Frankfort began to like Ormsby against his will. Happily for the latter, the influence of such a character as Frankfort's was not thrown away upon him; for his nature, as I have shown, was capable of excellent impulses. These, like goodly fruits brought from shade to sunlight, soon ripened into

sentiments, which might hereafter become principles; but the future must not be forestalled.

And all this time we have kept them at the gate of the poor Dutchman's desolate-looking garden.

Major Frankfort shook hands with Vanbloem, or rather Vanbloem shook hands with Frankfort. Ormsby did not understand such familiarity, but he suffered it with a better grace than he would have done had some of his brother-officers been by, and permitting May to lead off his horse, followed the Dutchman to the entrance of his neglected-looking abode.

Vanbloem's wife was a mild-tempered woman, too indolent to scold the lazy Hottentot girls sitting in the garden, or rather yard, of the dwelling, awaiting the return of the herdsmen, and totally regardless of their charges, the children, who, rejoicing in the dirt, were busily employed, under the tuition of a little Fingo boy (see Note 1), in moulding most unclassical representations of elands, rhinoceroses, sea-cows, elephants, and various other denizens of the hunting-grounds.

The aspect of the principal apartment and only sitting-room of the house did not strike the travellers as inviting, and to Ormsby, the slaughtered sheep suspended from the roof, with his head downwards, and dripping with blood, was particularly revolting; turning his back to it in disgust, he found himself face to face with two enormous people, the grandfather and grandmother of the family. He might have doubted their being alive, but for the pipe in the patriarch's mouth. The ancient dame sat almost immovable, but a slight tremor in the head indicated palsy. A teapot stood on a little table beside her, and with her feet turned backwards round the legs of the chair, and her arms folded under her apron, she looked as if she had dressed herself in the round-eared cap and ample gown of *voerchitz*, a coarse print, manufactured in England, for once and for aye, never to be changed. A felt hat crowned the white head of the old man, and with more courtesy than the Boer usually exhibits, he lifted it from his brow, but replaced it ere he shook hands with Major Frankfort, who offered his palm at once. Two or three heads of round-faced Dutch girls, Vanbloem's elder daughters, peeped in from a door leading to a back room; they vanished with a giggle, and then one, less shy than the rest, came forward and ventured to offer the "tea-water." This was declined with thanks; but unwilling to treat the civilities of these poor people with coldness, Frankfort promised to say "Good night" before he and his friend retired for the night.

They then proceeded to the outspan, and gave orders for the preparation of their repast, while they bathed in the stream, yet warm from the effects of the sun.

The pools under the alders were clear and deep. How delicious it was to cast aside the heavy coat, saturated as it had been with wet; how refreshing to lave the weary limbs in the crystal bath!

Then what ample justice was done to the carbonatje (broiled mutton steaks), and the stewed buck, and the "remove" of quail, to say nothing of the glass of "warm stuff," when the sun went down and the cool breeze came up the river. Verily, our travellers enjoyed their repose on that green bank with a greater zest than they could have done in a well-appointed foam, after a more luxurious feast in this quiet-going, "very comfortable" England.

It must be owned they had not a very military appearance, albeit they are "armed and accoutred" for "the road." Their jackets of drab duffle, reaching to the hip, were rendered more useful than ornamental by the capacious pockets; their felt hats were of that description long since adopted by the patriarchal Boers of Southern Africa, and of late become fashionable in England under the designation of "Jem Crows" and "wide-awakes;" and the ostrich plume, wound round these, not only shaded their brows from the fervid sun, but attracted the flies from their faces, somewhat blistered by the alternations of heat and wind and rain. Their trowsers of pliable brown leather stoutly resisted the thorns, or rather spikes, of the mimosa bushes; their *veldt scoons* (shoes) were of the same material, but stronger, and fitted the foot as easily as a glove; and their costume was rendered complete by the belt buckled round the waist, from which was slung, besides the flask, a small pouch of buckskin, containing gun-caps, a clasp-knife with numerous blades, and various other articles necessary for the journey,—a pair of long-barrelled pistols completing the equipment when starting for the *trek*. When riding without their waggons, they moved with a change of linen in a small sabretache of tiger-skin, appended to the saddle, while in a haversack was a good store of dried meat, hard-boiled eggs when they were to be had, and biscuit; in short, sufficient, on a pinch, for a good day's meal.

They rose to pay their adieux to Vanbloem and his family. Frankfort was unarmed, but Ormsby had by chance stuck in his belt his six-barrelled pistol, then a great novelty in that far country. Frankfort remarked this on entering Vanbloem's gateway; but his companion explained that it was not loaded, which was satisfactory, for the Dutch, though kindly disposed towards English settlers, were no great friends to the government, and, alas! there were not wanting men of a bad faction to turn even a trifling action of this nature to bad account.

The glory of the sun had departed, but there was twilight, which makes the summer day of the Cape so much longer and pleasanter than that of the tropics. The door of the great room at Vanbloem's stood wide open, and the coarse, flaring, home-made candles shed their flickering rays on a group assembled to look at the two Englishmen. To the family party were now added three or four Hottentot servant-girls, their woolly locks concealed beneath bright-coloured *douks* (head-kerchiefs). They had a smart air, for they were arrayed in flaunting colours. Scarlet or yellow bodices set off a striped or elaborately-patched petticoat, ample in width and scanty in length, displaying ankles that fine ladies would have coveted and feet proportionally minute. A bevy of children, very merry, very noisy, and very dirty, were chattering together at play, and looking in at an open window, with the strong light falling on their dusky forms, round which, their blankets loosely and gracefully draped, were two Kafir herdsmen. Their crisp hair, thicker than that of the Hottentots, was elaborately *coiffé*, being stiffened with red clay; round their well-shaped throats were necklaces of beads intermixed with wolves' teeth, and sundry rude ornaments adopted as charms, having been endowed with certain magic powers by the witch doctors or rain-makers of the tribe. Their wrists were encircled by brazen bangles, and each carried his snuffbox, a miniature tortoise-shell, with its long ivory spoon appended by a brazen chain.

One of them was in the act of putting a spoonful of the mixture into his mouth, when Ormsby walked up to him, and with great deliberation began examining him with the same curiosity that a naturalist would have evinced on seeing some newly-discovered animal. Both Kafirs returned his survey with a steady gaze.

In strong contrast to these sculptured and dignified-looking beings, rose the noise of chattering among the other occupants of the house and *stoep* (the platform that runs along the front of all Dutch houses). The old patriarch and his wife indeed maintained their usual taciturnity, and sat just within the door, their chairs having been moved there by their son, for the filial deference of the Dutch is remarkable.

At last some of the Hottentots, who had retired to a corner of the stoep, after a due examination of the travellers, began singing in a soprano key; the men coming from the farm-yards and joining them in deeper tones, all in perfect harmony, and some of the voices exceedingly pleasing.

It was an old but popular air, one which had found its way, like an angel's voice, across the waters, into the wilderness. It was a hymn sung to the tune of "Home, sweet Home!"

The sopranos were a little tremulous, to be sure, but true to time and tune, and the bass voices gave solemnity to the chorus.

The associations it called up were strangely contrasted with the scene. A rude dwelling, oddly peopled, standing in the midst of a wild garden, ill-tended, but perfumed by orange-trees, waving their scented boughs in the still air, while beyond, in dreamy profile, rose the boundary of hills with the spacious silent landscape between; but the far mountains, of brown and purple and pale blue, had faded utterly away into the clouds of night.

"Home, sweet Home!" Ormsby listened only to the air. He was not one accustomed to give way to those emotions of the soul which soften its impulses and direct its thoughts to the gentlest and most hallowed ties of earth; it must, indeed be confessed that he was too much inclined to discourage such emotions and to quiz them, as it is called, in others; but his heart, at this distance from the beloved and remembered faces which had shone upon him at home, was disturbed by its reminiscences.

The air was identified with a lost sister, the pet of his boyhood. There was a sudden vision of a long, narrow, day nursery, with many windows looking out upon green uplands and rich waving woods, where the fox-hounds used to meet; of another room, within, where old nurse Hetty used to sit and sing to his consumptive little sister, who died afterwards.

As he leaned against one of the rough pillars supporting a gable of the building, his thoughts wandered back to those early days; vividly he remembered that one on which his little favourite sister had been carried away dead; with what terror had he watched the dark and high-plumed hearse, with its fearful train of black carriages, all drawn by solemn, heavy sable horses, waiting for the small coffin, to bear it through the snow of the churchyard. He remembered it was midwinter; the ground and the trees and the hills and the roofs of the stables were all white with snow; it powdered the harness of the coal-black horses, and the carriages and hearse, as they wended their dreary way down the long avenue of leafless trees, and through the lodge-gates and along the road, till they were lost sight of below the slopes at the boundary of the park.

He remembered hearing his younger brother begin to sing the familiar tune, and nurse Hetty's dismay because she could not silence him, and his mother, in her white dressing-gown, looking into the nursery with eyes streaming with tears.

That air had long been forbidden in his father's house, and he had not heard it for years till now. Never had he been so nearly overcome by tender recollections; he mastered his emotions by a strong effort, and bowed civilly to Mrs Vanbloem's invitation to sit down.

The Kafirs had eyed him with some admiration, but were more attracted by the appearance of Frankfort. The Hottentot girls, having finished their hymn, came in from the stoep and manifested their unqualified admiration of his wavy chestnut hair, his brilliant eyes, and the gold chain that peeked from the folds of his dress. One gazed first at his glossy locks, then felt her own scanty allowance of frizzled wool; another cried, "good," "pretty," as she walked round him with a mixed expression of surprise and delight, and the youngest of all laughed aloud, exhibiting teeth finer than his own.

The Kafirs, having followed the Hottentot servants into the house, seated themselves on the floor at a respectful distance. Frankfort begged Vanbloem to translate the remarks they were evidently making on himself and his friend. The handsome countenance and elegant figure of Ormsby did not make so strong an impression on them as the more powerful form of Frankfort, who was the taller of the two by some inches. They were, however, neither loud nor demonstrative, but eyeing him from head to foot, they passed their deliberate commendations in their own peculiar manner. "Ma-wo!" had been the first exclamation of the younger and more excitable Kafir, as the tall figure of Frankfort had cast its shadow upon the wall, against which they leaned in indolent fashion, as the travellers walked up the garden-path with Vanbloem—Ma-wo implying astonishment.

The other had taken his observations at first in silence; but now he observed to his companion, in a low musical voice, "Inkosi enkulu!"—"That is a great captain."

"Eurci!" was the reply, when the other had satisfied himself that his friend's judgment was correct.

Frankfort saw the eyes of both the Kafirs fixed upon him, and returned their glances with such an expression of goodwill, that they with one accord held out two pair of hands, uttering the old imperative demand peculiar to Kafirs, "Baseila,"—"Gift."

All savages are beggars, more or less; but the Kafir does not beg, he *demand*s.

Frankfort laughed, and took some sticks of tobacco from the vast pockets of his duffle jacket, and would doubtless have been besieged for more, but that the light flashing on the six-barrelled weapon in Ormsby's belt drew the dark and gleaming eyes of the Kafirs upon him, and their exclamations brought the rest of the household round him in a circle.

He drew the pistol from the belt to gratify the surprise and curiosity of Vanbloem, who handed it to his father. The patriarch had the pleasure of exhibiting it to all, and so great was the astonishment and admiration displayed, that Ormsby would have offered it to the farmer, but Frankfort checked the generous intention.

The dissertation between the old man and his son was amusing; the patriarch remarking that where the pistol might *wound six*, the *roer*, the long gun of the Boers, *must* kill all it aimed at. The old man had a hearty contempt for all new-fashioned implements of war, but his son resigned the brilliantly-polished weapon with a sigh, which so touched Frankfort, that he promised to select a single-barrelled pistol from his collection of small-arms, and send it from the bivouac, as an offering of good-will to the good-natured Boer.

Our sportsmen then took their leave, in spite of the kindly invitation to sit down to the homely but plentiful table with the family of four generations, beginning with the aged grandfather, and ending, for the present, with the grandchild of Vanbloem, junior.

They found the waggons made snug for the night, and the cattle safely fastened to the tressel-booms—poor things! they were liable to molestation from wolves, close as they were to a thriving homestead.

May threw additional billets on the fire as his masters drew near—the other attendants were fast asleep beneath the store-waggon, and Frankfort and Ormsby prepared to luxuriate on the karosses spread within their sleeping-tent, a species of pavilion, affixed to the ponderous vehicle, their dwelling-place in rude weather, lined throughout with baize, furnished with well-stuffed benches, and made complete with sundry pockets, slings, straps, and thick curtains at either end. Ormsby was sound asleep before Frankfort had inspected the preparations for the start at dawn. Having seen to the arrangements for replenishing the fire for warming the coffee, having ascertained that the curtains were closed against the invasion of an unexpected storm, that the arms were secure—the horses safely picqueted, and the oxen safely *reimed* (fastened with thongs of hide), he was just about to tie the last knot of the tent-flap, when he fancied he heard some one breathing nearer to him than any of the sleeping groups, as Ormsby had thoughtlessly extinguished the light within the tent, and his low and steady breathing proved his insensibility to sight or sound—Frankfort stooped down, and, laying his ear to the ground, distinguished the pressure rather than the sound of a step upon the short turf.

Without rising, he whispered from the tent, "May."

"Does the sir call?" asked the bushman, awakened in a moment, and rolling himself down the mound, on which the store-waggon stood, to the tent.

"Hush!" said Frankfort softly; "some one breathed close by."

May put his hand to his ear, but all was still, with the exception of an occasional sigh from an over-tired ox or a muttered growl from one of the dogs. The ripple of the river tinkled pleasantly some yards off, but not a breath of wind stirred the boughs. The night was heavy, though the stars were coming out, and it was impossible to say what chance of discord existed among the elements.

May pricked up his ears like a little terrier, and Frankfort and he made a reconnoitring tour round the bivouac; but nothing was to be seen. The bushman retired to his mat and Major Frankfort to his tent.

The Hottentots slept sound, the huge oxen uttered their periodical sighs, the bats flitted about the tent, through which the moonlight began to peep, and at intervals the whine of the wolf came up the valley marring the silence, but too far off to disturb the sleepers and rouse the dogs. Frankfort gave a last glance at the Dutchman's farm. It looked exceedingly picturesque by that mellow light. The whole scene had an air of peace, little in character with the original possessors of so lovely a soil. Ah! there came the jackal's cry again, destroying the illusion, and a responsive laugh followed, like mocking echoes from the gibbering hyena.

Note 1. The Fingoes are the remnant of some powerful nations, conquered and enslaved by the Kafirs, whom they greatly resemble.

Chapter Two.

The Bushman.

The little bushman, whom we have introduced as the attendant of our English officers, must be more particularly described ere we advance in a story in which he will frequently make his appearance.

The reader will consider his name—May—rather a misnomer for such a creature.

He is about three feet and a half high; his head would be bald, but for a few bead-like tufts of hair, scattered vaguely about the surface. His eyes are long, black, twinkling, and very merry, but his expression is less cunning than that of the Hottentot physiognomy. His nose! where is it? His mouth is wide, but his white teeth redeem this feature from its ugliness; his skin is of the hue of pale gingerbread.

The countenance, however, is far from unpleasing; his voice is odd, with occasional clicks in pronunciation, which May chooses to introduce, notwithstanding his education. The hands and feet are exquisitely small, and the frame lithe and agile as a monkey's. His costume is copied from his masters; the materials are coarser, but the "wide-awake" hath on him a more jaunty air, the feather a more "knowing" feel, and this is fastened to the hat with a gilt bugle, the gift of some light infantry officer, and much prized by May, who had managed to coax from the same source an old red jacket, which he carries in the waggon-box, and wears on Sundays when they halt in the wilderness.

May is a capital mimic, takes off various members of the Graham's Town garrison, well-known as oddities; imitates with ludicrous gravity the imposing air of the governor's brother, and elicits peals of laughter from his Hottentot comrades, when, arrayed in Fitje's yellow petticoat, he caricatures the dancing of an affected young lady, whom he has watched through the windows of a ball-room. But I must give you May's origin, or you will wonder how this monkey came to see the world.

Behold a chain of mountains rising abruptly and with a bold sweep across a most lovely wilderness. From the colonial border these mountains look exquisitely, but faintly blue, in the haze which hangs about them. In that busy colony how faint an idea can its inhabitants have of the wild beings that dwell amid those distant solitary fastnesses. In the shelving rocks, in bowery nooks scented with the rich perfume of plants, which in our land a queen would prize in her conservatory, beside the clearest running waters, the little bushmen find their rest among the coneys, the bright-eyed lizards, and the treacherous snakes; brilliant birds flit round them as they lie at ease beneath umbrageous boughs or in cool shady caves, shrouded by luxurious creepers; from the flexile branches of the banyan-trees the monkeys peer down upon what some would consider almost their fellow-apes, and on the plains thousands of noble animals in herds are enjoying the gifts of nature, "feeding in large pastures." An army of elephants is moving through the bush, on a distant mountain; you cannot see them, but you can hear the loud trumpet-cry of their leader giving warning of some intruder's stealthy advance. In the valley the lions are ranged like soldiers awaiting the return of their scouts, and beyond, far beyond, just where the sunset reveals a spot which has lain in the shade all day, behold the advance-guard of the stately giraffe—two of them: the one with neck outstretched and eye and ear keenly intent, now upon the plain, now on the mountain-side, while his companion crops the fresh green herbage. A cloud crosses the sun, and the giraffes are seen no more; their momentary appearance has drawn the bushmen-hunters from their haunts, to gaze upon the shy and cautious animals.

There go the gnoos, tossing their manes, leaping, plunging, half in play, yet dangerous even to their fellows; see how they wheel round, advancing with eyes glaring through their shaggy forelocks. A herd of zebras are comparatively tame to these eager, restless things; but in greater contrast to the gnoos are the heavy eilands, fat and sleek, fit mark for the hunter's poisoned arrows. There are ostriches, too, stalking about; and nearer the bushmen's haunts, but wary of her neighbours, the pauw, or the wild turkey of South Africa, has her brood; far up in the air, between the clear sky and the fertile plain, rises the secretary-bird, with the doomed snake in his beak. The serpent writhes in its new element, swinging to and fro; up! up! above the rocks and sea, the bird swoops higher and higher to drop its prey upon a table-rock; its back is broken. Lie there, powerless, terrible, and fatal, and doomed wretch, till your tormentor returns and finishes the deed begun!

Sunset. The plain is in a glow, except where the mountains cast a shade, and this will deepen, as the shield of gold dips behind them. The little honey-bird, which has been wandering in search of travellers to coax them to the sweet nest it dare not itself invade, goes back disappointed to await the morning splendour; the sprews, on wings of green and yellow, go glancing past to their embowered rest; the homely brown-looking canaries are silent in the golden-blossomed mimosa, the English swallow trills her way back to the mission-house on the other side the mountain range; the few goats possessed by the poor bushmen return bleating to their rude fold, and ere long the wild beasts of the forest and the valley will come boldly forth; the tiger from the dense bush in which he has lain stealthily all day; then the jackal's cry will startle the children lying on their miserable sheepskins, and the lion's roar will answer it, rousing the echoes and terrifying the horses and cattle of those who travel in the wilderness.

Such a scene as this presented itself one glowing evening many years ago to the eye of a wayfarer, whose appearance with his pack-horse and saddle-bags, and the somewhat lame condition of the animal he led, gave proof that he had journeyed far and fast. With home almost in sight, he had outspanned his waggon in the valley, and ascending the hills had found that darkness would overshadow his path ere the object he had in view could be accomplished, if indeed it could be accomplished at all. A mist was rising in white wreaths over the plain, till the vapour became concentrated in a hazy shroud floating between the traveller and his people below; his beasts were weary, and would probably fall if he attempted the descent while yet it was light; besides, as I have said, he had an object in view; so he sat down among the shrubs and rocks, through which he had scrambled with some difficulty and much fatigue, and began to ponder on what steps he must take to insure a safe bivouac for himself and his jaded cattle during the night.

He was a good man, and would have had no personal fear even if he had not been acquainted with the nature of the locality and its inhabitants; but he had no mind to have his horses torn limb from limb by wild beasts, and pitying them as their ears moved nervously backwards and forwards, their eyeballs starting from their sockets, he regretted that he had not delayed his expedition till the following morning.

There was no help for it now; the sinking horses looked piteously at him, and he longed to take their saddles from their galled backs, but he needed to look about him ere yet there was daylight: he regretted he had not brought his waggon-driver with him, but always thinking of others, he had overlooked his own necessities. He grieved for his horses, not for himself.

James Trail was the occupant of the mission-house, whither our English swallow had trilled her contented way. He was a childless widower, and, bent on conquering his sorrow for his lost Mary by earnest attention to his duties "in that path of life in which it had pleased God to call him," he had made way for a married friend at his former station, and with a few native herds, a faithful Hottentot servant, and a distant relative, a trader in skins, ivory, horns, etc,

had established a little location in the lovely but uncivilised part of the country through which he hoped to preach glad tidings of the Gospel; but the untameable race of bushmen, whom he longed to attach to himself, looked at him from their coverts like startled apes, and yelled, and shrieked, and chattered, and once shot at him with their poisoned arrows, happily without effect.

A trifling circumstance brought these mountain sprites to better terms. One of a hunting-party was severely bitten by a puff-adder while lingering behind his comrades, and Trail had discovered him, helpless and terrified, and "like to die," by the side of a stream, to which he had crawled with the vain wish to ford it. The good Samaritan placed his neighbour on his own beast, after applying a remedy he always carried with him to the deadly wound; he took him home, and would have kept him, but the wild creature had been a rover all his life, and longed for liberty; as soon as he recovered, he fled to the hills to join his fellows. At times he would return, accompanied by a mate of his own tribe. One day he brought his children with him; another, two or three wild hunters, clothed in fitting skins, sat down in front of the mission-house, but would not draw near. They waited for their share of beads, their meal of mutton and bread and milk, and then scurried off to their nooks to send down others. Wretched creatures! these came in the dead of night as thieves, and Trail, wearied with their depredations, and grieved at his want of success among them, made such a compact as he could, by means of signs, assisted by his knowledge of the Dutch and Kafir languages. On condition that they would permit his flocks to feed in peace, he agreed to furnish them with game, Indian corn, and beads. The bushmen, knowing that if after this compact the pastor's sheep were lessened in number, mutilated, or poisoned, their messengers would be sent empty-handed from his door, each kept a constant watch upon his neighbour, and this sort of truce had been kept between Trail and the pigmies up to the time when the former was making arrangements for a journey on business into the colony.

For a week previously to leaving his house to the trader's care with two herds only, all, however, well provided with arms, the missionary had seen and heard nothing of his wild neighbours, and learning from his cousin, who had occasion to follow him, that they had not come down from the mountains since his departure, our good minister resolved, when on his homeward route, on penetrating the fastnesses which he had at first visited with pious intentions, but from which he had been driven, in such a fashion as would have made most men hesitate ere they set foot on such dangerous ground again: he felt it was his duty to seek these creatures.

He would have made a fine picture, seated on a grey rock which jutted out in an angle from the great mountain, which from base to summit, was seven thousand feet above the level of the ocean. The plain lay some hundred feet below, but the haze obscured it from the view. Trail felt very solitary between the sky and this shroud-like vapour; he looked at the poor brutes still panting beside him, and deliberated, as he took a survey from the rock on which he was perched.

There was not a sound now; even that restless caller, the whip-poor-will, was quiet. On each side of the traveller was a comparatively clear space, behind was a scarp of rock overhung with trees. Securing his horses, he relieved them of their saddles and bridles, laid his saddle-bags against the rock, and having seen that the animals had length of *reim* (thong of leather) to give them room to roll at full length upon the moist grass, he determined to climb higher up in search of the little colony, whose condition he had long deplored.

Trail was a man of about three-and-thirty; the features were homely, but the expression of the whole was highly benevolent; the frame was thin, and could not be called graceful, but it was neither ungainly nor vulgarly awkward; the eyes were large, and when lifted up, shone with a pleasant, not a sparkling, light; the hair was thinning on the temples, and the brow alone showed that by nature he was a man of a clear and fair complexion. The rest was bronzed by climate.

There he stood alone, alone in that magnificent solitude; the purpose for which he had come faded for a time from his memory, a gust of wind swept the mist away from the side of the hill to which he turned, and a part of the valley "lay smiling before him;" a stream of sunlight shot athwart it, and he saw the wild tenants of the wilderness, disporting and luxuriating as I have described; another gust opened the landscape wide, and as Trail's eye swept the scene, his heart was lifted up in admiration. He turned the angle of the hill again, but the plain was hidden from his sight on that side, he could see nothing of his people and the bivouac below. He paused under a tall yellow-wood tree, and sat down again, his heart melting at the thought of what? his loneliness! His head rested on his hands, and he went back, back to his wedding-day at home in England, in the old church. There he stood, hand in hand with Mary (his old playmate) at the altar: by her side his sister cried bitterly, behind him her mother sobbed aloud, and the father's silence was most eloquent, for the lips were firmly closed, and the eyes blinded with tears. Younger children gazed sorrowfully on—and then—there came the last parting. A ship in full sail, James and Mary Trail leaning over the side of the vessel while she is lying-to at Spithead; a boat below, from which many last gifts are handed up. A little sister weeping heavily, the mother with her face buried in her handkerchief, a young brother hastily wiping his eyes with the back of his hand, an elder sister trying to sooth the father, who "would not be comforted."

They are all again before him: the boat pushes off; the old man stretches forth his hands, blessing the voyagers; the sister waves her handkerchief, the brother his hat, the mother tries to rise, but cannot, as the boat is swayed between the white-crested waves, which soon part the little vessel from the gallant ship; the yards are swung round, the boat has faded to a speck, the bows dash through the sparkling waters, churches, forts, and towers of the old town Mary Trail has never left before, glide away from her aching sight, and she lies down like a child to cry in her bridegroom's sheltering arms.

And lo! there is a grave, the first grave hollowed in the mound on which a little chapel stands between two hills in Africa. There are others near it now, and a deep-toned bell sends out its hallowed call across the river, and up the kloof and on Sabbath days there is a gathering from many homesteads; but Trail has left this peopled spot for another. He visits it sometimes, and sits by Mary's grave, but he can no longer bear it as a dwelling: nevertheless, he would have stayed there had there not been one at hand to take charge of the district.

He had not long left this spot when I introduced him to the reader at the early part of this chapter. He rises, but not

without effort: his steeds are quietly enjoying the crisp herbage, and above, the baboons are looking out from their hiding-places, and shouting aloud. Trail began to fancy his "little people" had caught sight of him, and were calling to him from the rocks overhanging the platform on which he stood.

He determined on seeking at once for some sheltered corner, where he could kindle a fire, picquet his horses near him, and eat such provision as he had brought, deferring his further search till dawn. The non-appearance of a single living being puzzled him, the more when he discovered the remains of a fire, over which the wind had passed, scattering the ashes. It was evident that a meal of locusts had been here cooked and eaten, probably some three or four days before. Some had been rejected, and some were mingled with corn lying amid the ashes. A stray arrow or two was also to be found, and a bow, unstrung, rested against a stone. Whilst examining these evidences of human existence, something rose heavily from a stunted bush: a huge asphogel, scared at last from its lethargy, flapped its wings, rose slowly over Trail's head, and floated down the mountain-side; another and another followed, and our missionary felt assured that, dead or dying, some members of the barbarian community were not far off. He discovered a fearful group at last. It would be a sad task to describe the scene as it was depicted by him to one who related the circumstances to me. It was probable that some part of the community had been absent on a hunting expedition when the fatality occurred, which had destroyed three aged bushmen, four or five women, old and young, all inconceivably hideous in death, and several children. One poor baby lay across its miserable mother's bosom, apparently the victim of a snake, for the creature lay coiled up beside the dead body, and a wretched little object had been mangled by vultures at the entrance to the grot or cave into which the party had apparently crawled to suffer and die together.

Trail had heard of whole families of bushmen dying from a surfeit of a hearty meal of locusts,—from poisonous roots being mingled in their cookery with the larvae of ants,—and of their sometimes falling victims to the deadly enmity of some adverse tribes; but he saw it would be dangerous as well as useless to penetrate the charnel-house further; indeed he had taken as sharp a survey of the interior as the light falling through a chasm would allow, and he shrunk from ascertaining whether an inner cave existed.

Struck with horror, he had made up his mind to move some distance down the mountain in spite of the coming darkness, when a feeble moan drew his attention to a cleft in the rock, just at the entrance or mouth of the cavern.

He knew it was the moan of a living being, and began to examine the corner whence it proceeded, but all was in darkness; stretching out his arm, he groped among the stones, and at length touched a clammy hand, the fingers of which closed round his with a cold convulsive grasp. He drew the creature forth, and found it to be a little bushboy, probably five or six years old.

It was our friend May. He derived his name from the month in which he had been brought into the Christian world, as Trail said. Truly the good man's laying his hand upon the little creature was a wondrous and providential circumstance. Poor, degraded, barbarous imp, thou wert a frightful object; but the good minister looked on thee with the deep anxiety and affection that those only feel who love their neighbour in the true spirit of a Christian, and helpless and hideous as thou wert, doubtless there were angels singing triumphantly through the golden aisles of heaven as a herald on bright wings came among them with glad tidings of a soul rescued from darkness. It was thine, poor May, lying lonely and desolate, and apparently forgotten, in that fearful darkness; the day-star from on high was ready to shed its light upon thee, and there was great rejoicing among the ministering spirits of the upper world!

We cannot trace the melancholy facts of the deaths alluded to to their sources; nine or ten unredeemed souls had passed the outer threshold of this world, to that mysterious region whence none return with a record; but whether the cause arose from accidental poison, or by the agency of vicious neighbours, Trail never ascertained. How the imp May had escaped appeared a miracle; mayhap he had been absent gathering honey or digging for roots; the goats had disappeared, if there had ever been any; there was sheep wool on the bushes, but there were no sheep, and the missionary concluded that the hunters had probably returned after the calamity had befallen their fellows, and, in superstitious dread of the locality, had hurried to change their quarters without any closer examination of the spot than they had been induced to make from curiosity or rapacity.

Speculation was fruitless, useless; May was rescued, and Trail, carrying him to the bushes where the horses were picqueted, gave him such nourishment as he could. It revived him, and as soon as he could manage it, our traveller descended with his steed and the child to a convenient spot, where he lit a fire at the opening of a natural alcove. Here he again fastened his horse to a tree, happy in having found a spot watered by a rill, which trickled down a channel among the rocks, and spreading his *veldt combass*, a large rug made of dressed sheepskins, upon the sward, he laid his saddle beneath his head, and not far from him he did not disdain to place the weary and frightened being, whose sleep was soon as peaceful as a Christian child's within "a fair ancestral hall."

The night passed without further adventure, for Trail's sleep was light, and he kept up the fire at his feet, so as to prevent the intrusion of the wild beasts of the neighbourhood. At dawn he found his *protégé* still sleeping; and by the time he had made further but unavailing search for some living evidence of the sad spectacle he had beheld, the mist had cleared away from the hill-side, and he descended with his child of the wilderness to the bivouac, where he found his people in some alarm and uncertainty about his safety.

To untravelled readers the idea of leaving the dead unburied among the rocks and caves must appear rather unseemly, to say the least of it; but, in the first place, Trail's party could not have accomplished such an undertaking by themselves; and, in the next, leaving the waggon and its contents together with the oxen, would have been madness. Add to this, the chances were that a horde of bushmen might return to the spot unexpectedly, and there was dearly no alternative but to make the best of the early part of the day; for, although the mission-house was only nine miles distant, the way lay between narrow and rocky passes, wound up the steepest acclivities, and was at times difficult to penetrate, owing to intervening clumps of bush, connected by a tangled growth of underwood.

So the child was called May, in memory of the period of his rescue. The bewildered creature's language was utterly

untranslatable; but, with the keenness of perception so peculiar to his race, he soon learned to express his wants in a curiously-mixed dialect of Hottentot, Dutch, Kafir, and English, and this part of his education accomplished, Mr Trail sent him to his friends at the larger mission station to be trained into something like civilisation by good Mrs Cheslyn.

And now it may be told, in a few words, how May progressed in his education; how he learned to sing hymns in a truer voice than the Kafir children, whose notes, however, far surpassed his in melody; how he loved to dance in the moonlight with the Fingo herds, when Mrs Cheslyn thought they were all fast asleep in an old school-house, till their unearthly chant brought Mr Cheslyn out among them; how when the truant was punished, he would escape, stay away for days, and come back afterwards with ostrich eggs; how he would sulk sometimes with his lips out, and his eyes almost hid by the low frowning brow, run away again, and again return; how he stood in awe of no one but Mr Trail; how, if he was saucy to Ellen Cheslyn, it was for her sake he usually returned from his wanderings; how he would watch her in the doorway, looking up the road on those days when Mr Trail was expected; then as he caught a glimpse of horse and rider, winding down the hill, he would ask her, in Kafir, "Uza kangala nina? uza lunguzela nina apa?"—"What are you looking for? What are you peeping there for?" Then, with a low chuckle, he would spring over the *stoep*, topple head over heels down the garden walk and through the gateway, and, with distorted limbs and visage, hasten to give his friend and benefactor the "Good morrow," pointing back to the house to call attention to the watchful Ellen, and then plunging into the thicket, laughing and singing, and as merry as a cricket.

May's life had been comparatively free from care. True, an outburst from the savage tribes of Kafirs, to whom Mr Trail had been a gentle and a kind teacher, laid his station, Westleyfield, even with the dust. It was burnt to ashes, and all his little property with it, but his wife, Ellen, escaped with her husband and infant to a Dutch lazar, or encampment. May accompanied them, sometimes as nurse, sometimes as caterer, with a knob-kierrie (club), knocking down a buck or a bird occasionally, and cooking the same as opportunity offered. So they passed on afterwards to the colony; but May, lingering behind one day, looking for corn, which he believed to be buried in what appeared to him a deserted *kraal*, or hamlet of huts, was pounced upon by the enemy, who would have despatched him at once, but that one, more humane than the rest, listened to the poor bushman's appeal, that he might be permitted to say his prayer. After a brutal laugh from the wretches, who boasted that "God Almighty was dead in their land," they consented.

This circumstance saved his life. As May cast himself prostrate on the earth, a little party of *roed batjes* (red jackets), commanded by a sergeant, who happened to be reconnoitring in the neighbourhood, and who had crept along the banks of a river, suddenly reared their heads, above the cliffs of the Keiskama. There lay poor May, praying aloud, while the savages danced round him, declaiming on the greatness of their leader, on his bravery, his prowess, flight or ten Kafirs leaped and howled about the helpless bushman, flourishing their knob-kierries, shaking their assegais, and varying their war-cries with imitations of the wild beasts, to which they compared their leader: "Behold," said one, "he is a tiger!" and there was a chorus, accompanied by the vicious whispering growl of the stealthy brute: "he is terrible as a lion, keen-eyed as an eagle, wise as the serpent." Then the chorus-master roared and shook his assegai, while the rest made their spears shiver like the wings of passing birds, and the hiss of the serpent was followed by the wild shout of attack upon their victim.

"The *roed batjes*!" cried the chorus-master, and the soldiers sprung into the midst of the enemy with a hearty English cheer: the Kafirs gave a yell of fear and disappointment, and May jumped up to find himself surrounded by men he felt to be his friends, though they were almost as strange to him, as regarded their appearance, as the foes from whom he was rescued. He gave an answering yell of triumph in imitation of the chorus-master, as he saw the latter, with his kaross flying in the wind, stop, mount on a stone, and fling back an assegai, which quivered through the air, and fell within a few inches of the sergeant's feet, who drew it up from the ground as a trophy.

"Well," said the sergeant, turning May round and round, "you are a nice little article, ain't you, to make such a confounded row about: and where the — did you spring from, you small chap?"

"From Westleyfield, sir," answered the bushboy, in a very tolerable English accent.

To be brief, he related his story, and followed the soldiers. An old officer of the corps placed him in the service of his family; and, on their departure for England, May was handed over to some one else, and from his last master had been recommended to our travellers, Frankfort and Ormsby, as an intelligent guide and trusty servant.

He had never rested after his rescue till he traced out the Trails, who had terrible misgivings about him; but they could not prevail upon him to return to Westleyfield; their settled mode of life was by no means so agreeable to him as the one he led with the troops. He could seldom be coaxed from head-quarters, the band acted upon him as a spell; but he grew attached to Captain Frankfort before he became his servant, and hung about the stable with the groom, who was happy to find his recommendation of May confirmed in a way that satisfied the sportsman. The English groom remained at head-quarters while trusty May went up the country with Frankfort and Ormsby.

He had married in the colony, and made a bridal tour into the Winterberg mountains with his wife—a Christian Hottentot gin with a dash of white blood on her father's side, of which she was justly proud!—to introduce her to his friends the Trails, and repeated his visit on the birth of his child, when Mr Trail christened the creature Ellen, after his wife. They did not return to Westleyfield; that station was handed over to the charge of an older missionary, whose tall sons made almost a garrison of defence among themselves.

May returned to the colony with Fitje and his child. Fitje, like himself, had been brought up among people from whom she had imbibed habits of civilisation,—would I could say, industry! but this would be contrary to the nature of the Hottentot, however utter idleness and vice may be overcome by good example: but they worked when they were penniless, and, in spite of indolent propensities, Fitje made a good and tender mother, and a most kind wife. She loved gossiping in the sunshine, she could not resist a dance to the music of the drums and fifes; but she did not smoke a pipe, she was an excellent washerwoman, and she was a regular attendant at the Dutch chapel. She had a Hottentot taste for smart *douks*, but she never tasted Cape brandy; and when May fell under Captain Frankfort's care, she was so proud, that she would not associate with her earlier acquaintance. She and May had a little Kafir hut

to themselves near Frankfort's garden, and the family of the bushman, his merry-hearted wife and good-tempered baby, presented a picture as agreeable to look at, in a moral point of view, as that of any independent gentleman on earth.

I think we left him retiring to his mat under the store-waggon of the sportsmen. Fitje and the child slept beside him soundly, albeit at midnight the moon's rays slanted right across their swarthy faces.

Morning in Kafirland! The air is filled with delicious perfume. The toman is spinning about in the hazy atmosphere, the jackals are quietly wending their way across the plains, looking back at times, in brute wonderment, perhaps at that great sun; the spider has spread her silver tissue across the pathways to ensnare the unwary; and

"Jocund Day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain's top."

What a carpet of green and gold, variegated with the scarlet "monkey-foot," the lonely, trembling, drooping gladiola, the agapanthus, the geranium, brilliantly red as the lip of fabled Venus; the wreath of jessamine and myrtle, and laurel boughs, in which the birds are awaking to a world lovely to them!

Ah, what exquisite things hath Nature in her bounty spread before the heathen! They cannot be counted, they dazzle the eye and set the heart bounding in the plenitude of a pure, inartificial enjoyment.

The Dutchman's settlement was beginning to teem with signs of life. The gates of the kraals were thrown open, and sheep and goats and oxen were blending their voices with the incessant, uneasy chorus of the dogs, while the herds divided the multitude to lead them to their separate pastures.

The waggons of our party were already prepared to start; the hot coffee had been thankfully enjoyed, the Kafirs paid in tobacco for their offering of milk in tightly-woven baskets; and the Boer had come down to say "thank you," for the pistol he had duly received.

Frankfort imparted to the Dutchman his suspicions, that some one had been prowling about the bivouac in the early part of the night, but he said it was unlikely; it was probably some cunning jackal, or a herdsman's dog. Frankfort could not help thinking it was some human being, but Van Bloem said no. May was already in advance of the cavalcade, turning back now and then, with an impatient gesture at old Piet, the chief waggon-driver, and Fitje, with her baby on her lap, and gaily attired, is seated on the waggon-box of the largest vehicle, *en grande dame*, being the only lady of the party. Happy Fitje! no rivals—the men of all degrees turn to thee with deference, thankful for the aid of thy womanly skill, and cheered by thy merry laugh, albeit thy mouth be none of the smallest.

"*Trek!*" (Note 1)—what a shout!—"Trek!" the slash of the long whip echoes many times, backwards, forwards, above, around, behind the mountains and through the *kloofs* (ravines). May is waiting at the turn of the winding road, half a mile off. The train of men and waggons, horses and dogs, moves slowly on, and the sportsmen ride gently ahead. But May keeps steadily in advance of all, and the dogs raise a cry of joy as they catch sight of him when he pauses at the angle of a hill, and stands there a minute or two, whistling as gleefully as though he were "monarch of all he surveyed."

Note 1. There can be no literal translation of this word of command, but the oxen understand it well,—to them it means "advance," "on."

Chapter Three.

The Shipwreck.

We must now turn from the inland valley, with its homestead, its cornfields, and flocks, to a very different scene,—a scene at sea.

On the day when our friends Frankfort and Ormsby were introduced to my reader with the tempest warring round them, as they stood shelterless with May upon the open plain, a solitary ship neared the south-eastern coast of the great continent of Africa. The hurricane blew there with frenzied violence; the fiends of the storm were howling aloft among the shrouds, the canvass cracked and rattled till it split into ribbons, and was whirled away to the winds; the rudder had been torn from its place, the masts groaned and shrieked, the waters frothed up in fountains of spray, and at intervals the heavy surges swept the decks like clouds, enveloping the vessel, and bearing it down with a force it could ill resist.

The sailors were hanging about the ship, but there were few on deck, and none in the shrouds, for there they could not keep their footing.

There were troops on board; the dull roll of the drum made itself audible at times, when there was a lull, and volleys of musketry mingled their signals of distress with the screams of affrighted women and children,—and, alas! alas!—with the oaths of terrible men,—for it was a convict-ship.

There were but momentary glimpses of the shore as the lightning flashes rent in twain the dark masses of vapour hanging about the gloomy rock-bound coast. The captain could only guess where he was, for the vessel had been driving all the night, and the character of the cliffs was his only guide now. He saw there was no help for them if the ship continued to lie with her head to the shore, and he believed that a sand-bank at the yawning mouth of a river would engulf them, unless the hand of Providence cast them to the westward of this, where, as he supposed, the

sands sloped from the cliffs, on the summit of which stood a small fortified barrack, occupied by a slender garrison of British troops, who would render such assistance as their means permitted in saving the lives of such as might be fortunate enough to be cast adrift upon the coast, or be enabled to reach it by rafts, or in the launch.

The convicts had all been freed from their shackles in the early part of the night—as soon, in fact, as the desperate situation of the ship was ascertained; but they were kept between decks till some plan of possible relief could be devised. Some sat moodily in the corners of the ship, awaiting the day, in sullen, gloomy despondency. Some blasphemed; some laughed in bitterness of heart, exulting in the idea, that man's vengeance had been set at nought by a stronger power;—whether for good or evil, they did not consider. Some jeered at the soldiers, who bore the jeers with unswerving spirit; and some of the women, God help them! jeered the loudest! One, indeed,—who had deeply considered her position, and repented,—prayed aloud, and some drew round her to listen, but these were few; others cursed their doom. One soldier's wife, a young creature with an infant in her arms, leaned against a riven mast, crying bitterly, while her husband tried in vain to comfort her. Immobile as images were most of those iron soldiers, except as they answered to the voice of command; true, even in the jaws of death, to their country and their profession, they heard the blasphemy and the jeers and the ribaldry of the wretched beings they guarded, without evincing the slightest emotion. Between the volleys of musketry, a heavy gun occasionally boomed out its signal of distress, but it was only echoed back from the gaping rocks of the dangerous coast; again the small-arms awakened no answer.

Silence,—a voice of command from the poop, and all hands are called to lower the launch. The ship had struck several times against the sand, shivering, as though terrified at being so assailed. The gangways were guarded, and the convicts not permitted to pass. Few, indeed, attempted it, though all had been unmanacled; but discipline, in hours of difficulty and danger, is generally more than a match for strength.

The launch was lowered with a will, by those who would have no right to enter it. It was appropriated, of course, to the women and children, and those who were to have the charge of it were appointed by lot.

There was no confusion; those who drew planks turned calmly away, and went to other duties, while the guardians of the launch marshalled its passengers in funeral order, and they were cautiously lowered into it.

There were two officers in command of the convict guard; the elder was married; his wife looked quite a child, she was barely eighteen. Melancholy it was to see her clinging to her husband, and begging to be left with him on that deck, which began already to open its seams, and show the water boiling below. She threw herself on her knees at last, and implored him to let her die there with him.

“Marmaduke, my love, my husband, do not send me from you;” and, turning to the captain, who gently implored her, for the sake of her unborn infant, to endeavour to save herself, she replied, in a voice of indescribable calmness, “Sir, those whom God has joined, let no man put asunder; I will not leave my husband.”

Then a boy midshipman came forward, and begged the officer to take *his* place in the launch, but Captain Dorian would not leave his men; and now everything was prepared to cut away the boat from the ship, and Mrs Dorian stood firmly by her husband.

I have alluded to the knowledge, such as it was, that the captain had of the coast they had been nearing for so considerable a time. He was not mistaken in his conjectures that they were within gun-range of a part of the shore guarded by a garrison of British soldiers.

See a signal!—the clouds have been lifted by the merciful hand of Providence; and, though the answering gun from the tower of the little fort cannot be heard, in consequence of the wind setting in-shore, and the elements outvying each other in noise at sea, the flash is distinctly visible. Captain Dorian persuades the poor young creature that there is help close at hand; appeals to her in the character of a soldier, who expects his wife to assist him in setting an example of firmness; points out to her the selfishness of her wish to remain thus unmanning him in his military duties; and, passive, stupified, at last, she suffers him to carry her to the ship's side, and she takes her place in the launch.

Dorian looked at her as she lifted her eyes in a wild way to him. She stretched out her hands, as if imploring him to call her back. A white-crested wave sweeps over her, and throws her down; she tries to rise; she sees her husband with clasped hands praying for her; she waves hers in reply, and Dorian is called away on duty.

He speaks coolly and decidedly; he gives the necessary orders to an old sergeant, but is stopped by the screams of the unhappy women on the deck, who are hoping that the launch may come back for them. A strong rope had been affixed to the ship, and it had been decided that this, being also connected with the launch, should be fastened ashore by any means that the will of Providence might offer. The rope was strong, but the rottenness of the ship's timbers was proved in a sudden and appalling manner. The poor soldiers had congregated in that part of the vessel to which the rope had been made fast. I have already said that the seams of the deck had opened, leaving here and there a large space; still the captain, officers, and crew were in hopes that she would hold together till she was driven on the sands, and by that time they anticipated further help by means of the launch, the rope, and perhaps some surf-boats, if the detachment possessed any, as was probable, from the garrison being a *dépôt* for stores brought thither by coasters.

An awful crash took place; the great ship parted, and the poor anxious watchers of the launch were precipitated into the foaming ocean.

The miserable convicts rushed upon what remained of the deck. They shouted, they sang, they chattered, they uttered ribald jests; they climbed the rigging, and swung aloft. It gave way under their feet. Some seemed to revel in the freedom of the unchained air; they clustered along the yards like bees. Now the ship's bows are drawn into the surge; now the shattered poop sinks beneath the waves; now the sea overwhelms the decks, sweeping living aid

inanimate things in its vortex; and now, oh God! the great beams gape and yawn and part asunder, and see the wretches are jammed in between; a mast is shivered, a block falls, and strikes an old man down; his eyes burst from their sockets, his head is bruised and battered, his limbs quiver, and his fingers are convulsed. The deck opens again; the bounding sea bursts up, and draws into its relentless jaws more than one victim!

The ship was fairly breaking up. Some rushed to the fore-castle, some looked despairingly from the poop—Between the fore and after part there was soon an impassable gulf.

At the scream, which drew the attention of Dorian and his sergeant from the arrangements they were making, the former rushed to the poop. He saw the brave fellows who had been swept off struggling in the waters, trying to regain the shattered vessel. They perished every one of them! At any other time he would have been stunned by the sight, but his eyes are strained beyond it; fixed in an aching gaze upon the launch, he can distinguish no one in her now; her passengers seem all huddled together: he turns round on hearing the mast crashing over the ship's side; he is shocked at the sight of the mutilated old man. Again he turns; his eyes seek the rocks, above which he has seen the flash of the signal-gun; he fancies he hears the echoes rolling along the cliffs; he distinguishes another momentary light; the launch is hidden between two watery mountains, but she rises; he would give worlds to use a spy-glass, but it is impossible; but he needs it not; he sees the launch again with terrible distinctness. She has turned over, she goes down! He sees no more; many of his gallant soldiers have perished in the boiling element beneath him, and he springs forward in his despair to join his fair and child-like wife.

They were found afterwards cast ashore, strange to say, not far from each other; and the captain of the detachment, as commandant of the fortress, read the funeral service over them with a faltering voice; they sleep together in a grove of oaks. The spot was chosen because the trees that flourished there reminded passers-by of England.

Signals were now distinctly heard from the heights, and soldiers were gathered on the cliffs watching the ill-starred convict-ship. Oh, to see the arms of the maddened wretches stretched towards the shore! Some, like Captain Dorian, cast themselves in a frenzy upon the angry waters; some strive to lash themselves to spars; another boat is lowered, with provisions hastily thrown into it; three or four bold spirits tempt the surges in the fragile bark, and it is swept towards the river's mouth, is whirled round in the sparkling eddies, and disappears.

It is of one of these "bold spirits" I have to speak.

I have said that the convicts were relieved from their fetters as soon as the vessel became unmanageable.

Sternly awaiting his fate in a dark corner of the labouring and bunting ship, sat a man of some eight-and-twenty years of age; his arms were clasped round a gun, and thus he steadied himself as well as he could.

Strangely indifferent he seemed to the howling of the winds, the rattling of the cordage, the falling of spars, the crash of timbers, and the imprecations of his fellow-convicts amid the scream of frightened women. At times he sneered at the frantic gestures of a soldier's wife, who was sitting on the deck, with a baby on her lap, rocking herself to and fro and bemoaning her hard fate, and that of her family, most bitterly, at the same time directing her husband and children in certain preparations for leaving the ship, if they should be so fortunate as to succeed in doing so. Her advice and admonitions were interlarded with various expressions of terror, sorrow, affection, and anxiety.

"Oh, Micky O'Toole! Och, wirasthrue, my darlint; sure when we played at the same door-step as childer, I didn't think we'd come to this. Och, Larry, my child, the mother that owns you is breaking her heart. Alice, say your prayers, fast—say them fast, allannan; true for ye, my darlints, this day we'll be in glory; pray up, Ally, pray up, Larry, the saints be wid us. Micky O'Toole, what did you do wid the little bundle of cloth I put up to go ashore wid? Oh, the vanity of me; sure didn't the priest tell me I'd be punished for setting myself up wid a sunshade (parasol), when you were made a corpular. Ochon a rhee, my heart is broke!

"They'll be missing us at the harvest, Micky; they'll be dancing widout us, and we drowned—drowned. Oh, Micky!" A wailing cry from the baby made its mother weep more bitterly, but still she occasionally recalled her scattered wits to console her children.

Not far from Lee, the convict, was stretched, in a listless attitude, a young man, who seemed little more than twenty years of age. He also was one of the condemned; but no one could have recognised him as a criminal by his appearance, which was exceedingly prepossessing. His thoughts were apparently wandering; for though his countenance expressed awe, there was resignation also. He was looking for a better life than the career mapped out before him as a felon. In the great crisis taking place, there was hope for him somewhere. The wretched welcome any change. He awaited it passively.

But his heart was touched at sight of a penitent creature, who bewailed her past errors in an agony of self-reproach, as she uttered the names of father, mother, brothers, and sisters; at times exclaiming, "Oh Jamie, Jamie, ye'll be sorry when ye hear of poor Jessie's end."

"Mother, mother!" was the last appeal of the unhappy young woman, as she was washed away by the booming waves through a gap in the wreck.

But Lee saw not this; he was smiling at the scene between Mrs O'Toole and her family.

Ere long he had unlashd the boat, assisted in throwing in provisions, and, casting himself into the frail vessel with two other comrades, committed himself to what he called chance.

At length the muskets ceased their roll, the drum its sullen round. The ship had struggled bravely; the fore and after parts sometimes jamming each other, and then parting. Both were now engulfed. The death-cry rose above the roar of the foam, and the noise of falling spars and blocks; and sea-chests, ship furniture, all that had been carefully

gathered together by the hand of man, were cast into the ocean.

Now a man, lifted on the crest of a wave, saw his wife, and struggled to reach her; but she was swept past him with her eyes glaring madly. Now a woman, with features all convulsed, snatched up some passing child, and cast it from her when she found it was not her own. Now the prow neared the shore, and a young officer sprang from the bowsprit into the sea; dizzy with the leap, he closed his eyes—and opened them—oh, blessed hour!—in a tent pitched on the cliff for the reception of those cast on the strand.

The detachment of English soldiers had assembled on the cliff at the first signal of distress fired from the convict-ship. They had waited there from midnight until dawn, knowing by the nearer sound of the guns and small-arms that she must be driving towards the shore; but they could give no aid; they could only abide the issue patiently, and meanwhile make such preparations as might possibly be useful.

The barrack they occupied was situated on the western bank of a river, the entrance to which, in the present agitated state of the open ocean, formed almost a Maelstrom. As day dawned, and the convict-ship was seen driven in-shore, it was evident to the lookers-on that she must go to pieces; for fringing the shore was a narrow line of sharp and jagged rock, and at the very edge of this the ship's bows were already beating. Still it was doubtful on which side of the river she might be cast ashore, or whether, indeed, she might pass the whirlpool foaming at its mouth; for the ledge or shelf, over which the breakers burst with increased violence every hour, extended across the opening, and made a bar, which rendered it unnavigable. On either side of the stream the sands stretched for miles, and the ocean washed the shore with a hoarse and endless roar; but not with such destructive powers as it did above or below the river's mouth. On the western side, especially, there was more chance for the poor creatures struggling for their lives, inasmuch as the sands beneath the cliffs were not of that shifting nature which rendered anchorage impossible on the eastern limits; besides which, whoever escaped drowning, by being flung upon the eastern bank, stood a chance of having his brains dashed out by detached masses of rock that had rolled from the cliffs, and were embedded in the shore. Near the mouth of the stream, indeed, many an incautious rider, on his way from Kafirland, had been well-nigh overwhelmed by the quicksands.

Fortunately for those who had outlived the storm so far, the tide drew the two divisions of the wreck, partially submerged as they were, on the safer bank of the stream; the colonial side, in feet, of a river dividing the territory of the British settlers from the "neutral ground" of the savage inhabitants of the north-east. It was found afterwards that the two portions of the ill-fated ship had been connected by means of various spars and cordage interlaced beneath the waters; but she had not been many minutes fairly among the breakers ere she literally crumbled to pieces, and scattered her timbers on the waters.

Out of three hundred souls, not more than eighty were saved. Some swam till their strength was exhausted, some gave themselves up to their fate like the young soldier, who spread out his arms, closed his eyes, and plunged from the poop to the sea; some clung to spars, boxes, tables, hencoops, anything that came in their way. All who reached the shore received the hospitable care of the kind soldiers of the fort, and afterwards pursued their different routes and destinies as Providence directed, after preserving them for the fulfilment of its own wise and grand purposes.

The boat which had been disengaged almost unperceived by Lee, and the two other convicts, continued to buffet the waves most gallantly. It reached the entrance of the river—here the rowers used their strong arms for a time in vain, and there seemed no other prospect than that of being engulfed, when suddenly the boat rose, as if lifted in air, over the bar of rocks I have described, and, shot into the stream, was sucked into a kind of whirlpool, where it spun round like a top, filled and went down for a few minutes, but came back to the surface empty. Lee was drawn down with his fellows; his eyes and ears filled, and his senses failed him: he had an indistinct vision of the convulsed features of the other two struggling below him, and of a gurgling sound from one who tried to scream; but all afterwards was blank till he came to his recollection stretched on a bed of sand, which ran inland from a creek overhung with bush.

It was a considerable time before he could bring himself to understand the reality of his position; but at length he rallied his intellect, and sat up to look around him.

The storm still raged—not a vestige of the wreck was to be seen, and the boat, broken in pieces, was lying high and dry between the rocks, with which the bush was intersected; the body of one poor drowned wretch was floating, all swollen and disfigured, in the creek. Jasper Lee rose by a sudden impulse, and scrambled as far from the sight as his cramped and aching limbs would allow him; the stunted bush or scrub, by which he tried to climb the cliffs, gave way in his hands, his feet slipped on the streaming and slippery weeds; but he reached a ledge at last, and taking "heart of grace," he scanned the prospect before him.

Evening was advancing, though as to when the sun was likely to withdraw his influence from that hemisphere, it was impossible to say. Sky and ocean were blended together in a hue of lead, and the glancing wings of sea-birds looked like gleams of silver light between the angry heavens and the warring sea. His eye fell only on the void expanse. He had cast himself down on an angle of the cliffs which jutted far out, and during a momentary lull, the wind brought the sound of drums from the garrison on the opposite shore. He looked down immediately below, he perceived some rotten pieces of timber floating by; he expected to see some human creature still living, for many had lashed themselves to spars and masts, and might yet be tossing about at the mercy of the waves. He stretched himself as far forward as he could, and looking to the westward, where the light of day was lingering longer than elsewhere, he distinctly saw groups of soldiers, engaged in assisting those who had been cast ashore below the fort.

He fancied he heard voices, he looked down. Immediately under his feet there were, as it seemed, phantoms floating by; some dead, some with agonised faces and beseeching hands lifted out of the white foam, and one saw him—she was young and fair, with long tresses, all unbound, clinging round her white throat and bosom; she seemed to give a gasp of hope; he leaned over; hardened man as he was, he would have given much to have saved her; the swell brought her nearer, she saw him; still she herself tried with desperate energy to catch a ridge of rocks,—she reached

it, the heavy waters swung her forward with terrific violence, the sweet face was lifted up again. Lee was about to cast himself at all hazards from his position, when a stream of blood darkened the white spray, and the head of a shark came up, its huge jaws were filled with the mangled and bleeding limbs of its victim, and the horrible sea-monster drew its prey into an inlet where it had been driven by the storm.

He buried his face in his hands, turned sick, and almost fainted; after this he looked no more towards the sea, and ere long found himself obliged, for safety's sake, to reconnoitre the locality in which he had awoke to consciousness after so narrow an escape.

His condition was forlorn enough; his clothes hung in shreds upon him, his hair was matted with brine, his body was sorely bruised, his hands and feet lacerated; but it must be confessed, that, in spite of the horrors he had witnessed, his spirits rose fresh and buoyant, as he remembered that he was at liberty; though houseless, naked, cold, hungry, and bleeding, it was not in his nature to despair.

He turned his eyes again to the westward, and on climbing higher, he discovered the wall of the fort, with its tower in the angle and its looped parapet. Soldiers were still straggling up and down the cliff, intent, as they had been for hours, on their humane efforts in saving life, and the remnant of property which had been thrown ashore with the tide.

"Ha!" muttered the convict, "I am on the right side of the river; they've had their glasses out at the fort, no doubt; but they cannot pass this, frothing as it does at the mouth, like a wild beast, for a week to come. Well, some will fancy themselves in luck when they get within those four tall walls, and some may have their chains dangling about their heels again; but this way of escaping death is not to my taste. I have work before me, I know; but what would life be without any difficulties! What a stupid life would Adam and Eve have led without sin! A true woman, Eve; disobedience gave the flavour to the fruit! Well, I have no objection to difficulties, and although I don't abide by the trash that gives chapter and verse about first causes, I know I have not been planted on this continent again for nothing. It must be owned, though, that I have had a precious welcome;" and, wiping the blood from his temple, he sat down again, for he was somewhat exhausted in body, though untiring in spirit.

The clouds fell lower and lower, and shed no more reflected light; a pitchy darkness followed. Lee gathered himself up between the bush and the wet and slippery bank, and lay down to dream of a surging sea, of pale beseeching faces and mangled bodies of young and beautiful women. The tide was again rising, and he dared not descend, so he determined on waiting till the dawn, and then commencing a search for the provisions which had been put into the boat, and which he hoped he might find attached to some fragment of her wreck, for they had been securely lashed to one of the seats.

Towards midnight, as the tide receded, the fury of the tempest seemed to abate, and just as day peeped with affrighted eye from the east, our convict ventured from the shelf on which he had been uneasily stretched during the hours of darkness.

A dense fog hung over the river; the wind came in gusts from the ocean, and some of the trees above the cliffs were torn up by the roots and cast midway among the stones and scrub. The solitude was perfect to a man in Lee's position, and the tide having left a spacious strand, he let himself down from his covert, and began to make a search for the necessaries of life.

The wreck of the boat was lying where he had seen it the preceding evening, and, after a patient search, the hungry man discovered the bundle of provisions. It was saturated with wet, the rain fell around in torrents, there was not a spot of ground on which real repose could be sought; but Lee sat down and satisfied his wants with a relish indescribably keen.

Let us take a view of him, resting on the dreary strand, having refreshed himself with a moderate meal of biscuit and salt pork, the latter, of course, uncooked, but to him most savoury.

In the prime of life, highly favoured in personal appearance, with the spirit of intelligence lighting his clear grey eye, and with the stamp of the better class upon his frame and countenance, how came he there—a convict?

At this moment he was intent chiefly on one point: he was determined to avoid all chance of further captivity or restraint.

As the fog was lifted from the river by the evening breeze, he felt the necessity of keeping out of sight of any stragglers about the opposite heights. He inspected the bulky package of provisions: a bag of damaged biscuits, some lumps of salt pork, a case of dried fruit—cabin property—a canister of cocoa, and various other articles, which had been hastily thrown into a bundle, and now adhered together like glue.

These stores were exceedingly precious to one in our adventurer's condition.

But the clouds began to gather again; floods of rain poured their torrents down the channels in the cliffs, and he determined without delay, and unmindful of his fatigue, which he felt the more after his meal, to seek a hiding-place which would be secure from intruders, although there appeared little chance of any one intruding on his territory.

All along that riverside deep indentations had been made below the cliffs by the encroachments of the sea, and Lee was not long in discovering a cave which penetrated far under them. There was not much time to lose in conveying the provisions to this covert ere the path was rendered soft, and therefore dangerous, by the swell of the tide as it turned again, and Lee was beginning to doubt the safety of the shelter, when, on drawing his bag of provisions to seek stowage for it at the furthest limits of the recess, he discovered that the chasm was deep and wide, and lighted slantwise by an aperture many feet above the level of the river. His thirst had been heretofore allayed by the channel of rain-water rippling down the face of the cliffs, and he was beginning to doubt how he should be supplied in his

retreat it compelled to remain there anytime after such supplies should cease; when, to his satisfaction, he convinced himself that a little stream, which trickled into the cave through a crevice, had its source in one of those bountiful and sweet springs so often discovered near the sea-shore, and which, in spite of their brackish taste, are so exquisitely refreshing to the exhausted traveller.

This was just one of those pieces of luck which often seem to rise in aid of the vicious,—but we may not question the decrees of Providence. God has his own reasons for letting the tares thrive for a time, though the harvest of wheat be thin.

On the whole, Lee had reason to rejoice in having discovered such a retreat for the present. He had sufficient stores to support life for some days; he was free, after his own ideas of freedom; space before him, above, around, with nothing to guide him but his own free will; he thought not of check or hazard, for no man held authority over him.

Misty, vague, dark, dreary, was his future; but it was not so utterly lost in the darkness as it would have been to a stranger on that great continent of Africa.

Contented at first with the comparative shelter he had so opportunely discovered, he had seated himself on a stone, and surveyed the interior of his domicile; but the various plans which floated about his busy brain wanted gathering together and arranging, and he found himself ere long overshadowed by the gloom of night. Though his wits were sharp, his body was weary, and growing stiff with cold. The river murmured hoarsely past the cave; the wind came in gusts through the crevices of the rocks, and penetrated to the very marrow of his bones. The outline of the opposite bluff looked like the frowning profile of a giant, when at intervals the clouds were parted by the broad flashes of lightning; for the storm at times still wreaked its fury against the rugged coast.

Having collected the damp leaves of fallen trees together in a heap, the convict made a very tolerable bed, throwing over them a long strip of green baize, the table-cover of the cuddy, which had been appropriated as a wrapper to the provisions.

The wind still kept up its “sound of mournful wailing,” and whistled through the gaps in the cave; the spray foamed within fifty yards of the entrance; the thunder came back at times with a mutter frill of wrath, and his clothes were still wet; but our convict was lulled to sleep by the roaring of the mighty elements, which held their strife around his place of refuge.

Now and then he started up, as livid faces rose before him in his sleep; and at last the excessive cold roused him, and he was thoroughly awakened. Darkness was around him, and the stream, flowing down its channel, dripped over on to the stones, and plashed upon his almost benumbed feet. He crawled towards the aperture; there was a little light, just enough to watch the tide, till, by its retrograde movement, he was able to make a random guess at the “time o’ night,” or rather morning. Shivering and melancholy, he crouched, with his head upon his knees, and, as his eye got accustomed to the outer atmosphere, he began to see stars. A body of clouds floated seawards, the wind veered about, and he again perambulated the shore in search of something for fuel. Day advanced, and he stumbled over a few cask-hoops; they were soaked with wet; but with the help of a remnant of a well-pitched spar from the wrecked boat, he determined on tiring to kindle a fire. Flints were searched for, and again Providence provided for his present wants.

He re-entered the recess; but, on consideration, deemed it prudent to take some further steps for insuring his concealment.

The rocks had been so washed, while the tide was up, by the spray of the surging river, that some of those which hung over the cave were loosened. It was a matter of skill and difficulty to separate even the smaller ones from the earth in which they had been imbedded; but Lee was a man of great personal strength, and, one block giving way, it bore down with it a heap of sand and a tree, which had been uprooted, thus undermining all that immediately surrounded it. The whole mass fell in front of the cavern.

There was not much time to lose, as the daylight might betray the refugee; so making a passage for himself through the stones and rubbish forming his barrier of defence, he re-entered his hiding-place, and set to work to light a fire.

This was not easy; at one moment a stick would catch the flame, blaze up, and disappoint him by dying so gradually away as to keep him hoping to the last; at length the pitch grew hot. He had uttered oaths enough to bring the spirits of fire to his aid. The smoke rose in little columns, and made his eyes smart with pain; but he persevered till the light danced upon the steaming and jagged walls, showing him his shadow, monstrous and undefined. The vapour found vent in the aperture opening to seaward, through which the spray had ceased to drift; and ere long some slices of ship’s pork hissed on the glowing billets. A soldier’s tin served as a kettle and drinking-cup, and Lee contrived to make something like a cup of cocoa. After such refreshment his blood flowed more freely in his veins, and he once more lay down to rest, intending to keep his wits about him though sleeping, and to replenish his fire, with a cautious observance of the outer atmosphere from time to time; for, although a turbid and swollen river intervened between him and the colonial side of the country, he had no mind to be tracked, by the smoke of his bivouac, by any wanderers, whether Europeans or natives.

He felt, indeed, tolerably secure; rightly judging that the Europeans on the western bank would have enough to do on their own ground, and that the few *whom he knew* to be scattered to the north-eastward would be as unlikely as the natives to hear of the wreck while the heavy rains filled the rivers to overflowing and rendered the ground dangerous and toilsome alike to riders and pedestrians. If Kafirs did venture out on foot, he knew enough of them to satisfy himself that their journeys would be undertaken to some better purpose than loitering on the coast without sure prospects of plunder.

He again lay down, and enjoyed that species of repose which gives ease to the body without completely deadening the powers of the mind; and it must be owned that his conscience was by no means so harassed by trouble or

remorse, as from his outward position one would think it must be. In his own estimation Lee was an ill-used, unfortunate man; and, as to the latter, truth to tell, his reasons for thinking so were not altogether fallacious.

He is a felon; but the circumstances which have brought him to his present condition have met with extenuation from some: of this, by-and-by.

Hush! the earth is loosened without; Lee hears it fapping about the entrance. Some small stones come clattering down, and then there is silence.

The strong man's heart beats, and he clutches the clasp-knife hanging round his neck, and tries to open it, but his hand trembles; a strong current of air rushes in, the fire flickers up, and the shadow of a man's face is for an instant traced on the rocky side of the cave.

It is suddenly withdrawn.

Lee revolved the circumstances of his case in a few seconds. He felt sure it was a white man's shadow, even at that momentary glance; the outline of the loose cap and prominent nose was unmistakable. It might be a mend—a fellow-convict—a sailor; if the latter, Jack would die rather than betray the fugitive. But if it were any who might, after all, turn informer, he would doubtless report that the cave was tenanted, and bring down a file of soldiers upon him, unless the clasp-knife settled the question, which it was not likely to do in its rusty condition. Lee's powers of body were a little impaired by the perils he had undergone, and the exertions he had been obliged to make in screening his hiding-place, as he hoped, from all observers.

But he was discovered, that was certain.

"Who comes there?" he cried, in a voice that shook more than he wished to confess to himself. "Enter, I am armed."

"Lee," hoarsely whispered a voice, issuing from lips within which the teeth chattered audibly,— "It is I, Martin Gray."

"And where the devil did *you* cast up from?" asked Lee, in no very gracious voice, and sitting up with ears and eyes now wide open.

"I am starved, and miserable, and hungry," was Gray's reply, as he scrambled through all impediments in his path, and crawling into the cave, began unceremoniously to draw together the embers of the fire.

"Are there any more of you?" inquired Lee, hastily.

"Not one. I have been skewered up in a hole ever since I was flung ashore. I got hitched on to the rudder of the boat when it broke away, and except a few bumps, I was all right when I got driven in between the rocks, and there I have been wedged for hours, for I dared not stir, except in the dark, when I could find nothing. I had no mind to be caught by the soldiers up there on the hill, so I have been creeping along under the rocks looking for luck in some shape or another, and what should I see, but a glimpse of light from this quarter? Friend or foe, it was all the same to me; I resolved to take my chance, and here I am."

Martin Gray was the young man I have alluded to as lying passively on the deck of the staggering ship—he had, like others, sprung into the sea, to take his chance, and clinging to a spar, had been providentially washed ashore.

Lee had had much opportunity of judging of Gray's character, which, though not without good, wanted strength and resolution; he was less wicked than unfortunate. There was this difference between the two: Lee would most probably, under any circumstances, have been ambitious, selfish, and unsound in principle, while Gray, with better fortunes, would have made a respectable member of society: warm of temperament, he was docile of disposition; he was, in fact, the very person to be influenced by a strong and determined mind, under circumstances like those in which he was now cast.

In Lee's forlorn condition, he felt there was comfort in fellowship, with so "safe a fellow as poor Gray," and he therefore set about proffering hospitality to his guest with a good grace, especially considering the limited extent of his larder. The meat again hissed upon the coals, the batch of damp biscuits was re-toasted, and Gray brewed another cup of cocoa—what a treat it was!

If you have been shipwrecked, reader, as I have been, you will understand this.

Gray having dried his torn clothes, and satisfied the inward cravings of nature, not without warnings from Lee on the dangers of indigestion from too hurried a meal after a long fast, which warnings were entirely self-interested, recommended that the fire should be extinguished, lest its smoke should betray their hiding-place at sunrise; "though, to tell the truth," the young man added, "I am much more inclined to surrender myself than to take my chance; for what is to become of us?"

"Surrender!" cried Lee; "what, with such a country before us as I know this to be? No, no, my lad, you'll not surrender; trust to me, there is nothing to lose by taking our freedom, and what prospects are there before us, if we give ourselves up? You, for one, would be packed off to New South Wales by the first opportunity. As for me—I have said it before—I had rather fall into the hands of God than those of man: here is space enough for even my free spirit, and with a little caution, and patience, and perseverance, I will take you into safe quarters for life!"

Gray was too weary to enter upon further discussion, and the two convicts stretching themselves side by side, the former was soon dead asleep, while Lee lay meditating an infinite variety of plans.

"This youth is safe," soliloquised the host of the the cave; "he must be taught to keep my counsel and his own, for although hereafter he may be rather an incumbrance to me than of use, it will not do to let him go,—he would betray

me, to a certainty. He has roughed it and seen service; though he is not clever, he has lots of pluck; on the whole, perhaps, I may make him useful, and it would be deuced lonely work to find my way across the country without any help. We must look about for arms; I saw large pieces of the wreck drifting this way after the crazy old craft went to pieces.

"I wish I had not seen that girl, though. I cannot forget her; how the blood bubbled up with the foam!

"The wind has changed, I suspect, but the river will be impassable to those red-jackets for days to come; we must collect our traps together without loss of time, and make ready for a start; I must do the amiable to this lad; he is a soft-hearted youth, I know.

"That fellow Tanner, I wonder if he is still trafficking up there in the kloof; he is an infernal rogue; I hope he won't turn informer—I think not, though, for I could betray him, and he knows it."

He rapidly chalked out in his mind's eye a map of his plans, and as he heard the wind again veering about to all points of the compass, and at last return to its deadly quarter, from which it had breathed its fury on the hapless ship, he rubbed his hands cheerfully together. "Blow, gentle gales," said he, and as Gray answered the apostrophe with a loud snore, Lee laughed and lay down, taking care to appropriate to himself a goodly portion of the green baize coverlet. Ere long he, too, was in a dreamless sleep.

Chapter Four.

The Deserter.

It is time to give our reader some further insight into the circumstances which had brought these two sleepers to their present condition, for they will occupy a prominent and peculiar part in the narrative.

Although Gray is the last adventurer on the scene, I will give him the precedence, since all that is necessary to relate concerning his previous history may be comprised in the following sketch.

He was the foremost boy of the village school of M—, industrious, high-spirited, and well-looking; he made slow but steady progress in his education, and his pastor entertained fair hopes touching his future prospects; but these hopes were suddenly overclouded by Gray's enlisting into a company of artillery quartered at a neighbouring town.

Thus it fell out. Let us go back to his earliest days, when he had been accustomed to stop at his uncle's garden-gate to call for his cousin Katy on his way to school. She would come with her school-bag hanging on her arm and singing down the walk as merry as a bird, and hand in hand they would wend their way along the lane to the school-house, where they parted at the porch with a tender but most innocent farewell, she for the girls' class, he for the boys'. On Sundays they stood side by side round the pulpit to recite their catechism—often, however, threatened with a separation, because Martin Gray *would* prompt Katy.

On Sunday evenings in the summer prime they sat beneath the apple-trees in the garden belonging to Martin's bereaved father, and on winter nights it was cheering to see the light glowing on the walls and shining through the cottage casements; for there were the three assembled round the fire, Martin reading to earnest auditors.

A sorrowful evening hour it was for Katy, when her cousin parted with her at her own door. Love, and joy, and peace, all departed with him, and she exchanged happiness for the misery of finding her father and mother quarrelling after their return from the alehouse. Morning would chase away the sad thoughts the darkness had brought. Morning brought healing on its wings, for then Katy and Martin were again hand in hand, singing through the lanes, and gathering primroses or crocuses on their way to the school-house.

Then Katy "got a place;" her mother thought it a very fine thing indeed, to have her daughter admitted as under-housemaid at the Hall. Katy and her cousin met at church on alternate Sundays, Katy growing smarter and prettier in Martin's eyes every time he saw her; but he began to find out that the dashing valets, who accompanied their showy masters to the Hall, were freely permitted to join him and Katy in their summer evening strolls. He remonstrated. Katy was clever and self-opinionated. She replied that she was not a school-girl; he quizzed the valets; she observed they were *gentlemen* to him, adding that Mrs White, the housekeeper, thought she demeaned herself by keeping company with such as he; he grew angry, Katy laughed at him, and one of her admirers, passing by, hearing the laugh, paused, stepped up to her, learned the cause of the merry peal, and walked off with her in triumph.

She looked in vain for Martin at church on the following Sunday; she dawdled through the churchyard, and her friend, "My Lord Wellor's valet," overtook her: he thought she was lingering for him. She did not drive him away, as she had discarded poor Martin Gray, with a laugh, but she was evidently thinking of some one else. With all his vanity, he guessed as much, and quitted her to join some gay ladies'-maids, who were flaunting along the meadow path. Katy never noticed them, though they watched her all across the meadow, out at the gate, up the lane to the turnstile, where she stood for a while, but turned back, and so met the giddy party again.

It was now her turn to feel the bitterness of laughter, when directed against herself; for the prettiest of the party, a rival of hers in the affections of Lewis the valet, cried out, "Well, Mistress Kate, were you looking for your sweetheart, Martin Gray? It is all of no use, my dear; he is gone for a soldier."

"Gone for a soldier!" Katy passed the giddy waiting-women and their obsequious attendant, and hastened to the nursery garden of Martin's father. He was sitting alone beneath the apple boughs. The pathway was unswept, the clove pinks streeling over the neat box borders. He looked very sad, indeed. "Uncle," said Katy, with white lips,

"where is Martin?"

"Gone for a soldier, Katy," replied the old gardener, striking his gnarled oaken stick angrily on the gravel path.

"Oh, uncle!" Katy burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

"It is no use crying now, Katy," said Gray, "it is too late;" and rising, but not without difficulty, for he was an infirm man, "well stricken in years," he walked towards the cottage, Katy following him like a culprit.

The elder Gray did not close his door upon his pretty niece; in truth, he could only suspect her as being the cause of his boy's departure, for Martin had formed some military acquaintances latterly; but one of; his son's last acts had been to collect some gifts, which this father knew to be "keepsakes from Katy," and these were lying on the window-sill, packed up and addressed to "Miss Katharine, at the Hall."

Martin had left; the cottage two days before with a sergeant of artillery, who had long had designs of enlisting so fine a young man, and from the adjoining town had addressed, a few lines to his father. He spoke of his wish for other countries, of the Artillery service being one of a superior character, as he considered, to the Line, and anticipated great satisfaction at speedily embarking for Gibraltar; not a word was said or Katy, not a single regret was expressed at the idea of leaving his native village, and from the style of the letter, it was very evident that it was written as a matter of duty to the old man—all sorrow at quitting him was superseded by the anticipation of visiting far lands. The father laid the letter on the table, and observing, for the first time, the parcel on the window-sill, he wiped the mist from his spectacles, read the direction, and formed his opinion of Martin's reasons for leaving home.

"Don't open it here, if you please," said old Gray, as he put the parcel into his niece's hands.

He sat down in his accustomed corner; Katy placed herself in the tall, old-fashioned arm-chair in front of the window, and Martin's dog, a long-haired shaggy terrier, lay with its nose to the ground in an attitude of expectation, which had doubtless been increased by the entrance of Katy; as she had come, he thought his master must soon follow.

There were various trifles belonging to the lad scattered about the room and its walls. The whip he used when he drove his father's cart into town—Katy had often heard it *whish* close to her ear as the tip of the lash touched the smart blue ribbons of her bonnet, causing her to turn round sooner than she had intended, though she had recognised the steady "trot, trot," of the rough-coated aged pony long before. A starling hopped up and down its perch in a cage manufactured by young Gray, and made its alternate appeals to "Katy" and "Martin." Festoons of birds' eggs hung over the neatly-carved wooden mantel-shelf, also the handiwork of Martin Gray; and a few of his pencil sketches, of much promise, were wafered against the clean white-washed walls. His books were all in their usual places on the shelves he had made for them; and the cat—ungrateful creature—purred with unaltered complacency, as she sat on the door-mat woven by the ready fingers of her young master, to whom Katy had given her three years before.

Heartless Tibby!—she nodded and dozed, and blinked her green eyes at the sunset, and washed her face with her white fore paws, just as she had done two Sundays before, when Martin was calling to her in vain from his seat beside his father under the apple-trees; but poor Grip was ill at ease, whining from time to time as he looked at Katy, then at the old man, at the open door, at puss—the selfish, the luxurious, the apathetic, the antipodes of Grip himself.

Katy found, after sitting there some minutes, that her uncle could not speak. The very clock was silent, for it had not been wound up on Saturday night; it had always been Martin's task to see to that. She went up to the old man, kissed him, and wished him good-bye. He suffered all this, and at last faltered out a few words intended to be kind. She looked back as she went out, but he said no more.

She never saw him again.

Next day the cottage door was closed. Evening came, the old man was not under the apple boughs as usual; the door was still closed. Some neighbours opened it, and entered the chamber; old Gray lay on his bed, as if in a calm sleep—he was dead.

Deep in the night a step came up the gravel-walk of the garden; Grip gave a low whine, the latch of the door was lifted, and Martin Gray entered. The unusual sight of a light at that still hour of village repose had prepared him for sickness, and he trembled exceedingly as he crossed the threshold. Friends were sitting there; he gazed at them with a bewildered stare, walked up to the bed, whither he was followed by the watchers. One of them, a kind old woman, laid her hand upon the sheet that covered the body, but Martin whispered, in an unnatural tone, "Lift it."

She uncovered the face of the dead, and Martin Gray fell fainting on his father's breast. They drew him into the garden, the soft summer air revived him, and he sat down upon the door-step of his home overwhelmed with grief. In vain poor Grip licked the tears that fell through his trembling fingers; in vain the faithful beast whined, and thrust his nose into his young master's bosom; his sympathy was unheeded.

The youth got up, walked again into the house, looked once more at his father, felt his brow, on which a few bright silver hairs were smoothly and decently parted, kissed it, and, saying to the old woman, Margaret Wilson, "You will take care of all," he gave a glance round the room, his eye resting for a moment on his father's vacant seat and Katy's high-backed chair, and then, shaking hands with two other kind-hearted watchers, he passed out again; Grip watching him, and waiting vainly for the whistle with which it had always been his master's wont to summon him.

The door closed, the latch fell, the step upon the gravel-walk receded quickly, and Martin Gray was never seen again in M— save by one person.

He paid it one more visit though, after his return from Gibraltar. His journey to his native place was made sometimes on foot, sometimes by a lift from a waggoner, or good-natured stage-coachman, who felt for the weary traveller, with his knapsack on his back, and sometimes in those barges which slip so lazily and pleasantly along the deep-winding streams of England.

It was in one of the last conveyances that he found himself sailing slowly up the river in which he had so often fished when a boy; it looked narrower to him than it had done in his youth, but the over-arching trees were taller and thicker than of old. He recognised a pool where he and Katy had drawn their pumpkin boats together; the alder bushes shaded it now, and it looked cold and gloomy, for the sunlight could not penetrate it. As the barge neared the bank, he offered payment to the bargemen, but they refused it—he sprung ashore, and plunged into the thick coppice that formed part of the grounds of the Hall where Katy used to be. He came to an open space, near which stood the ruins of an old keep, part of the ancient castle residence of the first owners of the soil. In early days, it appeared to him as something grand and stupendous; now he was surprised to find the windows and doorways so near him as he stood beneath the mound.

Having no mind to be recognised at once, he withdrew from the open ground to the shrubberies, and choosing a sequestered spot where the rooks were congregating in the old beeches, he sat down upon the leaves which the winds of autumn had gathered together in a bank.

It was a lonely place, but from the hawthorn hedge which bounded it there was a view of the meadows and farm-buildings belonging to the landlord of the Hall; and he lay contemplating, with something of pleasurable feelings, the variegated landscape of cornfields and green uplands—the sweet scent of beans reminded him of those autumn meetings, when the corn was carrying. There was a cart, loaded with golden sheaves, standing under the elms of the great meadow, and another coming down an opposite hill, with laughing children on the top—their voices rang distinctly across the fields; the sun was glittering on the bright weather-cock of the church spire, and Martin Gray took up his knapsack, which he had unstrapped from his tired shoulders, and resolved on yielding to the impulse which tempted him, to join the reapers... Voices in the lane close by! There was a laugh, prolonged, and rather loud, but musical and merry, if not cheerful, and two people advanced arm-in-arm. The forage-cap with its gold band, the blue surtout and glittering scales upon the shoulders, bespoke the officer of artillery, as Martin lightly concluded from the company quartered in the town; but the other, the lady—

The *lady!*—a bonnet with bright-coloured ribbons—ah, Gray thought of Katy's garish taste!—placed far back on the head, revealed a face encircled with hair of that rich wavy brown only seen in England. The curls fell heavily upon the swelling bosom—the large dark and shining eyes, the red lips, the brilliant cheek, were all of a character too full and decided for Katy; and yet—Martin stole along the hedge, keeping pace with these two people; the gentleman, young and showy, with his cap set jauntily on his shapely head, and she, the woman—for girlhood was passed, face and form were in their prime—was arrayed in attire that ill agreed with Katy's condition.

But it was she—her large shawl slipped from her shoulders, and she turned to gather up its gaudy folds; she spoke, laughed again, the white teeth parted the scarlet lips, and Martin knew her.

He stopped, breathed shorter, and she passed on, after the shawl had been adjusted, and the lover, or husband, had put aside the sunny hair and kissed the smooth forehead of that laughing, beaming face.

Whether wife or mistress, Gray felt she was lost to him, and he sat down again upon the bank of leaves, till the shadows of the old elms stretched themselves out like giants on the meadow-grass, and the song of the reapers mingled with the hum of voices in the village; then he rose, buckled on his knapsack, and made his way through many well-remembered paths, past the old school-house, to the garden-gate opening upon his father's little property.

Again he trod the well-remembered path, again he lifted up the latch, and, as he had hoped and expected, found old Margaret by the fire; age made her feel the cold, though the glow of autumn was in the sky.

She recognised him at once, in spite of growing infirmities; perhaps it was because, as she said, she had been expecting him, for she had saved what rent she could afford to pay out of earnings from the garden, and had it ready for him; but he set aside all questions of finance and property, and sat down beside the old woman's spinning-wheel.

Something whined and moaned at the back-door. Margaret rose, opened it, and Grip crawled in. He had waited, as it were, till his master came before he *could* die. He dragged himself as well as he could along the sanded floor, lay down at Martin's feet, licked his shoes, tried to reach his hands, fell back, uttered a long, low whine of joy, and *died upon the cottage hearth*. Dame Margaret gave the history of Katy in a few words. She had been encouraged in her insatiable love of dress by the housekeeper at the Hall, who had her own ends to gain by the setting off of Katy's beauty; father and mother, brought to the lowest ebb of vice by drink, quarrelled between themselves about unholy profits, and their daughter finally exchanged her place at the Hall for a dwelling in the town, close to the barracks. She had no shame now, Dame Margaret said, and Martin listened in bitter silence to the tale, and that night departed.

He turned and looked at his old home from the garden-gate. The light shone through the casement and streamed in a glittering line along the gravel path; the gentle breeze of autumn lifted the boughs of the trees and murmured through the neighbouring woods; the hum of voices in the village had died away, the "watch-dog's honest bark" breaking the silence now and then, and there was but small stir in the long irregular street as Martin passed through it.

No one observed him, though some were lingering about the old coach-inn, expecting the one-pair-horse vehicle that travelled through it "up to London." He went on his way, avoiding all the pleasant lanes and paths, through which he had walked in youth and sunshine, and reached a spot where four cross-roads met. He remembered the time when he and Katy would tremble if benighted here, for the place was said to be haunted: there was some old tradition of a

suicide being buried beneath the tall white hand-post, with a stake through his body, and not a villager would pass this way alone after sunset.

But now Martin Gray sat down at the foot of the hand-post, in the twilight, and hailed the coachman when he came up, much to the old driver's surprise, as he drove along the road, whistling in solitude, for not a creature was on the top of the vehicle.

Gray climbed up beside the coachman, and, looking back upon the village from the summit of a hill, distinguished only a few twinkling lights; but beyond it the windows of the great house shone resplendent: doubtless it was filled with company, and poor Martin turned from such a view with a heavy sigh.

The coachman tried, without success, to engage him in conversation, and then lit his cigar, leaving his passenger to his own melancholy thoughts.

I must give one or two more scenes in the life of Martin Gray ere I again bring him forward in companionship with his fellow-convict.

One fair summer's day, a body of troops was embarking for foreign service. Among the rest was the company of Royal Artillery to which Gray belonged, and the officer who had just assumed the command was no other than the same Captain Trafford, whom he had seen walking with his old love, Katy. Three years had elapsed since that memorable evening when Martin quitted his native village; but had he not then learned the name of this officer, he would have recognised him at once.

The steamer which was to convey the detachments to the transport lay alongside the quay of a great mercantile town in England. There were crowds standing alongside to wish their friends farewell. A gay regimental band had accompanied the troops, and they passed through the throng, cheering as they marched. There was not much delay in getting the steamer underweigh; all the poor property the men possessed was strapped upon their backs, and they were not long on board ere they turned their faces to the shore to give a parting hurra! There was a struggle between the policemen and some of the crowd at the gangway, but it was soon over, the people giving way. The cheers rose from the deck, there was an answering hearty shout, and the steamer dropped slowly down along the quay side.

A woman had pressed onwards to take a last look; her cloak was dropping from her shoulders, her bonnet hung at the back of her head; the rich hair was cast back from her wan, thin face; her dress was torn, disorderly, and soiled, but Martin Gray recognised her instantly. It was his lost love—his once bright-faced cousin Katy.

But she did not see him; and as he gazed with aching eyes and beating heart upon her, he heard a comrade say, "That is the girl that followed Captain Trafford all the way from London. I heard him last night, when I took the orderly-book to the inn, swearing at her, and telling her not to follow him. I was sorry for the poor thing, for she was so tired she could hardly stand, and leaned against the wall, staring at him and crying terribly; but he sent for a waiter and had her turned out. She gave me such a wild look as she passed me by, I shall never forget it; but I could not help her, you know."

The crowd dispersed, but Gray saw a single figure standing alone at the end of the quay, watching the steamer to the last. She stretched out her arms, leaned forward, and plunged into the water.

His involuntary scream brought others to his side, and the news soon spread along the deck that a woman had drowned herself. Some women had approached nearer the after-part of the packet than was consistent with the regulations, and openly coupled her name with Captain Trafford's. He came forward, and, in a furious tone, sent them forward, and placed a sentry on the spot they had invaded.

Some humane ladies of the party requested the captain of the steamer to let them know the fate of the unfortunate young woman, and late at night, as the ship's bows began to ruffle the waters, and her sails to fill, a fisher wherry hailed her, and a note was sent on board.

It was speedily whispered about that Captain Trafford had been the cause of the poor young creature's death, but there were no outward signs of regret on his part; he was as brusque as ever among the women and children when on duty between decks, and as intolerant and overbearing as usual towards the men of his company.

They hated him cordially—they had always done so; but after the sad incident I have recorded, their dislike increased.

Martin Gray buried his sorrow in his own breast. None ever knew that the unhappy girl who had cast herself despairingly into the waters was his cousin.

Some trifling dereliction from duty on Gray's part brought a violent reprimand from Captain Trafford. The young soldier responded in a strain equally excited, and the result was the imprisonment of Gray in a solitary cell.

Some days after, Captain Trafford, being the officer on duty, visited the prisoner. The sentry at the adjoining guard awaited the officer's return, and the sergeant, at length growing uneasy at the delay, proceeded to the cell.

Trafford lay on the ground at Gray's feet. He had evidently been stunned by a blow, for he was insensible.

Gray made no defence, merely remarking, that he "had paid an old debt."

Had Captain Trafford died, the young soldier must have been hung; but the former lived to give his evidence at the court-martial, the sergeant's corroborated the captain's, and the prisoner pleaded guilty.

But ere the sentence of the court was ascertained, Gray, through some sailor friends, managed to escape from prison, got on board a merchant ship where hands were wanting, and worked his passage home. He was easily traced, was seized as a deserter, and the result of another trial was transportation for life.

The convicts who had been rescued from the wreck by the soldiers of the fort were of course handed over to the proper authorities in South Africa.

Some met with a merciful destiny, some continued their evil practices—these were sent on their way.

The wreck of the *Trafalgar* became matter of history in an age when philanthropy, or the affectation of it, takes the lead in public.

“Ha!” said Lee to his companion, when they heard, some months after, of the fate of felons like themselves, “what a fool you would have made of yourself if you had given yourself up as you wished.”

Poor Martin Gray would at the moment this was said have gladly changed places with the hardest-worked convict in Norfolk Island.

But I must not anticipate my tale.

I have said that Lee had “rapidly chalked out in his mind’s eye a map of his plans.” These were rather facilitated in prospect by the unexpected advent of a companion; and on rising the following morning, he drew out such a sketch of his intended operations as induced Gray, of necessity, to assent to them.

In the first place, he, Gray, knew Lee to be a desperate man, albeit certain indulgences, the result of a morbid spirit of philanthropy—an endemic peculiar to England—had been granted to the latter on board the convict-ship; and he had thus, comparatively with the other voyagers, been placed beyond complaint. Secondly, there was only the alternative of giving himself up as a deserter. On the one hand, was infinite space in a fine country, with strange promises from his comrade, a daring and clever man; on the other, at best, a renewal of servitude under a yoke he had been taught by a miserable fatality to dislike.

Their resolution once taken, they determined, with wise precaution, on leaving no traces of concealment in a locality so dangerous by its proximity to the military post; for, although the river to the westward still remained impassable, and there was no likelihood of an invasion from the eastward, it was not to be doubted that ere long the scene of the wreck would prove of sufficient interest to bring some to the spot in search of such plunder as the tide might cast up. This territory, held, in Kafir parlance, by “the sons of Congo,” contained, besides the kraals and pasture-lands of its chiefs and their people, a few traders’ huts, and three or four mission stations, all widely separated from each other.

Chapter Five.

The Flight into Kafirland.

Perseverance and the instinct of self-preservation will effect much that, under ordinary circumstances, would be abandoned as impossible. By working at night within the cave, and at dawn at the outer entrance, they contrived to loosen heavy stones, and piled them together so cleverly, that they felt sure that in a day or two all traces of their hiding-place would be obliterated, especially if the surf increased.

Starting in the depth of a stormy night along the coast, at the imminent risk of their lives, they resorted by day to the rocks, where they ate such a portion of the provision they carried as served to keep up their strength. There was no scarcity of water, the heavens still poured forth their floods; at times they were almost blinded by the rain, and had not the heavy fogs occasionally rolled themselves up, they might have perished. For his own wise purposes, God chose to lead these two men in safety through the storm, and on the third day of their journey they entered a dense bush, crept along the bank of a stream, the Inzonzana, forded it in safety, and, having waited till nightfall to cross the open plains northwards, they about midnight entered a narrow gorge or kloof, and lay down to sleep; nor did they wake till the sun, for the first time since their *entrée* upon this stage of their existence, came from his chambers unveiled, and rejoicing as a giant to run his glorious course.

“We are all right now,” said Lee, “and we may light a fire in this dip under the cliff; we may wait again till night-time to pay a visit to my friend up there,” pointing to a mud hut on the slope of a mountain, which Gray would not of himself have discovered. “And so now to dinner; there is a scrap of pork left; our smoke will not attract attention here, so we may make ourselves comfortable; you will see fires in all directions by-and-by.”

And so it proved. The swollen rivers had detained many a Kafir from a thieving or hunting expedition; but Lee knew he was some distance from any kraal of importance. However, in case of any unexpected visit from rovers, he selected the densest part of a thicket for their bivouac till evening.

The sun went down, and the cool breeze, which stirred the surface of the stream, fanned the travel-stained faces of the wanderers. The sprews and smaller finches, the canaries, the titmouses, and the blue birds and the Cape chlories—a whole airy colony, in fact, of bright-winged creatures—began to flit about the bush preparatory to taking their pleasant pest among the myrtle boughs and dwarf lilacs, and soon woke the adventurers, who had sought repose in that small Eden.

Gray sat up, and the scene had its influence on his mind, which was not yet as a garden utterly laid waste and taresown. Gentle thoughts stole over him, and he longed for the wings of the doves crooning near him to fly away and be

at rest; but such thoughts became as a bottle in the smoke when his companion awoke himself, and, rousing Gray by a rough shake, bid him get up from the bed of dry leaves on which they had reposed themselves with a comfort rare to their wearied frames.

Lee's mind was wide awake. Now that he had readied a place of comparative security, for he knew well where he was, which was more than Gray did, he, Lee, almost wished that the latter had been drowned with the other victims of the storm; but the wish was idle—there he was—his fellow-convict, his comrade. It would not do to lose sight of him; he was at his mercy, for the deserter might earn his pardon by betraying his companion.

As Lee considered these points, he did not by any means contemplate getting rid of Gray by violent means. How many men, from whose misdeeds originate death and misfortune, shudder at the abstract idea of slaughter in cold blood.

“The breeze that stirs the stream,
It knows not the depth below.”

And the little bubbling spring, that rises with diamond brightness amid the flowery turf, wots not of the desolation it may spread in its course if unrestrained.

But Lee's career had been little checked in its evil nature; and I question if Gray had been thoroughly disabled by rheumatism or fatigue, whether his companion would have had any compunction in leaving him to the mercy of stray Kafirs or wild beasts.

But, as matters stood, it was clear he must not be lost sight of; so Lee, on hearing his companion complain of cramped limbs, made a virtue of necessity, and bid him take courage, and follow him to the trader's hut.

With some little difficulty they scrambled across the stones lying in the bed of the gorge, through which a swift rivulet was rushing. Had there been water enough to drown Gray, and had he fallen into it *by accident*, I know not how he might have fared.

But they reached the opposite slope dotted with granite heaps and mimosa clumps, climbed the mountain steep, and traversed another path. The moon, like a blazing shield, rising above the distant mountains, lit the plains, but the nearer hills were yet in deep shadow; and it was not till the wanderers were in full advance upon the ill-tended garden fronting the hut indicated by Lee, that they discovered, some paces from them, what appeared a herd of cattle. They drew back stealthily, for Lee's experience of the country made him cautious, and sunk down in a hollow beneath the thickest bush at hand. Each held the other by the arm; they scarcely breathed, and paused with fixed eyes and rigid limbs for many minutes.

At length a rustling sound arose among that mysterious crowd, the shivering noise of assegais announced its warlike calling, and a Fingo chief marshalled his phalanx with their shields of bullock hides, beneath which they had been resting till the rising of the moon. Keen watchers of their great mother, Nature, they had calculated to a nicety the darkest nook for a shelter to rest beneath their shields preparatory to their march at night.

It was clear they were on a mission of vengeance, for the few Kafirs, whose fires had appeared during the day, were either too terrified to leave their lairs, and give warning of an enemy's approach; or, what was more probable, the band of warriors had moved unnoticed to the spot.

In perfect silence, and within the shadow of the hill, the chief put his force in order; ere long they were on their march.

Not a sound was now heard upon the hill-side, but a measured tread of distant feet was distinctly audible to the convicts, as, impatient of delay, and, it must be owned, rather disheartened, they lay with their ears to the ground listening to the receding footsteps of the Fingoes along the edge of the ravine.

“What a life we are to lead in this savage country!” murmured Gray, who, ill, weary, and unhappy, would have given worlds to have been at his duty as a soldier again.

“Silence, fool! and follow me,” was Lee's reply.

There was nothing for it but to obey. They crept cautiously into the garden fronting the trader's hut; it was a desolate piece of ground; such plants as had once flourished were trodden to the earth; the door was torn from its hinges, and there was light enough from the moon to see that the interior had been rifled of some, if not all, of its contents.

The two men sat down upon the earthen floor of the despoiled abode; the one cursing, the other moaning in the anguish of pain and weariness of heart.

A man's form suddenly came between them and the moonlight that shone upon the opposite mountain. A pistol clicked in their ears.

“Who have we here?” said a stern voice in English. The convicts rose to their feet, and in a moment all three men stood together in the clear and radiant atmosphere.

But, to Lee's disappointment, the man, who had just issued from some place of concealment near them, was not the person he had expected to see, and on whose co-operation in his plans he relied, inasmuch as he, Lee, had some claims on the trader's good-will; and, compelled by circumstances to be prompt and truthful, he plainly admitted his surprise and regret. Then, without satisfying his interrogator as to his identity or his comrade's, he inquired abruptly, “Where is Tanner?”

To this he received, instead of a reply, the unsatisfactory answer of "What's that to you? and who the devil are you?"

The pistol was again elevated, but Lee coolly put it aside; and, sensible that his desperate position could only be defended by hardy measures—seeing, too, that the peremptory tone of his opponent was that of a man whose privacy was not to be further invaded against his will, answered in a steady tone:

"I am not a spy, you may trust us both; lead us into your cabin, or we must climb higher up the hill to the hut where Tanner kept his powder in old days. If it is not standing now, there is a cave near it, and we can light a fire there in safety. My companion must have an hour's rest and food, and we shall be secure enough there. To tell you the truth, we are both hungry, and have travelled far."

It was clear that the speaker knew the ground on which he stood and the calling of the trader, who, to outward observers travelling the country, carried on a harmless traffic in ostrich-feathers, skins, horns, tobacco, snuff, and such comforts as civilisation in her slow march through Kafirland had taught the use of to the natives. Puzzled, and rather disconcerted, he led the way to the hut.

It had a counter, shelves, weights and scales—all the accompaniments of legitimate trade; but on striking a light, and holding it up, both visitors and host were soon made aware of the devastated state at the stores. The shelves had been cleared of their blankets, the walls were bare of all but the nails to which beads and bugles had been suspended in tempting array; the tobacco had been swept from the counter, the remnant of tobacco-pipes lay broken on the trampled floor, and scarce a vestige remained of any portable wares. A bunch of common candles hanging in a corner had escaped the notice of the thieves. One of these the host took down, and, going into an inner room, returned with the welcome intelligence that there was something yet left in the locker.

Either overlooking the entrance to this inner apartment, or having found sufficient plunder to satisfy themselves, the thieves had here left all intact. The marauders had been Kafirs, who, not aware of the Fingoes' proximity, had swept off all the property they could readily dislodge.

The Fingoes bore the odium of the theft, but they were only intent on repossessing themselves of their own property.

A bed covered with skins stood at one end, a chest, a bench, and a common table of yellow-wood at the other; a few household utensils completed the furniture; the window was darkened by a rude shutter, and the ashes of a wood fire were on the hearth.

Drawing a few sticks together from the scattered embers, the host, a man of determined aspect, re-lit the fire, replenishing it with a billet of wood, and in a short time the three men were seated together on the ground with closed doors. A repast of dried buck and some mouldy bread, which did not look particularly inviting even to wayworn travellers, was spread before them; and the large chest being removed, some clay, which had been spread to give the surface the same appearance as the floor, was cleared away, a heavy stone was lifted, and the master of the hut, descending an aperture, brought up a tiny keg of Cape brandy, filled the flask he carried in his huge pocket, and, replacing the keg, the stone, the trap-floor, and the chest, handed a tin cupful of the burning liquid first to Lee and then to Gray.

All this, of course, had not been done in silence. The host, who called himself Brennard, recounted how he had been absent on a trading excursion for some days to Fort Beaufort, a garrison in the northern part of the colony; how, on his return, his horses and oxen had fallen lame, and he had left them at a brother-trader's station; how he had talked homewards with a pack-ox carrying some of his stores—the ox was now fastened to a stout oak far down the adjoining kloof; how he had advanced to reconnoitre, having heard the Fingoes were on march against Umgee's people, who had stolen Fingo cattle; and how, after watching the phalanx advance upon their silent path to his own property, which they despoiled sad left, he had been astonished to meet two white men on his ground, one of whom was evidently no stranger there.

Gray remained contented as an auditor to a conversation begun by Brennard in Dutch, and carried on by Lee, who admitted in English that he had been in the country before, and that he had known Tanner, the first trader on the station; but the dialogue was soon wholly carried on in Dutch, which was incomprehensible to the deserter. He learned, however, that Tanner had been shot on the other side of the Kei in a conflict with the tribes there. Brennard, who had been his agent beyond the Bashee, knowing that the head-quarters of the business needed looking after, left a deputy on the coast, near the Umtata river, and removed himself to the hut in the hills.

In a word, Brennard was a dealer in gunpowder, which he sold secretly to the tribes on the English frontier; and the men on the coast were the established consignees of arms from British artificers.

Lee, of course, soon enlightened Brennard on the subject of his former acquaintance with Tanner; but how it first came about was a mystery to the trader. He was beginning to consider how he might sift this out, and both convicts were on the point of reminding him that they should be glad of some change of raiment, when a long low whistle, from the side of the hut nearest the hill, interrupted their plan of operations, and the trader, rising, prepared to leave the hut.

His pistol lay on the bench, Gray seized it.

"Put it down, Gray," said Lee; "I know my man now; besides, you fool, do you suppose he would have left a loaded weapon behind him if he was bringing an enemy upon us? Put it down, I say," and he took it out of the hand of the deserter, who, as his prospects opened before him, began to deplore his state, and longed, with thoughts half-bewildered, to free himself from the net he felt gradually closing round him.

Lee read mistrust, and what he called fear, in the face of his unfortunate companion. The mistrust was unmistakable, but the fear was that which a heart, born as honest as human nature can be, feels when involved in wrong-doing,

from which there is no escape.

“Stay, Brennard,” said Lee, indicating an assumption of confidence in Gray. “I suspect I know what that whistle means. I have no secret from my friend here,” laying his hand on the shoulder of the deserter as he spoke. “I have told you as much as need be of my tale, and now let us make a bargain—there is nothing like plain speaking in great emergencies; and as I have a pretty strong notion that through your information we might be handed over to the authorities, I do not mind reminding you that we might do the same by you; and that while our fate would only be re-transportation—for we have escaped from the wreck of the *Trafalgar*—perhaps yours would be a dance in the air. Whether the hut in the kloof is still in its old place, I cannot tell; but a commando out here would soon rout out your stores, and either take you prisoner, or set a price on your head. At any rate, the game would be up with you as a respectable British trader,”—Lee laughed heartily—“and you would be at the mercy of the Kafirs or the Dutch, into whatever territory you might wander.”

He whom the convict so addressed was a man of powerful frame—deep-chested, and rather short-armed, every limb proved strength; backed by a couple of Kafirs, he might have despatched his visitors; but, although a dealer in contraband stores, and accustomed to danger, and at times to scenes of warfare, in which he was supposed to take a part against the very population he helped to arm,—although, in fact, he, like Lee, was a traitor, he would have hesitated at a deed of cold-blooded murder on his own hearth.

In a word, no two men could have better understood each other than Lee, the convict, and John Brennard, the trader of the Witches’ Krantz (Cliff). As for Gray, he might truly be considered, what a late ruffian was described to be, “the victim of circumstances,”—with wearied body and aching heart, he sat by, a passive listener; passive, because he *could* not help himself.

The low whistle was repeated, and Brennard, opening the window-shutter, responded in the tone of a wandering, hungry wolf: then the signal came clear but slow, and with evident caution, and moving in an upward direction, died away in some hollow of the hill. Then Brennard, closing the aperture carefully, proposed entering on a solemn compact with his new acquaintances, to which they agreed.

Strange indeed is that species of oath, which binds bad men together, and which may truly be considered as founded on a superstition, of which the devil is the founder. There are many to whom the nature of such an oath is sacred, who will rob, murder, desolate the home of the industrious and virtuous, and commit every crime which by that oath they are bound to enter upon, in partnership with others as “blind of heart” as themselves. In these compacts, they swear by the Bible, thus blasphemously making the word of God a witness and a guarantee for sin. Aye, and such compacts have been kept inviolate, even at the gibbet’s foot, and beneath the bloody guillotine.

And, after all, what is an oath, in the opinion of a truly honest man? A seal set upon the word of a villain, who only tells the truth because the fear of punishment on earth compels him to do it. He who lies to God daily, would hardly hesitate to lie to man, but that he lets “I dare, not wait upon I would,” and trembles, like the Chinese and the Kafir, not at commission of crime, but at the disgrace and punishment which must follow its discovery.

They stood up, did those three desperate men, in the low and narrow room; the owner of the wild domicile held the book in his hand, for there was a Bible in the chest. They opened the unholy compact with the words “I swear.” As they spoke, their eyes were fixed distrustingly on each other, not on Heaven, the witness they invoked, and Brennard was proceeding to dictate a certain form, with its set phrases of “betrayal of brotherhood,” “rights of partnership,” etc, when the whistle came back from the krantz above, descended gradually down the hill-side, paused, chirruped like a bird, a gay, innocent bird, and a low tap at the door was followed by a voice of most musical sweetness.

“Vuka u zishukumise”—“Awake and be stirring,” said the voice. It was a woman’s.

“Urga lungenalake?”—“Are you ready?” asked Brennard.

“Ewa—urgu kuza ni nina?”—“Yes—when are you coming?”

“Dirge za”—“I am coming now,” replied the trader.

On which another voice added, “Lexesha kaloku”—“Now is the time.”

A quick but gentle sound of unshod feet patted past the window, there was silence again in the outer air, and the three Englishmen resumed their attitude; Brennard in the centre with the Bible—it had the names of brothers and sisters beneath his own in the fly-leaf—he had kept it by him in the wilderness—and the two others with their palms spread open on the cover. They went through the formula again, the oath was sealed by a kiss upon the sacred record, sad it was restored to its resting-place, whence it never emerged but on extreme occasions like the present. The fire was extinguished, and once more refreshing themselves with a sip from the flask, the light was extinguished, and all three passed out from the hut, the door was drawn to, as well as its dilapidated condition would allow, and passing through the garden and advancing a few yards to the right, they turned the profile of a hill, descended a steep pathway leading to a dense bush, and in a few minutes distinguished the hurried tread of naked feet upon the crisp leaves and underwood; a group of women pattered through a narrow glade, and, passing our adventurers in silence, led the way into the kloof.

Lee recognised the locality as he advanced, step by step, down a declivity intersected with blocks of granite and tufts of scrub, or low bush; the murmur of a rivulet making its way over the stones was audible, and the distant cry of the jackal hailed the coming of the night. Here Lee remembered well to have rested on shooting excursions in former days; here he had listened to many a tale of Tanner’s, and he could guess the exact spot for which they were bound—the three men in advance, the Kafir girls in Indian file following. So they proceeded, till the darkness of the glen deepened, and putting aside a large alder, they bent their heads, and found themselves beneath a magnificent oak-tree, to a branch of which was fastened a large ox, black as Erebus.

Motionless and patient he stood with his heavy load upon his broad back, for Brennard had intended returning to the spot sooner than circumstances eventually permitted him, and he bent his head in loving recognition of Amayeka, whose sweet voice welcomed her favourite. The unusual roughness of the weather had detained Brennard longer on his expedition than usual, and Amayeka and her companions had kept their watch day by day in the hills.

I know not a more perfect model of obedience and endurance than a Kafir woman. With the white man, she is never thoroughly tamed. You may take her under your care in childhood—you may accustom her to English habits, dress, and religion; but once let her taste of freedom, and she is like a bird on the wing again. True, however, to the instincts of her nature, she bows to the thralldom of her race, wields the pickaxe and the hoe, submits cheerfully to her occupation of "hewer of wood and drawer of water," yields obedience to her task-masters, abjures her European costume, albeit she delights in a broidery of many-coloured beads, and sits meekly silent when bartered for by a lover, who, as a husband, makes her one of many slaves.

Such was Amayeka, who had been reared from the age of six years at a missionary station, near the Caledon river; but from this she had been withdrawn by her father Doda when she was fourteen, and during the year—for she was now but fifteen, the prime of a Kafir maiden's life—she had thrown off her European habits in every sense, retaining only the language, which she spoke with the grace so peculiar to her nation when educated.

I specify her age from general calculation; her father could only count her years by connecting her birth with a period of great drought.

She and her companions, all older than herself, had been sent by Umlala, a petty chief, to convoy the treasonable stores brought from the colony in Brennard's wagon, and transferred to Zwartz's back, at a secret station on the banks of Somerset River. This done, a sagacious old Kafir had led Zwartz through an intricate defile to Witches' Krantz, and fastening him to the "trysting tree," returned as herdsman to the trading wagon, with its span of draught-oxen, on the banks of Somerset River. For days these poor girls of Kafirland had sat watching the changes of the atmosphere from the mountain slopes. Their food was parched corn and strips of *biltongue* (meat dried in the sun), supplied by a cleft in the rock, where they had long ago established a simple larder. Apples, from the banks of the Kei and the Gonube rivers, varied their repast occasionally, and a large light basket of sour milk, brought to them from a distant kraal, was a delicious addition. They were very merry; they laughed, they sang, sometimes hymns, taught them by Amayeka; they danced, ate their frugal meals, and slept soundly, pillowed on flowery turf, with heaven's own canopy of blue and gold above them. If the clouds rose, they withdrew to the caves in the mountain-side, and these recesses were their shelter, when a scout come to tell them that Jocqueenis' Fingoes were on a march into Dushani's country, to "eat up" the son of Ixexa. For, however quiet and unpeopled the hills of Kafirland may appear, there are always scouts on the look-out. These tribes carry out the prophecy against the sons of Ishmael, "their hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against them," hence they are ever on the watch. But all this time our adventurous group are waiting together in the glen. Here Brennard unslung his haversack from Zwartz's yoke, taking out of it such articles of raiment as he chose to retain for his own use, bestowed it, with some acceptable gear, on the convicts. The flask of Cape brandy was added to the stores, and to each was given a small double-barrelled pistol. Thus partially provided for, the three bade each other farewell, for it was necessary to make as much way as they could before morning, and the defile being threaded, some hours of repose might be obtained in a place of security, to which their female guides would direct them.

Brennard, having watched the party as far as the rays of the moon flickering through the tracery of the trees permitted, returned to his domicile, there to accomplish such repairs as he could single-handed; and this done, to return to Somerset River for his wagon, and forward information to the authorities of the delinquency of the Fingo marauders; but long before the trader had noted the outrage on paper, the warriors had stalked through the enemy's kraal, and possessed themselves of the cattle they called theirs, and crossing a stream about nine miles to the north, soon chanted their song of triumph and defiance from their own territory.

As the reader will readily infer, the compact to which I have alluded involved a treaty of partnership between Brennard, Lee, and Gray, in the secret traffic of arms and ammunition with the tribes to the north-east of the Cape colony. The deputies left by Brennard near the coast held a situation of little danger, since there was no legal restriction on the sale of arms; nevertheless, a certain caution was necessarily observed in the transmission of such stores from Cape Town, lest the eyes of the authorities should be opened to a fact, at present only suspected by the non-commercial settlers. The powder traffic, demanding greater care and secrecy, was not so easily carried on, and it had long been obvious to Brennard that it would be highly advantageous to establish an intermediate agent between the Gonube and the Witches' Krantz, for the disposal of the gunpowder, and the surer interchange of Kafir goods in return.

This offer Lee readily accepted, with a reservation that, if it suited his purpose hereafter, he should proceed to the locations lately established to the eastward by the disaffected Dutch. As to Gray, a spell seemed to bind him to such measures as Lee chose to propose.

I have shown that Lee had given Brennard only such details of his early acquaintance with Tanner as he thought necessary, and the trader, as he climbed the hill again, wondered, within himself, at the mysterious influence which had thus suddenly been imposed upon him. Who Lee was, or what his position had been in Southern Africa in former days, he could not tell. All he knew was, that he was a runaway convict, that he had been acquainted with Tanner, and that he had a thorough knowledge of that part of the country, and of all the secret nooks for keeping contraband stores.

Brennard also felt quite certain that Lee would not have admitted his real condition as a runaway convict of the wreck of the *Trafalgar*, had it not been an event of publicity which would elicit close inquiries; and as there would, probably, be some survivors who had witnessed Lee's escape in the boat, it would at least be conjectured that he had reached *terra firma* and made his way into the interior, where he might become a dangerous assistant to the Dutch, who were known to welcome such desperadoes to their gloomy councils. In a word, Lee knew himself to be a marked man, and,

in such an exigency, there was nothing like binding a useful coadjutor, like Brennard, by ties which, if broken by one, must be the ruin of both.

When in the cave, after his preservation from shipwreck, Lee had shaped out a somewhat crude plan for the future; he certainly entertained a vision of self-aggrandisement, of leadership among the malcontent Boers, of founding a settlement, and opening a career of rule; but a new incentive to be "up and doing" presented itself unexpectedly before him, and a fresh impetus was at once given to his desires of organising a party among a people ripe for rebellion, by the perusal of a paragraph in an English newspaper, of a comparatively late date, which Brennard had brought with him from the interior, and given to Lee to beguile him on the stealthy march, in company with the unwilling and melancholy Gray, and the dusky maiden guides of Kafirland.

It was on the evening of the first day's march that the instincts of ambition within the convict's breast assumed a new direction.

Through what deep and tangled footpaths did those patient maidens lead the party! A curious sight it was to Gray, a stranger in that far country, as, lingering behind the rest, he watched the group wending its slow way, now under the shadow of the great krantzies, now waiting for him, beside some tiny stream, that shone like steel under the "Green willows with the hanging boughs."

He could not run, and had he been able to do so, he knew not his way. He could only guess by certain constellations, known in both hemispheres, that he was journeying eastward, and he wandered on like a man dreaming that a fiend has fixed an evil eye upon him, and beckons him to a doom he cannot resist. Gray felt that Lee never lost sight of him.

It was at night that their longest marches were made; but when the sun came fairly up, the girls were generally able to point out the established resting-places, where a commissariat of biltongue and Kafir corn lay hid in some rocky storehouse.

In these halting-places all slept through the golden hours of noon, the women at a prescribed distance. There had been five at first starting, and the party had been increased by three more joining them in a kloof, almost impassable from the density of the bush. Zwartz lay like a guardian in the centre of his female friends; they petted and talked to him at times, calling him all manner of endearing names, but Amayeka was his best friend; and Gray, sorrowful and restless, reclined always within arm's length of the wary Lee.

The latter was the first stirring. It was a sultry afternoon on the first day's march, and Lee took from the haversack the paper Brennard had slipped into it at the Witches' Krantz. The paragraph I have alluded to was as follows:

"We regret to learn that the indisposition of our governor, Sir Marmaduke Faulkner, still detains him in England, and that General Sir John Manvers has been requested to take command of the frontier forces at this critical period, when it is pretty well understood, by such as choose to open their eyes to the fact, that the Kafirs are rife for war, and that the Boers to the eastward are only waiting a favourable opportunity to proclaim their disaffection. Sir John may be daily expected from Cape Town."

"So," said Lee, his chest heaving, his eye dilating, "*he* is here! Well, there will come a day when we shall stand face to face, openly, as foes; I may fail of success, I may be beaten for want of a regular force, but I *may* be revenged—revenged;" and the tone in which he uttered this aroused the sleeping deserter.

Lee held a parley with Gray, but did not enlighten him fully on the subject of his enmity to the man who would soon be first in authority over the wide territory through which they were roaming. He gave him to understand, however, that his final object was not to join a tribe of savages in a fight against his countrymen; once well on the north-eastward, there would be no difficulty in proceeding by degrees to those settlements where many Dutch farmers lay bivouacked, with all their poor household and farm property about them.

The character Lee had assumed for himself and friend was one which quite suited his disposition, and would greatly facilitate his movements; the Kafirs would welcome him as a trader, and pass him safely on as such; while the Dutch would receive him as a confederate, and hail with satisfaction so able an assistant as Gray, a deserter from the Royal Artillery.

Night fell. The Kafir girls re-adjusted Zwartz's burden; they frequently lightened it by carrying skins of gunpowder on their heads, which they did with perfect ease and grace, and Amayeka, uttering the simple warning, "It is time," passed on, lingered on the hill-side to point out the smoothest cattle-tracks to Gray, who, as his limbs recovered their elasticity, tried to reconcile himself to his fate by admitting the pleasant influence which the glittering eyes and brilliant smile of Amayeka shed on his moody moments.

Having passed through many intricate defiles and glens of indescribable beauty, they emerged, in about a fortnight from the first night march, upon a more open country. These plains were dotted with kraals, from each of which some "Great man" came forth; Amayeka acted as interpreter. A day was fixed for meeting in a secret spot, where a due exchange of goods was to be made. The wagons sent by the agent from the Gonube were already, with hides and horns, waiting there, and these were to be despatched by trusty convoy to the Witches' Krantz; Doda, the great councillor or the principal chief, firmly believing that unless the tribes kept to their agreement with Brennard, the latter would withhold the supplies and betray the storehouses, or rather storehuts, which held the arms and ammunition of Kafirland.

A stronger would not have distinguished these huts from others of the hamlet, but day and night three dusky guards kept watch and ward around them, for fear of treachery or fire. These guards wove baskets, or shaped out bullet-moulds, or bound the assegai blades to the slender shafts; they did anything apparently but keep sentry over the domicile they so cautiously protected.

On the twelfth day of the journey, having headed the Imkwali river and traversed a plain, our travellers suddenly dipped between two hills, and on ascending the last, found themselves in front of an amphitheatre, over which Umlala's kraal and pasture-lands were spread. It was the chief residence of Umlala and his *hemraaden*, or councillors.

Behind this green space rose a range of purple heights; nearer to it, and sheltering the village from the north, was a chain of low hills, and the sides of these were dotted with thousands of beautiful cattle. The whole population of this territory was astir. Over one slope a hunting-party wound its way, below were children riding races on the backs of oxen, far too sleek for such an exertion; girls were laughing and talking together under the noble groups of trees, but the great mass of Kafirs had gathered in a crowd in an angle of the kraal. Amayeka, on perceiving this, bid the convoy await till her father should be sent for.

Doda came, he having, as I have shown, already held communication with Lee on the road, and he now invited him to the front of his hut until Umlala should be ready to receive him. Ere long, a summons arrived, and Lee proceeded to a conference with Umlala.

The chief was seated on the ground, surrounded by several of his *hemraaden*. The subject of conversation had for many days touched upon the preparations for war, which, for months had been secretly progressing in Kafirland; and the intelligence which Amayeka brought, and which Lee confirmed, was soon conveyed by Doda: he told Umlala that the white men were making ready for battle. Even now, it was said, the white chiefs were beginning to count their red men by tens, for they were many.

No immediate or noisy demonstration followed this announcement. Umlala sat, to all appearance, in deep thought, Doda waiting at his right hand till it should please his chief to address him.

At last, having matured his thought, Umlala said, in a low and distinct voice,

"Amakosa noburoti bona"—"The Amakosa are brave."

The crowd testified their satisfaction by a murmur of assent that rolled through the assembly like the swell of an ocean wave.

"Our chief is wise," said Doda; "without him we are as the land in drought—as a bundle of sticks scattered for want of a cord—as people journeying on vast plains without a purpose, without landmarks. It is he who leads us from dark places, and sets our feet on open ground—we are his children—hear him."

"Umlala," answered Amani, "is my mouth, let him speak."

"Our ears are open," said Doda, and sat down with an uneasy glance at Amani.

For Doda was peacefully inclined—that is to say, though war was in his heart, he had tasted of the blessings of civilisation. He had seen his daughter, "sitting in the sun and eating honey," living under virtuous influences, in peace and plenty, at the mission station, and it was with inward reluctance that he had obeyed his chief in withdrawing her from thence. It would have been useless, as well as impolitic, to oppose his sentiments openly to Umlala's inclinations, especially as of late the discontented Dutch had been tampering with the chiefs, and some mercenary and unprincipled traders had profited by the aspect of affairs to increase their traffic.

Amani rose. He was the rain-maker, or witch doctor, of the tribe—one of those wicked magicians of the country, who, taking advantage of the Kafir belief in evil agency, manage, with extraordinary tact, to turn the very changes of the elements to bad account. By his cunning and audacity, he had made such predictions and revelations as had obtained for him paramount ascendancy over his chief, and consequently the whole tribe. Doda both despised and dreaded him. He had missed him lately for several days. Amani was supposed to be in the retirement of the hills, preparing charms and incantations for the ceremony they had assembled to witness, the induction of the young warriors into their calling. But Doda, who had his scouts ever on the watch, felt sure that the wizard had made a hurried march to some secret place of meeting with Brennard, who would have given him the last colonial news; and, armed with this, he could easily forestall Amayeka and her white confederates, since Amani could travel faster and by nearer paths than they could traverse in a body, and with Zwartz, encumbered with their contraband stores.

It was soon clear that such was the case.

Amani began his address by saying, that Umlala's eyes were open. Amani himself had predicted mischief. He had told his chief that the great white captains were coming to speak to them with guns; but as for the red men they had now on the borders of the colony, *they* could be counted in a day, they were *not* many. He called on the sons of Congo to sound the war-cry from the highest mountain-top.

"Swear," said he, "by the bones of Congo's forefathers, to drive the Amglezi to the sea which spits them up. Behold, we will turn the hail-storm of their fire to water—it shall be as water poured through a broken calabash. What right has the white man to put his foot before us on our war-paths, when we choose to quarrel with the Gaikas about grass? The bad people of Gaika steal from us—he shares the plunder—then we take up arms against him—the white man comes, and tramples down our corn; he begins the war, and will not let us rest in our huts, though our fight with Gaika is no business of his. Gaika calls himself the white man's friend; he is a liar—he hates the white man—but likes to sit where he will in the colony with his eyes open. He stretches out his hand, and the Amglezi fill it. The Amglezi are fools, and believe him. He does not steal their cattle himself, but sits still upon the hills, and sees it go by to the kloofs in the Amatolas; and quarrels with us when he finds us there waiting to share the plunder that belongs to all the land—our land—a land that will soon be dead to us, for shall we reap the corn we have planted? Gaika is a woman—he will not fight us himself, but lifts up his voice, and cries aloud to the white men, who come among us like locusts, and eat us up, and then pay Gaika in beads and buttons for his treachery to his brothers. Let the Amglezi come—let them kill the last man of us—but let not Umlala's children put their necks under the foot of Gaika. Better to

be dead lions in our own kraals, than live dogs in the Amglezi's territory. The white man calls himself the protector of the Kafir tribes dwelling on the borders of the country he has made his own; but we are oppressed by his protection, and we will not have it; and we know, too, that some of the Amglezi are with us in heart; for they tell us we are wronged, and bring us arms and powder wherewith to regain our rights."

Doda thought within himself, "we pay for such stores;" but the thought rested in his breast, for he dared not express it.

Amani proceeded, waving aloft an assegai, which quivered in the grasp of his muscular palm:

"Awake, sons of Congo! shout from the mountain-tops! the valleys are waiting to reply—we have sat still long enough. Behold the children of the foam will multiply, and come and drive us like monkeys into the rocks. Shall we consent to sit there in darkness? Shall our young warriors be mown down like early grass, or be driven into the sea like ashes before the wind? Shall our cattle be taken from us, to languish in new pastures? Shout, young warriors of Kafirland! shout, for the elders of the tribe are women—their hearts grow white. Our old women would laugh at the old men, whose eyes are unclosed, but that their hearts tremble as they think of the strong hand of the Umburghi. Hark! the young women of Kafirland, the daughters of Congo, call to us in our sleep. Answer them, and let the war-cry be echoed back from the Kei to the Amatolas. Let Gaika know that we are men. Then shall he be ashamed—then shall he uncover his face, and turn it towards us, and we shall have light."

The Kafir girls, armed with assegais, and ranged in a double semicircle behind the councillors, responded to this appeal with a shrill chorus, their weapons rattling like the leaves of a forest in a gale of wind. Amani ceased speaking, but they took up the strain.

"Busa Abantu u ba hlanganise"—"Sound the alarm! gather the people together,"—they chanted over and over again in a tone of triumph and defiance. "Uya biswa go yithlo"—"You are called by your father."

"You are called, you are called," was repeated many times, till the young hunters paused on the hill paths, and, looking down, waved their muskets, for most of them were thus armed. Some threw their assegais and knob-kierries into the air, and cried, "Izapa, izapa"—"Come on!" Six or seven women, the mothers of the kraal, stood round a skin stretched on sticks to the tightness of a drum; this they began to beat, now loud, now low, now in slow time, and now in quick, accompanying the measure with their feet, and repeating the cry, "Sound the alarm"—"Silathtekile"—"we are lost!"—the strange chorus rising, swelling, dying away into a cry of wailing and despair, and again filling the amphitheatre as it was taken up by the whole population of the valley.

Suddenly some of the newly-elected young warriors, twenty in number, stalked from a hut set a little apart from the others of the kraal, and Lee was thoroughly startled by their appearance. Whitened from head to foot with a preparation of ashes and chalk, their ghastly hue contrasted in a most extraordinary manner with the dusky colour of the rest of the tribe, some of whom drew as near as custom permitted, and united in a shout of welcome.

The faces of the youths were almost concealed by a thatched head-dress of reeds, surmounted by two tall and slender leaves of the palmeet plant; round their waists, and depending to their knees, were kilts of the same texture as the head-gear; brass bangles shone upon their arms and ankles, marking the exquisite contour of their limbs; and, shaking a reed in his hand, for as yet they were not permitted to wield the assegai, a youth advanced in pantomimic fashion. At one moment he would spring forward with a bound like a tiger's, the next he would glide onward as a bird skims the surface of the earth; then rising suddenly, he would execute a pirouette in a style that would establish the fame of an opera dancer. Anon he would balance himself on tiptoe like a Mercury, then wheeling round, and again springing into the air, would come down with an *aplomb* that stirred the spectators to loud applause, the men crying "It is good," the old women drumming loud and sharp in the back-ground, the younger ones advancing, retreating, and chanting shrilly to their accompaniment of rattling assegais; the spectators in the distance adding their meed of admiration, their cries of applause and encouragement echoing along the hills, and dying on the air, till taken up and repeated by the herdsmen in the valleys.

Umlala had been too much excited to hold a parley even on the important question of gunpowder traffic.

The chief and his councillors ceased to speak. Doda led the white men away, Amayeka following at a distance. A hut was set apart for their accommodation, and a huge steak, cut from an ox slaughtered in honour of the young warriors' installation, was sent to them by Umlala, together with some baskets of sour milk, and a good store of Indian corn. The bearer closed his message with the usual demand of *baseila*, which Lee answered with an English oath, and Gray responded to by sending the chief some tobacco.

As the night fell, the dark but shapely arm of Amayeka pushed aside the wicker door of the hut, and set within it a small English saucepan containing some fresh eggs, a little pipkin of clear water, a few grains of salt—a great prize—and a cake made of coarsely-ground flour. Gray would have followed her to offer her thanks, but Lee restrained him at the doorway.

Ere closing it for the night, they looked out. The hills were silent, but, between the summits and the sky, a scout at times appeared, moving here and there in communication with others. The watch-fires began to glimmer, the cattle were settling in the kraals for the night, but the hamlet was still astir, and the dull beating of the great primitive drum went on. The stars came out, the Southern Cross shed its light upon the wild scene, and the young warriors still kept up their ghost-like dance upon the dewy turf, one party relieving the other, as did the singing-girls and elder women.

Long after the fire in the centre of the convicts' hut had been extinguished, did both the inmates, stretched on karosses, try to collect their somewhat scattered senses together. Still the weary drum beat on—still the shrill chorus rose and fell upon the clear night wind, and at times the shout of some excited dancer pierced the air. Lee, in wish, sent them to the infernal regions—whence, indeed, a stranger might infer they came—and tried to frame plans connected with the insurgent operations of the Dutch. Gray strove to pray, but knew not how—poor wretch!

"Ah," thought he, with a heavy sigh, "would I were once more a soldier, and an honest man!"

And with this vain wish he fell asleep, and dreamed he was a little child again, kneeling on the hearth beside his mother, and repeating to her the simple prayer she used to teach him at eventide.

Chapter Six.

The Kafir Spy.

We left Frankfort and Ormsby with their cavalcade of wagons, horses, and attendants, pursuing their way to the north-east.

I have no intention of giving you a detailed account of this part of their expedition, since they are not presented to the reader in the character of mere sportsmen—indeed such narratives belong to more experienced hands than mine, albeit, ere their able works appeared, I had collected a few anecdotes, which would now present no novelty.

May, the bushman guide, still headed the cavalcade, a unique advance-guard, closely followed by two or three of the queerest-looking mongrels possible, of which his favourite was a species of water-spaniel.

A fine bloodhound kept close to Ormsby's horse's heels, never condescending to join May and his scratch-pack, and scorning all offers from the bushman's cuisine; the only symptom of toleration of inferior caste shown by the aristocratic dog was a passive endurance of the infant Ellen's caresses, when she crawled through the grass to Major Frankfort's tent, into which the yellow face of the little imp no sooner peered, than she was snatched up by her father, and carried back to Fitje with a gentle rebuke. "The sir was kind," May said, "and he would not have him imposed upon."

In many ways this stunted creature of the wilderness displayed a refinement of feeling not always met with among worldly beings, jealous of infringing on the conventionalism of society—people who meet you with "Unmeaning speech—exaggerated smile," and measure their civilities by the length of your purse, or your position in fashionable life.



At last, even he, of the active limbs and bronzed skin, begins to pant—his shadow shows like a frog beneath his feet; tired as he is, he laughs at it, spreads out his hands, whistles an opera air he has picked up from some military band, and capers in the glowing light.—Page 100.

And are these less treacherous than the savage? Verily, I believe that, in spirit, they are just as deceitful.

But let us leave them, and return to our party.

There they go up the hill—May in advance with Spry and Punch, and Floss. The sun is blazing out, and our bushman winds his bright-coloured *douk* round his head, and tramps round the angle of a jutting rock, staff in hand. Before he does so, he looks back to see how the cavalcade gets on, lights his pipe, and alternately smoking, and singing, and whistling to his dogs, he proceeds leisurely along. At last, even he, of the active limbs and bronzed skin, begins to pant—his shadow shows like a frog beneath his feet; tired as he is, he laughs at it, spreads out his hands, whistles an opera air he has picked up from some military band, and capers in the glowing light, till wearied, he sits down on a block of granite, beneath a stunted bush, unslings his three-string fiddle from his neck, and plays with great skill, considering the means at hand, the rattling, saucy air of “Rory O’More.”

And he was at it right merrily, when the first wagon, with its oxen smoking and breathing heavily, reached the spot he had chosen as the outspan, where a more solid breakfast was to be prepared than the one that had been hastily snatched at dawn.

The country, although only about nine miles distant from the picturesque locality on which our party had rested during the night, was now of a totally different character; great plains, only relieved here and there by low bush, or huge masses of stone, stretched out for miles before the traveller’s eye, and the noble natural parks through which they had journeyed the preceding day were hidden from their view by the undulations they had traversed. In the distance, between the arid earth and the glowing sky, at the edge of the horizon, stalked a company of ostriches, apparently the only tenants of this great solitude.

There was something very grand, and even affecting, in the contemplation of such a scene; at least, so thought Frankfort, whose heart expanded under the impression produced by Nature in her state of lonely majesty. Here she was not lovely, but sublime; the infinity of space, the shadowless land, the unclouded sky—too dazzling for mortal eye to dwell upon—the awful silence, all seemed more fully to betoken the eternal presence of God, than in green places where shelter was at hand, and where, therefore, the solitude was not so apparent, so vast. The very cries of wild beasts give life to the jungle—but here the human voice broke abruptly on the stillness of the plains, as if it had no business there, and Frankfort was thoroughly disenchanted of his sublime mood in contemplating the almost awful expanse, as May scraped his fiddle ere he laid it down to attend to Ormsby’s inquiry as to “where his cigars had been packed.”

It must be owned, that Ormsby had no taste for the sublime or the romantic; indeed, there are not many men in the world who would have found food for contemplation in the desert scene before them; and as for our young sub, I am forced to admit, that by the time he had smoked three cigars, he began to wonder what he should do with himself when breakfast was over.

Frankfort had stocked the wagon with many more luxuries on Ormsby’s account, than he would have thought of providing for himself; and the meal, spread out on the shady side of the wagon, was by no means despicable. Excellent tea, devilled biscuits, cold tongue and honey, an offering from Vanbloem, and added to these were savoury slices of porcupines, a viand from which, in its raw state, Ormsby had turned away in disgust, but to which, when cooked, he addressed himself with a keen relish.

The panting oxen had been turned loose to seek what provender they could among the tufts of grass on the sandy plain—the sun shone upon a *vley* (pool), about a hundred yards from the outspan; the place had been selected by May, because he knew there was no better bivouac for miles in advance. Like many other bright things, the pool shone with a delusive lustre; it offered but a muddy draught to the thirsty traveller—but drivers, *foreloupers* (leaders of the draught cattle), guides and oxen, plunged therein their parched lips, and drank thankfully of the slimy waters...

“There is certainly nothing like judging of things by comparison,” observed Frankfort, as, after a thorough enjoyment of his breakfast, he laid his head on his saddle under a stunted bush, and, taking out a book, prepared to indulge himself, as he called it, till it was time to assist May in re-packing and preparing for advancing.

May trudged on with the dogs, and halted again in due time, in a similar locality, where the solace Ormsby sought was another meal, combining dinner and supper. An omelette from the egg of an ostrich, whose nest had been raked out of the sand by the keen and persevering May, was not a bad wind-up to a refectory of game; a cigar and coffee followed, and while the ostriches were still stalking in the light, the wearied party were glad to make ready for the night, and lay their limbs at rest.

For two succeeding days nothing occurred to distinguish the one from the other; there were the same arid tracts, the same glaring bivouacs, the chilly midnights and dewy dawns—the same porcupine breakfasts, venison dinners, and omelette remove.

On the third day they found themselves on the borders of a river, rapid and circuitous in its course, and fringed with bush, and here Ormsby, in a fit of *ennui*, determined that May should get up a regular porcupine hunt by moonlight—midnight was the time chosen.

Their tents were pitched on the riverside in expectation of remaining there some days, for, calm as looked the current, May, from certain indications, expected it to rise and swell beyond its bounds. Besides, here was shelter and pasturage for the tired cattle.

“So much for things by comparison again,” said Frankfort, as he sat down under a foe willow. “Those who sleep in well-curtained beds this night will hardly enjoy their rest as we shall do for the next three hours.”

Ormsby’s thoughts had been floating about in the clouds of his cigar, the fifteenth since the morning; but as he cast

the remainder of it from his lips, he said, "Ah, all this may be very fine and sublime, as you call it; but, for my part, I wish I were going to take my rest in the orange-room at Ormsby Park."

The contrast of the orange-room at Ormsby Park with the willow drapery, the starry roof and the silver moon walking demurely in the sky, at once dragged Major Frankfort from the sublime to the ridiculous, and he burst out laughing; but his mirth was checked by Ormsby whispering, "Hush, there is some one in the bush near us; I heard a branch crack—it can be none of our own people—they are all sitting together over the fire, listening to that three-stringed lute of May's."

"Hush, there it is again!—some restless baboon, probably," remarked Ormsby.

"No, the bush here is not thick enough for them."

At this instant, May came from the fireside circle. The night was so clear that he recommended attacking the porcupine in his haunt at once, and sleeping after the sport. On being told that some one was hovering about, he laid his ear to the ground, but could detect nothing. Ormsby reminded him that he had been under the impression, ever since they left the Dutchman's valley, that some one was hovering about. Had Frankfort stated this opinion. May would have put some faith in it; but he did not like Ormsby. The latter was perpetually scolding and ridiculing the poor little bushman; and so, as the idea of the stealthy visitant originated with the young subaltern, May chose to ignore it; but he determined, nevertheless, on keeping a sharp look-out, and was as much puzzled as his masters as to who the spy could be.

They were a tolerably large party; and, knowing the character of the locality, and the tribes near it, he felt sure that the enemy, if enemy it was, mustered in no force: so they set out on the porcupine hunt.

The bushman had already tracked out his victim for the sport. The poor little creature had set the dogs at defiance on being first discovered, and kept them at bay till it managed to retreat to its hole. So there he was, poor fellow, with his ears, almost like a man's, stretched wide open, listening for his expected besiegers; for, once disturbed, he was thoroughly uneasy, and all his quills, though lying close to his body, were ready to shoot out into a panoply for his defence when his castle should be attacked.

May tried to get a peep at him in his hole, but he could only hear him panting; so he fastened the bayonet, with which he had taken care to provide himself to the long bamboo of old Piet's wagon whip. It was very sharp at the point; our bushman had taken care to cleanse it from the rust it had imbibed in the damp ground, in which Ormsby had occasionally planted it as a candlestick by his bedside. Armed with this weapon, and followed closely by the dogs, whom he encouraged and exhorted in the queerest jargon that can be imagined, Frankfort and Ormsby carrying sticks, he led the way along the banks of the river, and soon reached the hiding-place of the poor little beast. The dogs gave tongue at once. May, as I said, tried to get a peep at him, but he could only hear him panting.

Floss soon got pricked in the nose, and retreated—only, however, to return to the charge, and scratch and yelp in vain. Spry and Punch kept steady sentry, warily taking their opportunities of making an entrance. At last the earth gave way, and the "wee beastie" emerged from his den, with all his darts prepared for the charge. His mouth was but a mockery; he could not bite; so he turned his back again upon the foe, and as they approached, opened out the weapons that nature had given him to save himself. These Ormsby believed would be shot out like arrows; but, as May said, the *schelm* (rogue) was too *slim* (knowing) to part with his arms entirely, adding, that "English man" was "too fond of *making* stories, and," with a sly smile, "too ready to believe them."

The creature, however, made his backward charge, again and again rolled himself into a ball, with all his quills "on end," and after gathering strength for another battle, fought his foes gallantly, till May, fearing the dogs would make a meal of him, drove his bayonet into the soft part of his body, and laid him dead upon the threshold of his home.

Ormsby was delighted with the novelty of the porcupine hunt on the edge of that winding river, its waters flashing in the moonlight, and clamouring along between the stones, or gurgling in little creeks of mossy rock. Here a bank stretched out into the stream, with a group of willows hanging their tresses over their own inverted shadows; there the grey cliffs were broadly reflected in the waters, and the frogs kept up a perpetual though most unmusical chorus from the pools in the drift. Up the stream the murmur was beginning to increase to a roar; and, in some dread of the torrent suddenly swelling, May scrambled up the bank, and shortened the way to the bivouac, where the wagons were drawn up in great precision, and where all were sound asleep save Marmion, who "bayed the moon" loudly at the approach of his master.

Ormsby, in horror of "creeping things," had latterly taken it into his head to sleep in the wagon, instead of sharing the tent with Frankfort; and still convinced that some one was hanging about the neighbourhood, he determined to keep watch till dawn; but fatigued by his midnight sport, he was soon overcome with drowsiness, and the bright African sun was shining on his face, and May laughing quietly over him, as he woke with a start, and seizing the bushman's hand, examined it intently, to May's great amusement. Frankfort, too, was looking in upon him, and Marmion, with his fore paws on his master's chest, had his great eyes fixed upon him lovingly.

"I have had the oddest dream," said Ormsby. "I felt, as I fancied, a hand clutch mine: I grasped it tightly; and when I thought I had got it quite safe, I found the arm was gone, and only the hand, hard and cold, was left in mine."

"And here it is, I suppose," said Frankfort, laughing, and taking up the six-barrelled pistol, which Ormsby always placed beside him when lying down at night.

May shook his head very solemnly, and then begged the "Masters" to follow him, and he would show them who had lifted the pistol.

The bushman led them through a mass of tangled underwood, to a copse all interlaced with wreaths of starry

jessamine and wild convolvulus, and softly putting aside a geranium-bush, entered the covert, followed by the others.

Bending low, and creeping after him, they found themselves soon in the centre of the thicket, surprised to see scattered about fragments of bread and meat, and some broken bottles; in short, these were the *débris* of a meal eaten on the spot.

Lifting up a bough, May showed them a young Kafir stretched on the grass, and wrapped in profound repose; near him were three assegais. He lay with his head supported by his dusky arm, his dark and finely-moulded limbs offering a study for the sculptor. But the frame looked worn, and his hair, long neglected, was of its natural hue, instead of a dull red, from the clay usually employed in adorning it.

Frankfort and Ormsby did not at once recognise the young Kafir servant, Zoonah, whom they had seen at the Dutchman's farm, but May informed them who the sleeper was.

Frankfort, surprised at the bushman's want of caution, placed his forefinger on his lips to enjoin silence.

May pointed to an empty bottle near the Kafir, and, taking it up, turned it upside down with a knowing wink, as he proved that it was empty.

"But," said Ormsby, "when the rascal wakes he will be off; and, as he has been lurking about for no good, we had better secure him; he would soon outrun the dogs. Some fellows would shoot him, and serve him right; he would murder us if he dare."

"No, master, no," replied May; "a Kafir won't kill you to get nothing by you; he would, if he could, sell your skin; but he don't want to make a row for nothing; it's all different when his blood is up. The dog has been hanging about our *spoor* (track) ready to steal all he can get, and he's making his way to his own people to tell them, perhaps, that there ain't red men enough in the country to keep it. Master Ormsby said this himself to Vanbloem, and I heard this fellow tell the other Kafir, who does not understand English."

"By George!" exclaimed Ormsby, "who would have thought the rascal was 'so wide awake;' but will his people believe him?"

"He's been sent into the country," said May, "as a spy, to take service, and find out all he can by lurking about the towns, and picking up news at canteens or shop-doors; and then he has come to the farm to keep his eye upon the cattle, and listen to every word that passes between the farmers and missionaries and travellers. His people will believe him fast enough, for they've been making ready for war these six months. Vanbloem's Hottentots told me they had lost cattle lately, but could not account for it. This vagabond has been at the bottom of it, depend upon it."

And May contemplated the sleeper as he would a mischievous animal; shaking his fist and making hideous grimaces over him.

"He will be up and at you, you little fool," whispered Frankfort, surprised at the death-like repose of the Kafir, who scarcely seemed to breathe.

"He can't rise, master," replied May, with a low laugh; "first of all, he's drunk, for I left some brandy in the bottle I pretended to throw away; and next, see the snake-bite in his leg: 'No need to tie him up,' said I, when I saw that. Ah, the schelm! here's the top joint of his finger chopped off—he belongs to some of old Mawani's people. Mawani wouldn't let the Gaika Nazelu marry his daughter, so Nazelu attacked his kraal ten years ago, and marked all the boys this way, after killing the men, or cutting off their ears and hands."

Frankfort and Ormsby shuddered as they discovered the snake-bite in the bend of Zoonah a knee, who, all unconscious and stupified, still slept on, in spite of May's chattering and caperings round him.

Ormsby drew back with a start as the bushman lifted the reptile, which he had discovered, with its back broken, but with some remains of life, for it reared itself up, and fixed its filmy eyes on the young officer's face; but Frankfort stepped briskly forward, and crushed its head.

Instinct roused the Kafir from his heavy slumber as May waved his assegai over him; but stupified, and sensible only of intense pain, he sunk back with a sullen air, keeping, however, a steady gaze on May.

This page only partly readable; about an inch down the right, missing.

"Poor wretch!" said Frankfort, "he must not, if we can help him. I have the cure of snake-bites; May, fetch the medicine-chest in my wagon."

May took the proffered key, from which a shrill whistle ere he went in search of which, however, he put less faith the Fitje's *coctions* of herbs, which she had prepare as soon as she, good-hearted little that the young Kafir had been wounded tile. Plenty of healing roots and herb the spot—for God often plants the ai snakes most abound—and very soon t and his wife were at their task of huma ing Zoonah's wound; May, while i bestowing on his patient a variety of ep Hottentot, Dutch, English, and Kafir la.

The savage understood the reality though it was not in his nature to trac or respond to its sympathies by gratitude gloom was on his countenance at having thus, like a wild beast, in the hunters submitted to the surgery; and, the t dressed, raised himself against the tru and stared from one to the other of the him.

"May," said Ormsby, who held a hand, "what has made the rascal follow him."

Zoonah, who understood English, knew, cast his eyes upon the turf, and bushman's translation of the question.

After duly considering the answer and accepting the cigar, he answered in language—

“Zoonah is the white man’s dog, they journey in the same path.”

To which assertion May added in “lies.”

Problem ends here.

“Ask him,” said Frankfort, “why he followed stealthily.”

“Because I was alone, and thought the Hottentots would kill me,” said Zoonah.

“He lies,” added May.

“Where are you going?”

“To my people—I left my heart in the bush,”—meaning his wife.

“Why did you leave Vanbloem?”

“He sent me away.”

“Why did you try to steal arms from the master’s wagon?”

“I do not understand you.”

Zoonah’s stolid air convinced Frankfort, too, that it was of no use to question him. It was evident that May was right—he was a spy on his way to his own chief’s kraal, and, as the bushman observed, it was useless to waste words upon a liar.

“He’s born liar—he’ll die liar; he’s born blackguard, and he’ll die blackguard.”

And, with this last truly English vituperative, May left the thicket, and went to prepare his master’s breakfast.

He had tied up the dogs and kept watch himself all night, lying in the long grass between Frankfort’s tent and Ormsby’s wagon, and had seen Zoonah, just as the moon was waning, winding himself along in snake fashion, till he reached the young officer’s sleeping-place, in which he was wont to spend part of the day, reading and smoking, with “pistol, sword, and carbine,” slung above him.

Doubtless, Zoonah had long had his attention fixed on these particular objects, and allowing the cavalcade to pass the open plains, had come up with it as soon as it was fairly bivouacked in the embowered nook selected by May. Here he awaited his opportunity to plunder.

But Kafirs have a dread of what they cannot see—a house, a tent, or a wagon, may always, they believe, contain some mysterious agency of evil, and hence, on Ormsby’s instinctively clutching the pistol the Kafir dropped it in terror, which was increased by a movement of May’s. The wily bushman, though, had no mind to throw the Kafir off his guard; the roar of the river proved that it was impassable; in the rear were the inhospitable plains of sand, the Kafir must ere this have exhausted such provision as he could have carried from Vanbloem’s, and would therefore not go far; and, in a word, May resolved not to alarm the little camp until obliged to do so.

The result was, that Zoonah traced his way to the thicket where the bushman had left a decoy, in the shape of scattered bread and meat, and an apparently empty bottle.

“I watched that bush yesterday evening,” said May, when explaining his devices to Frankfort; “for though I laughed at Master Ormsby, it’s always right to be ‘primed and loaded.’ Well, I watched that bush closely, because, whenever the birds lighted on it, they flew away and would not stop a minute. Some came there to roost in their nests—but no, off they went, came back again, and then away—‘Ah!’ says May, ‘some one *spinning* (lurking, hiding) there, I know;’ so I was glad to see Master Ormsby tie Marmion to his wagon, while we were hunting the porcupine, and I told old Piet to lie between that and the tent, where I made a good fire. This schelm little thought we went off so far; but I gave Fitje the long pistol ready loaded, and told her to fire it, if she was frightened—but she was not,” added May quietly, “and lay down as soon as she heard the dogs coming home with us. I tied them up as soon as I had fed them, and so now, if the sir pleases, I’ll reim the prisoner.”

“Reim the prisoner?” said Ormsby; “what does he mean?”

“Tie him to the wagon wheel, master,” answered May, “and keep him there, till we can get rid of him handsomely.”

Probably, May’s ideas about getting handsomely rid of Zoonah were rather vague; at any rate, he had no idea of trusting him in the smallest degree, and he was greatly astonished when Frankfort observed, “Nay, nay, we won’t bind him; he looks half-starved.”

“Poor wretch; we may make him earn his living by being useful—it is no business of ours if he chooses to leave Vanbloem, we cannot send him back—he is but a savage, and we must be kind to him.”

“Right, master,” replied May, after grave consideration; “but he’s a thief, as well as a liar, so take care.”

So saying, they left Zoonah in the leafy covert.

May put no trust in Zoonah, and such was Fitje’s dread of him, that she would not lie down to rest, unless her

husband laid his gun beside him.

The sportsmen decided on crossing the river as soon as it was fordable; and Zoonah, rejoicing in contributions of tobacco, cigars, and provisions, was happy, after Kafir fashion, lying on the soft turf, and contemplating, with a longing eye, the cattle he professed to guard, but hoped to steal from the men who had saved his life, and now fed him, and treated him with kindness.

Although May heartily despised Zoonah, he was always in good humour with him; for there is nothing in nature more cheery and good-humoured, though hot-tempered and keenly alive to injury, than a bushman, caught young, and tamed and educated by real Christian people.

Three or four evenings after the incident described, as Frankfort and Ormsby sat by the river, after the last meal of the day, anxiously comparing the depth of water with a certain mark they had drawn on a jutting rock, their attention was diverted by an earnest "talk" going on between May and Zoonah.

The latter was deriding May's idea of *Umtiko* (God). Zoonah, finding disguise was useless, now conversed in excellent English. May's suppositions were right. He had been educated at Shiloh; but the care bestowed on a Kafir seldom answers the humane purpose intended. Savage he is, and savage he will be, unless, indeed, the age of miracles is not past and gone.

"You say that Umtiko is good," said Zoonah; "how do you *know* it?"

May pointed out the benefits we derive from God.

"How do you know they come from him? Did you ever see him?"

"He is invisible."

"If he is so good and so glorious, why does he not show himself? The teachers are always telling us about God; but first, a Kafir never believes what he does not see, and next, the teachers say that all men are liars; how, then, can they expect *us* to believe *them*?"

"But the teachers do not tell you this without proof."

"Where *is* the proof?"

"In the beautiful world, where all things are given for our good, and where the wicked are unhappy."

"Who do you call wicked?"

"Those who commit sin," replied May.

"Sin!" said Zoonah, after examining the ground,— "sin means pleasing one's self."

Before May could answer, Zoonah went on: "You cannot believe in the existence of what you cannot see."

"You do not see the wind," interposed May. Zoonah went on in his own language, May translating sentence by sentence.

"You cannot take the word of one man, whom you have never seen *nor heard*," answered the cunning Kafir, "against the wishes of all men. The invisible God you talk of says, 'Obey me, and do nothing that pleases yourself.' The visible man says, 'Enjoy earth, and all that belongs to it, and be happy.' On one side is a *chance* of another world if we punish ourselves in this; on the other is pleasure, ease, and our own will, under laws made for man by man. You English have a woman chief; even she never sees the God you speak of. You know not even whether he is black or white."

At this point, Ormsby, who had drawn near, burst into a thoughtless and irreverent laugh, and Zoonah, at this, satisfied that he had the best of the argument, rose, and wrapping his kaross around him, ascended the bank, and followed the cattle to the outspan.

The east was faintly streaked with a crimson line next day, when May came to rouse the sleeping Ormsby, and call him to an early breakfast, which he had prepared, that the sportsmen might cross the river, which at last was fordable for men and horses, although the depth of mud in its bed rendered it impassable for wagons. It was possible to carry over such provisions as would last them till they reached the Orange River, where final arrangements would be made for trekking at once into the depths of the long-desired hunting-grounds.

The idea of change pleased Ormsby, and he readily assisted in the necessary preparations. With his usual want of foresight and discretion, he had begun to make a pet of Zoonah; and, forgetting how dependent he and Frankfort were on the integrity and sagacity of May, amused himself with the idea that the latter was jealous; but the kind-hearted bushman was utterly unconscious of this, and worked away with his usual aptitude and good humour, keeping, too, a close eye on Zoonah's movements when the cattle came in at sunset.

And now, to Frankfort's surprise, May permitted the Kafir to assist him in making up sundry packages for the trek over the river, soon to be carried on their own heads as they swam the stream; for May was ever humane, and strove to lighten the weights on the pack-horses.

Two leather bags were soon filled. Zoonah's dark eyes glistened at the goodly store scattered about the ground,— canisters of powder, a pocket looking-glass, bundles of cigars, and manifold articles delightful to a Kafir's sight; he

gladly helped in the task of tying up the bags, and after adjusting one on May's head, and lifting one to his own, he proceeded with the Bushman to the edge of the stream. The rest of the cavalcade were to cross the river whenever they could do so with safety; and Frankfort, ascertaining that all was ready, took his horse well in hand, and plunged into the clear and rapid current, Ormsby following. By Frankfort's desire, May was to attend as guide and groom, and on second thoughts, he consented to let Zoonah follow, deeming it unwise to leave him with the cattle.

Both sportsmen's horses breasted the torrent gallantly. Ormsby, despising May's injunctions, had nearly floundered in a sea-cow's hole; but the opposite bank was safely reached, and both gentlemen, dismounting to rest their panting steeds, sat down to watch the transit of May, Zoonah, and the dogs.

The bushman and Kafir, side by side, were already midway between the banks, and, in thorough good-fellowship, exhibited their skill and daring in buffeting the element through which the horses had passed with less ease.

Frankfort watched the race—for such it seemed—with some anxiety, for it called forth equal strength and courage on the part of both the swimmers. Ormsby laughed heartily at the "dodges" each took to circumvent the other, when suddenly, as if caught by the current, Zoonah was whirled round and round, sunk, rose again, keeping his burden safe supported by one hand, and in another moment struck boldly out with the right arm and vanished, to the horror of Frankfort, who gave him up for lost, and the dismay of Ormsby, who had seen Zoonah pack many articles of which he stood in need.

May swam gravely on, paying little heed, beyond a grin, at Zoonah's disappearance; and even Frankfort reproached him severely for triumphing, as he believed, in his own sagacity, at Ormsby's expense.

"I told the sir," said the bushman, when he recovered breath on landing, "that Zoonah was thief as well as liar, but Master Ormsby only laughed."

"You should not have intrusted him with a package of such value to us just now," said Frankfort.

"I obey Master Ormsby," answered May, beginning to shiver.

"Go and get some dry clothing on you," said Frankfort; and May rose to do as he was bid, first laying the package, untouched by wet, at Ormsby's feet.

The latter kicked it from him with an oath.

"It is all right, sir," said the bushman, patiently lifting it up again; "all your powder and other things quite safe. I let Zoonah pack 'em up, but changed the bags, while Fitje gave him his sopie; he's got a lot of rubbish packed up in the other. I thought it best to let him go. I knew he would, as soon as he thought he had got something worth taking. Ah! the schelm, he'll swim for the next hour. I should like to see him open his prize;" and Frankfort and Ormsby laughed as heartily as May himself.

On, still on. Each succeeding day drew our travellers far from the settlements of the English colonists, and Ormsby, by degrees, began to try and reconcile himself to an expedition from which there was no fair means of retreating.

Soon the broad and refreshing waters of the glorious Orange River, lying in lake-like beauty between its richly-wooded borders—the graceful shelter of the fine trees that grew luxuriantly near its banks—the murmuring sound of distant falls—the delicious lounge on the smooth turf, selected as the halting-place for at least a week, that horses and cattle, as well as men, might repose, were all enchanting to our sportsmen, to whom the scene was as new as agreeable.

The Orange River forded, our sportsmen at length looked down upon the "happy hunting-grounds." But it was not now as in the time when Mr Trail rescued May from the dwellings in the rocks.

As the white man's footprints had advanced, the game had retreated to the deeper solitudes of the wilderness. Herds of gnooks and bucks occasionally swept across the plains, and May pointed out a drift where lions sometimes came down to drink; but there were no companies of these kings of the desert—no sentinel giraffes—no midnight echoes from the trumpet-signal of wandering elephants.

It was a grand panorama, and as, while May off-saddled, our sportsmen cast themselves on the grass of a natural platform overhanging the scene, a fine buck started out of a bush, and passed them by with head erect, eyeballs strained, and limbs quivering with terror and dismay. The rifles of both sportsmen were brought to the shoulder at one instant, and in another, the beautiful animal was stretched upon the turf, dying the plants, which enamelled it, in blood.

The horses secured, away went May—greedy fellow—to kindle a fire; Frankfort and Ormsby took out their *couteaux de chasse*, and the former, ere he drew his blade across the neck of the creature, paused with some compunction at having killed his game with so little credit to himself as a sportsman, two rifle-balls having lodged in the head of the buck when only a few feet from his destroyers.

He paused, I say, and, casting his eyes upon the valley, drew Ormsby's attention to various species of smaller game, which, roused from their coverts by the crack of the rifles, were speeding in hot haste across the plain; gnooks, zebras, and bucks of manifold kind, all at once gave life to the green valley far below the travellers' reach; and Frankfort had scarcely had time to point them out, when a noble lion, with eyeballs of flame and mane erect, sprung at a single bound from his covert in the cliff above, and, in silent majesty, placed his huge paw upon the neck of the slaughtered deer, his gleaming orbs fixed in steady gaze on the astonished countenance of Frankfort.

He uttered no sound—the lashing of his tail against his sides was the only proof this magnificent lord of the manor

gave of his displeasure at the intrusion of poachers on his territory. His frown was terrific, and said plainly, "This is my property by royal right, and here I stand to defend it."

How long this scene lasted was never computed by the sportsmen—Frankfort always admitted that they left the lion master of the field, and declared that Ormsby was as ready as he to dive into a bush and climb a path they would not have attempted "under ordinary circumstances."

Not long after this adventure their plans and prospects assumed a totally different aspect to what they had anticipated; a simple incident proved the straw that turned the balance, and caused them to turn their backs upon an expedition to which one, at least, had looked forward with the prospect of a year's sport and travel.

At dawn, one roseate morning, a yell from the dogs awoke May in time to discover a poor little porcupine scuffling back to his hole. Up jumped Ormsby, who would not wait for May's attack with a short assegai, which he had at hand; lifting his foot, he laid the quarry sprawling on the ground, but not before the animal had driven one of his natural weapons into the thoughtless young man's foot; darting the quill, sharp as a needle, with all his force, the creature left it two inches deep in the instep, and would have returned to the attack, but that May, with a stirrup-leather, laid the enemy dead.

Ormsby sat down upon a block of granite, in great agony, and the bushman, after a deliberate survey of the jeopardised limb, remarking, with a gravity that startled even Frankfort, that "the sir must lose either his leg or his boot," opened his clasp-knife, and skilfully and deliberately cut the boot open, then applying his fine but useful teeth to the quill, he tugged at it bravely, and drew it out with a jerk. A clear jet of blood bubbled up from the wound, and Ormsby fainted with the pain.

The inflammation which followed was so great as to preclude the possibility of riding far, and as, fortunately, the wagons were only five miles in the rear, Frankfort deemed it wisest to return to them at once, as he well knew Piet would not move in haste.

Everything was as they had left it two days previously, although the obstinate old wagoner had been told to follow as soon as the sore-footed oxen had recovered, and they were now fit for their work. There sat Fitje, stitching at her patchwork petticoat; there lay the herd-boys beside the green-bordered vley; and there sat old Piet, in the glow of sunlight, smoking his pipe.

Chapter Seven.

Light in the Wilderness.

Ormsby was thoroughly discomfited by his accident, and his impatience, and unwillingness to apply the remedies prescribed by Fitje, duly aggravated the inflammation: he would walk, he would bathe, and at last was fairly laid prostrate for two or three days.

Utterly disgusted, and intensely pained by the jolting of the wagon, he listened one morning with complacency to May's information, that there was a Dutchman's farm at the foot of a long, low hill in front. The sun shone down upon the settlement, which at that distance looked fair and pleasant; but May said it was but a desolate place within, for the master was heart-sore. He had lost five sons in the last war; he had but few cattle left; and whenever he began to till the land, he was told by his neighbours—there were none within twelve miles—that it was not safe to stay. The bushman had heard this two months ago from the Boer himself at Beaufort, when he came there, in his perplexity, to consult his fellow-colonists.

Frankfort immediately thought of helping this poor man in some way, and the cavalcade directed its progress towards the farm; but on reaching it, they found it abandoned—"Silent all and lone." The house was empty, the doors and windows open, the garden desolate.

Both sportsmen agreed, that if this abandonment of the location was the result of a rumour of war, it was high time for them to think of rejoining their regiment instead of pursuing their expedition. Ormsby would fain have had the cavalcade halt here for the night; but May informing them that, if they would consent to advance three miles further, they would find a halting-place within only two hours' distance of the settlement of Annerley, a property belonging to a retired British officer, Frankfort decided on moving on.

The party proceeded slowly forward, the character of the country changing at every step. The bush grew thinner; wide undulating plains, dotted with ant-heaps, and here and there a dump of dwarf mimosas, were spread before the traveller's eye; and as the last rays of light gleamed in dying glory on the waste, several dark objects were descried moving in a body at speed.

Frankfort, by the aid of the telescope he carried, fancied he recognised European horsemen. A slight indentation of the ground hid them from his sight for a minute or two, and as they reached the elevation, the wide hat, ostrich feather, long *roer* (gun)—in short, the whole guerilla air, bespoke the Dutch border colonists of South-Eastern Africa.

At sight of the wagons, the party came galloping down the slope, and approaching Frankfort in breathless haste, announced that the new British commander of the forces, Sir John Manvers, had issued a manifesto desiring the chiefs of the Gaika and T'Slambie tribes to meet him in the neighbourhood of the garrison of Fort Beaufort, on the Kat River, on a certain day; that the chiefs had hesitated, asking for more time, to consult their councillors, which time was, of course, to be employed in making ready; that the war-cry had already faintly issued from the Gaikas, who only waited for the gathering of the tribes to shout it aloud from the Amatola mountains; and that, as soon as the warriors could be organised, an attack would be made upon the colonists.

This mounted troop of stout and determined Burghers had been despatched, by the commandant of a frontier outpost, to warn the farmers in the north eastern districts of their danger; and, being loyal to the Government, were proceeding, as far as they dared, to sound the alarm among all the landholders who were considered to be discontented, but as yet were not avowedly disaffected. These were expected to join a Burgher force, ready for action, if called upon; while the farmers near the colony were advised to put their homesteads in a state of defence; and if this was difficult, from want of hands, or faulty position, to establish *lagers* (bivouacs), and bring their families together, for the sake of security.

It was further stated, that the rivers were rising, and the enemy congregating along the bush-lined banks of the Fish River, ready to pounce on stray cattle or hapless travellers; the troops were mustering in the different garrisons, the new commander-in-chief was at Graham's Town, ships with stores and reinforcements were daily expected at Algoa Bay, and the greatest cause for anxiety was the uncertain state of affairs among the Dutch beyond the Orange River. These, it was supposed, had been fully conciliated by the visit of the late governor, whose health had suffered from his fatiguing exertions in negotiating with the rebellious Boers in person. By these able negotiations peace had been established, and redress officially promised; but, strange to say, the arrival of Sir John Manvers had been the signal for another outbreak, and while Kafirland was up on one side of the Orange River, the Boers were inspanning their oxen on the other, and preparing sullenly to trek, roer in hand, and with wives, children, and all their property in a train, headed by one Vander Roy, a clever fellow, and as ambitious as he was determined and persevering. Having delivered this news, and refreshed themselves with soppies of French brandy, the young Burghers touched their hats, the officers bent over their horses' necks, and were off at a hand-gallop.

Ormsby had laid aside his novel at the approach of the riders, and leaped out of the wagon to hear the news. At the prospect of war he sent up his hat into the air with a shout, and telling May to "up-saddle," would have mounted his horse, and insisted on at once riding forward to Graham's Town.

He made no allowance for difficulties; he thought not of swelling rivers, of a lurking enemy, ready to seize upon the horses of unprotected travellers; he would have taken May and one of the wagon-drivers with him, and left Frankfort on the instant; for the latter, though brave, was not rash, and had no idea of such a mad project as leaving the cavalcade behind, and starting headlong on a journey of two hundred miles, with horses quite unfit for it. Besides, he did not expect May to leave both wife and child to the tender mercies of the dogged Piet; and in short, to Ormsby's infinite disgust, he was told that haste was out of the question: they must make what way they could to Annerley, and there act upon the intelligence with such means as circumstances afforded. If fresh horses could be procured, a couple of armed guides would be sufficient, and the cavalcade of wagons and attendants could, for the present, remain behind; besides which difficulties, Ormsby's foot was too much inflamed to permit him to ride. On what small hinges do great doors turn!

Evening fell, heavy and gloomy; the atmosphere was loaded with an unpleasant vapour. As night drew on, the exhalations floated above the earth in thin white mist, and as this increased, the travellers could scarcely see a foot in advance. The road, or rather track, was grass-grown, the wheels sunk into the sward, and moved noiselessly along; there was no echo of the horses' feet upon the turf, and as if the stillness or nature had effect upon the party, not a word was uttered. Altogether, the vehicles, with their white canvass coverings, the impish forelopers, the attendant guides, and the riders, who kept close to the two foremost wagons for fear of losing their way, all gliding silently through the shroud-like vapour, might have served as an illustration of one of the scenes in that delicious romance of "Undine." They looked as if they must vanish and melt in the snow-white cloud, wreathing itself closer and closer round them at every step.

May was wide awake; his keen eyes were riveted to the ground, watching the slight undulations made by occasional wanderers in the wilderness, and if his eye failed him, he knelt down, groped about the path, and having found it, led the way beside the foremost forelouter. Poor, patient, honest May! how Ormsby muttered his discontent at thee for being "encumbered" with thy wife and child! How unthinking was he of thy daily aid!

The dwelling for which they were bound, and to which May was so carefully guiding them through the mist, along the almost trackless waste, had been and was, for aught the bushman knew to the contrary, the residence of an Englishman, who had been an officer. If still there, they would ascertain from him, "whose word," May said, "was true," the real condition of the country. If war had been openly proclaimed by the English general, Frankfort admitted it would be madness to proceed, and run the risk of being detained upon the banks of those densely-wooded streams.

Ormsby, like all self-opinionated, inexperienced men, would not admit the necessity of bending to circumstances; he was for advancing "in the teeth of the enemy. They would know better than shoot down, like dogs, a couple of English officers. He should like to bag a leash of Kafirs amazingly. He should send home a skull for his old governor's library. He hoped there would be war with all his heart. He longed to knock over some of those black tinkers."

Frankfort listened quietly, smiling inwardly at the idea of Ormsby in the bush in the rainy season, sleeping with his head in a pool of water, and breakfasting on a hard biscuit and a cup of muddy coffee, without milk or sugar; but he kept his communings to himself, and was not sorry when he saw lights twinkling through the mist. They looked distant; he put his horse into a canter, and in a few minutes was greeted by the "deep-mouthed welcome" of the dogs of the settlement,

Presently a door opened, but the lights were withdrawn; the butt-end of a musket rang on the stone step, and a gentlemanly voice uttered the words "Who comes here?"

"Friends," said Frankfort.

"Friends," repeated the voice aloud; the lights re-appeared, a group of people filled the open doorway, and the owner of the mansion—for it was a substantial building of stone—descended the steps, and advancing to the gate, a

Hottentot servant following with a lantern, held out both his hands, saying, "Welcome; excuse our caution, friends and countrymen, but it behoves us to be wary; for although the open plains are stretched before us, we have a suspicious kloof to our right, and a chain of hills to our left, which may contain some objectionable neighbours. The mistiness of the night prevented our discovering the character of your cavalcade, nor could we distinguish the usual crack of wagon-whips."

And no wonder; for the driver of the foremost vehicle was sound asleep, though sitting bolt-upright upon his box, and to Frankfort's discomfiture, and May's terror, Piet had not come up. May had collected the whole party together at a great vley some two miles off, and then finding that Piet would not be foremost in the van, had moved to the front as guide.

As it was supposed, however, that he would arrive ere long, though poor May had certain misgivings on the subject, Frankfort and Ormsby gladly accepted Mr Daveney's welcome, and followed him through, what appeared to them, a garden, for trees bent over the pathway, and the air was burdened with perfume.

Ascending the steps of the house, their host stood at the threshold, and welcomed them again, ushering them, as he did so, into a large sitting-room, which, though dimly lighted, was evidently furnished with some attention to taste and comfort. "We are cautious, you see, in the wilderness," said the host, and ringing a small hand-bell, he bade an old Griqua, who answered the summons, bring more light, desiring him further to inform the ladies, that the visitors were friends, and to "send Erasmus for the gentlemen's saddle-bags."

Frankfort and Ormsby surveyed their host with that interest which only travellers in the desert can feel on opening communion with a countryman and brother-soldier, for Mr Daveney stood avowed "a soldier every inch of him." The erect carriage, and the kindly, but decided, tone of voice in which he issued his simple orders, proclaimed his profession at once. Of the middle height, of strong but slender frame, his life had doubtless been one of activity and observation: the high, thoughtful brow was divested of its early curls, but the well-shaped head was still partially adorned with crisp grey locks; the eye was blue as heaven, and shone with an honest light; the teeth were perfect, and of that hue indicating a sound constitution; a grey moustache shaded the upper lip, but, smiling as he spoke, a most agreeable impression was conveyed by the contrast of these white and even teeth with the sunburnt face, marked not so much by care, as with those lines which evince a deep sense of man's duties to himself and others. The close observer will often recognise the difference between the restless attributes of anxiety and the calm thoughtfulness of a mind sensible of its powers and intent on its responsibilities. He makes the discrimination almost imperceptibly to himself, but is not the less guided by the impulse arising from it; and thus Frankfort took the proffered hand of his host with a feeling of interest he seldom accorded to strangers, and responding to the light of the honest eye and hospitable smile, said, as he lifted his hat with the grace of a soldier and a gentleman, yet with his own frank and unaffected manner, "We are officers of the Eighty —th regiment; this is my friend Ormsby, and I am Captain Frankfort."

A door leading to an inner apartment opened, and a lady, followed by the Griqua servant, bearing lights, entered, and admitting that she had been somewhat agitated, "not alarmed," by the unexpected arrival of the party, added, that supper would be served up with as little delay as possible.

There followed soon a young lady—yes, a young lady in the wilderness, and the stamp of a gentlewoman was on her and on her mother. No adventitious ornaments of dress, or the absence of them, can give or take away this stamp; be it in the desert, or the court, the English gentlewoman, in humble garb or courtly robe, needs no herald to proclaim her position.

Mother and daughter, in their simple costume of sober hue, were received by our two wanderers with all the courtesy they would have paid "To high-born dames in old ancestral halls."

Ormsby was most agreeably surprised. Miss Daveney was of a charming height, had fine hair, a gentle voice and winning manner, with a little dash of coquetry, which in girlhood, as the result of innocence, is so bewitching. She admitted, that her alarm had been great, for the news from the colony was startling; her father, as the magistrate of the district, held a situation of difficulty and responsibility; the Kafirs had long been anxious for war, and within a few days, Mr Daveney had been informed, on good authority, that the Dutch in the upper part of the colony would not respond to the manifesto calling on them to assist in the defence of the colony: "in short," said she—clasping her pretty hands together, in an attitude of thankfulness, as she lifted her clear eyes, honest as her father's, to Ormsby—"we really have been in some perplexity, and nothing could be more opportune than your arrival. I confess, I had some dread of remaining in the wilderness—yet, what are we to do? My father must not desert his post; never were visitors more welcome."

And Ormsby fancied—vain Ormsby!—that though the welcome was intended for both travellers, the smile was especially bestowed on him, and a very piquant smile it was.

But, dear reader, this pretty, animated Marion Daveney is not my heroine; she is a fair, ingenuous creature, with sunny hair, and shining eyes, and fawnlike step; but methinks you will be more interested in Eleanor, who has not yet descended to meet the guests.

Seated at the window of her little bed-room, she had sat looking out upon the misty night, forgetting that she was alone, and that darkness had fallen round her. It suited the mood of her stricken heart, veiled within the shadows that had been cast upon it, and doomed to remain there, as it seemed to her, for ever. Dim visions of childhood free from care, passed bird-like among flowers and sunlight, rose at times, and, like blue specks in a stormy sky, only made the clouds look heavier and nearer for the contrast.

She rose, paced the chamber, re-seated herself strove to gain courage to join the family group—for she loved to please her father—but sunk down at the idea of encountering strange faces.

"The thralldom is over," said she, "the chain is broken; but the mark of the fetter has burnt in its brand upon the heart. As spots upon the green hills are seared for ever by the lightning's blast, so is the blight upon my soul. Oh, youth, youth!—in some so verdant and so fair—why has mine been scathed so ruthlessly?"

She heard a step approaching, and, hurrying to the window-sill, appeared to be looking out. The step was her father's, and, recognising that, she opened the door.

By the light he held, he looked sorrowfully at that young pale face.

"My love," he said, "strangers have arrived, who will probably be with us some days; do you think you can summon resolution to come among us?"

"My dear father, I will do anything you wish," said the daughter; but, as she spoke, she burst into a passion of tears.

The father closed the door, and sat down with his arm round his weeping child.

Her youth—she was barely twenty—her sable garb, her beautiful hair bound simply round her head, in token of mourning, instead of falling on her bosom in its natural heavy ringlets—her sobs, emanating from the depths of an aching heart, presented such a picture of desolation as would have moved a stranger. Her father could only take her to his breast, and clasp her there, as though he would say, "Lie here, my stricken one, and be at peace."

She understood him, for she loved him, she respected him, and she was anxious, as she said, to do anything he wished. The overburdened heart gained relief after this outburst of sorrow, and, rising, she said—

"Give me half an hour, father, and I will be with you. I am not selfish, as you know."

She kissed him, lit the candle on her dressing-table, and began to make such preparations for her appearance as would prevent any remarks on her agitated face and trembling frame, except in so far as might arise from the arrival of the strangers under circumstances of excitement and alarm.

Some idea of Mrs Daveney's character in early life may be gathered from a letter written to a friend in England some five or six years after she had settled with her husband at Annerley—so, from certain associations, she had named the residence—which, once but a mere farm, was now a capacious and picturesque dwelling.

"You will remember," says she in this letter, "my resolution to marry for love; you ignored my principle of matrimonial life being all the happier for mutual struggles, helpfulness one towards another; you laughed at the idea of care and trouble being stronger ties between man and wife than hours linked with flowers. Do you remember quizzing my fanciful notion of the evergreen cypress-wreath and the faded rose-garland? Nay, you often said I was too anxious for distinction, for any kind of *éclat*, to marry *only* for love. You know my story, my orphaned state, my dependence—no, not dependence—my reliance for protection on my kind aunt, and my departure from England. Hither I came; I was honest in my first communication to you; I told you that the admiration of the world had charms for me, which every pretty woman must understand. You scoffed at my world, and I—how I laughed at yours!—Lighted rooms, conventional forms, worldly tactics, the same circles revolving and re-revolving—Dinner-parties, where the host and hostess sat revelling, not in the society of friends, but in the display of plate, and cookery, and servants—Morning drives through interminable streets, or between tall hedges, or monotonous parks—Evening visits among crowds, where mothers came anxious to outdo their auctioneering compeers in displaying their daughters tricked out for conquest, and where daughters vied with each other in deceiving the world, by trying to look as if they cared nothing about it; and where men sneered at women, and boasted of being too knowing to be caught even with a gilded hook. *My* world, I told you, should be where self was not upon the surface, as in yours; where Nature reigned supreme, and where earth was peopled with men and women in whom thought was brought into action by necessity.

"And the opening chapter of my career in Southern Africa! how you laughed at that, though in all good humour, because you were prosperous at the time. Ah, what a brilliant colouring does the rainbow of hope cast on all it falls upon!

"There was no contempt in your congratulations at my *success* on my first appearance at a colonial *fête*, got up for my especial presentation. Ah, Emily! I often think of that day. My dear, single-minded aunt, and her husband, who had begun by being soldier, and turned merchant in prosperous times; how pleased were they at introducing their niece, fresh from England, while to me, life in Southern Africa seemed delicious after the thralldom of school in murky old London. Bands of military music, young and gallant gentlemen, all struggling for the ladies' favour, a horse to ride, the prettiest that money could buy, and Captain Daveney beside me, who *would* teach me. Ah, what a day that was! I remember it well, Emily—the repast spread on the green-sward beneath a spreading oak; the champagne cooling in a nook, where clear waters rippled over the stones; conversation by the river's side; then the saddling our steeds by the careful hands of courteous cavaliers; the canter home by moonlight, Daveney keeping his place beside me all the time. We assembled at my uncle's house, and refreshed ourselves with coffee; then we danced, resting in the verandah, all festooned with vines and roses; then we strolled under the quince hedge in the bright garden, and parted with smiles, gaily anticipating the morrow.

"To you, with the wreath of strawberry-leaves floating before you, how trifling, how shallow did all this appear! and how summarily, Emily, you closed our correspondence with that daring quotation, in reference to my contentment, and that you said I thought it 'Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.'

"The Court, the ball, the Opera, jewels, dress, carriages, horses, fine houses, tribes of servants bowing down for hire, hundreds of *acquaintances*, and no *friends*—these were your heaven, dear friend. Duchess in perspective though you be, you will own some day that these are but as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

"I married Daveney—then came the solitary outpost; but love triumphed.

"My English maid left me, to marry a man who now drives a pair of bays, and I was fain to help myself. After this came the bustle and excitement of an anticipated campaign, and we were encamped upon the plains of Africa. Ah, Emily! you never experienced the hearty good-will, the earnest kindness that such circumstances draw forth.

"Fear there was at times, not for myself, but for my husband; but, thank God! war was averted. Still, the idea of our common danger drew us closer to each other, and the child born in that encampment, amid the din of arms and clang of bugles, was dearer to us than others while it lived. It died, poor babe, and I have now two daughters, of whose welfare you shall hear, when you desire."

Chapter Eight.

The War-Cry in the Mountains.

The kind uncle referred to by Mrs Daveney was imprudent enough to speculate, and lost a large sum; but, wiser or better-principled than most men who gamble, he forswore speculation for ever, and retired to England, to live on the residue of his property. It had been his intention to apportion his wife's niece on winding up his affairs; but ready money in colonial commerce was at that time a dream, and as he had fine available land in one of the most flourishing districts of the colony, he proposed that Captain Daveney should leave the army, and take possession of the land, which was excellent. A magistracy fell vacant at this time, and, by Mr Morland's influence, was offered to Daveney.

Thus the alternative was offered the soldier, of a plentiful estate, with an excellent house, built indeed on the ashes of a former homestead, and to be held by force of arms, but all preferable, as it appeared to Mr Morland, to life with a regiment at home. The corps was on the eve of embarkation, his wife on the eve of her confinement, and, within a month of the offer, Daveney had "made his book" in his corps, and, with a goodly stock of furniture from the kind merchant's store, he bade adieu to his brother-officers, and *trekked* from the town to the wilderness.

He promised his soldier friends he would see them all again before they marched, and so he did, but from a distance. On the morning that the Forty —th were to start from Graham's Town, he reached the hill overlooking the green parade-ground at Fort England. The men were hurrying from quarters, oxen were yoking to the baggage-wagons—men and officers were fully accoutred—they fell into the ranks—he could see some of them looking up the road—were they watching for him? The regiment formed column, the band struck up "The girl I left behind me," and Daveney's old comrades turned their backs upon him.

He sat motionless on his horse, watching, with a swelling heart, the long cavalcade of troops and baggage. He could see it all passing through the wide streets of the great straggling African town. People came running from their houses, waving their hands in token of farewell; Daveney heard the soldiers cheer, and then, with something more like a sob than a sigh, he turned his horse's head homewards, led it slowly down the steep irregular pathway, let it browse upon the sweet green pasturage, and sat down to shed a flood of tears.

Still he felt he had acted, as far as he could judge, for the best. A career of trust and command was before him. He was to think for others as well as himself. He was in possession of house, land, and cattle. He was to be umpire, in a large district, between the great powers of might and right. He stood with ten talents in his hand, for which he was to be responsible.

A certain spasm shot through his wife's heart, as well as his own, when the old uniform was laid aside for ever—the sword hung up, the number cut from the forage-cap; but within her mind lay, deeper than in his, the germ and elements of an unrecognised ambition. Had she been born to power at home, she would have exercised it with the same lofty bearing with which, on one occasion, in her husband's absence on duty, she had set her house in array to receive a troop of savages, who had been seen stalking, brand and assegai in hand, through the passes of the district.

The letter we have quoted was but a girlish effusion. Still, the shrewd woman of the world, the embryo Duchess, read her friend and playmate aright when, on laying down this epistle from a soldier's wife, she remarked to a friend who had heard its contents, "Africa will suit Eleanor Daveney. In England she could neither be seen nor heard above her compeers. I know her better than she knows herself. She is just one of those who profess self-abnegation in their desire to be placed in a sphere of usefulness, but whose enthusiasm would fall to the ground without the excitement of success or applause."

"There is some good sense, though, and much good feeling," observed the other lady, "in all Eleanor says, and, without intending it, she has placed her husband in a pleasant light. I should think he was just the man to appreciate the good sense, and turn the warmth of heart to wise account."

"Yes, I dare say," replied Eleanor's friend, with an absent air, as she walked to the window, overlooking Piccadilly, and watched the restless thoroughfare through her eye-glass. Then a carriage, in most perfect taste, drove up, a portly man, with a hook nose and rubicund visage, descended, and the Duchess-elect forgot Mrs Daveney's existence for many years, till her cousin Frankfort, by a letter, revived for a short time the old association.

But let future events develop the characters I have faintly sketched. Supper is ready in the eating-room, and Mr Daveney, as we shall for the future style him, having introduced his guests to his tiny dressing-room, where they refreshed themselves with clean water and a slight change of dress, taps at the door and waits to usher them to his hospitable board.

The sportsmen gladly acceded, and followed him to the dining-room, where Mrs Daveney and two daughters awaited them.

Frankfort's eye rested at once upon the pale face of Eleanor, the elder of these daughters. He recognised the high thoughtful forehead of the father, but the long grey eye, with dark lashes, resembled her mother's, so did the lip, that had narrowly escaped being scornful; and, though strongly resembling her mother, the features of the youthful face were soft. But much older than that young fair face was the expression it wore,—*wore*, for it was not natural to it. Was it the result of mournful experiences? Yes, surely so, thought Frankfort, as Mr Daveney took his daughter's hand, and placing her beside himself, introduced her to his guests.

She looked up, and bending gracefully to both gentlemen, her eyes and Frankfort's met. Oh, the mysterious charm cast on the traveller from the depths of those earnest, melancholy orbs!

Ormsby soon found that both sisters had been, in Cape Town, Marion within the last twelve months, visiting some friends of her father, who were enjoying the Cape climate after the sultry sun of India. He was fully prepared to admire his fair neighbour's bright eyes, and at the same time enjoy the repast spread before him; it was plentiful, savoury, and far from inelegant. Before the host was that first-rate Irish dish, a cold shoulder of corned mutton, garnished with fresh, green, crisp parsley; on lifting the cover from the side-dishes, a fragrant steam arose, that warmed a hungry man's heart as he inhaled it. In one was a fine cucumber, scooped hollow, and then stuffed with seasoned meat, and stewed in rich sauce. In another smoked a famous Dutch *plat*, called *La partje*, square inches of mutton, skewered on little sticks, dipped in sauce, made of tomatoes and capsicums and eschalots if none better offers, and toasted over a wood fire. A third contained a pile of rice, white as snow; the next a *rechauffé* of ox-tail curry; added to these were potatoes, baked with their jackets on in the ashes, roasted *meelies* (Indian corn), so delicious when young, grated biltongue, excellent butter, some delicious rolls, a household loaf on a trencher, with a knife beside it, whereof the handle was of polished horn from the head of the African gemsbok; then there was such preserved quince, and marmalade, as a Scotchman's soul would have delighted in, to say nothing of poached eggs, brought in hot after all had sat down. It was all like magic to the travellers, and had they seen the old Malay in the kitchen, with his mysterious contrivances, which no European cook would condescend to understand, they would have been still more astonished. He was an old creature, who had lived with the Morlands, and then followed the Daveneys to the wilderness, where he had his own way, and sent forth all manner of savoury dishes from a huge fireplace, without a grate, before which he was seated all day, issuing his orders to an assistant imp, something like May.

There were no fine wines, no foaming English ale, but the Cape Madeira made good beverage, mixed with water; and there was an old-fashioned silver service before Mrs Daveney, from which she distilled coffee clear as amber, and steaming milk; the table-linen was white as an African sun can bleach it, and the light from two tall wax candles, mantled in the cherry-patterned delf. The ladies took some coffee, in compliment to their guests—what trifles place people at ease with one another. Their light supper was long since over; but Mr Daveney, who had been busy about his farm defences all day, enjoyed his meal the more for the companionship of brother-soldiers.

At the sound of Eleanor's voice, Ormsby, who had paid no attention to her appearance beyond a bow, glanced across the table, and, with his usual air of nonchalance, put aside the light on his left hand, that he might have a better view of the speaker; and having satisfied himself that the pale cheek and braided hair of the one sister was less attractive to him than the radiant smile and sunny ringlets of the other, he helped himself to the smoking *La partje*, and prepared to do full justice to the good cheer he so little expected to find in the wilderness.

Frankfort, as he looked round upon this family group, entered with deep interest into Mr Daveney's anecdotes of sport and peril—his anxieties for the present, his projects for the future. They went back together to the crowded homes of England, its pallid manufacturing children, its cities with dark buildings jammed together, its thronged populace, toiling; toiling on, with heaven's sunlight bricked out; its gigantic schemes,—some successful, blazing up and illuminating the world; some, like rockets, aiming at the sky, and falling in smoke upon the great ocean of eternity; some lying in gloom, with hopeless projectors, whose thoughts were to be seized and worked out by men who could and *would* be heard. They talked too, of the struggle of the better classes to "keep up appearances," to "get their sons on," and their daughters "settled;" they, who had scarcely wherewithal to buy food and raiment,—while here was a fair, plentiful country lying waste—a savage hunting-ground—space for thousands—a wild and lovely country, awaiting the hand of civilisation to make it prosperous and peaceful for all.

Frankfort could see that to touch on domestic questions was tender ground. His host turned the tide of conversation to the troubles of the colony, its grand resources; and Mrs Daveney, as she listened to the conversation, at times joining in it, said earnestly to Frankfort, how she wished that such as he might stand up in the council-chambers of England, and plead the cause of the colonist of Southern Africa. But Eleanor only joined in the discussion with a smile or a sigh, as her father's reference to past events demanded. Still, Frankfort read the heart, as he looked into those deep eyes, and pondered afterwards on trifling things, which would have escaped a man not enthralled with their expression of deep melancholy.

The meal ended, the ladies retired to a table, on which books and work had been scattered in some confusion on the arrival of the sportsmen and their wagons. The cloth was withdrawn from the polished oaken table; a little kettle, with its spirit-lamp, was glowing beside Mr Daveney, and he was about to blow some mulled Pontac, the rich red wine of the Cape, when Frankfort begged to withdraw, in order to make inquiries concerning the absent Piet.

Some unusual sounds without had already caught the ear of the master of the dwelling. The dogs were growing restless in the yards; the people were astir in the outbuildings; and at the moment that Daveney and Frankfort rose together to go out and reconnoitre, Ormsby comfortably establishing himself in a camp arm-chair, brought from his wagon, the door was thrown open, and May rushed in; terror was in his face, the passage behind him was filled with servants, and, gasping for breath, he exclaimed—"Master, good Master Frankfort, come out and see, come out and listen; the fires are lighted on the hills; but that is not all—open your ears, and hear the war-cry on the mountains. Oh! master," cried the poor bushman, in a voice of despair, "what shall I do?—my wife! my little child!"

Mrs Daveney stood up, silent, but appalled; Marion's cheek faded to the hue of death; Eleanor went up to her father,

and put her arm through his.

"My dear," said he, "you must summon all your presence of mind, for I must go."

"I know it, father, but tell us what you would have us do; the house is already defensible"—the windows had been partially bricked up for some days, in consequence of intelligence from the towns—"but you must appoint us our places, if you are obliged to leave us."

"Your mother," said Mr Daveney, "has had my instructions these three days; she has an able coadjutor in you; but Marion is faint-hearted, I am afraid."

Excellent arrangements had indeed been made, in preparation for defence, if besieged by the savages, which Mr Daveney could not think was probable, from various circumstances.

The enemy had got so much plunder lately, that he considered they could scarcely have disposed of it with sufficient security to enable them to go openly to war. He had many other arguments against a sudden attack; but he was an old soldier, who knew that *there is nothing so likely to keep a foe away as to be always ready to receive him*. Furthermore, he never disdained advice, or scoffed at information, and he had lately heard of immense stores of ammunition finding their way into Kafirland in a manner incredible to him, but perfectly intelligible to the reader.

The house, then, had been duly set in order. Arms and ammunition were stored in a large closet adjoining the dining-room; small bags, filled with sand, were ready to be placed against all apertures left to give light; a room had been prepared by Mrs Daveney for the wounded, a table spread with lint, tourniquets, and various salves and styptics; provisions had been collected together in a store-room, where also stood several barrels of water; and, in short, it would be quite possible to hold out against assailants for many days.

Unfortunately, the cattle, horses, and sheep were unprotected; the stone wall and blockhouses, begun some weeks back, were yet unfinished. The plan was admirable, but, owing to want of hands, required much time to carry it out.

But I must defer my description of these buildings till a future occasion. May disappeared in the same frantic way he had entered, and the master of the house having, with quiet decision, repeated his instructions to his principal servants, and succeeded in calming his younger daughter's terrors, proceeded to the *stoep* of the house, cautioning the inmates about displaying lights, and followed by his daughter Eleanor.

On emerging from the house, a scene was presented, so brilliant, yet so terrific, as to mock the efforts of my poor pen in describing it. In a few minutes the whole household were drawn together by one impulse in the verandah; all the servants clustered in a group at the foot of the steps.

The plains which the travellers had journeyed over had to them been invisible till now, that they were fairly lit up for miles round. The mountains, stretching, as I have observed, from the left of the homestead, and extending in a south-westerly direction, were enwreathed with fire, clearly defining their shape and altitude against the glowing sky. Some rose proudly to the heavens; some formed a dark but distinct foreground; some were covered, others only dotted with burning bush, and, from the most distant peak, crowned with its diadem of basaltic rock, to the nearest acclivity, sloping seawards, these wreaths of vivid flame blazed with steady splendour, illuminating acres of trackless country. From the mountain-tops in the back-ground, great tongues of flame shot up from time to time, lit the air for a few minutes, and raided into darkness; anon, some answering light gleamed out from a distant height, and so disappeared; thus, in all directions, these luminous telegraphs sparkled and died away, while on the plains, at no great distance from the settlement, a shimmer here and there proved that the savages were astir in all directions.

Mr and Mrs Daveney stood together, and held a parley; their guests surprised at the steady reasoning of the lady, no less than at the close calculations of the host.

"These fires," said Mrs Daveney, "are the forerunners of an open declaration of war; but I doubt their attacking the settlement, especially to-night, for the scouts ere this will have told the tale of a reinforcement at Annerley; you have been tracked hither."

"The drought of this year has been nothing considerable," remarked her husband, "and therefore I am inclined to attach some importance to these illuminations, which are common at this period, when the earth is parched, and the Kafirs improve the vegetation by burning the old grass out of the pasture. Still, as there has been no public proclamation of war—I, as a magistrate, must have received notice of it if there had been—I can scarcely believe these to be signals of open defiance to our authorities, however the enemy may translate them between themselves."

"Ah! father," interposed Eleanor Daveney, who had wound her arm round the trembling Marion's waist, "the rivers may have risen, the post-riders may be shot, or their despatches seized."

"Right, Eleanor—we know not what intelligence these luminous telegraphs may convey from the Fish River to the Kei, while our poor heralds lie dead in the bush. We may be thankful," continued the host, bowing to Frankfort and Ormsby, "for our gallant reinforcement. Marion, are you a soldier's daughter, and afraid?"

The light—for it was clear as day beyond the house, the verandah shading the group out partially—fell on the upturned face of the frightened girl.

"Not only for myself," said his daughter; "what would become of hundreds in the district if you fell in a conflict with these savages?"

Her father put aside the ringlets from her brow and kissed her. "Let us hope for the best," said he. "If these

demonstrations be hostile, troops from the garrisons must be on the march; the colony is ill prepared for war, and the Dutch farmers, to say the least, are uncertain; but, if once the word to arm is given, thousands of brave and ready burghers will be up and stirring; for, however incredulous the authorities may have been, the settler has slept with arms in hand: and now, let us hold a council of war."

So saying, he opened a door leading from the stoep to the eating-room, and, desiring Griqua Adam to arm the trustiest herds, and place them as sentinels in the kraals and angles of the outbuildings, he sat down with his family and guests to confer as speedily as might be on the present emergency.

What it was immediately necessary to guard against was the stealthy advance of the enemy on the right; certain duties were also assigned to the ladies; poor Marion's white lips sadly belied the readiness with which she obeyed her father in telling off percussion-caps by dozens. To be sure, Ormsby seated himself beside her to assist her in the task, and the calmness of her mother and elder sister was her best incentive to courage.

A strange sight it would have been to English eyes to see Mrs Daveney and her elder daughter bringing the muskets from the store-room, Mr Daveney and Frankfort piling them in readiness for those whom Griqua Adam had summoned to receive them in a trellised passage at the back of the dining-room.

In a few minutes a very fair plan of operations was sketched out for the instruction especially of the two officers, each having a particular post allotted him.

Poor May, who had been patiently sitting on the stoep awaiting his master's decision, at last tapped in despair at the door, which Mr Daveney, a little disconcerted by the interruption, opened.

"Ah! sir," said the poor bushman, "I am heart-sore for my wife and child; they must be in danger, for these schelms are all round us. Come out, sir, once more. Oh! master," observing Frankfort advancing, "the *vrouw* and the *kiut* will be murdered;" and thereupon poor May—merry-hearted, honest, hopeful, keen-witted May—sat down upon the ground, and cried like a child.

"Something must be done, certainly, for this poor fellow," said Mr Daveney; "let us at once arm the people, and steal out cautiously to reconnoitre."

Advancing to the right of the mansion, the two gentlemen looked up towards the kloof; it was in profound darkness; but, on the krantz above it, the dark figures of Kafirs, looking more like, demons than human beings, were seen flitting about, and leaping from ledge to ledge of the rocky precipices with firebrands in their hands. Below the *stoep* some of the Hottentots and Fingo servants of the farm, stood watching these creatures, and calculating the meaning of every movement with a coolness that gave Frankfort great confidence in their courage and sagacity.

The distant signals still shot up at intervals like sky-rockets, and, as May affirmed, were evidently questions and answers passing between the Gaika and T'Slambie tribes.

"See there," observed Mr Daveney; "at the very farthest ridge is a gleam like a star, this is but a link in the chain which began in some far valley within the frontier line, and is passing from hill to hill to the distant bluffs overhanging the sea near the Kei."

The servants were assembling in the trellised passage to wait their master's orders, the ladies and Ormsby were still busied in the dining-room, and Frankfort was intent on May's entreaties that a party might be sent under his guidance in search of Piet's wagon, when the deep stillness of the night was broken by a cry so unearthly, so shrill, yet so strangely prolonged, that all stood still to listen.

It was the war-cry of Kafirland!

It came from the farthest mountain-tops, advanced as though a voice, trumpet-tongued, passed over the hills, descended to the plains, rose again, the echoes following it. Fainter, fainter, it dies away at last into a wailing cry, only to be repeated at the starting point, taken up, passed on as before, and sent again wailing through the great solitudes from the Amatolas to the ocean.

Silence, dread and profound, fell upon many tenants of the mansion in that appalling hour. Mr Daveney and his guest re-entered the dining-room—Eleanor had sunk upon a chair to receive her falling sister in her arms, Marion's face was buried in her sister's lap; Mrs Daveney, in the act of giving a musket to the Griqua, stood transfixed with awe, for she well knew what that unearthly cry portended, and Ormsby had opened the door leading to the trellised passage, and stood there with the servants drawn up awaiting the orders of their master.

We read of the heroines of old, who armed their heroes for the battle, or went forth commanding armies; but it is not to such as these our hearts yield the tribute of earnest admiration: that calm fortitude, which stands in better stead than the daring elicited by excitement—that dignified resignation, which prepares itself to meet danger—that self-abnegation, which sets aside all difference of opinion, and unites with all ranks of life in the common cause of defence, is worth all the sudden impulses of bravery which history has immortalised. The records of our colonies would furnish forth subject-matter for many a bard; but they want, so to speak, dramatic colouring, though one would think the terrific scenes of blazing homesteads and blood-stained hearths were not without what reporters would call "effect." Verily, our English settlers' wives, with their patient, work-a-day endurance, would need the pen of a Goldsmith or a Crabbe to set them in their proper light.

Eleanor Daveney would have made a charming foreground for such a picture as men like these have loved to draw.

Mrs Daveney issued orders in conjunction with her husband, apportioned to each man his store of ammunition, loosed to the priming of the muskets in the hands of the herd-boys, who were more accustomed to the assegai and

the knob-kierrie than to our firearms; but Eleanor, while she soothed her more excitable sister's fears, had a word of encouragement for every one; and, rousing Marion, bid her accompany her to the stoep, and comfort the women, who were there huddled together in mute terror.

Poor May, who, in the extremity of danger to the household, could not obtain a hearing, now rushed past the sisters like a madman, and, springing over the gateway, sped out into the wilderness. They could hear the terrier yelping at his heels ever so far, and Frankfort, thoroughly dismayed at the idea, at once gave his faithful bushman up for lost.

Eleanor had some comfort for him.

"These defiances from the hills," said she, "are so decided, that there is no doubt the assegai hangs over our heads by a single hair; still the object of these creatures is plunder. When they attack the settlement, it will be in a quiet guise. If May keeps his wits about him as he used—as he used to do—he will find his way uninterrupted."

"Ah!" said Frankfort, "you have seen my friend May before?"

Eleanor hesitated, but only for a moment, and replied—

"Yes, we remember him when quite a boy."

Candour evidently prevailed over a seeming reluctance to refer to the past; and yet there was nothing singular in Eleanor Daveney's remembrance of May, who had been employed from childhood about the English quarters and locations. It was simply her sudden pause, hesitation, and hurried tone in admitting the truth, which had attracted Frankfort's notice.

Ormsby, on hearing the bushman had sped into the wilderness, grew furious with Piet, and wished Frankfort had taken his advice in forbidding Fitje's accompanying her husband. Frankfort reproached himself for not riding in the rear of the cavalcade, and keeping the party together, but time was too precious for unavailing regret; it was deemed prudent to close and secure the front of the dwelling, Eleanor consoling Marion by reminding her that, for the present, the war-cry of Kafirland was their best personal security, since "you know," said she, "that unlike the honest faces of civilised lands, the Kafir comes not with beating drum and flying standard; and the settler of South Africa is safest when face to face with his wicked neighbour. Yet," added Eleanor, "why should I call the Kafir wicked?—it is not for me to judge."

Again there arose that shrill, terrific war-cry. Marion shuddered, and wound her arms round her sister's slender waist.

"Poor wretches!" said Eleanor, lifting her mournful eyes to heaven—"poor misguided beings!" and, clasping her hands, her lips moved in inaudible prayer.

Frankfort watched her as she implored Heaven in behalf of the unhappy savages, and could not help contrasting her mild courage with her mother's authoritative air of resolution and her sister's utter helplessness and terror.

All night long the little garrison of Annerley stood to its arms, the sentinels immovable at the outposts, Daveney and Frankfort going the rounds at intervals, Ormsby in command of the party guarding the rearward premises, his headquarters being the trellised passage, from which he occasionally looked in upon the ladies. He had been particularly requested by his host to act under the directions of the old Griqua, who had been a soldier in the Cape Corps, and whose experience was invaluable; and, what was more than Frankfort had expected, Ormsby had the good sense to see this, and acknowledge it.

Daveney, albeit far from easy as to the safety of his family, would not permit his domestic troubles to interfere with his duties as master of a household.

Once, when on his rounds with Frankfort, he looked in upon the group, and asked how all went on. Marmion had made his way into the sitting-room, and stretched himself at Eleanor's feet, with his black muzzle to the ground, and ears and eyes wide open, keeping watch and ward over the group. Marion lay on a couch, her head pillowed on her sister's arm, and fast asleep, her ringlets hanging, all dishevelled, round her, and Mrs Daveney's anxious gaze was riveted on a loop-hole looking eastward, watching with weary heart the long-coming of the dawn.

So wore on the night. The fires on the hills died away; the gorgeous sun, opening his gates of glory, came forth to dispel the smoke and vapours that obscured the distant mountains and floated over the plains; the night sentinels were relieved, and other watches set; the house was put in order for the morning refreshment, so much needed; the herdsmen, well armed, led the cattle to the open ground fronting the settlement, and the ladies retired to their own apartments for a while.

Frankfort then expressed his deep anxiety about the missing members of his train; but as it was considered by his host highly imprudent to reduce the force of the garrison under present circumstances, there was nothing for it but to leave May to his known sagacity, and hope that old Piet had not brought himself and others into danger through his obstinacy and imprudence; for there was no denying that the vley indicated by May as the outspan was flanked on one side by a dense bush, a notorious haunt of Kafirs.

Our two sportsmen were ushered by Mr Daveney into a tolerably-sized apartment, divided by a wooden partition running little more than half way to the roof. Everything was in the most homely style, but exquisitely neat. In each domicile was a small camp bedstead, table, chair, and chest of drawers, all manufactured by their ingenious host. Sheepskin mats were spread on the earthen floor, and the walls, originally white-washed, were gaily papered with manifold prints and engravings from some of those publications which, for the last fifteen years, have taken England and her customs through the length and breadth of the earth. The windows were, of course, partially screened by brickwork; but the sun pierced one of the loops, and shed its rays on the picture of a popular *danseuse*. Frankfort

would have smiled at the associations called forth by such an anomaly, but his heart misgave him about his faithful servant, and though he lay down, he could not rest, and he longed to start in search of May; but that would have been absurdly imprudent.

At noon the cattle herds came running in, to say that horsemen were in sight; and Daveney, on examining the defile behind the settlement, descried, to his great satisfaction, a party of burghers, headed by an escort of Cape cavalry.

In five minutes they were at the gate, the state of their steeds indicating sharp riding. Daveney stood with open doors ready to receive them, and the officer in command dismounted, and presented an official packet.

It announced that the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Manvers, had reached the frontier; that, deeming it prudent to await his reinforcements, he had projected a meeting with the Kafir chiefs at the base of the Amatola range; that, for the present, open hostilities were suspended; that the Eighty —th had been selected, as the weaker corps, for garrison duty. Daveney was instructed to put the district under his authority on the *qui vive*, and to send the General such intelligence as he could gather. It was anticipated that the meeting in Kafirland would not tend to a peaceful result, as Sir John had to propose terms most distasteful to the tribes, who had long been bent on war. "And so," said Captain Ledyard, coolly dusting his boots on the steps, and looking round on the unfinished defences, "the sooner you throw up your outworks, Daveney, the better." Captain Ledyard had, from his bivouac at night, witnessed the warlike demonstrations on the hills, and pronounced them as evincing the resolution of the war party in Kafirland. It was very natural to believe that the Kafir scouts had seen his fires, and carried the intelligence to the chiefs, that troops were on the march. The warriors had therefore evidently delayed offensive operations till it was ascertained whether more were following.

"You are too well accustomed," said Ledyard, "to guard against stealthy attacks, to require any caution on that head; but it is amazing to think how these devils have supplied themselves with ammunition. Within six or seven months, they must have completely stored their magazines afresh. I see, too"—and here the colonial soldier's experienced eye scanned the defences of the homestead—"that your house is roofed with zinc; but I do not like the glen in the rear. It is well named the 'Devil's Kloof.' However, you did not choose the site of your farm yourself, my good brother-soldier, and you will make the best of it, and give your enemy a good peppering from the loops."

So saying, he entered the house, where he was introduced to the two officers, who, on hearing that their regiment was the one selected for garrison duty, resolved on not rejoining it at present. It was clear they could be useful to their host, and had more chance of smelling gunpowder where they were than if they returned to their corps.

Such refreshment as the times allowed was spread in the darkened eating-room for Captain Ledyard, while his followers bivouacked in front, and a sheep was killed, skinned, cut up, and eaten, within half an hour after the arrival of these welcome visitors.

As they were to halt till the cool of the evening, Mr Daveney proposed that poor May's footsteps should be traced, while the sturdy burghers, resting on their arms, kept guard over his people; so, with a knowing old Hottentot, and two Fingoes, the latter on foot, the host and Frankfort well mounted, pistols in their belts, and rifles slung ready for use, started for the vley, where Piet had lingered on the midnight march.

Chapter Nine.

The Gathering of the Settlers.

Anxious as Frankfort was concerning the fate of his attendants, thoughts of his host's daughter Eleanor *would* rise as he rode silently beside Mr Daveney on the expedition in search of Piet the obstinate.

Within the last twenty-four hours of his existence a new chapter had been opened before him in his book of fate—it was not his own inditing. Frankfort, although not the man to be attracted by a mere pretty, interesting face, had been taken by surprise in the desert. He had never been a trifler in those showy circles in which Ormsby was wont to flutter; he loved books, reflection, and but for his sporting tastes and military talent might have been considered by his brother-officers a "slow man." Albeit courteous by nature and education to the gentler sex, and less uncharitable towards its failings than many more favoured than himself, he never could bring himself to "philander," as Ormsby designated flirting, for which the latter had a cruel capacity.

But this sorrowful, gentle-looking being would have drawn Frankfort to her side anywhere—so he thought.

Certainly, the circumstances attending the introduction of our travellers to this family had brought out features in the character of all, which placed them in a strong light before the young men, who naturally yielded to the influence of the fair daughters of the wilderness. Ormsby was attracted at once by the merry-eyed Marion; Frankfort's contemplative mind dwelt on the care-worn face and dignified calmness in the midst of dangers displayed by Eleanor; and now, as he rode beside her father, he found himself going back to the first moment of meeting, and counting, as it were, every link in the chain that he felt had been silently, but surely, cast around him.

Her quiet courage, her steady reasoning, her unconsciousness of display as she stood amid the clatter of arms, the centre of a group of uncouth creatures, so strongly contrasted with herself, as they received the weapons of death from her hands; the mysterious sadness that superseded all other feeling, clouding her young brow, and influencing the very tones of her voice as she addressed words of comfort and encouragement to her sister, who, like all volatile people, had been struck down at once by terror—all those attributes, so rare in woman, or so seldom developed—(perhaps for want of opportunity—that is a mighty word, though all men may not know it)—would have impressed Frankfort, had the possessor of them been the plainest woman in the world.

So he fancied. But was any man ever yet attracted *at once* by a plain woman, simply *because* she displayed courage, tenderness, or was visibly unhappy?

Trace the cause to what source you please, our reflective, reasonable Frankfort could not banish Eleanor from his thoughts; and he found himself replying vaguely to some of her father's remarks, till the latter, as he put his horse into a canter, observed—

"This creature, you see, is perfectly trained; he is seldom ridden by any one but my daughter Eleanor, who is an excellent horsewoman."

"Ah! he is Miss Daveney's favourite, is he?" said Frankfort, struck for the first time with the graceful action of the animal.

"My daughter *Eleanor's*," said Mr Daveney—"Mrs Lyle's."

"Mrs Lyle! I was not aware"—and a sudden glow suffused the manly face unused to blushing—"that—that the young lady was married."

"She is a widow," answered Mr Daveney; and then he abruptly changed the subject, as, settling his reins, he directed Frankfort's attention to a wild pass on the left, in which he had once had an adventure with Kafirs.

Married! a widow! so young! Frankfort was astonished—yet what was it to him?—His host evidently thought so too; for, having set him right as to his daughter's position, he began talking on other matters.

Mr Daveney pointed out many a covert, whence, he said, probably some dark spirits were looking down on them, but unwilling to show themselves on the open plains. They soon sighted the vley; but it was necessary to be cautious in approaching it, in consequence of the dense bush with which it was partially bordered.

The keen-eyed old Hottentot gave it as his opinion, that no body of Kafirs was concealed within, as the birds were swaying in the branches of the taller trees, and the ground showed no sign of fresh *spoor* (track, footmarks). From the spot at which the party halted, only a portion of the vley was visible, and Mr Daveney was beginning to consider at which point they were to commence their reconnoitring operations, when Ormsby's bloodhound dashed into the copse, and came back whining and importunate.

Both gentlemen dismounted, gave their horses to the Fingoes, and, despite the caution of the Hottentot, followed the beast into the bush, their arms ready. Klaas, seeing this, entered it with them; the dog leaped in, and the three creeping after him on hands and knees, Mr Daveney put aside a bough, and within a yard discovered Piet lying on his face—dead.

They turned him over; he had been stabbed in the chest by an assegai, and had doubtless crawled into the thicket to die, for a bloody track crimsoned the green leaves beyond him.

But where were May and Fitje and the child? Klaas scrambled through the copse as fast as he could, and the others, shocked at the sight, drew back instinctively.

On emerging from the bush, they found one Fingo with their horses, who informed them that his comrade had discovered the wagon, or rather the remains of it, for it had been set fire to. On reaching the side of the vley where the shattered vehicle lay, they were all greatly relieved at hearing May's voice issuing, apparently, from the depths of the earth, and next his head appeared above ground, then Fitje's, and, at last, the impish, roguish, yellow countenance of the child.

Kafirs had been concealed in the bush beside the vley the preceding night. Piet owed his death to his obstinacy. Jealous of May's authority, he had dawdled behind in spite of Fitje's entreaties to keep close to the other wagons; the more anxious she became, the more dogged was he; and, laying the long whip across the roof of the wagon, he folded his arms, and left the oxen to crawl as they liked along the pathless waste. Fitje resigned herself to circumstances with true Hottentot philosophy, and, tying down her *douk*, wrapped her patchwork petticoat over her child, and lay down within the vehicle to sleep. All at once she heard a groan; something rolled off the box and obstructed the fore-wheel, she looked out into the waste, and three dark figures gibbered at her in the mist. She thought she was dreaming, but she soon *felt* she was not; a strong arm dragged her out, and flung her on the ground, and she saw her child lifted up, about to be impaled most likely, when one of the men, whom she discovered to be Kafirs, flung it from him, remarking, "it was a girl, and not worth killing."

Poor Fitje snatched it up, and remembering that, while outspanning at the vley, May had indicated a certain spot as a pit-fall for wild beasts, she crawled thither with all speed, while the savages were intent on rifling the wagon. She crept into the welcome covert—there was the skeleton of a wolf in the pit; but "misery makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows," and so poor Fitje thought little of her ghastly neighbour, but lay in dread of being dragged out, stifling poor Ellen's screams as well as she could, till the glad sound of Spry's shrill bark told her help was near.

She sat up, listened in agony, lest the enemy should still be lurking about; the wagon was yet burning, and her fears increased as she remembered that one of the packages especially commended to her care was a case of gunpowder. Careful May, however, always in doubt or dudgeon about Piet the obstinate, had that very morning removed it to safer keeping; but for this precaution, it would have fallen into the hands of the enemy, or, by exploding, destroyed the lives of all near it.

She took heart on hearing May's low whistle near her, for he soon guessed the hiding-place of his keen-witted *vrouw*, and, descending beside her, set her fears at rest.

The ladies of the household were standing at the gateway, watching for the return of the party with no little anxiety. The distance was short, the plains open, and commanded by a mound behind the settlement, on which a vidette had been placed; but still, after the shock their nerves had sustained the night before, they trembled for the safety of the reconnoitring party as soon as it was out of sight. No reason will subdue a woman's fears for others, and Captain Ledyard talked in vain. They listened anxiously for shots, and felt certain the vidette could not reach Mr Daveney's people in time, if attacked, never thinking of their own critical position in such a case. Marion—bright-eyed Marion—saw them first. "Safe, mother, safe; and there is a little creature on foot with the Fingoes, and a woman, and—" she gazed intently on the coming horsemen, whose pace was slackened for poor Fitje's sake—"oh, mother! Eleanor! some one is leading a horse, and—" she clasped her hands together in a convulsion of terror—"something is slung across it—a human creature—a man—he must be dead!"

Captain Ledyard shaded his eyes from the sun, and said nothing; Mrs Daveney stood tranquil, but with lips white and quivering; Eleanor opened the gateway, and stepped out to have a clearer view across the plains.

"I see my father," said she, "in advance—I know the horse's pace."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs Daveney; Marion burst into an hysterical fit of weeping upon Eleanor's bosom; and, this great terror removed from their overcharged hearts, there was space for more rational thoughts.

"It may be the unhappy driver Piet," said Eleanor, and as she looked again, she recognised Frankfort with her father. He took a handkerchief from his breast, and waved it. It was a good sign, she felt, and as soon as the pedestrians were within safe range of the settlement—for they had to pass the mouth of the kloof—Daveney and his guests galloped forward. Eleanor's conjecture, as the reader guesses, was right. The old Hottentot had laid the body of the murdered man across his horse, and brought it to the settlement.

Frankfort was still in some doubt as to the fate of one of the foreloupers, but May had a notion "the little *bavian* (monkey) had escaped;" and, on taking the horses to their stables, sure enough there was the imp, leaning idly and unconcernedly against a gate, with a hunch of bread in his hand, and a broad grin on his black shining face.

At sunset, the herdsmen having dug a grave, May and Griqua Adam buried the miserable old Piet, and piled some stones above him, to save his remains from the wolves; but when the farm-servants ventured out next morning, they found the grave had been rifled, and, by chance, casting their eyes, in the course of the day, on a jutting krantz, lit by the sun, they discovered the wretched creature's body impaled on a scathed oak, round which the asphogels were sweeping, eager for their hateful meal.

In a day or two, some of the farmers of the district arrived, bringing with them their families, and proposing to establish a bivouac on the plains. This Mr Daveney at once acceded to; but, deprecating the system of leaving the homesteads as lurking-places for the enemy, he laid his own plans of defence before the colonists, who, satisfied that their women and children would be under safe guardianship with the little force the magistrate could organise, consented to return to the principal farms, and garrison them at once. "Hurrah!" cried a sturdy young settler, with a complexion bronzed from its original English hue to the swarthy colour of the Hottentot; "I said we ought to make a stand for the credit of Old England. I never saw the mother-country, as you call her, but I have a respect for her, and I take it, the crack of a few Brummagem rifles will stop the mouths of these yelling devils long before she takes the trouble to send us soldiers. Well, I suppose she intends it for a compliment, and thinks we are able to take care of ourselves; and so we are." He stooped from his saddle to receive a parting token from a pretty creature, who had been making her toilette, after the trek, in a cumbrous but cozy old wagon, and who, though sunburnt, looked as fresh as any girl on a fair-day in England. There were tears gathering in her eyes, but she brushed them away, and bidding "God speed him," with an attempt at a smile, dropped the curtains of the vehicle, as he galloped in hot haste after his companions, far in front, with Mr Daveney at their head.

For Frankfort, well instructed by his host, and tolerably experienced in the warlike character of the enemy he had to guard against, was left in command of the settlement for the present; in a week Daveney's magisterial duties in the district would terminate, and he would return with safe escort.

These had scarcely departed, ere the good missionary, Mr Trail, arrived with his wife and children, and begged for room to outspan; but Mr Daveney's dwelling was of India-rubber quality, for a room was offered to the Trails, and they accepted it; but, occupying the wagon by night, this apartment was appropriated by Mr Trail for school purposes; and the night after the magistrate's departure, as Frankfort and Ormsby were returning from their superintendence of the outworks, they were taken by surprise at the sound of the Evening Hymn chanted in good harmony by some thirty voices.

Frankfort instinctively lifted his hat from his head; Ormsby remained covered; there was silence, then the door opened, and a motley assemblage walked forth decorously: there was the broad-chested, square-faced Dutch vrouw, and her children, sturdy as herself; the Hottentot and Bechuana serving-girls, in flaunting *douks*; two or three Kafir children, who said their fathers were in the bush; some Englishwomen, wives of the district farmers, and their children, blue-eyed and fair-haired, like their Saxon ancestors. Then came Eleanor, Marion, and Mrs Trail; and lastly Mr Trail, with two little bright-faced creatures hanging at his skirts. No, not lastly, for May and Fitje, and their merry-eyed infant, brought up the rear.

As the ladies stepped into the trellised passage, Ormsby raised his hat and bowed—Frankfort said nothing; but he thought how one-half the world did homage to the creature, forgetting the Creator. Ormsby followed Marion into the house. Frankfort waited to address Mr Trail, with whose reputation he was well acquainted; but he was prevented in his purpose by hearing Eleanor say to the missionary, "You will come to me, then, in five minutes. I have much to tell you. You can scarcely feel sorrow; but you will certainly be shocked."

She stopped suddenly, seeing Frankfort standing at her side; a glow, like sunset upon snow, mantled on her marble

cheek, her eyes fell to the ground, and her embarrassment was only relieved by the sound of Mrs Daveney's voice calling to her to come and assist in some household concerns.

Mr Trail apparently did not notice what I have related; he gave his attention at once to Frankfort, who was desirous of having all the defences completed before the host's return.

It was no easy matter to enclose hastily a number of scattered outbuildings, occupying nearly two acres of ground. The wagons formed a capital breastwork for the front of the dwelling, already tolerably secure; the orchard and garden-ground flanking the rear were surrounded by hedgework of the prickly mimosa, forming a kind of abati (Note 1), in which picked men were to be placed as checks on the enemy's advance; the stables, cattle, and sheep kraals, separated from the dwelling by a miniature vineyard, were as yet scarcely defensible—the stone wall, as I have before related, being stopped in its progress for want of hands. But now a redoubt was in speedy progress, the entrances being protected at night by piles of thorn-bushes; and the vineyard having in peaceful days been irrigated by a mountain rill, there was abundance of water; there was a chance of the supply being cut off by the cunning foe, but tanks and barrels were to be filled, which Mr Trail doubted not would last as long as water was required; for the plan of the defence was so admirable, that it was scarcely probable the Kafirs would make an open assault; still the cattle were a great temptation, and foraging parties were daily bringing in fresh captures.

"But," said Mr Trail, pulling out his watch, "I must leave you now, sir, and at nine o'clock I propose assembling the family, and closing the day with thanksgiving to the Almighty for the mercies with which He surrounds us. We shall meet again then, I trust;" and leaving Frankfort in the vineyard, the missionary returned to the house.

What could this interview between Eleanor and Mr Trail mean? "Pshaw," thought Frankfort, "what is it to me?" and then the mantling cheek, the quivering lip, the trembling hand, on which he had discovered the mystic ring guarded by a circlet—a gilded snake—came between him and his reason, and he paced the green retreat, regardless of the fading day, till the moon rose high and clear, and the path was traced with the graceful pattern of the vine foliage.

Something glittered in the path, he picked it up; the moonlit atmosphere of South Africa is so brilliant that the smallest handwriting is legible; but what he lifted was a miniature of a lovely child. There was nothing but the head, bending, as it were, from orient clouds; the face was angelic, the lips rosy and smiling, the waving hair like threads of gold in sunlight, the eyes with the pencilled brow unmistakable. Was it a brother, sister, or child of Eleanor? He looked at the back, and on an enamel ground was inscribed: "My Harry, born April 18— died March 18—."

"Eheu! Eheu! Eheu!"

He put it carefully up. The bell, hanging in a large mulberry-tree, under which the household assembled on Sundays to worship that God whose presence lights the desert, was now struck by Griqua Adam, on returning through the vineyard, reminded "the Sir," that "prayer-time was come;" and Frankfort, re-entering the trellised passage, joined the family and household servants on their way to what Ormsby already nicknamed the conventicle, where Mr Trail awaited them with the Bible open at the thirty-seventh Psalm.

Frankfort was quite accustomed to hear men like Mr Trail called "swaddlers," "humbugs," nay, terms were applied to them such as no woman's pen can record; but though he felt what sorry representatives of their societies some of these teachers of God's solemn will had been, he was not one to censure the mass for the misdoings of the few; and therefore, soldier though he was, his heart was moved as he looked on the reader's calm, benevolent face, and heard him proclaim, in mild but fervent tones, that "the meek-spirited shall possess the earth;" and even Ormsby's eye glowed with something of enthusiasm as the missionary lifted up his voice at the closing verse, "And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they put their trust in him."

Frankfort could not help glancing towards Eleanor. She seemed unconscious of any one's presence: verily, if by nature she was intended for loftier purposes, some deep sorrow had stricken her, and she was of a surety belonging to the "meek-spirited of the earth." Large tears were stealing slowly and silently down that young and faded face, and fell in diamond drops unheeded on her sable garb; there were others weeping in that place of prayer besides herself but these sorrowed not without hope. If she had hope, it was evidently not of this earth; and Frankfort was more convinced of this every hour he passed in her presence, a presence felt more than he liked to acknowledge to himself, for she had evidently not a thought to bestow on him.

Her mother's eyes were fixed upon her; Mrs Daveney was seated beside the reader, Eleanor in a corner where there fell but little light. Still the watchful gaze seemed to pierce the mourner's very soul, and Frankfort, a keen observer of countenance, read in that mother's eye anxiety, tenderness, yet something of reproach.

"Let us join in prayer," said the teacher, and, for the first time since he had left England, Ormsby found himself kneeling in a home congregation.

He could not follow the teacher,—he was back again in the old dim library, a little boy, at his mother's side, with his hand clasped in hers. Perhaps at this very hour (there is little variation of time between Europe and South Africa) they were all assembled there,—master, mistress, children, servants on whose heads Time had shed his snow, even where they had then stood,—while the soldier son was wandering in distant countries.

But Frankfort forgot even Eleanor as he listened to the eloquent voice of Mr Trail. The prayer opened with that fine verse from the ninth Psalm, "Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy right. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men;" and at the close of it he added, "And it is for you too, my friends, to know yourselves to be but men. It is the arm of the Lord that shall prevail, and not an arm of flesh. We know, O God, that thou wilt help us; but in His name who commands us to love our enemies, to do good to them that despitefully entreat us, we beseech thee to remove these blinded heathen from the blackness and the darkness with which it has pleased thee to surround them. We know that they would have our blood poured out like water, but

do thou of thy mercy teach us to subdue our hearts, as well as our enemies, and in the spirit that bids us turn our cheek to the smiter, teach us charity to our benighted brethren. Would, O Lord, that it might please thee to quench the burning brand, and bury the war-spear in the earth for ever; but if such be not thy will, go forth with our armies, Lord; make them strong in faith, that in the name of the Lord they may do valiantly. We know that thy cause must prevail; that the banner of the Cross, though it be dyed in blood, must be planted wheresoever thy gospel shall be carried. Help us then in this fierce strife, this mortal conflict for God and for the right; and, even as thou wert a cloud by day and a fire by night to the Israelites of old, be with us in this wilderness. Once more, O Lord, once more, have mercy on our foes, and teach us from the depths of our hearts to say in the words of Him who died that we might live, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It was the sentiment, the tone, the fervency, and the simplicity, which gave eloquence to this appeal, and Frankfort loved to join in the hymn that closed the service, all standing; but, alas! habit has more to do with human nature than the theory of right. The solemn song rose from lips accustomed to the holy duty, and if Ormsby had little heed of what was passing, his friend at least felt that there were things to be searched for and known, whereof his philosophy had not yet dreamt,—those mysteries of good and evil which all the metaphysics in the world can never penetrate, if the true light be wanting on the path that leads to them.

The blessing was invoked, the little congregation rose, and Frankfort's thoughts were earthwards again as he remembered the miniature.

There was no doubt in his mind to whom it belonged. But to whom should he restore it? He was following Mrs Daveney into the sitting-room, intending to place it in her hands, when Mr Trail drew him back.

"A little accident has happened," said the missionary; "one of my wagon-boxes broke in the hurry of our rough journey, and in transferring the contents through the vineyard to the house—"

Frankfort drew the miniature forth, and said, "Is this your property?"

"It is one of the articles I have missed," replied Mr Trail; "I am truly glad it is found." As he spoke, Eleanor approached, and seeing the miniature handed from one gentleman to the other, looked eagerly in the missionary's face, as though inquiring the meaning of what was passing. Mr Trail drew her arm through his, and led her away, leaving Frankfort mystified.

He had been told this fair, melancholy creature was a widow. It was clear she had been a mother, and she was now probably mourning the recent death of her child; but why were these, apparently, secret or forbidden themes?

Then he reasoned as usual,—what was it to him? He was a stranger,—and yet he could not be considered entirely such under present circumstances, and how much, too, Mr Daveney had intrusted to him!

He waited for some minutes, hoping Mr Trail would return, and accompany him in his night rounds. He stepped into the verandah: the plains were bathed in moonlight. The inmates of the wagons were retiring to their rest; only here and there a light glimmered, or the feeble voice of an infant and some mother's murmured lullaby waivered through the stillness of the night; but Mr Trail and Eleanor were pacing the stoep in such earnest conversation, that they did not perceive Frankfort, who withdrew to his nightly duty.

The cattle had been secured by Griqua Adam, the gates were closed, the sentinels posted, and the outworks were nearly completed. Mr Daveney was expected home on the morrow.

Note 1. Abati consists of trees with their branches shortened and sharpened at the ends, and they serve as a chevaux-de-frize on an emergency.

Chapter Ten.

Mystery.

Noontide in Kafirland! what a glow! A bold but popular authoress was severely rated lately for the passage, "made twilight undulate." Truly, in an African noon the atmosphere flickers like water.

Not a sound, save the great bee, as large as a beetle, going whooming, whooming, among the doricas and convolvuluses screening the verandah. The locusts, all emerald and scarlet and gold, lie motionless in the pomegranate hedges. The cattle stand panting in the plains, too much exhausted to feed. The Hottentots are enjoying the sun in their own way, either fast asleep, with their yellow faces turned upward to the dazzling sky, or sitting smoking in the glare; and the dogs seek shady corners, and breathe last and hard, with their pink tongues hanging out of their parched mouths.

On the reinforcement of the Annerley garrison, the Kafirs had deemed it prudent to "sit still" in the hills. Doubtless, too, they were awaiting the issue of the grand meeting in the Amatola valley. A certain feeling of security for the present drew the inmates of the dwelling-house together in various occupations. The ladies resumed their feminine employments, and the mornings were passed in the entrance-hall, which, like those of most South African residences, was fitted up as a family sitting-room.

It was a pretty cool retreat in general, but this morning the air was so sultry, that every one felt listless—every one but Mr Trail, and he was busy, as usual, in his school. The hum of the children's voices was audible in the hall. Marion said it made her quite sleepy to listen to it; she threw down her pencil. Ormsby sat looking at her over his book, as he

pretended to read, lounging in his camp chair. Mrs Daveney was writing; but now and then she would raise her eyes to her youngest daughter, and glance from her to Ormsby. It was evident that the young officer's attentions to Marion were observed by the mother. Eleanor and Mrs Trail were sorting books and work for the school, the Bechuana teacher standing by, looking, as Ormsby said, provokingly cool.

Frankfort sat with a book in his hand also, but attentively noting all that was passing.

He was beginning to feel a little uneasy respecting Marion, and the thoughtless flirt, Ormsby—the girl so innocent, so fair, and barely seventeen. He observed, too, that her sister, at times, looked anxiously towards these young people, who always contrived to be side by side, interested in some particular object or topic.

Mrs Daveney finished her despatch, closed her desk, and begging Marion to follow her, left the room. Marion pouted, but obeyed; Ormsby retreated to solace himself with a cigar. Mrs Trail was sent for by her husband, the Bechuana girl carried off the books and work, and Frankfort and Eleanor were left alone.

Frankfort was a man unaccustomed to violent emotions, and, as we have shown, not usually susceptible of sudden impressions; besides which, he had acquired a habit of reasoning with himself, when other men would have been too selfish to see the necessity of it; but all the reasoning in the world now would not subdue the throbbing of his pulses as the young widow's dress swept past him on her way to the door.

Mr Daveney was expected that night; the anxious daughter was dreading a storm.

"Ah!" said she, shading her eyes as she looked towards the hills, "this bright day portends mischief, I fear. God grant my father may reach home by sunset."

A hot blast of air poured through the doorway. She closed it, and sat down within a few feet of Frankfort. He felt she was on the point of addressing him, and saw, by her embarrassed air, that what she was going to say was not mere commonplace.

"Major Frankfort," said she, after a short pause, "I am glad to have this opportunity of addressing a few words to you on a matter of deep concern to me. I am not going to speak of myself—my history cannot interest you, although it must be clear to you that I am a joyless creature—but I, claiming a right to judge and act for those I love, because sorrowful experience has aged me more than years beyond them—I venture to ask for a proof of your friendship, albeit we have been acquainted little more than one week—" She hesitated—Frankfort looked at her, her eyes were cast down, the tears were beginning to steal from under the drooping lids; he could not speak, his heart was so full of pity, and yet there were doubts mingled with this pity—was there any self-reproach added to the bitterness of the anguish that oppressed that stricken heart?

He was thinking only of Eleanor, while she was intent on interesting him in her sister's welfare—she brushed away the tears.

"Ah!" said she, "how self stands between us and the impulses of good! Here I have come, with the resolution to do my duty to my sister, and I am alluding to my own vain regrets for what can never be amended—it is of Marion I would speak, Major Frankfort. Your friend Mr Ormsby is evidently a man of the world, who sees no harm in devoting himself to any young creature who may take his fancy far the time. Will you pardon my reminding you, that if you have observed this, it must suggest itself to you—it must clearly be your—your duty, to speak to him? Alas, alas!" added she, "I scarcely know how to address you on this most painful subject; men are so apt to impute evil motives to women, whose principles are honest, whose minds would be pure, but for the heavy lessons learned from the other sex. Ah!" continued she, covering her face with her hands to hide the blushes that crimsoned it, "can I trust you—will you help me? Save my sister, my darling Marion,—save her from the misery of a blighted heart. Oh, think, Major Frankfort, how terrible a doom it is to dwell in the desert, with but the record of a dream!"

"You would understand me better if you knew all—you would appreciate my earnestness, my anxiety to shield my sister from a deadly sorrow, ere it be too late. Ah!" she cried, clasping her hands, and speaking with more energy than she had hitherto displayed, "if you should set down what I say to wrong account—if you *should* misunderstand me!—"

"Believe me, Mrs Lyle," answered Frankfort, with great emotion,— "believe me, when I say that, from the depths of my soul, I understand you."

He lifted his eyes to her face as he spoke. At the mention of her name, "Mrs Lyle," something like a spasm passed across her features, and he saw her slender fingers close convulsively together. His words admitted of opposite interpretations, but the deep sympathy expressed in that frank and earnest face was too manifest to be doubted for an instant. Eleanor's eyes drooped beneath the melting gaze that fixed itself upon them. It was long since she had received such silent but expressive homage. She thought but little of it after the first instant of surprise. She put no trust in man.

The deep blush passed away, and left the cheek as cold and statue-like as ever. She went on speaking of her sister. "It may seem," she continued, "that I am assuming my mother's prerogative in opening this subject; but I wish to spare both her and my father pain and anxiety during this period of public harass and responsibility, and therefore, relying on, or rather treating to, your generosity, I hope I may depend on you to remonstrate with Mr Ormsby on his show of devotion to my sister, since it can mean nothing."

"But," said Frankfort, "is it fair to speak of it as a *show* of devotion? Your sister is one who would command admiration in any circle. She is so charmingly fresh and innocent—so unlike the young ladies who, as you say, would be pure in heart but for the heavy lessons taught them by our sex, that, putting beauty out of the question, my friend

would be happy indeed in winning the affections of such a being as she appears to be."

"As she *appears* to be! Oh, wise and cautious that you are!—more merciful though than he, *you* would not seek at first sight to win a prize, believing it to be pure gold, and then reject it, because, on nearer view, you discovered the dross of human weakness!" She spoke with a bitterness which Frankfort felt was foreign to her gentle nature. He had not been for ten days domesticated with this sorrow-laden woman without discovering, in those trifles which mark the character, how tender, how feminine she was! She ceased to speak—but he could not withdraw his gaze from her earnest, mournful face. Every word, every look, betokened the strangest associations of worldly experience with the simplicity of a naturally trusting heart. The nervous trepidation, the modest blush, the sweet, faltering voice, how deeply were they contrasted with the resolute way in which she urged her right of sisterly guardianship, and the opinions she permitted to escape her lips, albeit unused to rebuke, or to the expression of ungentle thoughts!

By what silver cords are we often drawn unconsciously towards each other! Frankfort, for aught Eleanor considered, might have been one of those who thought ill of the female sex because he had received its favours; Eleanor, for aught Frankfort *knew*, might be playing a part. A mere man of the world would have suspected her of laying a scheme to ensnare Ormsby for her sister's sake, whilst willing to attract himself; but both were single-minded, honest-hearted people. The woman's heart was full of anxiety, and she longed for help from a strong and steady hand; she met with an open palm, and she accepted its assistance in all confidence and security.

They parted, Frankfort promising to put the matter in a serious light before his thoughtless friend, Eleanor thanking him for her sister's sake, and totally unconscious of the spell she was gradually weaving round the hitherto untouched heart of the thoughtful, high-souled soldier.

He knew the weight of his influence with Ormsby. That night, after Mr Daveney's return, Eleanor looked from her window into the avenue, between the mansion and the gateway. Two figures were pacing beneath the over-arching trees. Now they stopped and talked; now the slighter of the two left the other, with an angry gesture, then returned; now they were linked, arm in arm, and approached nearer the house.

Eleanor had left her light in her sister's room, and Marion was calling to her to say "Good night;" she was full of a ride next day. "How charming, after being shut up so long! Papa even thought these might be peace with Kafirland, after all. Some of the chiefs had sent him messengers, with flags of truce, and at any rate the open plains would be safe, and they should have a gallant escort, and—"

Marion was rattling on, as she sat before her glass, brushing her bright hair, which hung in great luxuriance over her white dressing-gown; but hearing no reply from Eleanor, she turned round, and saw her sister, with her head leaning on her hand, in her old abstracted way: jumping up, she ran to her, and casting her arms—how dazzlingly fair they looked against that sable robe!—round Eleanor's neck, she exclaimed, "Sweet sister mine, how selfish I must seem; but I am so happy!—and you—ah! you only answer me with your tears; but, my own darling, you must not refuse to be comforted—you *must* not." And she kissed the high, thoughtful brow of the pale, sad face she loved.

"Comfort, Marion! dear, bright-faced, light-hearted sister!—earth can give me no comfort, no consolation; but I love you—I love *you*;" and she took Marion to her bosom, and kissed her tenderly. "Consolation and comfort are yet to come. Doubtless they *will* come, but they have not been granted me yet. Ah! 'Sunbeam,'" she added, calling her by the name a Kafir chieftain had applied to Marion—"Sunbeam,' may no clouds overshadow you!"

She longed—oh! how she longed—to warn Marion of the thorns and rugged ways of the path which looked so fair, with Love beckoning in the distance, and smiling at the feet that stumbled in striving to reach his temple, in which were many altars—some of triumph, most of sacrifice; but she had not the heart to rend aside the veil.

She gathered up her sister's radiant tresses, kissed again the rosy cheek, and withdrew to her own little room. The moon shone through the latticed windows, chequering the objects it illuminated: she extinguished her light, and looked out into the avenue. Frankfort and Ormsby were still there. On the right and left were the wagons: the *lager* consisted of some twenty people on either side, but all was noiseless, save the pacing of a solitary sentinel, who waited for Frankfort to go the midnight rounds. The latter hurried up the avenue, and bid the man proceed, saying he would follow; and then she heard the two officers exchange a friendly "Good night."

"Remember," said Frankfort.

"I will," replied Ormsby; "you are right, and I am wrong, my good fellow." The rest was lost to Eleanor, who retired from the window.

Another blazing day! Mrs Daveney established herself with Marion and Mrs Trail in the cool dining-room; Eleanor was assisting Mr Trail in the school; Frankfort was displaying his success in engineering to his host, and was planning work for Ormsby and himself.

Marion was more listless than usual, laying down her work—sad, stupid work it was—coarse frock-making for those "wretched little Hottentots"—and lifting up the dark moreen blinds to see if thunder-clouds were gathering. "No; there were streaks in the sky like great white plumes, there would be a breeze in the evening, and she should have her ride."

"Sit down, Marion," said Mrs Daveney, rather impatiently; "how restless you are! it is impossible to write while you are wandering about the room."

Marion sat down, her cheeks in a glow, and stitched away in nervous haste. Her mother noted all this.

At the early dinner all the party met again. There was some change of seats, in consequence of Mr Daveney resuming his accustomed place at his table. Mrs Daveney's keen eye remarked that Ormsby was not at Marion's side

as usual, and then, to her surprise, she saw a glance of intelligence pass between Frankfort and Eleanor.

She recognised the meaning of this at once.

The ride was again talked of, and Mr Daveney yielded to Marion's entreaty "only for an hour's canter in the cool of the day." Eleanor consented to go; that decided her father.

You will have discovered, dear reader—I am always inclined to like my reader—that Mrs Daveney was a woman likely to be a little jealous of her own authority. It was fortunate that her husband was content to *share* his with her, otherwise there would have been struggles for the real and the fancied prerogative, in which the high-spirited woman would have surely conquered. She was certain that Eleanor had opened her mind to Frankfort on the subject of Ormsby's devotion to Marion, and she felt angry at being, as she considered, forestalled in her prerogative; and Eleanor, you know, had some compunction in the matter too.

You will have discovered, too, that between the mother and elder daughter there was not that tenderness, of manner at least, which existed between Mrs Daveney and Marion. Eleanor had been born during the illness of that best-beloved being, who had entered the world when dangers beset his parents—poor little quiet thing! she was set aside at once, that this fragile creature might, if possible, be saved. He died; and then there came, as consolation, the bright-eyed, rosy-lipped Marion.

But with the father, the gentle, dark-haired Eleanor had made her steady way, and kept it. She grew up, to use a trite simile, like a violet in the shade. No one thought anything of that colourless oval face, those dove-like eyes, that intelligent brow shaded by heavy curls. There was no promise in the thin, small figure; the gentle voice was seldom heard; the smile not often seen; and it was with considerable satisfaction that Mrs Daveney consented to let the delicate, drooping girl accompany her father on a visit to the Governor's wife at Cape Town.

The said Governor's wife, Lady Annabel Fairfax, was a relative of Mr Daveney's. She had loved him in her youth, but he had never known *that*; and now she welcomed his gentle daughter with that deep tenderness which pure-hearted women feel for the children of those on whom their first affections have been bestowed.

But we shall have to refer to this part of Eleanor's history by-and-by.

While she rides, her mother is pacing the verandah with Mr Trail. Good Mr Trail, he is soothing that ruffled spirit, deprecating its jealousy of authority in trifles; he analyses Mrs Daveney's motives, he sifts them like wheat before her very face, and he condenses, in the "half-hour's talk," almost the history of her moral life since her marriage. He is a very old friend; he has been associated with her in her husband's district for years; he has seen her children grow up, and he loves them.

He loves Eleanor best, though: we naturally feel most for those we pity.

And Eleanor—she is riding side-by-side with Major Frankfort. Ah, take heed, Frankfort—she has, as yet, no thought of thee!

It was like a picture of a hunting-party in old times. Eleanor revived to new life on horseback, and her bright bay steed rejoiced in the precious burden he bore. She took the lead with Frankfort, leaving her father with Marion and Ormsby. Poor Ormsby, he deserved some credit for letting Frankfort arrange the reins for Marion; but the rosy lips were pouting, the eyes reproachfully turned towards him, and he could not resist the temptation of joining her in the avenue when her father fell back to see that the escort following them was well armed.

Start not, reader, at the notion of ladies riding for pleasure with armed escorts in a heathen land. Many a time and oft have I traversed these enamelled plains, too much exhilarated with the grandeur of the scene to think of danger.

Eleanor, in her dark riding-habit, fitting so as admirably to display the graceful shape and easy attitude of the rider, a large, simple straw hat shading the face, over which, under the influence of the refreshing breeze, a hue like the inside of a delicate shell was stealing, was a delightful picture to Frankfort, who had often longed to draw her from the shade she always sought; and Marion, in a riding-dress like her sister's, but with an ostrich plume wound round her hat, resembled one of those saucy dames, who "went a hunting" in the merry days of vicious, pleasant, witty Charles the Second.

They scarce drew rein for four miles. There was no spoor of Kafirs, the hills were silent, and there were herds of bucks gathered on the plains. The tribes were evidently sitting ominously still.

The Trails and Mrs Daveney were watching at the gateway when the riders came in sight. Those left behind were always anxious till the wanderers came back again, in these uncertain days.

The time of truce was passed by the settlers in the district in "making ready" for the expectant foe—in Kafirland the people were collecting cattle, arms, and ammunition. It was the lull that precedes the storm, and the community at Annerley knew it. All there calmly but resolutely awaited the crisis. The women, children, and old men, occupying the wagon bivouac, were fain to be content with the news they received occasionally from their friends at their homesteads; the Trails kept the even tenor of their way in the school, and among the humble people of the settlement; and Ormsby, unable to restrain his passion for Marion, was in a serious dilemma between his wish to remain and Frankfort's advice to him to rejoin his regiment at once, if he was not in earnest.

"In earnest, my good fellow!" exclaimed the incorrigible flirt; "you don't suppose I am in earnest, do you?"

"Then, if you are not in earnest, according to the world's acceptance of the term," replied Frankfort, "you should go. If you remain under such circumstances, I can neither consider you as a man of honour nor an honourable man."

Ormsby was selfish, as you know; but he had a great respect for Frankfort, who, without making a fuss about being a "man of honour," *was* an honourable man. Ah, reader! there is a wide difference between the two, as perhaps you have found before now.

That evening Ormsby went to Mr Daveney, and solicited leave to pay his addresses to his daughter Marion.

Mr Daveney desired time to think; but, at any rate, refused to hear of a definite engagement until the young soldier had reconsidered the subject, and written home to his father for "consent and approbation." Nay, the honest-hearted settler—Mr Daveney and his wife often referred to themselves as settlers—would have had the young man return to his regiment without delay, that he might try the test of time and absence, before Marion was even consulted; but despatches suddenly arrived, bringing accounts of the result of the great meeting with the chiefs, who, contrary to their usual practice, breathed nothing but war and defiance in the very teeth of the authorities. It was clear, the borders of the colony could not be passed with any chance of safety. There seemed no alternative now but to await the reiteration of the war-cry, and stand to arms from Port Elizabeth to Natal. The Dutch in the upper districts refused their aid in the Colonial cause, and the Kafirs chuckled at hearing that the *Amahulu* and the *Amaglezi*—(the Boers and the English)—were "barking at each other like dogs."

The little episode of which Marion was the heroine had been the means of bringing Eleanor and Frankfort into nearer communion than during the first week of their acquaintance. The young widow's gravity of manner was little changed, but the deep melancholy was gradually giving way before the influence of a mind that opened its stores chiefly for her. She did not talk more than usual, but she listened, and Frankfort felt he had gained a vantage-ground.

He kept it, too. Like Scheherazade in the "Arabian Nights," he always contrived, when he quitted this fair, sad creature's side, to leave something for her mind to rest upon; some subject which she would wish resumed. I am wrong in using the word "contrived"—that was not Frankfort's "way"—but the interest Eleanor took in all that he so pleasantly and intelligently discussed invested it with an additional charm to himself.

Meanwhile, father, mother, friends, looked on, and hoped that a light was dawning on the horizon of Eleanor's clouded life, and they rejoiced. They had no doubt of Frankfort's honesty of purpose. His bearing and his sentiments were alike frank, just, kind, manly, and single-minded. He was not blindly, passionately in love with the soft voice and mournful eyes that had certainly at first enchained his attention—bewitched him, as some would have it—but he was most deeply interested in the young widow; anxious to penetrate the cloud of sorrow that even in his presence shaded her brow, and, as he reluctantly admitted to himself, created a gulf between her and him, which he only *hoped* to remove or pass over. Every night, as he paced the avenue after the sentinels were posted, did he resolve on openly addressing Mr Daveney on the subject of his widowed daughter's position; but the resolve faded into air, when he reconsidered what had passed between himself and Eleanor in the day. He had two weighty reasons for pausing. He was by no means sure of Eleanor's sentiments towards himself, and he had a dread, though this he was unwilling to acknowledge, in his own mind, of lifting the veil of mystery with which he *felt* more than he *knew* she was invested.

But as soon as he did gain courage to sound the depths of his own heart, he recognised the duty he owed to her, to her family, especially his gracious, generous host, and to himself; and he resolved that another sun should not set till the question, on which he felt whole years of happiness must depend, was decided.

The dew was on the leaves and the sun high in the east, when Eleanor Lyle came through the cool hall into the glowing verandah on the morning when Frankfort had at last resolved on requesting an interview with her father.

He had a very strong idea that she liked him. She was one who had evidently suffered from the treachery or the evil humour of man; everything she said or did was tinged with some fatal remembrance. She shrunk from the sound of the name she bore; she could not believe in Ormsby's faith; she did not openly ignore all honourable feelings in the other sex, but she clearly set no store by men's promises to women. She did not volunteer these strong opinions—they were drawn from her; but Frankfort soon discovered that it was he only who could elicit them. Yes, she most certainly liked him—she had a good opinion of him, too, he fancied; he had tested it at times in his own quiet way.

They met together in the verandah this fine, warm, balmy, dewy morning, while the world was pleasantly astir. Children creeping out of the wagon bivouacs with "shining morning faces;" herd-boys coming by the house with baskets of meelies and fine burnished English tins of milk; graceful Fingo girls, with fresh-gathered pumpkins and cool green water-melons on their heads; Mrs Trail's Bechuana nursemaid and ruddy children—such contrasts to their dusky Abigail—loaded with heather, lilac, pink, and white, and purple; and then there swung out from the old mulberry-tree in the vineyard the call to prayers in the school. The people from the wagons hurried off; the front garden and avenue were deserted; there was not a sound but the whooming of a great bee that was always rifling the doricæ and invading the roses and convolvuluses, till the "morning hymn" swelled on the warm, still air in solemn chorus, and true, though unstudied, harmony.

They descended the steps, and sought the shade of the avenue. It was flanked on either side by a little nursery of trees; there was a good deal of low bramble and brushwood, which made almost a labyrinth of the ground; but there was a shady spot beside a silver thread of water that stole from the rill irrigating the vineyard, and Frankfort and Eleanor were bent on gathering water-cresses for breakfast. I doubt if people not interested in each other would have thought of taking all this trouble for a few green leaves; but these two went about it as if they had laid out for themselves a serious employment.

It was a delicious nook. Eleanor had even laughed at the scramble she had had in reaching it, and sat down heated and fatigued with her descent of the bank, down which Frankfort might have made an excuse to lift her if he had so pleased—he would have been pleased to do so—but he did not; there was such a divine purity about this young and graceful and subdued being, that, had he been in a desert with her, he would, have felt that it was she who drew the barrier between them, which he dared not pass.

All this may seem very anomalous when you think how Frankfort dreaded to lift the veil between them; but, remember, his doubts were the issue of lonely reflective hours in Eleanor's presence. He grieved at the secret sorrow that oppressed her, and bound with its heavy fetters the joyous impulses of youth.

How handsome he looked as he cast himself on the green-sward beside the little rill, his hat laid aside, his open, honest countenance brightened with enjoyment at the radiance of the morning and the fragrant beauty of this green retreat, with the shy retiring Eleanor actually smiling in his face, as he fanned her with the broad green leaves of arums growing in the shining watercourse. Ah, it was the honesty of that face that made it so handsome! Eleanor was not one to be attracted by mere statuesque beauty—she had forsworn love for ever—she was anticipating peace in this abjuration of love, when the kindly eyes and approving smile of this true-hearted soldier beamed on her with an effect like sunlight on the hills in Kafirland, scathed by the lightning. There are patches on which no green grass will ever again grow—desolate spots in the great oasis; but these are overlooked as the herald of a new day touches them with his glory, and casts all that is unsightly into shade.

Gems of dew glittered on the mossy bank—flowers, rainbow-hued, were opening their chalices to the genial influence of day—a magnificent corallodendrum spread its scarlet-tufted boughs over a low rustic bench, and they seated themselves together under this fine canopy. Eleanor had desired a little Fingo boy to follow her with a basket for the cresses—Frankfort thought he obeyed his mistress much too soon.

She had taken off the large straw hat—Frankfort held it for her; her fine hair was slightly disordered; there was a light in her eye, a colour in her cheek, her lover—we must call him such now—had never seen before. That young face, that candid smile—nay, the smile sometimes broke into a low musical laugh. Ah! could, the demon of self-reproach be lurking beneath all this bewitching feminine charm?

Frankfort felt that the time must soon come when he should ask her for her history. He had resolved to learn it from herself. He longed to pour balm into the wounded heart; he was growing hourly less *afraid* of hearing the truth. He was just, too,—he felt that no offer of confidence could be made to him till he solicited it.

He would do so now. She sent her little dusky page to the rill and rose to follow him. She was tying on her hat, when a slender chain encircling her throat caught in the strings, and she unwittingly drew it from her bosom. Frankfort saw suspended to it the miniature he had found in the vineyard.

He felt emboldened,—he ventured to touch it.

She made no remonstrance, but with a deep sigh would have replaced it.

Frankfort held it fast. His hand did not shake, but his heart beat.

How often does a sudden impulse bring to a crisis what has cost us many hours of forethought! and how often—oh! how often!—does the one great event of a life hinge upon some trifle unforeseen! A look, a word, an unexpected meeting, will often remove the doubts and agonies of years, when but for what we call *accident*, there might have been no meeting, no blessed exchange of look or word.

Frankfort felt that this was a crisis in his life.

"Eleanor," said he, "whose child was this?"

"Mine, Major Frankfort," she replied, "mine; he died, and—" she broke into a passion of tears. He drew close to her—she suffered him to take her hand. All his doubts faded at sight of those fast-falling tears,—those sobs of agony.

"Not now, not yet," said she; "the bitterness of death is past; but you have touched a chord which has vibrated through my soul, and I must have time to recover my trembling senses."

She took the arm offered her; they returned by an open pathway to the house, the little Fingo following, carrying his basket piled full of fresh and glittering leaves, and in his arms a quantity of arums, the large water-lilies of South Africa.

Mrs Daveney and Marion were in the entrance-rooms. Since Ormsby's avowal of his attachment, Marion was more constantly at her mother's side. I have shown you how Mr Trail had exerted his influence over Mrs Daveney for good; how his words, like the dew from heaven, falling on good seed, had revived her best impulses, and removed the tares of false pride and self-glorification from her heart. Ah, kind, useful man, there be many that the world calls "as good as thee;" but there are *ways* of ministering God's word, "the small rain upon the tender herb," refreshing the soil, not tearing it up and sweeping it away in the torrent of over-zeal and self-righteousness. It is such as Mr Trail who pioneer the way for the timid, and keep the ground for the weak. Verily, it is the meek-spirited who possess the earth; they consider the evil of their own nature in reproving others, and obtain concessions to their humility which would be denied to their assumption of supremacy.

How dark and unfathomable are the depths of our own hearts, till the Day-star from on high sheds its divine ray on our souls, and teaches us to guide others by conquering ourselves!

But it strikes me you may think me prosy,—too fond of dissecting people's motives. Pardon me, it is my way, my fault, my habit,—excuse it if it does not suit you, and pass on.

"Ah!" cries the worldly-minded reader, "by Eleanor's tact and candour, a very delicate point has been settled; confidence has been established among all; Ormsby declares he never should have known his own mind if he had not been brought to the point; he was never so happy in his life."

In a word, you will exclaim, "All's well that ends well." Certainly, that is one of the secrets of self-gratulation and

content in this work-a-day world.

But do not jump at conclusions—we are not near the end of our story yet.

Mrs Daveney saw traces of tears in Eleanor's eyes. She glanced at Frankfort, and observed that his face was full of serious thought; but, albeit Marion had always been the favourite, so to speak, the mother had every confidence in Eleanor. How often mothers *love* one child best, but trust another most!

Mr Trail had brought this mother and eldest daughter nearer to each other than they had been for years; and Mrs Daveney anticipated Eleanor's confidence ere the morning passed. The latter did not appear at the breakfast-table, and the kind, anxious father went to satisfy himself that she was not ill.

There was a shade of anxiety on his brow, and as he passed his wife, on leaving the table at the call of some farm-servant, he whispered to her that Eleanor wished to see her.

The result of their conference was the resolution on Eleanor's part, with the sanction of father and mother, to "tell Major Frankfort the history of the miniature, and more if he desired it."

Light broke on Eleanor as her mother reminded her of many trifling incidents, plainly manifesting Frankfort's partiality for her. These, connected with what had lately passed between the young widow and the generous, candid soldier, left no doubt on her mind of the nature of his regard for her. She began to weigh every look; she suddenly remembered he had addressed her as "Eleanor,"—she had been too much startled by the unexpected allusion to her lost darling to think of anything but the revival of the bitter pang.

Then Frankfort's violent emotion was so at variance with his usual delicacy. She was half-frightened to believe that he loved her. They had spent three weeks together under the same roof. It might truly be said that the light of a new day had *dawned* upon her, so insensibly had Frankfort's influence stolen over her, and sweetened an existence, of late so wretched and forlorn.

To have seen the settlement of Annerley, in the early part of March, 18—, you would have thought, had you known nothing of the terrible elements gathering silently around, that Mercy and Peace had met together, that Righteousness and Truth had kissed each other.

"In the deep noontide, in the sunset's hush," the children's voices chimed together in the busy school; mothers and sisters plied their needles in the shady, trellised passage; the cattle herds grew careless, and dozed away the dreamy day; the ladies of the family party suffered themselves to hope that the dove with the olive branch was winging her way from the mountain haunts of the unhappy heathen. Ormsby was hourly profiting by his association with his energetic, intelligent, active-minded host. The "maxims" he had been accustomed to laugh at as "Frankfort's platitudes" were household words here. The fresh, innocent mind of Marion was a new and beautiful study, and he was a little, a very little, afraid of Mrs Daveney. He was not quite sure that he liked her—she was evidently inclined to keep him in order, and then she was "dreadfully clever."

So complete was the quiet reigning in this beautiful wilderness, that even Mr Daveney began to think the chiefs had held council, and determined on prolonging the truce, owing to the lateness of the season, the corn being yet unripe in the districts between the Buffalo and Keiskama rivers. The two officers were awaiting his expected despatch to rejoin their regiments, if ordered to do so, as they had considered it right, on so long and unforeseen detention, to "report" their whereabouts to their commanding officer.

You will think it all very novel-like and romantic to have brought these delightful, handsome, intelligent officers into the wilderness, and established them there with an obliging mamma, and a soldierlike host, and two charming daughters—you will consider it all perfectly correct in romance, but not quite so true to nature. Ah! if you had seen the world at home and abroad as I have done, dear reader, you would have discovered that romance and reality are much more nearly allied than untravelled folks imagine. I assure you, the picture of the Annerley settlement is not exaggerated, though I admit that the family I have selected to introduce to you is not of common stamp, even in England; but there is plenty of space for more of them in Southern Africa, and there is so little room in England, that vice jostles against virtue, and often has the best of it.

Frankfort and Eleanor were again seated on the rustic bench, beneath the scarlet-tufted corallodendrum. He could not doubt any longer that he had at least touched her heart—how deep the impression was, he could not tell. In her manner to him she was like a child, all joyousness; at times smiling, almost gay, and occasionally confiding, but as yet not so in matters connected with herself. Sometimes she would half promise to "talk of herself" to him; then the time came, and something would intervene. If he had shrunk from asking her previous history, she dreaded to tell it. She said so, but added, for his comfort—"Fear not, dear Major Frankfort; you may pity me as unfortunate, and condemn me as weak, but you will not have occasion to condemn. I am only a wronged, deceived, and, for a long time, most unhappy woman; and if you should despise me for my misfortunes, which you may do"—she put her hand on his lips, as he was about to interrupt her—"you will not love me less, though you may not choose me for your wife."

He took her hand in his, and pressed it with a fervency, eloquent but silent.

"Ah!" said she, shuddering, "it is so long since I was happy, that, albeit *you* present the cup, I hold it to my lips, trembling lest it fall."

She took the miniature of her boy from her bosom. Frankfort bent over her, and gazed upon the angel face, dimmed with the young mother's tears; but though she wept, it was not with that passionate anguish he had witnessed before. He drew her to him—he ventured to kiss away those slow-falling tears—he had told her that morning that he

loved her.

"Tell me," at last whispered Frankfort, trembling and cold with suspense, "who was this child's father?"

"I could not nerve myself to tell you my sad story," replied Eleanor. "I have written it. My father will give it you this evening, I own I shrunk from this tearing open of the records of the past. There are some passages from which you will turn perhaps in dismay. You will discover, what you may have already suspected, that I have loved and been deceived; but you have yet to decide whether I am a fitting bride for you. I confess I have no hope."

Frankfort withdrew his hand from Eleanor's. He paced the walk in great agitation.

She waited till he approached her again. "Pity me," said she, rising. "Ah! it has been a terrible task to make this revelation to you. Do me justice—I did not seek to win *you*. I had abjured love for ever; but you came; you were kind; I listened; a new emotion stirred my heart, unlike the wild passion which once brought me to the depths of despair, and now, God help me! *you*, too, may forsake me."

She was weeping. "Tell me," he again whispered, "is there any self-reproach?—any shame? Ah, Eleanor! I must know—any—"

"Disgrace!" you would say, interrupted Eleanor.

Her lover answered her not a word, but stood waiting her reply. The strong, tall man shook like an aspen-tree.

"You will learn all," said Eleanor, "in the packet I have left for you with my father. I leave it to you to decide whether we may meet again."

The light of day was fading. Side by side, they returned towards the house; but not a word did either speak. They went round by the vineyard; they stood at the gateway leading to the trellised passage. Frankfort opened it, and Eleanor would have passed him by.

He drew her back. "Shall we meet again, Eleanor?" said he.

"Alas!" she answered, "I fear *you* will decide otherwise." And he—his *heart* answered her in the spirit, if not in the words, of Moore's beautiful song:

"I know not and care not if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art!"

Ah, reader! you will be glad to know, for I cannot help telling you, that Eleanor, though *disgraced*, was not *guilty*, save in the act, and that I do not defend, of marrying one for whom she had no real affection.

The inmates of Annerley have retired to their rest. The whole household seems hushed in the deepest repose; but Frankfort is seated with a packet before him, which he longs, yet dreads, to open.

He tears the seal away, and the sight of Eleanor Lyle's handwriting makes his heart beat—he can hear it in the silence of the midnight hour.

But we must first see how sped the convicts.

Chapter Eleven.

The Torture.

It was in the month of December, 18—, that Lee and Martin Gray established themselves as traders at Umlala's kraal, in Kafirland. The reader has been given to understand that Lee had no intention of domesticating himself with the savages, albeit he adapted himself at once to the customs of the tribe, persuading the chief and his councillors that he had been induced to join them from a desire to better his condition, as well as aid and advise them in their plans and operations against the colony. He was too well acquainted with the Kafir character to attempt to impose on them by professing disinterested motives, for on these he knew they would place no reliance; but by fixing himself as a trader among them, he could in the first place bide his time for carrying out his intentions of joining the Dutch; and while doing so, lay up a fund for future pecuniary wants or emergencies. To Brennard it was his interest to be a faithful agent. To do Lee justice, he had no thought of fraud in money matters, and from the traders to the eastward he easily gathered intelligence of the Dutch farmers' movements, from the districts of Natal, and beyond the Draakberg, to an appointed spot between the branches of the Orange River, where a general gathering of emigrant Boers was to take place previous to trekking in a body to Orichstad, a settlement beyond the 25th degree of south latitude, and therefore considered by them as not subject to the British Government.

With an air of good faith, he opened a correspondence in cipher with Brennard, who, at his suggestion, placed an agent on the Stormberg mountains, and thus increased his contraband traffic by disposing of arms and ammunition to the Boers, who, assisted by these traitors, grew sanguine in their hopes and determined in their preparations. So blind, indeed, was the colonial government to the real state of affairs, that wagons containing guns actually passed the outskirts of the frontier garrisons, on their way to the Modder and Bilt River settlements, while smaller arms were landed at the Umtata, and conveyed to a *dépôt* at the foot of the northern extremity of the Stormberg mountains.

The Dutch soon felt the influence of a master mind at work. A secret communication was set on foot between Lee and the rebel leader; but Lee was cautious in his policy, since, to be suspected by the Kafirs as anything but a trader,

would be to draw down attention from the missionaries, who were, when permitted, in communication with the tribes most distant from the colony. Those within the border were becoming every day more lawless. It was said by some of these teachers, in after times, that they had had an idea of some men of suspicious character living among Umlala's people; but having no tangible proof of their existence, having only the word of Kafir spies to depend on, they could take no steps in the matter, either by offering advice to the Kafirs, near whom the poor missionaries and their families were living in dread and peril of their lives, or by giving information to the authorities, who were too remote to act.

Lee liked the life he led; the form of government so favourable to the doctrine that "might is right," though tempered in some measure by general opinion, in which he succeeded in gaining a voice; the total absence of all moral discipline except as regarded women, with whom Lee, as he said, had no mind to trouble himself—a life of ease, yet of excitement, the spacious and beautiful country, all conspired to render his temporary location desirable; but while he thus rested on his arms, his mind was ceaselessly at work.

With that shrewdness which stands bad men in stead of deeper knowledge, Lee had long penetrated the weaker outworks, so to speak, of Gray's heart; keenly susceptible, of facile mind, and imbued with a vanity as natural to men as to women, he had easily yielded to the gentle influences and watchful solicitude of Amayeka. Lee at once profited by this "fancy," as he called it, to turn it to his own account, and used every means to encourage it.

Desirous of personal conference with the Dutch agent at the station in the Stormberg, he had no mind to be attended in such expeditions by Gray; yet he knew well that without some counter-charm, the deserter, on being left to himself, would at once appeal, through the missionaries, to the mercy of the British Government. True, there was the oath which had bound the three traders together in solemn compact, but paramount to all other considerations was Gray's horror of his own treachery and disloyalty as a soldier. However desirous he might be of keeping the compact, as regarded Brennard and Lee, inviolate, the issue of Gray's surrender would be keen inquiry, and consequently a fatal result to the chief convict's schemes. Like a good man's neglected garden, the surface of the young deserter's character presented a wilderness of weeds and briars, but below were seeds long sown, some dead, but some struggling, with every capability of fruition, when the soil should fall under the hand of the labourer. All considerations, Lee felt, would vanish before the wish to retrieve the past, to become, in Gray's own words, "an honest man again."

Evening time in Kafirland! The sun has all day long been glowing on the river, lighting it up like burnished steel; the trees motionless, the birds on listless wing, screening themselves within the shady boughs. Now the mountain peaks are blending their purple summits with a crimson sky, and the last rays of light deck the clouds in the west as with a glory! Lo! it fades, and the heavens are veiled with a mantle of pale grey; the stream begins to murmur, responsive to the breeze that stirs its waters; the birds congregate in the balmy air before seeking their rest; the countless herds more slowly homeward, panting for the refreshment of cool water brooks; and the women, some singly, some in parties in single file, trip across the plains to draw water, as is their custom at eventide. The picture reminds one of what one reads of in the patriarchal days.

Lee and Gray sat upon a bank that sloped to the river, a tributary of the Great Kei—would you had a map, dear reader, to trace the country I would fain describe. Peals of laughter stirred the air. Beneath the over-arching boughs a crowd of dusky Nereides were taking their evening bath, swimming, diving, pulling each other in sport below the surface of the stream, swinging from branch to branch with amazing activity and grace, and tossing up fountains of spray on the elder women, who stood silently filling their calabashes at the clear pools between the stones at the drift.

"Amayeka, Amayeka, izapa, izapa (come hither)," cried two or three of the younger girls, as Amayeka, apparently unconscious of the gathering below, and with slow step, vacant air, and pitcher on her head, moved along the opposite bank, followed by her little attendant, a tiny meercat, which I have hitherto forgotten to mention.

It is the wisest-looking little thing you can imagine, is this meercat of South Africa. Its keen, restless black eye looks right into your own, and asks questions as plainly almost as speech could do. It has a way of setting itself up bolt-upright, and turning its head from one object to another with the most inquisitive air, and adapts itself to the habits of its owners in a manner perfectly marvellous. I remember one which, though not very young when taken near the Orange River, became domesticated like a dog, and was far more sociable than a cat. I think I see it now, sitting at a garden-gate facing a parade-ground, on which, at stated hours of the day, troops were wont to exercise. As the warning bugle sounded, it took up its position; when the regiment fell in, the meercat placed itself in front of the line; when the men marched, the little beast advanced in front of the column, halted with the troops, and when they were again in line, sat down before them, and watched the commanding officer with a knowing air quite indescribable. At the close of a drill it would head the band to the limits of the ground; and when all were dismissed, would return to the house. In the cold weather, if suspicious of any visitors, it would roll itself into a ball, and squeeze itself into some corner, where it could not easily be reached; but it loved best to sit before the fire, with its paws on the fender, surveying the family group, of which it was the pet, with its sharp twinkling eyes, and bending its ears knowingly to every unaccustomed sound.

Such too was the creature that trotted beside Amayeka, now and then seating itself before her, and glancing from its mistress to the nymphs in the river, as if to remind her she was called; but she went on, deaf to the cry "Izapa;" and Gray watched her till she disappeared behind a tuft of trees overhanging the upper drift. Soon afterwards Lee joined some young warriors, with whom he had been engaged all the morning in firing at a mark, and who now summoned him to their employment of casting bullets at a fire under the rocks; Gray rose also, and descended by the bank.

Amayeka was seated by the river's brink, with the meercat at her feet; twilight lingered long, and the young moon shed its first ray of silver on the water, when a loose stone rolled past her; there was a light tread, a rustle in the branches of a long-tressed weeping willow, and Gray's hand fell on her shoulder.

But in a cove above lay the wizard Amani, with his elements of witchcraft gathered round him—strips of skin from the golden back of the deadly puff-adder, the hood of a cobra capello, some poisonous roots steeped in gall, the forefinger of a dead Fingo herdsman, and the skull of a Hottentot, in which last he was busily mixing up these ghastly charms with a cement of blood and clay.

He had long had some notion of Amayeka's intercourse with the younger convict, or trader, as Amani, like the rest of his tribe, supposed the deserter to be, and he now gloated at his discovery.

Of the two, he hated Lee the most, for he could discriminate between the energy of the one and the passive sorrow stamped on the countenance of the other. Then Doda was an object of special abhorrence; for Doda, when he could, pleaded the white man's cause. Amayeka, from her acquirements, invested her father with a power he would not otherwise have possessed; by her intelligence the wizard often found his plans forestalled, his prophecies doubted; but he had besides a deeper source of hatred against her, for a true Kafir she was not. Through her veins ran the blood of white forefathers; her ancestress was one of those unfortunates who had been stranded at the Umbeesam River when the *Grosvenor* was wrecked.

To her lineage Amayeka owed her soft, though short, and wavy hair, her complexion of fairer hue than is usual among the Amakosa race, her delicately-chiselled outline of feature, and her falling shoulders. Her limbs I have described as exquisitely moulded, and the voice musically sweet.

But although pleased to refer to her white ancestress, whom she faintly remembered, shrunk, bronzed, withered with age, and degraded to the state of a savage, Amayeka's habits were those of the wild tribe to which she belonged; but tender-hearted, with something about her of the English attribute gratitude, unknown amongst Kafirs, some of those old associations, whose roots lie deepest in the human heart, had led her to take an interest in Lee and Gray when she first heard their voices in the midnight solitude of the Witches' Krantz. Lee's ungracious manner soon repelled her; but Gray's dependence on her good offices as guide drew her towards him; and now, kindred, tribe, allegiance, all were forgotten in her passion for her white lover.

They sat together in silence for some moments, Amayeka resting her head on Gray's shoulder, her dusky locks mingling with his brown hair, which had grown long during his exile, and would have given to his countenance an air of effeminacy, but for the moustache shading his upper lip.

Horrible wizard! what a contrast to these youthful beings must thou have presented, leaning thy clay-painted face from its green covert! Gall-bladders, jackals' tails, and the polished teeth of monkeys, wolves, and tigers, made the head inconceivably hideous; and the great eyes glittering in the dusk would have startled the lovers had they looked up.

But they had no thought beyond their own vague destinies. The shades of night deepened, they could hear the girls and children chanting monotonously on their way to the kraals, the stream rippled past them unheeded, the guanias plashing merrily among the little pools, and the meercat nestled closer to Amayeka's feet.

"They say, Amayeka," whispered Gray, "that war is proclaimed in the colony, and that soldiers are marching towards the Kei."

"Oute!" ("Hear!") said Amayeka, who often used this Kafir prefix. "The white man's word to kill has not yet gone forth. The red soldiers are scattered through the bush. The Amakosas sleep with an open eye, but are not yet up. Soon a voice will be heard on the mountains, and answered from the valleys, and the war-cry will fill the land."

There was a pause.

"Amayeka," said Gray, "what will you do when your tribe is roused? You cannot stay here. You must fly."

"And leave you?" asked Amayeka, in a tone indescribably mournful.

"I love you, Amayeka; you must fly with me."

"You love me, Martin, you love me!" repeated the Kafir girl, in distinct and sweetly-toned English, as if she had just acquired a knowledge of the value attached to the language, because her lover understood her at once; and then she went on in an innocent, childish way: "Ukutanda, diyatanda, diyatandiva, diyakutanda"—"To love, I love, I am loved, I will love;" and laughing gleefully at applying an old lesson to a purpose hitherto unthought of she forgot the war-cry—the red soldiers—she began to teach Gray the lesson, and when he had repeated it over and over again, to her infinite satisfaction, she tried to look into his countenance by the dusky light, and laughed softly.

"But, Amayeka," said Gray again, "tell me, will you go with me from this wild tribe of yours?"

"Go!" said Amayeka, her low laugh turned into a sigh—"And whither? Leave the land, and my people to sit in the ashes! Cowards only fly from a burning kraal; the brave stand by to quench the flame, and help the ruined."

"But the red soldiers are my countrymen," said Gray; "you would not have me fight them!"

Amayeka tried to understand her lover's notions of treachery; but the question resolved itself into these simple words—"Ah! you must not go; you belong to us now."

The deserter groaned.

She took his hand, bent her head upon it, and kissed it with mute tenderness.

They sat in silence till night fell, and a pale shimmer on the stream only served to make the darkness more palpable.

But Amani's eyes still glared upon them fiercely, and he hated them with a deeper bitterness than ever.

They rose together, and walked leisurely by the waterside.

The wizard left his covert, and, gliding along the bank above, peeped over it occasionally to watch them. Sometimes they stopped on their way and whispered. He could hear Amayeka's voice falter, and he cursed her knowledge of the white man's language. Once, just where the moon's rays glinted, they stood, and Amani could see in Amayeka's hands something glittering. He recognised it as a steel chain, which he had observed round Gray's neck, with a knife of many blades suspended by it. How often he had coveted it! He heard the knife drop; Gray was unconscious of its fall. The Kafir girl picked it up, and gave it to her lover. Little thought Amayeka of the great need in which that knife would help her within a few hours.

At the lower drift Amayeka crossed the stream. Gray watched her over; took a keen glance up and down, little dreaming that Amani was watching him from a wolf-hole ten yards off; and then a low chirrup, like the cry of the quail, announced that all was safe in the copse Amayeka had entered. Gray then traversed the stones of the ford.

Ere long, Amani could see them emerge singly from the covert, Amayeka taking one path, for it was not too dark for Kafir eyes to distinguish the outline of a woman's form, with the little meercat trotting after her; her lover went another way, and then the wizard, profiting by a cloud which overshadowed the moon's silver rim for a minute or two, stepped stealthily across; and, biding his time, sought his hut, and retiring therein, closed the matted entrance, and began to chant his demoniacal incantations, to the great awe of the people assembled round their fires at the doors of their dwellings.

Gray found Lee supping on broiled meat, and one of poor Amayeka's coarse, sweet cakes; and Lee, after rallying the deserter on his passion, informed him that he proposed next day to start for the foot of the mountains with Doda, who had got leave from Umlala to guide the "White Brother" to the trading station.

Gray was passive in the strong man's hand. If he ever attempted remonstrance with his master—for such he felt the elder convict to be—the latter invariably denounced him as too weak to be vicious, swearing he would be a knave if he dared. As to escape from such thralldom, he could see none; and on the other side of the picture was Amayeka, the only creature on earth whom he loved, or who loved him. Honourable servitude was beyond his reach at present, and in the mean time he was pledged to Amayeka—vaguely—but still pledged. To her he owed all the comforts of his present sad existence, and she had many ways and means of ministering to them; he was bound to her by the ties of gratitude as well as of affection; he pitied her, and he believed, moreover, that if he left her, she must die—die perhaps by torture!

He sat down in the hut among the ashes of the dying fire. Lee could not see his comrade's face, for it was buried in his hands, bowed upon his knees; but the young man's frame shook like an aspen-tree; and oh! the bitter agony of the voice that cried aloud, "God have mercy on me!"

Surely the good angels then shedding their influence on the desolate being dictated that solemn and heart-rending appeal, and then heralded the cry to heaven!

Lee looked at the deserter with some contempt, but uttered no harsh word. He contented himself with sketching out a plan for Gray's guidance on the arrival of trading messengers between the Umzimvooboo and the Witches' Krantz; delivered to his charge a letter in cipher, to be forwarded to Brennard, explaining the necessity of his visit to the Stormberg, on trading "thoughts intent," and transmitting a receipt connected with certain monetary transactions. He also mentioned his intention of returning to Umlala's kraal within a given time, and then, in serio-comic phraseology, proceeded to inform Gray that, on rejoining him, he should make a barter with the chief for "a few Kafir wives."

"Don't be frightened, my lad," continued the reckless convict; "I assure you I have no intention of interfering with you, though I must own to a little regard for your girl on account of her white blood. Not that I owe the country I came from anything but a curse; but she is a deuced deal better-looking for her straight nose and smooth hair. The girl has good points, and I have shared the luck if I have not the love, for she makes good cakes, and can wash and mend my clothes as well as any Englishwoman. I should think, too, she was not to be had cheap; but you can afford to give a good lot of cattle for her, eh!" and Lee went on jeering, and puffing *dagha* (the wild hemp, the seeds of which possess much of the stupefying powers of opium) out of a long wooden pipe, till Gray was too stupified with the vapour to resent the brutality of his companion, who having, at the opening of the conversation, drawn from the deserter all that he could touching his position with Amayeka, suggested finally, with apparent good faith, that in the event of any great crisis suddenly taking place among Umlala's people, the lovers should make their way to a spot, to be selected by Doda, in the road to the Stormberg. Doda, however, was to imagine the rendezvous was only for Lee and Gray, and under no circumstances to be enlightened as to the part Amayeka was to take in this episode of the young deserter's life.

Gray was awoke the next morning by the light streaming in through the hut door, which was ajar. He had been late in falling asleep, and was heavy, and disinclined to rise for the day; but he looked out,—the huts were yet closed, the cattle still in the kraals; there was profound silence on the plain,—the sun had just gilded the eastern heights.

Gray closed the door, which had not been carefully drawn to by Lee, who had evidently, without rousing his comrade, departed on his journey; for the "traps" he had set in order to take with him had disappeared. Gray cast himself down in a sort of sullen despair, and weary thoughts of past and future disturbed his aching brain.

Ere long the whole hamlet woke up; the cattle came lowing from the folds, the dogs were giving tongue, the women and girls were astir, preparing for the hard labours of the day, building huts, hewing wood, and tilling the ground. Several youths were assembled on the plain, some to start on a hunting expedition, some on marauding parties, for much fine cattle had been brought in the preceding evening by a foraging band, and was being paraded before

Umlala, that he might feast his eyes on the prize. The sight was a strong temptation to the young men to try their luck in an adjoining kloof, where it was expected some colonial cattle had been driven by a neighbouring tribe, ready to swear to the British authorities that they were alike guiltless and ignorant in the matter, though in treaty with Umlala to share the stolen property with him if he would shelter it.

But all these preparations were brought to a standstill by the unexpected appearance of the wizard Amani, whose great clay-painted face first emerged from the low entrance of his hut; he crawled out of it, and stood upright, waving an assegai with his brawny arm. The people stood still at sight of this awful apparition, for he was arrayed in the hideous costume peculiar to these wretches when it is their will and pleasure to call a solemn assembly of the tribe for the purpose of publicly denouncing some unhappy creature, whom it is their interest, or their inclination, to bring to a fearful punishment, by death or torture.

The cattle-drivers went on leisurely with their herds towards the pasture-grounds, but sat down on a near hill-side, to see what would follow. They were mostly boys, and were not of sufficient importance to have incurred the wizard's displeasure. The women laid their implements of labour at their feet, and their children clung to them with vague dread; the old men trembled as Amani stalked past them, and the youths parted right and left to let him go by. Amayeka, who had been up and out before the rest, and had half-crossed the plain with a bundle of sticks on her head, dropped her burden in great terror, and stood paralysed, for she had her misgivings. The meercat seated himself beside her, and glanced his keen black eyes rapidly to and fro; hers were fixed on Amani, who, advancing to Umlala's hut, the largest in the Kraal (Note 1), drew the chief's attention to him by a frightful yell.

I have already given you some notion of his aspect, with its savage head-gear. A kaross of lion's skin was slung about his short but powerful frame, the mane forming a ruff round his huge bull-neck. The kaross was fastened on the right shoulder, leaving the arm free. With this he continued to wave the assegai, its tip of highly-polished iron, and the brazen bangles on the wrist, glinting in the morning sunshine, so brilliant in the Kafir summer-time. The drapery was short enough to display the legs, which, unlike the limbs of a Kafir, were thick and unshapely, and ornamented, like the arms, with bangles of burnished brass; strings of beads, of various colours, and mingled with necklaces of animals' teeth, garnished his throat, and round his waist, where the kaross opened, was discernible an elastic brazen belt, from which dangled a catskin pouch, a small tortoise-shell and spoon appended for taking snuff, a pipe of tambootie wood, hard almost as iron, and a variety of other articles, an English coin, an old buckle, etc.

To the head-dress I have before described, were now added two long feathers of the beautiful Kafir crane; these being drawn upward by the breeze, resembled horns, and gave the wizard an appearance more demoniacal than can be conceived.

He had doubtless been smoking dagha all the night. His eyes glared with unnatural light, his lips were parted, his white teeth gleaming between when he uttered his unearthly cry; and as he advanced, his movements became more excited; and finally, with a tremendous leap in the air, he dropped as from a height before Umlala, and writhed and gibbered like some wretch possessed of a devil.

The chief councillors gathered the people of the Kraal in a great circle fronting Umlala's dwelling, which was distinguished from the rest by its size. Most of the principal members of the tribe had gone towards the colony as plunderers or spies, or were scattered through the hills and valleys as scouts and messengers; the circle, therefore, was less extensive than usual,—still there was a gathering of some three hundred human beings.

There were none among these startled creatures who would not willingly have fled had they dared, but they knew flight or resistance were alike useless, and they maintained an impressive silence, while Umlala took his seat on the ground in the space within the circle, Amani on his right hand, though slightly in the rear, and a chief councillor on his left, preserving the same respectful distance.

This dread silence of the crowd was only broken by an occasional bitter laugh or wrathful exclamation from the wizard, who, having some days before been summoned by Umlala to prescribe for some trifling ailment, had taken care that the medicine given, a preparation of herbs, should not remedy the disease, but increase it. Umlala, however, had almost forgotten his ailment in his exultation over the cattle brought him by his foraging party. The wizard was determined on reminding him of it, and came to tell him now who had bewitched him, first as regarded his health, and secondly his judgment, which Amani pronounced at fault, from Umlala having permitted Doda to attend the white man on a journey. "Whither was the white man going? Did Umlala know his purpose? The white man's face was white, but his heart was black, and what but a spy could be the boy left behind?"

Gray, on hearing an unusual stir, crept from his domicile, which bordered a ravine, and, plunging into a tangled copse, made his way unnoticed to a little tuft of orange-trees on the site of an old missionary station, whence he determined on reconnoitring what was going on. He had a just horror of Amani as an impostor, but he had no conception of the power he derived from his misdirected abilities, for Amani was one of the shrewdest of his race, and possessed an evil influence over his chief.

Gray could see the whole face of the plain, and every figure in the semicircle spread out at his feet. He scanned it rapidly and uneasily, and, to his infinite dismay, discovered Amayeka. The grove in which he sat was one of the lovers' trysting-places; and, though the early morning was not a safe time for meeting, he had hoped to find her there, or within a short distance from it.

An undefinable feeling of horror stole over him; but he had sufficient presence of mind to pause and watch the proceedings. Whatever might be the result, he mourned his wretched position, not entirely for his own sake—indeed at this moment self was farthest from his thoughts. But what could this strange meeting portend? Mischief, he knew; but who was to be the victim? Naturally his alarm was connected with the unhappy girl, who had been his only friend of late. Her father was absent, her mother had years before vanished from the face of the earth, that is, perished in the bush, whither she had been carried in severe sickness, and left there to die or be devoured by the wild beasts

roaming there,—it was never ascertained which. After a lapse of time, some scattered bones were found, but these were left to whiten and fall to dust.

Gray climbed the tallest orange-tree, and looked down from its clustering boughs. He could not distinguish Amayeka's features, but her head drooped, her arms hung listlessly down, and at her side, in the begging attitude so peculiar to these tiny brutes, sat the meercat, as if beseeching pity.

She looked so friendless, so helpless, yet so far above the other girls, who, forgetting their terror in excitement, were chattering and whirling about near her, that Gray could hardly resist his impulse to descend the hill, cross the glen, and hurry to the scene of action; but he had had sufficient experience of Kafir habits to feel that he could do no good by rushing into the midst of the excited assembly.

Indistinct sounds reached him, and he could see the people were every moment becoming more earnest as they watched the wizard, who continued to rock himself to and fro, gibbering and screeching. At length Amani suddenly sprang up, and rolled his fierce orbs round the circle.

Miserable victims of a power, which owns no law, a superstition based on cruelty and vice! How many quailed before the assegai as it was again waved aloft! Unhappy wretch! who risked thy life to bring the poor settlers' cattle to thy selfish chieftain's kraal, dost thou think thou art discovered—doomed—because thou hast secreted in a wooded glen part of the plunder for thyself wherewith to buy thy wife? Thou boy warrior, of the strong arm and supple limbs, in form like a young Apollo, does the fearful wizard know, too, that thou hast fixed thy will upon the child of one of his foes, for he has many? Thou girl of a laughing eye and merry voice, does thy blood turn cold as thou rememberest the day when, resting from thy tillage in the meelie garden, thou didst mock the wizard, forgetting those were near thee who would seek his favour by betraying thee? Aged woman, with palsied head and shrivelled features, almost blind, too, but not deaf, art thou dreading his vengeance, because thou call'st to mind that he, by whose rude couch thou hast been watching all the night, and striving to aid in pain and sickness with thy poor herbal medicines, is one whom Amani hates? Thou mother, with a baby on thy shoulder, why are thy lips compressed, thy brow with anguish stamped? Dost thou quail at thought of thy tall son, who is betrothed to Umlala's daughter, the child of that Gaika wife, whose feet the great chief gashed and crippled, searing the gory wounds with red-hot assegais, because Amani, the wizard, denounced her as untrue?

Such scenes as these had at times been partially detailed to Gray, but he had had no evidence of their reality.

The crowd, in their eager fear, spread out like a fan, as though each member meditated an escape; but a loud summons from the principal councillor drew them round their chief, and all doubts were soon dispelled as to the real victim of the day.

Amani, having held his incantations over the Hottentot's skull and its contents, dipped the assegai therein, and, drawing it out dripping with the fiendish potion, began to wave it slowly before him. Tormentor that he was! he pointed it for a minute or two at the trembling girlish mimic. Did he know of her delinquency? She bore the ordeal with the insensibility of a statue, and the wizard passed her by. Some, utterly unconscious of offence, were inwardly startled when they found the sharp-bladed weapon within an inch of their breasts; but their dignity never forsook them. Each awaited his fate with outwardly unshaken nerves, and then watched the weapon as it passed them by to tantalise or condemn another victim.

All this could be distinctly seen by Gray. He was breathless—cold dews poured down his face—his teeth chattered with horror and suspense—he covered his face with his hands. A shout!—was it of exultation?—pierced the air, and penetrated his very brain. He looked again,

Amayeka was in the hands of two fiendish women, witch-doctresses, confederates with Amani. The circle was broken—the throng were gathered closely together. Amani was standing up, gibbering and declaiming to the nearest listeners. Gray could distinguish a shrill scream from Amayeka.

Once again he bent his gaze upon the frightful picture.

Amani's glittering wand was again in motion, the witches were tearing open Amayeka's dress, the bead bodice, of which she had been so proud, was scattered in shreds on the ground; and oh, unhappy Gray! behold the proof—the witness in Amani's accusation. They draw from the depths of her bosom, appended to a bit of reim secured round her waist, the steel chain thou gavest her last night!

He comprehended all instantly, dropped from his leafy covert, leaped into the ravine, and, scrambling through bush and briar, rushed across the plain, and overtook the hags as they were bearing off their victim to a fire in a hollow behind Umlala's great hut.

Shocked, frightened, bewildered, unarmed, still he followed with the crowd. He could hear Amayeka's cries of agony, and the poor meercat seeing him stopped, awaiting his white friend's approach with an eye of wonderment and fear.

Once only the eye of Gray met Amayeka's; as the unhappy girl was dragged to the bottom of the hollow, she caught a glimpse of her lover on the mound above. She made a desperate struggle to shake off her persecutors; but had she succeeded, not one of the tribe—partly from superstition, partly from dread of the consequences to themselves—dared have lifted a finger to assist her.

Gray was frantic. He rushed back to Umlala, and the white man threw himself at the feet of the brutal savage. He lifted up his hands in humble supplication.

Umlala sat motionless. Not even his eye gave sign that he saw the supplicator; and Amani grinned silently like a

demon at his fallen foe. No response, no token of regret; all was stolid indifference on the chief's part; and, ere long, he rose. The wizard shook his assegai in Gray's face, and crying, in a loud voice, "Y-enzainhlela i be banzie"—"Make a path: let it be wide," the throng in front parted to the right and left, the chief moved deliberately onward, Amani at his ear talking rapidly, and to Gray almost incoherently, although he had acquired enough of the language to know that the wizard was intent on keeping Umlala to the dreadful purpose for which the tribe had been summoned together.

All at once two strong women seized Gray from behind, and held him tight. Amayeka saw that, for he heard her shriek. Had they no mercy, these wretches? Were they women? Was he to be immolated with Amayeka? They dragged him down the green slope, slippery with dew, that shone in diamond drops upon flowers of rainbow hues. He heard the fire roaring, and saw boy devils at their impish work. They had bound poor Amayeka's slender wrists with hard thongs of hide, and were trying to get the bangles over her hands. Had they not succeeded, they would have hacked off the limbs in their impatience to possess themselves of these gauds, so precious to them.

She ceased her cries, poor thing, and lay exhausted on the green-sward, while some of the women, who were foremost in the horrible work, prepared to stretch her out with the soles of her feet towards the flames, already greedy of their prey.

Gray called to her; she made a violent attempt to release herself, but in vain; and he, in his fury, shaking off the Amazons who held him, sprang forward, and would have either attempted to rescue the victim, or insisted on sharing her fearful death; when screams of affright and gestures indicative of warning drew the attention of the people on the plain to the herdsmen on the nearest hill. Some were hastily gathering the cattle together, while others pointed in the direction of Eiland's glen, an outlet of the ravine which almost encircled the Kraal.

Some alarming object was evidently in sight; but what it was could not be distinguished by the people in the hollow.

They were soon enlightened. A group of Europeans on horseback emerged from a wooded glen, a branch of the ravine running between two hills to the north-west. As they reached the summit of the gorge, and halted between earth and sky, the shining morning light showed them to be heavily-armed, and fully accoutred for a *trek*; but their horses, though rough, were fresh; and if they were from a distance, they had evidently been resting somewhere within an easy ride of the Kraal. The party swept down the hill at a brisk pace, plunged into the ravine, and were out of sight for a moment. The next, with arms unslung and ready poised, they galloped in close column, in number about thirty, across the open space, to the mound overlooking the hollow, in which the fire had been lit, and where Gray now knelt, releasing, with his good English knife, poor Amayeka from her dreadful fate.

Yet, white men though they were, the unexpected visitants of the Kraal did not pause in their course to notice the unfortunate lovers, but dashed on towards the ravine, where they perceived the cattle and their drivers. The Kafirs, on first observing the farmer's approach, had whistled off their plunder towards this dense bush, but had not succeeded in collecting the herd sufficiently close to the only gap through which such a body of men and beasts could pass in haste.

Women and children fled into nooks and corners; some found their way to their huts, and the herdsmen on the hills rushed into the adjacent kloofs and valleys. The tribe being, as I have observed, much reduced in numbers, the thirty stout farmers were more than a match for the thieves who had cleared their homesteads. Umlala, paralysed with fear and surprise—for visits from the settlers were, on account of his remote position from the colony, very unusual,—had hastened to conceal himself in a mimosa thicket; and Amani was quaking in a wolf-hole, his favourite retreat in intrigue or danger.

The Kafirs were unprovided with their firearms, some were even without their assegais. A volley of musketry from the settlers sent them screeching into the glen; and a Hottentot guide, catching a glimpse of Amani's head-gear, recognised him as a wizard, and shot him like a wild beast in his hole.

The cattle, responding to the call of their rightful owners, soon fell quietly into order, and were driven off with no further opposition than a few assegais thrown at random; the enemy calling out to the invaders, from the safe side of the ravine, "Take care of them; we will come for them before the hills grow white,"—alluding to the snow on the mountain ridges.

To this the colonists turned an indifferent ear, and, forbidding the guide to fire again, put their horses to speed, galloped round and round the herd of cattle, whistling, hallooing, and encouraging them forward, for no time was to be lost, as it was not unlikely that the armed Kafir scouts in the valleys might pounce upon them, unawares, by certain short cuts between the hills.

In the bustle and excitement attending the recovery of their property, the farmers had, as I have shown, paid but little attention to the singular situation of the young deserter and the Kafir girl; but, after securing the cattle *en masse*, five or six of the most daring cantered to the little eminence in rear of Umlala's hut, and discovered Amayeka stretched on the grass alone. She had fainted, and Gray had left her to procure some water to moisten her parched lips, and was hastening at full speed from a vley in the hollow to tell his miserable tale to the white men.

He could see them from the vley, but they, wholly intent on rescuing the girl—whom, indeed, they were inclined to consider one of the Griqua race, from her soft hair and regular features—were in too great haste and too much excited to await the appearance of a white man, who had vanished, as they supposed, with the rest of the throng, leaving the wretched victim of superstition and fraud to escape as she could, or lie powerless till her tormentors returned.

At the impulse of the moment, a young Boer—the party consisted of Dutch farmers from the Stormberg, who, worn out in trying to obtain redress for accumulated grievances, had taken the law in their own hands—bent from his horse, and, lifting the light, insensible form of Amayeka to his saddle, bore her off.

Another, reckless of danger, lingered to seize a brand from the still burning embers, and, following his comrade with the flaming stick, cast it at random on the roof of a particularly well-built hut, and joined his companions. They sped on, their cheers and laughter rousing the mocking echoes as they retraced their steps up to the mouth of the gorge, whence they had descended on the Kraal.

What made Gray draw back, and fly with extraordinary speed towards the river? What made him shout the Kafir cry "Izapa! Izapa!" to the women and children still occupying the ground?

They looked out from the low doors of their huts, and saw in an instant the cause of his warning.

It was one of the huts containing ammunition which had caught fire from the random brand.

They tried to fly, but some were too late!

The cattle herds on the hills set up a terrific yell, which made the colonists look back from the elevation they had just reached. Gray had crossed the stream, and was at a safe distance from the scene ere the fire touched the flooring of the hut in which the gunpowder was buried. He turned to take a last look of the plain; the poor little meercat was sitting, in its old posture, at the door of Amayeka's hut, just where the sunlight fell brightest,—a rumbling noise, like the muttering of distant thunder, woke the neighbouring echoes; the wind, which was beginning to gather from all quarters, caught the burning embers, and scattered them in all directions—several huts took fire—the unhappy women and children scoured over the plain, hardly knowing where to go in their blind terror. Some, as I have said, lingering about their dwellings to save their miserable property, and unconscious of the imminence of the peril, paid the penalty of their ignorance; for finally a great tongue of flame shot upwards, a loud explosion shook the earth, and from the mountain ridge Gray beheld the whole Kraal on fire.

He could not help feeling, since he had every hope of Amayeka's safety, a glow of exultation, as he beheld the destruction of the scene of his late sorrows, and waved his hand in token of a glad farewell to some people huddled together and watching him from the upper drift: horrified as he was at the issue of the day's events, he was so utterly disgusted at the part both women and children had taken in the torture scene, that he could not pity them as he might have done before it took place.

He resolved at all hazards on delivering himself into the hands of the colonists, and pressed forward to a tuft of trees crowning the apex of the hill.

Shading his eyes from the glare of the sun, he gazed intently into the valley on the other side. It was a scene of perfect repose. There were no groups of cattle to give life to the picture, these had long vanished from the open locations to the dark ravines of Kafirland; the Kraal filling the centre of the valley was deserted, and not even a *pauw*, or secretary-bird, was to be seen stalking solemnly along in the glow.

It was useless to descend the steep at random; he continued to scan the paths with careful eye. Suddenly he thought he saw the little band of horsemen, with the cattle in front, wending their way on the side of a hill, beneath a krantz of granite. He was not sure of this till they reached the sharp bluff or angle of the mountain range; they turned it, and he was left alone in the wilderness.

Note 1. Kraal indicates a hamlet of huts, as well as a solitary dwelling: I have endeavoured to distinguish the one from the other by prefixing a large K to the former.

End of Volume One.

Chapter Twelve.

Eleanor's Story.

But Frankfort is sitting in the hush of midnight—before him lies the manuscript. It is addressed to "Major Frankfort."

When the heart is very full, it is difficult to know how or where to begin a recital, which it is due to you as well as to myself to lay before you. It would harass you, nay, I think it would make your heart ache, were you to know, before reading it, all the pangs it has cost me to write this.

An old diary lies before me—old to me, who have lived through so much since I penned the first page, three years ago. I remember that I opened it to begin my task of journalist at a little road-side inn at the close of the first day's journey from home. I was going, with my father, to visit Lady Amabel Fairfax, at Cape Town. I was sorry to leave home and my young sister. I was sorry to think that, for the first time in my life, I should not say "Good night" to my mother.

On the other hand, I was pleased at the prospect of staying with Lady Amabel; and, although my mother had made the most careful arrangements for me, I fancied she cared less at my leaving her than I did. At that time, I think she loved Marion best.

Yet, I need not dwell on this point—I turn to another leaf.

Lady Amabel! I see her now—graceful, handsome, and so kind—awaiting our arrival in a large, luxuriant drawing-room at Government House.

It was night when I met her for the first time. Tired with a voyage of many days along the coast, I received her cordial embrace with a comparatively cold return, as she came forward in the hall. A gong was sounding in the garden. Through an open door, we beheld a vista of rooms, and servants lighting them. Lady Amabel desired her maid to conduct me to my apartment. She had contrived many little elegancies of dress for me, and my toilette was soon made. I was late, and had to descend the wide staircase alone. My feet trembled as I heard some one following, and a young man, in the dress of an aide-de-camp, came clattering past me; he had the grace to wait at the foot of the stairs and bow.

His face was as honest in its expression as yours. He apologised for "rattling by me," with the most graceful air of humility. He was quite sure I *must* be Miss Daveney—he *hoped* so—we were to be inmates of the same house; for he was the Governor's nephew, Clarence Fairfax. Would I take his arm? I should be the best apology in the world if any guests had arrived. He was the Aide-de-Camp in Waiting; it was his duty to receive the visitors, and there were two great officials expected—a Governor-General from India, and a foreign Prince in command of a squadron of the navy.

I put my arm through his without answering. I was completely frightened at the idea of the gay crowd I was to encounter. The hall was brilliantly lighted, and filled with servants. A door was thrown open before us. I shook from head to foot with nervous agitation. Clarence Fairfax pressed my arm, to reassure me; he declared his alarm lest I should fall. I own I was dazzled. The chandeliers, blazing with the light of myriads of wax candles, the tall mirrors reflecting them again and again; the variety of uniforms—staff, infantry, cavalry, engineers, artillery; officers in the costume of the French, Spanish, American, and Portuguese navies; the magnificent-looking General from India, his empty sleeve looped at his breast, that breast covered with orders; the young, bashful, sailor-Prince, fair-haired, blushing like a girl, yet with a certain lofty consciousness of rank about him that would have marked him from the rest of the officers had he been without the ribbon and the star; the buzz of voices of various nations; the ladies in brilliant dresses; the air redolent of perfumes, breathing through the windows opening to the garden;—all appeared to me beautiful, but unreal, after my desert life. I felt as Cinderella must have done when she found herself transported by the fairy into the lighted palace; and truly he, on whose arm I rested trembling, was like a prince of fairy tale to me!

A tall, slight figure, in the uniform of a general officer, with many decorations, advanced. His piercing eye flashed for an instant on his nephew, who had delayed his appearance beyond the hour of reception; but the expression changed on seeing me. He took me from Clarence, observing, with a slight asperity of tone, that he was, "as usual, very late;" and led me to Lady Amabel, who stood in the centre of the apartment, the blaze of the chandelier illuminating her elegant form robed in white, her graceful head encircled with an emerald wreath of shamrock-leaves.

To add to the illusion of the scene, the music of an exquisite band came, blended with the perfume of roses, through the open windows. A beautiful arm was extended to me; Lady Amabel pressed my palm between her soft jewelled fingers; and Clarence Fairfax came up with clasped hands, and in mock despair at his uncle's reprimand, at being "late, as usual."

There was a little stir, a rustle of silks and plumes, and I, in my innocence, was looking about, longing to see my father, that I might be near him at the dinner-table. The sailor-Prince advanced, and gave, his arm to Lady Amabel; she looked round ere dropping mine; a spur was entangled in my dress; there was a little laugh; Clarence Fairfax disengaged himself from "my tails," he said, and then, with a somewhat saucy ease of manner for first acquaintanceship, he drew my hand under his arm, and led me after the crowd, already half way through the ante-room.

"So, Lady Amabel is a relation of Mr Daveney's!" said he—"that is charming—there is a kind of cousinship between us. Nay, don't look so demure, you chill me, and I intend that we shall be the best friends in the world. Let us make that bargain."

He was so tall, he had to bend low to look into my face, which was covered with confusion; for I was unaccustomed to such familiarity. It took me by surprise; but, ah! the fatal air which men assume when they would please—those earnest looks, those low-pleading whispers. I forgot to look for my father, and seated myself on Clarence's right hand at the foot of the table. A magnificent bouquet of flowers almost hid Lady Amabel from my view, my eyes were bewildered with the blaze of candelabra and silver covers, and the uniforms of scarlet, and gold, and blue, mingled with the lighter hues of women's dresses; but, at length, I met the eye of Lady Amabel: she smiled, nodded, indicated by a gesture to my father that I was in my proper place, and by one to me that she was satisfied; and, indeed, so was I.

Sir Adrian Fairfax's attention was thus called to us—he looked at his nephew and laughed; we were the last to be seated. "Incorrigible Clarence," cried the General, shaking his head; "lingering behind—again late. Too bad, too bad."

"Do you see that showy woman opposite my uncle?" whispered Clarence Fairfax to me.

I glanced across the table, and replied in the affirmative.

"She is the wife of an official, and falls to my lot generally. I escaped her to-night. See, my uncle is smiling; he knows why I lingered; he excuses me, of course. You are my apology."

"I must take Major Fairfax's part," said the Indian Governor: "he may be late for dinner, General, but he is always first in the field, you know."

"And the last," replied Sir Adrian, laughing; "you see I have the best of the argument after all. Fairfax, the soup will be cold."

Everything that passed at the dinner-table on that memorable day is noted in my diary. I have not looked over it for three years. I need scarcely do so now; for, as I write, the tide of memory swells high, and trifles rise to the surface.

There was a ball that evening at Government House. Sir Adrian brought the young sailor-Prince to me. Clarence Fairfax stepped aside with a look of despair, which I took to be real. The first dance over, he came to claim me in right of "cousinship," he said. His countenance was radiant with smiles as he led me away. We whirled off in a valse, talking gaily all the time; he looking down into my eyes, and I forgetful of the crowd around me, till I heard some one remark, "What a perfect dancer! so airy—so unstudied!" "A relation of Lady Amabel's?"—"Yes." "From England?"—"Oh, no!—an officer's daughter." "Not pretty, is she?"—"Rather." "Good gracious, do you think so?"—"Interesting—Fairfax is taken." Giddy with the exercise, I stopped unwittingly close to the speakers—two or three showy girls and their partners. The band changed the air to a rapid measure, and I was again borne off as on wings. Breathless and exhilarated, we reached the door of an ante-room; Clarence thought it was unoccupied, and led me in.

Ah, conscience! The bloom of a youthful heart once touched, it sees evil in what it once deemed innocent!

I was accustomed to dance, to valse, to be associated occasionally with gentlemen, so why did my heart bound as I met my father and Lady Amabel?—and why was it relieved on seeing them pass by with only a smile of pleased recognition?

The Governor from India fell into conversation at the doorway; Lady Amabel looked back, and said, "Take care, Clarence, of the draught from that window;" and left us sitting on a couch alone. Her shawl was thrown across it. Fairfax drew it round me.

I had been prepared to admire this gallant young soldier—"first and last in battle." He had lately been wounded in a pirate fight while cruising with naval friends off the western coast of Africa; his sleeve, open from the wrist to the shoulder, showed that his sword-arm had been disabled. It was a stirring tale—a young captain struck down; the next in command weakened by fever; the ships lashed yard-arm and yard-arm; a swarm of frantic beings, who knew that to yield was to die; and a band of British sailors with a boy lieutenant at their head.

The rover's crew cheered the boarders as they advanced, the boy lieutenant fell, but Clarence sprang into his place, and led the sailors on. He had observed the battened hatchways, had heard the yells of the miserable captives in the fore-castle of the brig, and whilst the battle raged, had directed the carpenter how to release the crowd of victims. His coolness turned the fortune of the day; the hatchway burst open, the wretched slaves, emaciated, starving as they were, mingled with the English crew, and, elated with, the hope of liberty, sprang upon the pirates, and cast them into the sea. The victory was decided in a moment. Clarence Fairfax shared the honours of the day, and gave his prize-money to the rescued slaves.

I begged him to tell me this tale himself. He did so, with apparent reluctance; but the relation dazzled and enchanted me. I was bewildered with his beauty, his air, his charmed words.

While thus happily engaged, he talking and I listening, the servants entered, and throwing open a large window, an exquisite *coup-d'oeil* was presented. A marquee, lined with brilliant flags, and lighted with transparent lamps, stretched away into the spacious gardens. Tables were scattered about covered with refreshments, all arranged with exquisite taste; tropical fruits and flowers decorating the feast in elegant profusion and variety. He started up. "I am forgetting my duty," said he, "in lingering so pleasantly with you. Ah! here comes your father. See, he is following Sir Adrian and Lady Westerhaven, and is escorting the official lady who always falls to my lot. You have yet to learn, you sweet innocent lily of the desert, that the conventional forms of colonial society are even more absurd than those of England. Ah, thank heaven! your father has passed us by."

But he was mistaken; the showy, shining woman leaning on my father, who had been darting keen and earnest glances into every corner of the room, suddenly exclaimed, with a touch of bitterness I could not then understand, "Now, Mr Daveney, who would have thought to have found your daughter here? Quite safe, you see; but shy, very shy, on this her first appearance in public—thank you; but I believe it will be etiquette to resign your arm. Captain Fairfax, it may not be your *pleasure*, but I believe it is your *duty*, to take me to the supper-room to-night."

He looked at me, at this remark, and smiled; but evidently feared the scrutiny of the lady, for he assumed a demure look, which, in spite of my vexation, made me laugh, as he led the offended one to the marquee.

I followed with my father, who expressed his uneasiness at my long absence from the ball-room. I dare say some fathers would have been angry; but he had been so long a stranger to the "conventionalities," as Clarence called the forms of society, that he did not see any impropriety in my lingering with my partner in an empty ante-room, and only feared I might have felt overcome with the heat and the crowd.

How often men strive to argue women out of a due observation of "conventionalities" which militate against their schemes, and next contemn their victims for ignoring what they, the men, have taught them to despise!

I think I see that bold, bad woman, Mrs Rashleigh, now. Her black eyes and hair contrasted strongly with her brilliant cheeks and lips. Beside me, she was tall, and as she looked down upon me, she seemed to sneer. Jewels glittered on her unveiled bosom, her handsome hands and arms were covered with ornaments, a tiara of diamonds crowned her brow, from which the hair was widely parted, giving her face an unwomanly look; her voice was loud and dauntless, her laugh rung unpleasantly upon the ear.

And yet this bold, meretricious woman evidently held sway over the young and graceful aide-de-camp on whose arm she rested, looking into his eyes with that audacious stare, from which some men,—you, for instance,—would shrink.

Mrs Rashleigh was evidently rallying him about me. Then Lady Amabel came up to her. What a contrast between the two,—Lady Amabel was fair, gentle, feminine, and not what the world calls clever; but the pure mind shone out of her soft eyes, and made her low voice musical. She said something civil to her guest, and took my father and myself away with her to a little room, where a few choice friends were gathered round Sir Adrian.

I saw no more of Clarence that night, but retired to my bed to dream of fairy halls, and diamond palaces, and enchanted princes; and throughout the dream there hung about me an odious female genius, whose wand turned all I touched to ashes. I awoke, terrified at the thunder she had invoked upon *my* head in her jealous anger. I could not help laughing, as, in the bad fairy's thunder, I recognised the parting salute of the young foreign sailor-Prince.

I descended next morning, listless, unrested. Sir Adrian, my father, and Clarence Fairfax, were at the breakfast-table, and an aide-de-camp came in at an opposite door, as I entered. Lady Amabel was in her room. I took my seat by my father. The usual salutations passed; Clarence recognised me by one of his brilliant smiles.

"Oh! Miss Daveney," observed Sir Adrian, "you were the envy of all the women last night."

The colour rushed into my face.

"Why so, sir?" I asked.

"You monopolised the young Prince for the first dance. Mrs Vanderlacken expected to be taken out."

"And," remarked Captain W, the other aide-de-camp, "Mrs Rashleigh was taken in; for she has established Fairfax as her *cavalier servant*, and he hung back last night."

Involuntarily I looked at Clarence.

"Ah!" remarked Sir Adrian, who was a thorough man of the world, "she is a little too old for you, Fairfax; she owns to three-and-thirty."

"I thought," said I, surprised into volunteering a remark, "that Mrs Rashleigh's husband was alive."

They burst into a fit of laughter at my *naïveté*.

I believe my father had every hope, from my innocence of character, that my *séjour* at Cape Town would do me no harm. Lady Amabel was, as he knew, one of the most amiable of human beings; it was you who remarked that my father is one who has "made the most of human experiences, but is unlearned in those of society;" thus, he had been accustomed to see me associated with those young men who visited at our house whenever a commando brought them near Annerley; but society gathered within the home circle is widely different from that of a gay official residence, especially where the host is a man of the world, and the hostess facile, attractive, and unused to exercise her judgment.

My father returned home, and I was left especially under Lady Amabel's care. I spent my mornings with her. At luncheon the arrangements were made for riding or driving in the afternoon.

Clarence Fairfax trained a beautiful Arab of Sir Adrian's for me; it was he who taught me to ride!

You have been at Cape Town. Do you recollect that dusty road to Newlands, and the delicious change from that space to those long avenues,—those shady aisles?

It seems but yesterday that Clarence and I were sauntering there—he with his hand upon my rein, laughing at my conscious dread of Lady Amabel's displeasure at our lingering, while the General and herself were far ahead, fading in the vista.

We spent the summer months at Newlands. Do you remember one of those shaded paths between the quince and pomegranate hedges? the tall mountain rising like a giant between the sun and this quiet retreat. Here Lady Amabel and I used to bring our work, and sketch-books; and here Sir Adrian protested he always found Fairfax half an hour after the horses were ordered for the business visit to the town. The General complained that his aide-de-camp was more idle than ever; and Lady Amabel would shake her head at me, and then at Clarence, with a gentle smile of deprecation at us all.

She had set her heart upon marrying me to Clarence Fairfax. She did not tell me so, but I discovered it, albeit her tact veiled her intentions from all but one besides myself. This was not Clarence; it was Mrs Rashleigh.

The moment Lady Amabel had formed this "pretty plus," as she afterwards called it, she did just what a woman of refined mind would do. She took care, lest the world should sully my fair name with the breath of scandal. Had she been a manoeuvrer, she could not have done more to draw Clarence nearer to me. She kept me more by her side than she had done; she drew back when we sauntered in the ride; she made excuses to separate us if we sat too long together; and, in short, often disturbed Clarence's equanimity. He was of a passionate temper, though not rough in disposition; but I had never seen his disposition tried in essentials. I had yet to discover in him the foundation of selfishness—vanity. Ah! why am I anticipating? Major Frankfort, I did not anticipate or reason, while writing the first pages of the journal to which I have to refer in addressing this hurried scrawl to you.

Not far from the house at Newlands is a beautiful grove. You approach it by a labyrinth of lemon glades and silver trees—you remember those silver trees, always whispering on the scented air that pervades those Arcadian woods. The grove crowns a natural mound within a miniature forest, a clear stream ripples below, and falls musically over the rocks, making a natural cascade. In the hottest days of December a soft breeze murmurs through this grove, and stirs this shining stream. Lady Amabel would retire here with me in the blazing hours of noon, and Clarence would follow us, with servants bearing baskets of fruit and the light wines of Constantia.

Lady Amabel was always happy with us in this lovely spot. Clarence and I named it the Fountain of Nigeria; he had been there, and said it resembled it. I think I hear Lady Amabel's gentle laugh at my unsteady steps in descending,

assisted by her nephew, to cool the wine in the stream, and gather lemon and pomegranate blossoms to decorate the sylvan feast; and then my frightened air at being left below, unable to return without his help, which he so loved to give! I recollect one day a large party "tracking us out," as Clarence said, and Lady Amabel's vexation at our nook being invaded. She was the *chaperone* again, and drew my arm under hers at once.

We could hear the voices of the party before they reached us. I recognised one, Mrs Rashleigh's; she was in advance of all, dressed with extravagant taste, painted, veiled, and redolent of perfumes.

There was the old bitter tone in her mode of rallying "Fairfax," on being "*Lady Amabel's aide-de-camp*;" and, having paid her compliments with what I thought an impertinent air, she led off Clarence. I could see them strolling together between the tall pomegranate hedges. Unlike the conversations between Clarence and myself, it seemed that she was the talker, and he the listener; for the sun falling where they stopped for many minutes in the walk, I could distinctly perceive her gestures, while he appeared silent and grave.

But, while remarking this curious proceeding, I heard a young Dutch lady say to another, "Mrs Rashleigh and Captain Fairfax are quarrelling—did you hear that she was enraged with him at the last ball?"

"Oh, yes; and they say he has not been at her house since the Governor has been at Newlands—hush!"

They discovered I was near them, and were silent.

I heard remarks of the same nature from others of the party; but Lady Amabel was engaged with a group of children round the fruit-table. She had released me from her kind *surveillance* on seeing Mrs Rashleigh lead off her nephew. She had only designated Clarence as "her nephew" since my advent at Government House.

I fear you may think these puerilities, dear Major Frankfort. I will turn over three or four leaves of this childish journal.

One day, Lady Amabel was slightly indisposed; I carried my work-frame to her morning-room. The General and all his staff had ridden to Cape Town to meet some foreign official. She begged me to take my walk in the grounds, and I left her.

It was one of those dreamy days, such as we have lately had here. The birds and insects dropped their wings in the boughs. I hastened through the pathways, glowing with the sun, and sought the "Grove of Egeria." I went, singing to myself that pretty bit of Handel,

"Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
Trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade."

It was in harmony with the scene—all was calm—the glare of the heavens could not penetrate there—and I sauntered leisurely on, enjoying the solitude, and sat down beneath the branches of a noble plane-tree. Suddenly I heard a sound of horses' feet; I thought it was some one passing along the high road hidden by the plantations; the sound drew nearer; I looked through a long green vista—it was Clarence Fairfax, followed by his groom; he looked up as he approached. I was standing in a natural arch, with the light streaming down through an opening above. I never thought of drawing back, as I ought to have done, for Lady Amabel would have objected to our meeting in this retired spot. Clarence saw me, waved his forage-cap, and, springing from his horse, threw the reins to the groom.

He was in the grove in an instant, and at my feet, as I reclined, trembling with emotion, under the plane-tree boughs.

Ah! Major Frankfort, had you heard his gentle words, his expressions of pleasure at meeting me alone—the contrasts he drew between other girls and me; had you seen his smile, as he held my hand in his, and looked upon me!—you would not have doubted that he loved me.

But he terrified me by desiring—ah! he was very imperative—that I would say nothing to Lady Amabel of this meeting.

I would have retreated from the grove, but he seized me by the hand, and entreated me to listen to his reasons for *delay*.

Woe is me! I did listen to this once—*only this once*.

One might write volumes on such a text; but I was firm in not consenting to another meeting. I had been brought up in the few of doing wrong.

I trembled when I met Lady Amabel in the hall; she was tying on her bonnet, and coming to meet me.

"Did you see Clarence?" she asked; "his horses have just gone round to the stable."

Before I could reply, I heard the tread of a spurred and booted heel upon the threshold of the hall-door; Lady Amabel took it for granted Clarence had just dismounted, for she inquired if the General and Captain Walton were following him.

No; Clarence had left them "up to their knees in foolscap" in a government office.

I escaped to my room, shut the door, and began to think.

Those were two wretched hours, which I spent alone on the 18th of January, 18—. I pleaded, with truth, the lady's excuse for not driving with Lady Amabel to meet Sir Adrian. She took Clarence Fairfax with her in the carriage.

It was dusk when they returned, and a britzska full of visitors followed the General's equipage. I was at the head of the stairs, when I heard Mrs Rashleigh's voice; the servants were lighting the lamps. I looked over the banisters, she and two or three other ladies were coming up to arrange their toilette before dinner.

Clarence stood at the foot of the stairs; he was laughing at some bold sally of Mrs Rashleigh's, for he said, "for shame."

She had a brilliant bouquet in her hand; she tapped him on the cheek, and he, catching the beautiful hand, drew off the glove, and kissed it.

I rushed back to my dim chamber.

All this was painfully incomprehensible to me. I was totally ignorant of the character of a male flirt—I set down Mrs Rashleigh as a friend!—a dashing, impudent woman, but only a friend—thirty-two years old, as she acknowledged, and every one said she was at least thirty-five, to me at sixteen she appeared old; Clarence Fairfax was five-and-twenty.

I dare say that the intimacy of these two people would have been a mystery to you; and yet, ere this, you may have learned how mischievous is the influence which a bold, meretricious, experienced woman, whose chief study has been to please the other sex, gains by perseverance over a vain young man.

Clarence Fairfax loved me as well as he was capable of loving anything besides himself; but he was enthralled by this daring being—he was afraid of her. Ah! you may doubt; but history tells us how vain and indolent men have quailed before vicious women. She even exercised a sort of mysterious power over gentle Lady Amabel. The latter had an instinctive, feminine dread of Mrs Rashleigh's sarcastic laugh and audacious stare.

As for Sir Adrian, she amused him. She was a dashing rider, too; she had given it up for some years, but returned to it on being tempted to try Zara, my well-trained Arab. God forgive me for my suspicions—it acquired some dangerous tricks under her tutoring; she used to boast of her talent for the *manège*, and scandalised the decorous Dutch ladies, who, she said, were jealous of her, by riding with the General and his staff about the square at a grand review.

Lady Amabel was beginning to penetrate the cause of my fits of dejection, when unexpected news from the military posts startled both her and myself.

The war-cry had rung from the mountains in Kafirland. Vividly do I remember the night on which this intelligence reached Cape Town. The whole of the authorities, with many members of their families, had assembled, amid a crowd of pleasure-loving people, on board a fine English frigate, to celebrate a national festival. Gay groups were scattered about the decks, awaiting the arrival of Sir Adrian and his party. I was happy that evening, and stepped on the deck, leaning on Clarence's arm. How kind, how tender had been his manner, as he almost lifted me from the barge to the gangway of the noble ship! As people are said, in the last hours of existence, to review minutely every incident of their lives, so could I once retrace the most trifling details of this brilliant and enchanting fête. As I recall it now, I remember everything—the wreaths, the flags of all the great nations of the world; the glittering arms interspersed among the laurels, and the effect of the soft light from the battle-lanterns disposed along the poop; innumerable lamps shedding their radiance through the draperies of scarlet and amber, purple, green, and white, and blue; the crowds of laughing dancers; the imposing array of military and naval uniforms and decorations.

Ah, fatal gift of beauty!

How long it was before I could cease to think of Clarence on that night, his plumed hat in his hand! How often did his gay laugh haunt me, like a mockery, in the silence of the night! His countenance beamed like an angel's, as it leant down to mine, and his whispered accents touched my very soul amid the din of the giddy throng.

Arms clattered on the deck, as the Governor, Sir Adrian, acknowledged the salute from the guard of honour; the stirring air of "God save the King" pealed from the band on the poop; the crowd parted right and left, and the Admiral came forward to receive us. Having paid his compliments, Admiral B gave the order, in a good-humoured voice, to "clear the decks for action"—dance-music floated from unseen musicians; the officers selected their partners, and Clarence Fairfax led me to the head of the quadrille.

Mrs Rashleigh placed herself opposite to us, with Captain Walton; she was fanning herself, and was evidently much excited and agitated. I felt she was my evil genius for the night at least.

There was a fiendish light in her eye, but Clarence either did not or *would* not observe it, and he was in such spirits, that their influence for a time was irresistible.

We were laughing merrily together as Mrs Rashleigh sailed past us in the quadrille.

"Have you heard the news?" said she, addressing Clarence—she seldom deigned to recognise me except by an insolent bow.

"News?—no." And the young aide-de-camp led me back to my place. "There's a man-of-war just coming in," said he; "she has been making signals to the station on the hills; what news can she bring?"

The sun had long set, and the man-of-war dropped her anchor in silence; it was soon whispered that she had brought news from the south-eastern coast; and besides this, some excitement prevailed in consequence of her having had a desperate affray with pirates off the coast of Madagascar, and she had been looked for with much anxiety and interest, rumours of the action having reached us some days before?

There was silence. It was so profound, that we could distinguish the splash of the oars. The flag-lieutenant descended the gangway to meet the commander of the sloop, and attending him to the deck, presented him to Admiral D. After the usual compliments had passed, Captain Leslie requested to be introduced at once to the Governor, for whom he had brought important despatches.

Mrs Rashleigh came up at once to Clarence Fairfax; but looking at *me*, observed abruptly, "We must bid adieu to balls and fêtes immediately. The Governor and his suite will have to start for the frontier without delay. You will be charmed, I am sure, to take the field again, Major Fairfax,"—here she addressed herself to him;—"for you must be tired of lounging at pianos and superintending embroidery. Don't faint, Miss Daveney; you are as white as death, I vow. He will come back again; aides-de-camp never get shot, especially in Kafirland."

It is a fearful thing for a young heart to feel the germ of dislike springing in its depths; and, alas! I began to hate this woman.

Clarence looked round for some one to whose care he could commit me. "I must go," he said, "to my uncle at once." I instinctively moved away with him. We left Mrs Rashleigh standing alone. Every one was crowding towards the poop to hear the news. Lady Amabel had fainted.

The next few hours are vaguely sketched upon the tablets of my mind—day was dawning, as we descended the carpeted steps of the gangway to depart for the shore. I tottered into the barge, Clarence Fairfax supported me in his arms, and Lady Amabel was reclining on a seat, with Sir Adrian attempting to comfort her. Mrs Rashleigh was waiting for the Admiral's cutter to convey her to land. I could not reconcile her levity with the idea of her regard for Clarence. She was on the last step of the gangway, and leaning down, she looked under the canopy of the barge: "Pray, tell Lady Amabel," said she to me, with a mocking smile, "that she must not alarm herself; it will be quite a question of *words* on the frontier, and we shall soon return. I have made up my mind to accompany Mr Rashleigh, who goes with the Governor. We shall have a charming party; good night."

Clarence muttered something between his teeth. I laid my head on his shoulder, and sobbed bitterly. I forgot Lady Amabel and Sir Adrian; indeed they were intent on their own regrets and responsibilities. Clarence pressed me to his heart, and parting the curls from my brow, kissed me for the first and last time.

Oh! that stir in the household in the early morning the dread preparation for war—weapons lying on the gilded tables; holsters flung across the banisters; servants hurrying hither and thither with saddlery and accoutrements; the impatient chargers pawing in the stable-yard, as if they steady "snuffed the battle afar off;" orderlies dashing to the open doorways on foaming horses; and impatient voices issuing commands to the startled underlings!

I rose early and went below; my heart sickened at these evidences of immediate departure. I returned to my sleeping apartment. It loosed into the beautiful view of the approach to the house from my dressing-room. I could hear the clatter of horses' feet in the stables, and grooms and soldiers laughing, enjoying the prospect of the journey, and perhaps war. It was early day. How lovely is nature at her *reveille* in this soft climate! She was waking in the garden to the matin songs of birds; she was lifting her veil on the mountain-top, and unfurling her crimson banner in the sky to herald the coming of the sun.

But with me all was gloom. That Clarence Fairfax loved me, in his impetuous way, I *believed*,—alas! I did not know; but the future was a dark abyss. He was going—going into danger. All the horrible histories I had been told of death at savage hands rose before me. The hour or two passed in sleep during the night had been haunted with bloody spectres. I saw that brow stained with gore, those eyes which had beamed on me with merry light closed for ever. Gracious heaven! I had dreamt of torture, agony, and shame, with my beloved Clarence in the foreground of the picture.

Up and down, up and down those two rooms I paced, shivering on that sunny morning with dread, dismay, and doubt. Tears came—they poured in torrents over my face. I caught sight of it in the large mirror—it was pitiable to behold. I wept the more at the sight of my miserable and altered countenance. How sad is self-pity! It is so long since I have recalled these wretched moments of existence, that I can dwell upon them now more as a vividly-remembered dream than as actual facts. I give you, dear friend, more details than you may like to have, but I think you have a right to watch the phases through which my mind passed under the influence of that absorbing earthly passion.

Yes, it was a mere earthly passion; but many wiser than I have been bewildered and enchained by exceeding beauty, a dazzling smile, a winning manner, a perfect form, and a reputation distinguished among men for gallant and generous actions—generous, you know, in the worldly acceptance of the term.

Besides, while with me, Clarence was wholly mine; if I might judge by manner, hanging over my embroidery frame while Lady Amabel was writing; or—

Ah! I have said enough of this. He was to leave me now. Would he die? Would he return? or, if he did, would he return true to me, and *tell me that he* loved me?

You see, under all this strong current of love for him, there were doubts. I hardly recognised them; but they existed nevertheless. I had heard him laugh at "love-stricken damsels," left by men who had been publicly engaged to them. I recollected his boasting, of giving advice to a young officer, who had gone "a great deal too far," to get sick leave, and sail for England by the first ship. The young man did not take this advice; he stayed, married, and Clarence called him "a fool."—Yes, these doubts rose to the surface of my mind, and then—

I heard his voice in the front of the house. I lifted the blind of the dressing-room window, and saw him: he looked harassed, he had been up all night. He was on horseback, and fully accoutred. Oh! was he departing? I dropped the blind; next I heard the rattle of spurs and sword; he had dismounted.

I wiped the tears from my eyes, and ran down to the garden by a back staircase. Clarence had some deer there in a little paddock. I walked mechanically along a grape-walk to the inclosure: the pretty things knew me, for I visited them every day; they put their faces through the railings, and licked my hands. Nelly—he had named one after me—trotted up and down impatiently; she was watching for her master. I suppose he thought that I should be with his favourites; for, ere long, he came through the grape-walk. I hastened to meet him—for agitation and distress overcame my reserve—and we walked up and down the arcade together.

He entreated me not to forget him, said he should be wretched till he returned, and a hundred tender things besides; but I could see that the change from garrison life to active service was exciting to him: he had no idea of temporising with savages, he said; he hoped Sir Adrian would settle the question by “speaking to the Kafirs,” as they said themselves, “with guns.” Oh! it would only be a month’s affair. They were to ride five hundred miles a week till they reached the seat of war; and then, he added, with a gay air, “think how much faster we shall ride back.”

We met Sir Adrian in the garden; he had been looking for Clarence. The Governor was too full of public affairs and his own domestic anxiety to say much to me. A young girl of seventeen, in the full bloom of mirth and beauty, was an agreeable object to him in a ball-room, but he was wont to laugh, like Clarence, at “sorrow-stricken damsels;” he saw I had been weeping, but could enter little into my misery; he uttered some courteous expressions of regret at leaving me to the dulness of Cape Town in the absence of officials; and with more show of feeling than I had seen him exhibit, said, “You will take care of Lady Amabel, my dear Miss Daveney; I am consoled in these hurried moments of departure at the idea of leaving her with so sweet a companion.”

“You must make breakfast for us this morning,” added he, giving me his arm, and leading me through the verandah to the room where the repast was spread.

I sat down passively in the chair Sir Adrian placed for me, and did the honours of the breakfast to the Governor, his staff, and two or three civil functionaries.

Mr Rashleigh was there—obsequious, prosy, and judicial: he was alike despised and disliked in private life; but he was “Sir Adrian’s right hand at Cape Town;” was *au fait* at the working of the difficult machinery of government from one end of the colony to the other; and, as I afterwards heard, kept up a sort of civil treaty with Mrs Rashleigh, who had never loved him, but who had a thorough sense of the advantages she derived from her position as his wife, surrounded by the appliances, and, what she considered, the state of official life. She had ample evidence against him to procure a divorce if she chose it; but such a proceeding would have been the ruin of both. She had the art to conceal her most glaring errors from the world, and rumours were afloat of stormy debates between this worldly, unprincipled pair: he remonstrating on her extravagance, she defying him, by threatening him with an *esclandre* that would have deprived him of his high appointment.

You may believe that such rumours never reached Sir Adrian and Lady Amabel. It is “expedient” to overlook the most glaring errors of powerful and useful men. Probably, if any one had endeavoured to enlighten Sir Adrian, the latter would have deprecated the information as intrusive. No; every one believed Mr and Mrs Rashleigh to be unprincipled people; but they had a fine house, gave elegant entertainments, were on the best terms with the first authorities through every successive government, never worried others with their quarrels; on the contrary, were perfectly civil to each other in public; and, although the lady was said to be extravagant, she paid her debts.

I am telling you what, probably, you may have heard of these baneful people; for it is not very long since circumstances came to light which would never have been known had the Rashleighs continued prosperous; but the day came when the world did not care what it believed against them, and then their very errors were exaggerated—if that were possible—but I must not be uncharitable. How true that remark of Sir Thomas More—I forget the exact words—you quoted them the other day—that “our faults we engraven on marble—our virtues traced in the dust!”

The gentlemen hurried over their breakfast, and Sir Adrian retired with Mr Rashleigh. How I longed to rise and escape through the window into the garden! but it was impracticable, and there I remained for upwards of an hour, with a heart bursting with grief, while my face was condemned to wear a calm appearance. Doubtless, “Fairfax’s flirtation with little Miss Daveney” had been talked of at many of these men’s tables; but they were all too much interested in the important events pending to give a thought to the shy, melancholy little figure, sitting with her back to the light, and dispensing tea and coffee as fast as the servants could hand round the silver salvers.

Oh! weak of heart and weak of mind that I was in those days!—But am I the wiser for the past?

I trust so; I pray it may prove good for me that I have been afflicted, and that, like the land desolated apparently by the dark waters of the Nile, my soul may be purified and strengthened by the floods that have gone over my soul, and that the receding tide may leave all refreshed, hopeful, and serene.

Oh! the solitude of a great mansion which for weeks has been ringing with sounds of dancers’ feet, of laughter, and of song. The large vacant rooms, the tall mirrors, reflecting in all directions one insignificant little object! I went wandering about the apartments at Government House the greater part of that morning. Lady Amabel was in bed, exhausted by a succession of fainting-fits. The sudden announcement of the evil tidings had scared her weak nerves, and Sir Adrian’s speedy departure had prostrated her. They had scarcely been sundered for twenty years, save in some short brilliant campaigns in India. No one seemed to dread actual danger to the General’s person in his present expedition; but I had heard something of the foe he was about to encounter, and I knew what *might* be.

Clarence Fairfax and I parted amid a bevy of officials. We shook hands like commonplace acquaintances. The other members of the staff came rattling in through the open doors. All was hurry at the last; I ran up to my dressing-room

window, and watched the assemblage of people who had come to make their parting bow to the popular Governor.

Horses, men, equipages were crowded together; Sir Adrian appeared—there was a hearty shout—the grooms and orderlies brought up the chargers, they were rowing and fretting with impatience. My pretty Zara was led by a dragoon, to be ridden only occasionally. The General and staff were soon in their saddles—the crowd gave way—Sir Adrian waved his hat—the aides-de-camp bowed right and left, and the cavalcade proceeded at a rapid pace down the street. In ten minutes not a trace was left of this gallant array. The Rashleighs were to follow the Governor in the afternoon. They drove up to the door of Government House in their travelling equipage, saddle and sumpter horses following. Lady Amabel could not see them—I would not; but from my dressing-room, where I sat trying to draw, I could hear Mrs Rashleigh's imperative voice. I looked through the Venetian blinds for an instant, and turned away, sick at heart.

It was evening before Lady Amabel and I met. How vast the room looked as we two sat at dinner, with a lamp shining on a table usually crowded with guests. Next day we departed for Newlands.

Sweet, gentle, kind Lady Amabel. She had, as I have told you, begun to penetrate the cause of my occasional dejection: occasional—for there were times when I had no doubt of Clarence Fairfax's attachment. But she had her misgivings about Mrs Rashleigh, whom she spoke of once or twice as a "dangerous woman;" and this was a strong expression for Lady Amabel. She now drew from me a part of "Love's sad history," and expressed her regrets at Clarence's departure without opening his mind to her. In many ways she betrayed uneasiness at the idea of Mrs Rashleigh's determination to follow the authorities to the frontier.

How solitary now to me were those long, green vistas at Newlands! The fountain of Egeria had its own peculiar melancholy charm, and many early morning hours were passed in these bowers, consecrated in memory to love and happiness.

Letters soon arrived, bringing us hopeful intelligence of peace with Kafirland; but an immense press of business was likely to detain Sir Adrian for some time. He even talked of a journey to Natal, on the northeastern coast; but, the fear of absolute and immediate danger removed, visitors poured in to offer their congratulations, for Lady Amabel had endeared herself to many.

The despatches contained a note for me. I put it aside till I could open it in solitude. It was full of kindness, and I was comparatively happy.

On the other hand, I was doomed to hear of fêtes and balls got up to celebrate Sir Adrian's arrival at Graham's Town, the capital of the frontier. Mrs Rashleigh was doing the honours of his house; her husband and herself were its inmates, and I could detect many a lurking smile on the lips of keen-witted, ill-natured visitors, as they listened to the relation of these "facts and scraps" to Lady Amabel.

Some relations of Sir Adrian's happened at this time to take up their abode at the Cape. They called at Newlands, and introduced a young man, who had come from England with them, and who brought letters of special introduction to the Governor.

Lady Amabel was indisposed, and I received the guests; they remained to luncheon. Lady Amabel sent to request that they, with *Mr Lyle*, would remain to dinner. They could not accept the invitation, but Mr Lyle did, and was left *tête-à-tête* with me.

Handsome, original, and clever, he certainly beguiled away those hours more agreeably than I had expected. He spent the evening with Lady Amabel and myself. She liked him; she said he was "not *too* clever for us," in our unsettled, agitated state, for we were only *hoping* for peace; and she gave him a general invitation to our country residence, to which she had also asked her relatives during their *séjour* at the Cape. Unaccustomed to thoroughly "private life," Lady Amabel was happy to throw her house open again to society. We had no fêtes or dinner-parties; we were not gay, but we were cheerful, for every week brought us more hopeful intelligence from the seat of war. I heard less of Mrs Rashleigh and Clarence Fairfax, and believed his excuses for short and hurried notes to me. The interchange of these notes was not quite right; but, although kind, they contained no warm expressions of regard. Lady Amabel considered them harmless, because Clarence signed himself a "Faithful Cousin." I suppose she had not the heart to forbid what she saw gave me so much pleasure. He was, he said, "overwhelmed with office work."

Mr Lyle had been sent from England to join a force quartered at Natal, but with especial credentials to the Governor, to whom he enclosed them. He shortly received instruction to remain at Cape Town for the present, Sir Adrian anticipating an opportunity of naming him for a staff appointment.

He visited us almost daily. Lady Amabel was charmed with his attentions. He was ever ready to bring us good news, and on the arrival of despatches would gallop out to Newlands to be the first herald of the tidings.

I have told you that the first impression he made was agreeable—but as for marriage!—

He treated me with a certain air of respect, which, I confess, pleased me exceedingly. He seemed more for my favour than Lady Amabel's. There was a peculiar kind of cleverness, too, in his conversation, which was new—it was that of *educated ability*; but he had an original way of discussing questions, and, through the respectful reserve he maintained towards me, I could discover a lurking talent for sarcasm, not ill-natured, but irresistibly amusing. He entertained Lady Amabel very much with his "quiet impertinences," as she called them, and "drew out" her colonial visitors to an extent they never dreamt of. I own that I was a little mystified; it was some time before I could discover the difference between jest and earnest in this character.

Lady Amabel, as I have told you, though elegant and charming, was an idler; she missed Mr Lyle extremely, when some days passed without a visit from him. It never struck me, till enlightened by his own subsequent revelations,

that he withdrew himself from us occasionally in order to be recalled—an absence of two or three days was sure to be followed by a note of invitation to dine at Newlands—and then he came with news, private and political. His credentials had introduced him to the principal families at Cape Town, and he was already well received among them.

He had the talent of adapting himself to the habits and tastes of all classes and both sexes; he could talk politics with officials, and was often asked by Lady Amabel to assist her in entertaining such persons as she had friendly reasons for inviting to Newlands. She thought him a little spoiled, for it did not always suit his mood to talk. She did not discover, nor did I at the time, her own error in spoiling him herself.

He turned all kind Lady Amabel's foibles to his own account.

No two characters could be more opposite than Lyle's and Clarence Fairfax's, and yet both had certain attributes in common; both were brave and daring, but Clarence had less moral courage than Lyle—both loved to conquer, but the one wanted perseverance, and would yield to passion while success was doubtful. I could recall many circumstances which would explain these contrasts in the two characters. Clarence Fairfax, in his resolution to conquer a horse, closed the contest by shooting it dead in the face of his grooms. Lyle seized the reins of one of Sir Adrian's fiery steeds, and, mounting it when excited to fury, fought with it resolutely, till it quailed beneath his hand, and then galloped it for miles against its will, till it was thoroughly tamed.

People had seen these two men play billiards, and remarked the dashing impetuosity of the one, and the cool, calculating game of the other; the one winning by quiet determination.

Both Lyle and Fairfax sketched well; the first filled his portfolio with wild scenes from storms at sea or battle-pieces, roughly done, but full of spirit—there were also innumerable caricatures—so true as scarcely to be caricatures; Clarence was a graceful artist. Neither liked reading, for reading's sake; but Clarence could quote many a passage from Moore's and Byron's softest poems, while Lyle was more at home with "Thalaba" or "Cain;" but liked better, he said, to shape his opinions from his own observation than from books.

Chapter Thirteen.

The Catastrophe.

Rumour began, with bold and busy tongue, to talk more openly of "scandalous reports" from the frontier concerning Mrs Rashleigh. Lady Amabel, always charitable, put them down to the account of a little "natural bitterness" on the part of weak, jealous people, who might depend on Mrs Rashleigh's influence for invitations to the official parties; but I heard otherwise, and from no other than Mr Lyle. So far, he said, from people being desirous of the *entrée* at Sir Adrian's official residence at Graham's Town, many persons objected to meet Mrs Rashleigh, whose conduct with Fairfax had become notorious. Lyle mentioned Clarence as though he was utterly unconscious of my interest in him, and added, that he knew him slightly—they had been at Westminster together. He did not tell me that Clarence and he had been foes in one of those shocking stand-up fights so common in English schools. Lyle had conquered Clarence, and the latter did not resent the issue of what was declared a fair fight; but the former never forgot that, though victory was his, there were few to cheer *him*, while the vanquished boy was surrounded by friends.

In short, with many tastes and talents in common, these two men were totally different.

Clarence was accustomed to talk to me chiefly of himself. I began to think of this, as Lyle did homage to talents which he discovered I possessed. Still there were the doubts about jest and earnest. Every day I found out how difficult it was to understand the character of men. Lyle became more marked in his attentions as the time drew near for Sir Adrian's return; and I—I must confess that I was surprised at having borne Clarence's absence with patience.

I had had my hours of sorrow and anxiety nevertheless. The dread of a war was dissipated soon after the Governor and his troops had left Cape Town; but diplomatic matters detained them for three months. During that period I never left Lady Amabel; but Lyle made himself acquainted with all the domestic history of Sir Adrian's proceedings, laughed at the scandal about Mrs Rashleigh and Fairfax, but did not doubt it,—it was too well authenticated; and when he discovered that my countenance was clouded with dismay, affected bitter regret at having wounded my feelings; but smiled incredulously at the idea of my entertaining a serious passion for that young *roué*.

He did not dwell on this. He knew that in a disposition like mine love reigned triumphant over pride.

Woe is me! I knew so too.

I have tried to detail some of the characteristics of this deeply-designing man; but you would rather have them passed over, and I shrink from the recital. He was determined on retrieving a tottering reputation by an alliance with any one whose friends or fortune might arrest the progress of ruin and disgrace; I was the victim he singled out. My thoughts were far apart from his designs.

I was like a city besieged, with the enemy smiling before me in friendly array, watching to stalk into the gates, awaiting the arrival of a faithless ally.

Lady Amabel and I were at Newlands, expecting tidings from the frontier, and prepared to return to Cape Town to receive Sir Adrian. I was awakened early one morning by the distant sound of guns—it was a salute—it must be the Governor and his suite; they were expected to return by sea. I threw on my dressing-gown, and ran to Lady Amabel's room.

I met her in the passage; she was all joy. I trembled with agitation, pleasure, and dread.

The carriage drove round within half an hour, and we hastened into Cape Town. The bells were ringing, the ships in the harbour were decorated with flags. Crowds lined the streets; the Governor had landed, and was detained on the shore by a congratulatory deputation. We were received by the throng with loud hurrahs. Peace had been proclaimed, and treaties established, which people believed would be satisfactory. Triumphal arches had been raised within a few hours. On we dashed. We reached Government House just as the guard of honour passed us after receiving Sir Adrian. Every one looked joyous; the mansion resounded again with cheerful voices.

"Here they come! Here they come!" Carriage-wheels approached. Lady Amabel and I ran into the hall. She threw herself upon her husband's breast. Captain Walton and the military secretary advanced to shake hands with me. They were laughing—quite happy to have escaped the toils of an inglorious warfare. I could not speak.

Lady Amabel greeted them, and looking round, said, "But where is my nephew? Where is Clarence Fairfax?"

And they both answered with another laugh, which Captain Walton checked suddenly, as he caught a glimpse of my frightened face. "Oh! he is quite safe, and very—happy," said the secretary. "Well," said Captain Walton; "he is coming back overland with the Rashleighs."

"Yes," observed Sir Adrian, in a tone, partly of sarcasm and partly of displeasure; "and he had much better have returned with us. I am by no means satisfied with this arrangement of *Mrs Rashleigh's*."

I was most bitterly disappointed.

Shame to me, I had nearly forgotten to ask after the welfare of my family. I addressed some agitated questions to Captain Walton, who told me all were well.

He had always been kind in his manner to me, and could readily guess the meaning of my melancholy face. My arm trembled on his as we proceeded to the breakfast-room together—that same room where Clarence Fairfax and I had parted in a crowd.

I would fain pass over much that followed. I received a letter from my father. He had heard somewhat of Clarence Fairfax's "conspicuous attentions to me." He feared Lady Amabel had been "too indulgent." Fairfax was the very person to "charm a young girl's senses," but he hoped they were not overcome by a fine form and a bewitching manner. My dear father thought too well of me to suppose that I was enthralled by this lively, dashing, handsome young aide-de-camp, who was, to say truth, at the feet of a lady whose reputation had suffered from her carelessness. Every one indeed spoke of Fairfax as a male coquette.

You see, dear friend, my father would not assume that I was "seriously enthralled;" he was not with me to judge for himself. You shall read his letter some day. You will see that though he tried to treat this matter lightly, it weighed upon his mind; he was bent on having me home again. "My darling," he says, at the close of this letter, "write to me at once; you have never mentioned this affair, which others speak of so carelessly, and your silence makes me anxious. In my anxiety I asked your sister if you alluded to Captain Fairfax in your communications with her, but she tells me no. My love, I long to have you with me again. Captain Walton admitted to me that you were looking ill. He is most kind, and enters into my anxieties. He was unwilling, I could see, to commit Fairfax. In a word, dearest Eleanor, he has more respect for Fairfax than that infatuated young man has for himself..."

Then followed directions for my return, under the care of friends about to leave Cape Town for the eastward settlements. They delayed their departure, and I was detained, to Lady Amabel's satisfaction, for she had become attached to me. But, albeit firm in her attachments, she was a person, as you may have discovered, ever open to fresh impressions. She was as unsuspecting of evil as I was.

Mr Lyle had made his way, and stood in high favour when Sir Adrian arrived.

He was presented, and joined the circle at dinner that day; he took his station at my side—I was sadly abstracted—he was in his most agreeable vein, and drew me from myself, as usual.

I know, dear friend, you will wonder that the letter I received from home was from *my father*. I had always belonged more to him than my mother. Marion, you know, was the favourite in her babyhood; and it was my fault, perhaps, as well as my misfortune, that I was always reserved to my mother. I well recollect her once expressing impatience at that reserve; but I never could shake it off; it exists, as you know, to this day. A sensitive child, once repelled, seldom makes another advance, and I have told you that I entered the world just as the best-beloved one was fading from it. My mother had less thought naturally for me than him. I turned to my father—his arms were open, and I rested there.

You have been a member of our family circle for some weeks now; otherwise, how could I bring myself to cast a shade of reproach on my mother, for whom you have so high a respect? Ah! *you* will not set it down to wrong account.

You see I linger in my wretched history.

I look again into my journal. 16th March. "Clarence has returned; at times dejected; at times excited; he is totally unlike his former self. We are at Newlands again. All these scenes and objects associated with happier hours! They bring but bitterness to me. I never approach the fountain of Egeria... When I hear the sound of horses' feet in those long avenues, I fly—I am ill—I cannot rest—and oh, this crowd! how it oppresses me! How I long for a friend to whom I could impart my sorrow. Oh, for advice!—Dear father! would that I were at home and by thy side. Mother, you would

take your stricken daughter to your arms. Though weak and ill, how strong within me is the power of suffering..."

You say, Major Frankfort, that you love me; I believe you; you will love me ever, for you will ever pity me; and so, knowing what your heart will feel on reading this, I will not *shed* all my miserable thoughts of this period upon paper.

All this time Lyle was intent upon his purpose. He *felt* my fate was in his hands.

He took up a new position.

I was sitting one morning in Lady Amabel's boudoir. A servant ushered in Mr Lyle. He started back; "It was Lady Amabel he came to see," he said.

I begged him to be seated, and rose to go for her.

He detained me gently.

How specious he was—how blind was I! He had "been studying me for weeks;" from the first moment we met, he "had been deeply interested in me. He had perceived the shade that an early sorrow had cast round me, and had come to ask Lady Amabel if there was no hope for *him*; he would not press the question on me now, it would be unkind."

I believed that he felt for me from his soul; that he *would* have "given worlds for a *look* which would bid him not quite despair; but this was not the time to assail me. He knew I had pride; it was blinded now, but the mist would clear away, the scales would fall from my eyes. I should do him justice; he grieved that the world should have dared to tamper with my name—" He quite frightened me as he said this. I was oppressed with a sense of bitterness and wrong, against which I was powerless; but here was one who seemed disposed to do me justice. I wished to do right. Lady Amabel would have been all kindness had I unburdened my full heart to her, but she would not have understood me; she would have proposed a ride or a drive, or a *fête*, or might have sent for Clarence, to scold him. Ah me! I had not a friend at hand who could give me good advice; and here sat this clever experienced, silver-tongued man, offering me his sympathy, and teaching me to believe he was the only one near me who could feel for me—who had, in fact, any real regard for me; and this regard was offered so humbly that I had not a word to say against the expression of it. On the one hand was Clarence Fairfax, reckless of my affection, ignoring it indeed, and, as Lyle remarked, with indignation he protested he could not suppress, "insulting me publicly, by doing homage before my face to a shameless woman, whose triumph was the greater in that she had drawn this infatuated young man from one so lovely and pure-hearted as myself."

My tears rained down upon the work-table on which he leaned, contemplating me with an expression of compassion new to me, yet not unpleasing.

I began to think I had found a friend.

More company on that evening! I longed to return to the quiet of home; but unavoidable delays kept me back. We were to leave Newlands for Cape Town next day. An irresistible impulse seized me—I stole out at dusk, to take a last look at the Grove. I walked swiftly through the avenues, ascended the mound, and went to our old accustomed seat under the plane-tree.

The darkness and the silence that prevailed were in accordance with the gloom that hung over my soul.

At last I bade adieu for ever to this spot, so painfully dear to me. I descended to the avenue. A tall figure approached me—it was Lyle's—"I thought," said he, "that I should find you here; but be not alarmed, I shall not return with you. I recognised your figure leaving the house, and came to prepare you for meeting with Mrs Rashleigh to-night; she is to be among the guests. Lady Amabel's position with regard to this woman is most difficult—but a crisis is at hand; Fairfax is completely in her toils—an *esclandre* must take place soon. I beseech you do not add to this bad woman's triumph to-night by that heart-broken demeanour which you have lately worn. Ah! Miss Daveney, I shall look for your *entrée* with an anxious eye and beating heart. Pardon my presumption in thus intruding on you, but my interest in your happiness must be my excuse."

He took my hand in his, but dropped it immediately, with a sigh; and, lifting his hat, disappeared in an avenue.

I went to Lady Amabel's dressing-room. I had not the courage to enter the saloons alone. I need not have been afraid. Clarence was not there when I joined the circle; but I felt as if all the guests were looking at me. I condemned myself for the next few hours to wear "That falsest of false things, a mask of smiles."

Lyle's eye met mine—it seemed to haunt me.

It was an *alfresco* *fête*. The heat of the season was over, but the nights were soft and mild. One of the long arcades was enclosed, and lit with variegated lamps; a brilliant moon illuminated the lime-groves; every arrangement was made to conduce to the splendour and pleasure of the scene.

I could not stand up to dance. My knees trembled, my teeth chattered, and I felt my lips turn pale as Clarence Fairfax drew near with Mrs Rashleigh. I could not look at her; she was laughing and talking in her usual bold strain, and answering for Clarence questions that were addressed to himself. He saw me not, though he cast himself beside me on the couch—his sash streamed over my dress, his sword rested against my hand, his spur touched my foot. I withdrew it quickly, and moved aside; he begged my pardon for incommoding me. I turned to him to bow, and the crimson tide flushed that fine face. He started up nervously. Mrs Rashleigh rose, too, took his arm, and led him off.

She named me to him in my hearing. I heard him say, "Hush! Anna, for mercy's sake; don't remind me of my misdeed."

"Anna!"—they were indeed on very familiar terms.

She was robed imperially that evening, and looked wonderfully youthful. Whispers passed from lip to lip, as she and Clarence passed up the apartment, and went out into the lime-grove. Others were following them. I sat, trying to talk to Lyle, and smiling vacantly at the polite recognitions of some of the guests.

Lady Amabel came up to me. "My dear child," said she, "you look quite ill—come into the air. Mr Lyle, give Miss Daveney your arm."

But I begged to withdraw for a little while, and Lady Amabel excused me.

The library was the only room unoccupied on this festal night. A single lamp stood on the table. The windows of this room opened to that dark walk overshadowed by the mountain. Here there were no illuminations—no crowd of dancers. I extinguished the lamp, and sat down by the open window.

Two figures were walking slowly up and down the avenue. They stepped a few paces beyond the shadow of the mountain, into the moonlit path. It was Mrs Rashleigh and Clarence Fairfax. She was talking vehemently; he was entreating her to be calm.

I sat, transfixed; had a voice from the grave summoned me, I could not have obeyed.

She was reproaching him for some imagined neglect. He told her that she fancied it. Now her tones were those of passion, vehement and imperious; he implored her, for her own sake, to restrain her wrath.

It is impossible to relate to you all I saw and heard, as, statue-like, I leaned against the window—bitter imprecations were heaped on my own head. Clarence would have burst from her at this, but she cast herself upon his bosom, and clung there, pouring forth the most passionate expressions of love and regret. "Would he desert her? She should die! She only lived in his presence. He saw her gay and brilliant in society—Oh! if he knew the dark hours she passed without him."

They moved slowly, close by the window; she was talking to him, with her head resting on his shoulder. She was speaking of her husband—complaining of him—for Clarence uttered his name in an angry tone, and then whispering, "My poor Anna! and you suffered this for me!" folded her in his arms, and embraced her wildly.

They were within a yard of me, and I dared not move. Icy cold were my hands, clasped together; my eyeballs burned and throbbed, but no tears came to their relief. I seemed to realise the sensation that Niobe must have felt on being turned to stone.

They leaned against the window—some one approached—they started, and were moving on, when the angry voice of the outraged Mr Rashleigh arrested the steps of the guilty pair. The wretched woman screamed aloud, and clung to Clarence, who, on Mr Rashleigh raising his hand to strike him, received a blow on the arm he had lifted to ward it.

It was Lyle who had thus brought about this terrible *esclandre*, though of this no one then was aware. It was he who, as the crowd moved to a refreshment tent, had put a slip of paper into Mr Rashleigh's hands, warning him of his wife's delinquency, and the scorn in which he was held for his contemptible indifference to her shamelessness. He was informed of her whereabouts at that instant.

Mr Rashleigh opened this document in the sight of many persons; its tone of contempt galled him to the quick, and, forgetting all consequences but the desire of revenge, he rushed at once to the scene of his disgrace.

I fainted—some one lifted me from the floor. It was Lyle—he carried me into Lady Amabel's boudoir; she was there, walking nervously up and down. She received me with tears. Lyle withdrew. I felt grateful for his sympathy, and the kind and delicate manner in which he had expressed it.

Chapter Fourteen.

Strife.

I saw Clarence Fairfax but once again.

The exposure which had taken place separated the Rashleighs for ever. Challenges were interchanged between the gentlemen at the same hour.

The selfish woman who had thus brought disgrace on her husband, herself, and the man she had infatuated by her art, lost all prudence in her ungovernable state of excitement, and wrote a passionate appeal, from her retirement near Newlands, entreating Captain Fairfax to see her once again. But Sir Adrian had placed his nephew under arrest. Mrs Rashleigh had the hardihood to endeavour to force her way into his quarters by night; she was repelled from the door at the point of the bayonet, the sentry having due orders to prevent the ingress of such a visitor. In vain she implored, in vain she stormed.

Captain Walton kept watch upon his brother aide-de-camp within, and would not let him yield to the temptress.

Clarence resigned his appointment on his uncle's staff, and was ordered to England forthwith.

Lady Amabel and I were in the library with Sir Adrian when his nephew entered to take his leave. It was before official hours, and such a meeting was wholly unexpected on our part, nor perhaps had he anticipated it.

Lady Amabel could not pass him by; her heart was full—her eyes swimming with tears as he caught her hand.

"Dear aunt," said he, "*you* will wish me well."

"Sit down, Amabel; sit down, Miss Daveney," said Sir Adrian.

"Yes, Clarence, they will both wish you well; I do, from my soul; I take some blame to myself in this wretched business; but what is done cannot be undone. You have been the victim of that wretched, worthless being, whom it would be an insult to name here. Sit down, my lad, amongst us again; we are all deucedly sorry to part with you; when we meet again, you will be all the wiser for this business, I hope. I hardly like to let you go, but I suppose I must. I shall not get on at all well without you, my dear boy. Confound that devil.

"Well, Amabel, it is enough to make any one swear; for, now that she is fairly down, every one comes forward to say that she ought to have been banished from society long ago. I don't pity her one bit," continued the General, rising and pacing the chamber; "but I am heartily vexed to think she has seduced my sister's son, and in this affair *she* is the seducer, not Clarence."

"Oh! sir, I deserve more reproaches than you dream of," replied his nephew. "I cannot stay; I unworthy of any kindness or consideration. Aunt, God bless you."

Lady Amabel was sobbing audibly.

I stood mute and tearless.

Something like "Good-bye" was whispered. I looked up in that face, once so ingenuous, so happy. The laughing eyes were clouded with melancholy; the saucy curled lip pale and compressed; the tall, graceful form trembling with emotion. Not one word could I utter. My fingers closed upon his shaking hand for an instant. I withdrew them. He had pressed them so tightly in his nervous agony, that the indentation of a little ring I wore drew blood.

"Poor child! poor child!" said Sir Adrian, very kindly—a sudden thought about me causing him to stop and look fixedly at my sad countenance; "I pity you, too, from my heart. Amabel, this has been a sad business; it has moved me more than I like to own."

I looked up—Clarence Fairfax was gone!

The vacant appointment of aide-de-camp was offered to Mr Lyle; I applauded his delicacy when he told me he could not accept it under the circumstance of Clarence's disgrace.

I rather quailed, though, at that term, "disgrace," applied to "poor Clarence," as Lady Amabel began to designate him as soon as he departed.

Another staff appointment fell vacant in the frontier districts. Lyle applied for and obtained it.

He was happy, he said, in the prospect of being associated with me hereafter, but did not press his suit.

It was not long before I followed him to the upper districts of South Africa.

Lady Amabel and I parted with sorrow; she had been ever kind to me; her very errors were those of a tender-hearted, loving woman, and what would it have booted me had she been strong-minded and resolute? Clarence Fairfax's nature was fickle—I will add no more.

My journey homeward was a melancholy one; my friends were kind—you know them—Mrs and Miss C—; but I retired within myself, and they had the good taste not to weary me with their sympathy.

On the last day of our journey we halted on the banks of a rapid river; night fell, and we were about to close the wagons and seek repose, when we heard voices on the opposite bank. Your little bushman May was one of our drivers—he had been in our service before, and came to tell me that he recognised my father's voice. I ran from my tent to the brink of the river; it was dark, and the rushing of the waters among the stones in the ford prevented my distinguishing any other sound; at last I heard my father nailing us—he was in the middle of the stream—he came nearer—some one accompanied him—two horsemen rode up the bank—my father and—Lyle!

I had not been two days at home before I discovered that Lyle had established himself in my mother's favour—he was quite a person calculated to make a decided impression on her imagination—for, sensible, well-principled, and firm-minded, as she is, you know she is highly excitable and imaginative. The late *émeute* in Kafirland had brought my father from Annerley to B—, a small town largely garrisoned. Here Lyle held his appointment—here my father was now acting in a high official capacity in the absence of one of the authorities; both were thus brought together professionally. Lyle necessarily had the *entrée* of our house.

Original in design, prompt to act, and of a determined spirit, Lyle was a most useful coadjutor to my father. His quickness of perception taught him at once all the assailable points, so to speak, in my mother's character, appealing to her judgment frequently in Government matters; and, although doing this apparently in jest, constantly abiding by her propositions. It was fortunate that her experience in the colony was such as to make her advice really available,

and this artful man turned it to full account publicly and privately. He knew well how to please my father, who had not at first been inclined towards him as my mother was; whenever the former gave him credit for good policy, he would refer him to Mrs Daveney as the suggester of the plan; my mother would disclaim the suggestion, but would confess that Lyle had appealed to her ere he began to work it.

At a time when this beautiful colony was on the verge of ruin from the commotions subsisting between the various races of inhabitants, you may well believe that men of comprehensive mind and dauntless courage were invaluable to the Government. My father and Lyle, both personally known to Sir Adrian, were constantly selected by him for the most difficult and dangerous services; and it is due to the latter to admit, that he was ever ready for the severer duties of the field, entreating my father to consider how much more valuable was the life of the one than the other.

The soldiers adored him; in his capacity as a staff-officer he was not expected to volunteer heading large bodies of the settlers, accompanying commandos into Kafirland; but he did so with a spirit and efficiency that materially assisted the Government agents in their measures with the chiefs. He shared the fatigues and privations of those he commanded, he was ever first in a foray, and he was such an excellent sportsman, that his return with a foraging party was always welcomed by the hungry wanderers in the bush.

Were this man still living, dear friend, I could not dwell on these details; but, assured of his death, I have been able to review much of my past life more calmly than I could ever suppose would be possible.

This clever, handsome, resolute man had, as I afterwards found, resolved, in the first period of our acquaintance, on making me his wife—you will wonder why,—since there was little love on his part, and my poor heart was bleeding from a sense of wrong at the hands of one I had loved. But I began to be ashamed of my girlish passion, verily not without reason.

Nevertheless, youth receives such impressions readily, fake though they be, and afterwards the heart shudders at the bare remembrance of what it suffered in its bewilderment of a first passion; the experience taught by such a sorrow is very bitter, and can never be forgotten.

I cannot bear to detail the artful schemes by which this man persuaded my father at first to listen to his proposals for me; but, on my assurance that I loved him not, Lyle was forbidden to press his suit farther, at any rate for a time.

Thus he was not dismissed finally; he declared himself grievously mortified, and, obtaining leave of absence during a lull in the political storms that had threatened to desolate the country, departed on a sporting expedition.

He returned in three months laden with the spoils of the chase, and designated the White *Somtsen*, or, in the Kafir language, a mighty hunter.

He again renewed his suit.

Woe is me! I could see that my father and my mother were not agreed in this matter; the latter openly reproached me for my weakness in adhering to my first love—she appealed to my pride.

Alas, alas! my friend, I own that I had been wanting in that—I admitted my error, and deplored it.

She spoke of the family reputation being sullied by the union of my name with that of Clarence Fairfax and the miserable Mrs Rashleigh.

I could not see it in the light she did, but I wept sorely when she alluded to the mortification it had caused her *and my father*; she emphasised the last two words of this sentence.

She dwelt on a difference of opinion now existing between her and my father—"it might estrange them seriously."

I trembled, and began to waver in my resolution.

She said that the *esclandre* had been injurious to my sister's prospects in life.

I feared that I had been more to blame than I had believed.

I said "the world was very hard."

"Very," replied my mother—"so hard, that your imprudence has been visited on all of us. I have been blamed for launching you into the gaieties of life at Cape Town, with all its incidental temptations. Marion is pointed out as the sister of 'that flirt, Miss Daveney, Mrs Rashleigh's rival;' and your father reproaches himself for not remaining with you when he discovered that Lady Amabel Fairfax had lost rather than gained in strength of character—"

I could have said, "Ah! mother, how do you learn what the world says of us?—who dares tell *you* these things?" I was not aware then that Lyle, in his own specious, deprecatory way, was her informant, directly or indirectly—"grieving to set such unpleasant truths before her, but deeming it his duty to do so."

You will wonder that a clever woman like my mother did not see through this systematic deceit; but she was bitterly annoyed at the issue of Clarence Fairfax's attentions to me; she fancied herself pointed at by the finger of pity—you know how sensitive she is on this point—and she was impatient at my belief that Clarence had loved me. "Had he ever told me so seriously? Was I blind enough to believe him in earnest? He had never loved me; his regard, such as it was, was contemptible."

More, much more, she said—I admitted that Clarence had never been my acknowledged lover; but—

"Are there no looks, mute, but most eloquent?"

I confessed that he was fickle—"And vain?"—"Yes." "And selfish, and heartless, and unprincipled!"

I could not answer these allegations—I dared not say he had been the victim of a vicious woman, years older than himself, and deeply versed in intrigue. I had once ventured to speak in this strain, and had drawn forth words of scorn and anger, which my mother afterwards repented using, but which I ever dreaded to evoke again.

But the climax of Lyle's art lay in an incident I shall record.

My father and I were riding one day, sauntering through a kloof, when we were overtaken by him. At the end of this kloof was a branch of a rapid stream. Here it was deep and dangerous; but my horse and I knew the ford well—Lyle rode a little behind me. In the middle of the stream my horse began to plunge among the stones—my father was a few yards in advance; he could not easily turn to my aid, owing to the strength of the current—I was alarmed, yet tried to restrain the animal, but he plunged the more; Lyle, with his powerful arm, drew me from my saddle, and bore me before him safely across the drift—my horse was swept down—it is the same old grey we pet sometimes; he was found two days after, hanging to a branch by his bridle, having found a footing on the bank.

Can you conceive a man afterwards boasting of this trick? It was Lyle who had made the animal plunge that he might rescue me, and thus place me under a supposed obligation for my life!

My mother insisted on my going into society—she was doubtless right; but you know what society consists of in a great garrison,—a few ladies, crowds of gentlemen, and some women, whose friendship is far from desirable; I believe some of the latter were unsparing in their scandalous chronicles of Cape Town, when Mrs Rashleigh and I were both made subjects of remark. The girl of seventeen, the daughter of a representative of authority, and of a mother whose abilities and lofty aspirations rendered her an object of fear and dislike with many, was not likely to be dealt with gently by these idle, frivolous, uneducated women; the story of Miss Daveney's "*liaison*" with Captain Fairfax lost nothing in such hands; and although most of our earliest friends stood by us through good report and evil report, these were not many, and it was evident that the faith of some was shaken. Lyle took care that my father and mother should see this—he alluded to it with indignation, and avowed himself more devoted than ever—

"My *mither* urged me sair, my *father* could na speak, But he looked in my face—"

I asked for time—I sincerely believed that I had banished Clarence from my heart, if not from my mind. I accustomed myself to receive Lyle's attentions; they were offered, though not offensively, in the sight of other men, and in an evil hour for all, I yielded.

I admired Lyle—I admired his courage, his abilities, his apparently independent spirit, his resolution; I was perpetually told that his perseverance deserved reward.

I married him, believing that I felt a regard and admiration for him, which would ripen into affection. How much it has already cost me to set down these details, these reasons, or excuses—if you think the last word the truest—for consenting to a union which has blighted so many years of my young life!

I have him before me now. I hear the solemn adjuration of the minister of God, as we stood before the altar of the little church of B—: "I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it." I looked up at the tall, powerful man standing beside me. Never shall I forget his countenance—his features were suffused with a leaden hue, which faded to a deadly pallor, his lips were colourless, and he leaned against the altar-rails for support; but he recovered himself by a strong effort, and repeated the responses distinctly, though in a low time, and with his eyes fixed on the ground.

We retired for a time to a beautiful village near the sea. I soon noticed that my husband was moody, silent, but not unkind. I tried to please him; I fancied that I must be a dull companion for one so clever.

We had been married about two months, when I discovered that my husband was expecting letters from England; he was evidently anxious about these. And why? He had described himself to my family as being without a single relation on earth, except the uncle from whom he had brought commendatory letters; he had made a fair settlement on me, and my father had placed before him a due account of his finances and my prospects. My father was then a wealthy landholder in Albany; but, unfortunately, he had placed the greater part of his savings in one of those great banking-houses in India, which failed so suddenly as to ruin thousands.

My family had returned to Annerley, and my husband and I had just taken up our abode at B—, when the fatal news of my father's heavy loss reached us.

I had already had some experience of Lyle's violence of temper on his resuming his official duties: there are some men, you know, whose tempers are more violent than hasty, who can curb their passions when obliged to bend before a superior power, and whose wrath finds vent for itself at home; but I was unprepared for the storm that burst on my devoted head at the announcement by letter of our pecuniary misfortunes.

He accused my father of wilfully deceiving him; he bestowed the most revolting epithets on my mother, and laughed bitterly at my having believed he could love "such a pale-faced, forsaken, meek-spirited little idiot for herself alone."

But you would not have me repeat all the degrading and terrible imprecations that fell from his lips.

My first thought was of the pain this sad state of things would cause my father and mother.

In the course of a few days my father, rode over to see us. It was, at first, Lyle's policy to appear on the best possible terms with me. He had no intention of openly disgracing himself, and it was also very plain that he was in deep anxiety about news from England.

My father received letters from Sir Adrian. Here is an extract from one:—"What will you think, my dear Daveney, when I tell you that this Lyle, whom we have received in our homes, proves to be nothing more than a swindler? I have discovered that, not only in England, but at the Cape, he has persuaded various persons to back bills to a considerable amount; he has not a sixpence beyond his commission, which he will be obliged to sell immediately. I have written him a letter on the subject; and for your sake, my dear Daveney, I do hope the affair will be managed as quietly as possible. I inclose a few lines from Amabel, who is deeply distressed for your daughter. We have all been grievously deceived; and I consider that the credentials he brought me from various military friends should never have been accorded to this young man, who, though professing to be a reformed character, was not to be depended upon. The person to whom he has been chiefly indebted for letters of introduction granted them under peculiar circumstances, and in the hopes that this handsome, plausible, clever vagabond would mend his ways: he is young enough; but, I am sorry to say, I have proofs of his being thoroughly depraved."

Sir Adrian did not know the worst. The documents which Lyle had laid before my father, previous to our marriage, were forgeries.

You will wonder, since there was clearly no regard for me from beginning to end, why I was selected as a victim by this being, who, as you will learn some day, *had* been unfortunate. It was from his lips I heard the unwelcome truths: there was little time before him to obtain a sure footing in South Africa in an honourable position, ere bills, endorsed by men whom he had succeeded in duping, would become due. Subtle of purpose, he easily gained such information touching the young *protégé* of Lady Amabel Fairfax, as made him think it worth his while to lay siege to me. Lady Amabel was just the facile, guileless, unsuspecting woman to whom it was easy to gain access, and this once accomplished, he readily found favour with me—it would not have done to deliberate; and, furthermore, I was the only girl, with whom he was intimately associated, whose means were accredited. My father was known to possess a considerable sum of money, and a fine landed property. Lyle contrived to have a correspondence with my father touching settlements; the latter little knew that every line he wrote was sent to England to reassure creditors.

He had a deep-laid scheme, too, relative to my young sister, had I failed him. Time, time, was all he wanted; and by sending home the correspondence on my father's part, he succeeded in persuading some of his dupes to renew the bills, offering high interest for this.

Will you believe it, when ruined in character and fortune, it was his pleasure to lay bare these schemes before me?

For some time after he had abjured his military career, it was his policy to keep up an outward show of kindness to me: he actually succeeded in making some think he was an ill-used man; and when those who were charitable enough to believe him more unfortunate than vicious would invite us to their houses; he would insist on my going. If I remonstrated, heaven help me! He is dead, and I forgive him all his trespasses: were he living, I could not confess to any man that he has sometimes taken me by the hair of my head, and swung me round the apartment, till, terrified, dizzy, and blind, I have fainted.

We had a wicked servant too, a Malay woman, who hated me, and who was readily persuaded into spreading a report that I was ill-tempered.

My poor father managed, in spite of difficulties, to make us an allowance that would have been amply sufficient for our wants had my husband been a reasonable being; but a man utterly devoid of principle, and angrily deploring the ruin he has brought upon himself, is *not* a reasonable being. My wretched partner for life grew frantic at last with rage and disappointment when Sir Adrian Fairfax found it necessary to denounce him as a swindler; for, some of the better class of merchants, deceived by his plausibility, were disposed to trust him; and he had the hardihood to expect that Sir Adrian, for the sake of my family, would place him in a situation, with certain emoluments, at the request of the most influential men connected with the commerce and the diplomacy of the Cape Colony.

Much that I have last noted down has been drawn from communications passing between my father, Sir Adrian, and some other gentlemen, who were anxious, if possible, to save Lyle from utter ruin.

His reputation was irretrievably gone; but they would still have given him, if they could, the means of existence. Sir Adrian, however, could not in honour permit this; and I was beginning to consider where we should hide our heads, at any rate till after my infant's birth, when one morning I discovered that the little money we had had in the house had been taken from my desk. My husband had departed. Whither, it was not easy to say.

We traced him into Kafirland. I sought the shelter of my father's house. My mother opened her arms to receive me. You see her sometimes look reproachingly upon me. She derives such unmitigated relief at the idea of my release from bondage by the death of my miserable husband, that she grows angry at times because I mourn the wasted years I have passed, and have no heart to meet the future.

I had remained three months at Annerley, often in dread of my husband's return, but beginning to hope that a letter which my father had despatched to him, through a trader, would induce him to accede to a legal separation. Alas! it seemed to me that it only reminded him that he held in his hands the power of tormenting me.

I was one evening walking up and down the trellised passage, pondering mournfully on my future prospects, when the author of all my misery appeared before me. He was scarcely recognisable at first. His complexion was bronzed,

his beard and whiskers, enormously grown, gave him a ferocious appearance, and his costume was more like that of a buccaneer than anything else. He carried pistols in his belt, and on my screaming as he seized my hand, he drew one of the weapons out, and, in sheer recklessness, discharged it. The ball entered the thatched roof; the noise attracted my father from the vineyard.

The scene that ensued baffles description. My father drew me towards him. Lyle held the pistol, with one barrel yet undischarged, close to my head. My father released me in dismay, and stood helpless, it had been useless to attempt to thrust the weapon aside—"Advance a finger, stir a foot," said Lyle, "and I fire. She is my wife; you gave her to me, and a precious bargain I have got. I will keep her while it suits me, and when I am inclined to go roving again, I will send her back. Call *me* swindler!—it was *you* who took *me* in with your promises. Liar and scoundrel that you are, you had *no* funds in India, but you had a mind to palm off upon me what Fairfax had cast off!—and yet you were not so keen in this matter as your wife. Ah! start, if you will, but keep your distance, and send some one for this frightened fool's kit. You are rightly served; I will take care that you shall pay me for keeping this daughter of yours, that was to have so fair a fortune."

The servants, attracted by the noise, gathered round us. My father would fain have drawn Lyle away, to prevent so public an exposure. Little May was in our service at that time—he had a *kierrie* (stick), and, springing up, struck the pistol out of my persecutor's hand.

It was impossible, however, to come to terms with him. All that my father could obtain from him was a Respite till a wagon could be prepared for travelling, and some arrangement made for occupying a small farm near B—. It was not far from Mr Trail's mission station, and within a mile or two of a little military outpost.

You were speaking of Mimosa Drift the other day. You know the desert solitude of that beautiful spot. Ah! what terrible hours have I passed among the alders overhanging that hoarsely-murmuring river!

For there I would retire to weep, sometimes; there I would hide myself from my husband in his hours of wrath.

But these fits of insane rage became unendurable; and one night, after I had been struck to the earth, I had the presence of mind to lie as if insensible. The single Bechuana servant we had, terrified at the scene of violence she witnessed, rushed away in the darkness of the night to the little fort, where, on the commanding officer being informed of what was passing in our wretched home, he immediately set off with assistance to the rescue.

But I had flown—Lyle was there, raging like a wild beast from room to room; he was armed, too, and the officer was not sorry that the threatening language and gestures of my husband were such as to justify his taking him by force to the outpost. Thinking it wise to avoid public exposure, he released his prisoner next day.

The night was pitchy dark when I crawled to Mimosa Drift, and sat down by the riverside to recover my scattered senses. My feet were bare and bleeding, a shawl, hastily snatched up, covered my night-dress, and my hair streamed over my shoulders. I had been dragged from my bed to look for some ammunition which had been left out, and which I had unfortunately put away in my ignorance of my husband's intentions to go out shooting at dawn. Tired, frightened, and confused, I could not remember where I had put it for safety; discovering it at last, he found that it had got damp from the rain dripping through the thatch, and I paid the penalty of my thoughtlessness.

He left me, as I have stated, lying apparently insensible on the ground. How I had strength to rise I know not, but I felt my way through the house and garden. Nettles and briars blistered my feet as I sped across the plain. The wind was howling between the hills; great masses of cloud were floating like palls in the lead-coloured atmosphere above; below all was gloom, except when bright forked tongues of lightning descended before me, showing every stone, every insect, in my path; a shower of light struck the earth, and spread into a sheet of flame, that ran past me, and seemed to set the ground on fire. My shawl was caught by the blast—I was drawn back—I fancied it was my tormentor—I shrieked aloud, and the tempest answered me from the hollows in the mountains; large drops of rain began to fall heavily upon my face—the thunder roared—I never thought of turning; on I sped, wild with fear. The drift sheltered me from the strength of the blast for a minute; the wolves and jackals were screaming to each other from their hiding-places; the hyenas gibbered and mocked at me, with their sneering laugh; the bats wheeled on the air whithersoever it drew them—their cold wings swept at times across my burning cheek—the murmur of the river increased to a tumult. I dreaded being seized unawares, and, springing into the stream, forded it, heaven knows how, in safety.

I must have lost my way, for, after wandering about for hours, I came at dawn to the foot of one of those sudden elevations which almost baffle human strength in ascending them. The tempest had subsided, but the rain shaded the heavens as with a veil. I ascended the mound with much toil, but could see nothing but bald rocks, and shrubs beaten by the torrent. I sat down upon a stone, shivering with cold and fear, and wept as I had not done for months.

The clouds lifted at last, and showed me more distinctly my utter loneliness. God sent help. I heard a sheep-bell tinkle, and guessed rightly that I was not far from Mr Trail's mission station. I followed the welcome sound, and soon recognised the plentiful gardens sloping to the road. I crawled up the acclivity. Day was banishing the Genius of the Storm as I approached the gate. The windows of the school-house were open, and the servants of the household were assembled there in prayer. The "Amen" swelled like the murmur of an ocean wave; the voices of the worshippers rose in the matin hymn, and, overcome with exhaustion, and the transition from terror to peace, I fell insensible at the threshold of the mission-house.

Chapter Fifteen.

Dismay.

I recovered myself in the arms of kind Mrs Trail. Oh! the repose of a quiet darkened room after such a night! My friend laid me on her bed, and, giving me a sedative, left me to the rest I so much needed.

But fearful dreams pursued me, and I was awoke by angry voices beneath my window.

Too weak to move, my sense of hearing was too acute to mistake one of those voices; Lyle was demanding me from Mr Trail, the latter refused to "deliver me up;" and my enraged husband, seeing, I suppose, that it would be in vain to do battle in the mission-garden, where the herds had gathered to defend their master, if need required, departed, threatening and cursing as he went.

Mrs Trail came to me—I could only weep and moan in her arms; by night I was so extremely ill, that an express was despatched for my father.

And in this hour of dire distress and perplexity my boy was born. Truly he was baptised in tears. He was so weak and delicate, that we feared he would die. I leaned over him in jealous terror as Mr Trail bestowed the Christian name of Francis upon him—I named him after my father.

But, like those flowers which unfold their loveliness amid the storms of the desert, he flourished in spite of the evil influences surrounding me.

I was constantly persecuted by the desperate man to whom I was chained by the law. My fears were now for my boy; if I should lose him! Ah! what long, miserable watches have I kept by night over his little bed!

Although I knew that, by legal course, I could be torn from my home, I yearned once more for my father's sheltering arms. My mother learned, too late, at what a cost I had obliged her, and came for me herself.

We were obliged to travel by night, and with an armed party; we well knew that, as far as law went, Lyle was empowered to bear me off through the desert; but my father was resolved to risk all to secure me from wrong and insult, until he could persuade Lyle to agree to a legal separation.

But, while this was pending, Lyle's pleasure was to sue my father from time to time for "harbouring his wife."

At this time a rumour reached my father that Lyle had another wife living, but we all shrunk from such additional exposure. The kind-hearted commandant of the military outpost, near Mimosa Drift, took advantage of this rumour to threaten Lyle with an investigation; and doubtless Sir Adrian would have released me from legal bondage pending the necessary inquiries. The issue would only have involved us in deeper disgrace, for we have since ascertained that Lyle, by means of false representations—forgery has been hinted at—had inveigled a girl, with some money, into a mock marriage, and had deserted her, after dissipating her property.

Be this as it may, we deemed it best to ignore the rumour; but it had its effect on Lyle, who again retired into Kafirland.

My friends at Fort Wellington entreated me to visit them for a while, and though my father and mother were unwilling that I should leave them, and my very dread of the neighbourhood made me hesitate, I consented at last, considering how much my father's constant anxiety at sight of me weighed against his zeal in his official capacity.

Certainly there was a greater feeling of security for me in the little fortress. Sentinels at the gates, and these closed at night, I could go to rest, with my boy on my arm, certain that, under Providence, no rude hand could awaken me, and tear him from my bosom. Long used to lonely midnight vigils, I would start up sometimes frightened from my sleep by what seemed an angry voice, and then would fall back on my pillow, relieved by the sound of the sentinel's measured footsteps, and the loud clear cry of "All's well!"

I could have been comparatively happy here, for, although unsettled and miserable at first, Mrs Lorton was an active, intelligent, cheerful woman; and I was delighted to share with her the task of instructing her little family.

Anxious to relieve my parents, in their present reduced circumstances, from the burden of maintaining myself and my boy, I entered with some zest upon my new duties, and each morning found me the centre of a little group of children, with books, work and music; and, to add to this feeling of repose, we ascertained that my husband had shaken the dust of Africa from his feet, and departed for England.

But he left me his curse, and it pleased Providence that it should be fulfilled.

My boy was suddenly stricken with fever—you know how impossible it is in the desert to obtain timely medical aid. When the surgeon from a distant garrison arrived, it was too late to save my precious treasure.

He lay upon his little bed, moaning as he moved his aching head from side to side, his pretty curls all strewed about his pillow. The children *would* come to him—he recognised them at times; then the large blue eye would grow dim—the angel face would flush and pale by turns—the lips would murmur indistinct sounds, and he would grasp my hand convulsively—"Water, water," was his perpetual cry—a burning-thirst tormented him. One of his young playmates held the cup to him, my darling drank from it, and tried to raise his weary head and bow his thanks, but sunk back with a cry of anguish.

The few sands in the hour-glass of that little life ran slowly out; the light from the beautiful eyes shone into mine like rays of hope. The children gazed tearfully upon their "pretty Frank;" he would try to smile, and once he spoke. "Mamma," he whispered, "you will be sorry for poor little Francy—kiss me, mamma; I love you." I bent down—my hot tears fell upon his face—he felt them not—my little flower faded so gently away, that we knew not the moment his spirit departed.

My cup of sorrow was full to the brim.—With anguish too deep for tears, I performed the last offices of love for my darling. I would fain have followed him to his grave in the burying-ground near the fortress; often it seems to me now that there only could I find rest.

But this is sinful—I should rather pray that my sorrows may be my blessings in futurity. Mr Trail came to me with his gentle words of peace and consolation, but my rebellious heart refused all comfort.

I *would* see my darling's little coffin borne from the fortress. I sat at a window that overlooked the gateway, and watched the simple procession with a heart so still, that it seemed turned to stone in its agony. My eyes were fixed and tearless, I dreaded the last look of that coffin which held all my hopes.

I am a soldier's daughter—but I could take no pride, for the sake of my darling, in the last honours that were paid his little corpse—as it passed the gate, the guard of the Fifty —st regiment turned out and presented arms to the coffin. At this simple but characteristic compliment to my dead child, the well-springs of my full heart overflowed, and I burst into tears.

The procession passed through the gateway, the soldiers retired to the guard-house, the single sentry kept his measured beat, and I, in my desolation, cast myself upon my bed and cried aloud, "What *have* I done, what *have* I done, to be so afflicted by the hand of God?"

"Say, rather, *chastened*," said Mrs Lorton. "Ah! Eleanor, believe me, that those whom the Lord never sees fit to chasten are not to be envied, as you, in your present sorrow, would believe."

The little miniature you have seen of my Francis was taken from life by Mrs Lorton; it fell into Mr Trail's hands through the loss of a box when I was travelling; it has, you see, twice escaped destruction.

I returned to Annerley, broken-hearted. It was our winter—a desolate one, memorable in the annals of the colony for its storms and floods.

Oh! how long it was before the cold wind and rain, which I heard beating against the windows, ceased to send a shudder through my heart, for fear they should injure my poor little lost snowdrop. I had dreaded leaving Fort Wellington, yet, what a trial it was there—to see the vacant place in the nursery, and the unused playthings, carefully put away by Mrs Lorton, but sometimes drawn out by stealth, that I might weep over them!

These last lines of the manuscript are almost illegible, from the tears that had fallen on them.

Frankfort's eyes were dim.

How shall I tell you the rest? The unhappy being who was bound to me by my wretched fate disappeared, as I have said. For more than two years we heard nothing of him. At last, we learned that he was at the head of one of those factious parties in England, calling themselves patriots, who stir the people up to discontent by disseminating false principles among them. He was to be heard of in the different manufacturing districts, rousing the lower classes, and, as he himself said, "teaching them what they wanted:" thus he drew the weaver from his poor hearth, to send him back more discontented and unsettled than ever; the farmer from the market, to set him against his landlord, whom hitherto he had loved; the mechanic from his work, which afterwards he had no heart to finish; the reaper from the sunny fields, and the boy from his home, to destroy its influences if good, to foster them if evil; and those who listened went from him dissatisfied with themselves, and with "war in their hearts" towards their fellow-men.

In a word, you well knew the name of Jasper Lee, he who was convicted for a conspiracy against the Government. He was my husband!—the name of Lee was an assumed one.

Within six months we have received authentic intelligence of his death, and I am personally disenthralled of my heavy chain, but I bear its marks—my head has been bowed to earth by this galling yoke, and I shall feel that your decree will be just when you renounce me for ever.

I am thankful that, at last, I *can* recognise the hand of God in all the suffering I have undergone. Do you remember my requesting an interview once with Mr Trail?—you stood by and saw my confusion on discovering you. Ah! I cannot tell you the consolation I have derived from that good man.

You will believe me fully, when I say that the idea of obtaining your love never entered my head—it will soothe me in my most lonely and melancholy hours to think that you considered me worthy of it.

I have written this sad record somewhat roughly—I fear, too, somewhat incoherently; much that must have wearied you might have been omitted, and yet, much remains untold. Alas! you have had to learn not so much the history of my *sorrow*, as of my *disgrace*.

Yes, *disgrace*—my misfortunes have been greater than my faults, yet, in justice to others, I would not have you account me blameless. I believe, if I had the courage at first to tell my mother that I never could love Lyle as I ought to do, she would not have urged me to marry him. But I was passive in her hands—indeed, I was bewildered.

I cannot tell you what it has cost me to write this. While others sleep, my brain aches with conflicting emotions. I pace my room again; I take up my pen, scrawl a few lines, then erase them, and again commence my restless walk.

Sometimes, overcome with hours of anxiety and unrest, I try to sleep, but my thoughts sway to and fro like a sea,

and I fall into that visionary state between waking and sleeping, when the real and the imaginary are so blended together, that no effort of our own can separate them. Lo, then, I see you for a moment, standing upon a sun-lit shore, with arms outstretched towards me, then dark clouds arise between us, I strive to reach the strand; but heavy booming waves engulf and toss me to and fro, and next my husband's face looks up from the surge, and his horrible laugh awakens me.

When I heard of his death, deploring it as I did for his sake, since I fear he had no time for repentance, I did dream that fresh hopes *might* spring from such an event—hopes of security and peace in the bosom of my own family.

Alas! having known you, I feel all the bitterness of my lot with double force.

But what an apprenticeship I have served to anguish! In time I may learn to bear even your loss, and shall find consolation in the *memory* of your regard.

I cannot revise what I have written, though I dread lest what I have said may impress you with a sense of my inferiority.

I have asked myself this question often—"Will he despise or pity me?" Both, perhaps. Your reason will induce something of contempt—but your *heart* will teach you to pity the unfortunate Eleanor.

There were many erasures in the manuscript; it was unlike the ladies' love-letters described as written in "fair Italian characters," but albeit the style was irregular, the writer's purpose was clear and decided.

In her feelings towards Frankfort, she evidently "let I dare not, wait upon I would." His was just the heart to appreciate the candour and the delicacy of sentiment betrayed rather than displayed in this record of human weakness, suffering, and wrong. I have shown you that he was a man accustomed, to *use* his reason. It must be owned that he had never found this so difficult to do as now: he was thoroughly unselfish; but he had a mother and sisters—how would *they* look on such connection? Would it be wise to draw Eleanor, from the retirement of her father's home? Facile, easily impressed, would she, were she even free from the marks of her galling fetters, be suited to him as a companion for life, or rather could *he* make her happy? Then he asked himself why this question of suitability had not presented itself to his mind before now.

It was fortunate for Eleanor that the question resolved itself to this. His own position, his mother, sisters, family connections, all became secondary considerations before the one grand hope of brightening this joyless creature's career... Frankfort wrote Eleanor a few lines, as follows:—"I thank you for the last line of your letter—'Your *heart* will teach you to pity the unfortunate Eleanor.' For both our sakes, let us pause one day ere we allude again to the terrible recital I have passed the night in reading.

"It may seem cruel to say so little, but day is dawning. You know how averse I am to decide suddenly on momentous points. Ere long the family will be assembled for prayer; we shall meet there; till then, adieu, dear Eleanor."

Eleanor found this note on her dressing-table. She dwelt most upon the three last words.

She was first in the school-room, Mr Trail followed, and the household worshippers were soon collected. As Eleanor was leaving the room, Frankfort drew near. They shook hands. It was a friendly greeting on his part; she bent her head and walked slowly by, he did not follow.

In after-life Frankfort would look back on that day as the most momentous in his existence—even more so than that terrible one on which—

But, what am I doing? Anticipating what it is not yet time you should know, my reader.

He was absent the greater part of the day, meditating in the solitude of the hills. The little settlement lay below the mountain slope where he sat. It was a busy, happy, thriving place; the sunlight fell on richly-cultivated lands and herds of fine cattle, the vineyard was filled with workers; Marian and Ormsby were there laughing, he wreathing her brow with a garland of grapes and vine-leaves—she looked like a Bacchante; their voices in gay harmony floated up the green hill-side; women and children were seated in shady nooks at work and at play; the Trails and Mr and Mrs Daveney were walking up and down the avenue in earnest conversation.

In contrast to this scene of employment and cheerfulness, was Eleanor reclining beneath the corallodendrum tree in the sequestered spot where she and Frankfort had held their last meeting.

She was in a deep reverie; her head rested on her hand—her looks were bent upon the ground. Frankfort could see her distinctly from where he sat; they were only severed from each other by the ravine through which sang the rill that irrigated the vineyard.

And was it in his power to shed light and life on the pathway of this desolate young creature?

Motionless she sat as a statue, little dreaming that he, whose image had filled her thoughts, was so near.

With all her philosophy, inborn, and lately taught by Mr Trail, she could not help considering her lot a severe one; but she called to mind the good minister's reply, on her observing, in the words of the Psalmist, "I thought to understand this, but it was too hard for me."

"Yes," he had said, "too hard for *us* to understand; but look to the words that follow: 'until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood! the end of these things.'"

She rose and resolved on seeking the good teacher; but ere she had moved many paces along the turf, Frankfort stood beside her.

Love, charity, and tenderness of heart had triumphed over all selfish considerations; the power of this patient, suffering, wronged creature happy superseded all other sentiments.

The power of making others happy! How few estimate this divine and lofty attribute as they should! How few understand or prize the possession of it!

Again Eleanor and Frankfort met together beside the little fountain, which glittered like silver in the emerald glass; day was declining ere they thought of moving. They had sat, hand clasped in hand, their hearts too full for utterance save in whispers, till the shadow of the corallodendrum lengthened on the sward.

They rose to return to the house.

"Let us go to my father and mother," said Eleanor,

Hark, a sound!—something whirred past them, and descended so swiftly that they saw nothing till the long, slender shaft of an assegai quivered upright in the ground, within a few paces of their feet. May, who had, unobserved by them, been gathering water-cresses immediately below the Devil's Kloof, started up before them. He had not from the hollow observed them; the three stood for a minute or two utterly confounded.

Frankfort drew the weapon out in haste, and hurried Eleanor to the house; they met Marion and Ormsby, mirthful as ever.

"We were going to look for you," said Ormsby, with a sly smile; but a glance at Frankfort told of serious matter.

On reaching the house, and relating what had occurred, Mrs Daveney congratulated Frankfort on having escaped danger from lurkers in the hills during his morning saunter with his rifle, which, by the way, he had forgotten to use. Lights were brought. Mr Daveney said little, but took the assegai in hand to examine it.

There were some letters scratched on its polished blade; they gathered round to look. On the one side was inscribed the year "18—;" Mrs Daveney held the lamp nearer; on the other, deeply and freshly indented, were two words—

The date was barely a month old. Oh! that shriek! those appalled faces!

Mr Daveney took his insensible daughter Eleanor in his arms, and carried her away; her mother covered her face with her hands. They had no doubt *now* who was the agitator in Kafirland.

Before sunset a scout came in, breathlessly announcing that slender wreaths of smoke were beginning to curl up on the points of the hills, and that a Kafir herald, with a feather at his ankle, had been seen by the herds stealing up a pathway from the kloof. Some of these herds had probably followed him, for there were deserters among the farm-servants.

"Then," said Mrs Daveney, "this is the surest sign of an attack, if we wanted no other evidence of mischief. And now, God help us!" She withdrew with Marion.

At midnight the watch-fires sparkled on the mountains, and along the more distant ridges the war-cry sounded faintly; but before morning dawned it rang out, loud, prolonged, and clear, and the settlers at Annerley knew that Kafirland was "up."

Chapter Sixteen.

The Sunless Kloof.

Meanwhile, guided by Doda, Lee, or, as we may now call him, Lyle, threaded his way through some of those innumerable defiles which, cleaving the great mountains of the Amakosa country in twain, afford covert for many a marauding party with its cattle; and, having passed the Zonga River, the two wanderers sat down to rest in a "murky glen," impervious to the sun.

At the time when the people at Umlala's Kraal were intent on torturing the unhappy Amayeka, Lyle and Doda were quietly preparing to refresh themselves with such provision as they had brought with them, and both were not a little startled at hearing the branches in the jungle giving way before some footsteps. There was a crash close to them; two horns emerged from the speck boom, or elephant bush, the head of a huge ox became visible, the body followed, and then two dusky figures. These were our old friend Zoonah and a thieving comrade. The animal had been abstracted from a kloof, where a herd of stolen cattle had been concealed, and the worthy pair had sought this solitary spot with intent to slaughter the beast, and keep holiday as long as it lasted.

The apparition of a white man, seated beside Doda, elicited from them the usual exclamation of "Ma-wo!" but the party very soon understood each other, and the three Kafirs having *reimed* the poor creature, they proceeded to destroy it after their own fashion, which I should be sorry to describe. Suffice it to say, that the wretched animal, being secured beyond all power of resistance, was deprived of its tongue by the most cruel process, and its skin subjected to the assegai ere it was fairly dead.

Of late years the Kafirs have abandoned this shocking mode of slaughter; but some of them, when beyond the influence of the white man, or of their less, savage chiefs, will occasionally adhere to the old custom.

Lyle gave up all idea of proceeding on his journey that day; he knew his friends too well to suppose they would separate with such a feast before them. It is just to him to say that he turned with horror and disgust from the quivering body of the poor ox, and would have ended its agony by shooting it, had it been prudent to use firearms.

The three Kafirs—Doda, Zoonah, and Lulu—applied themselves to the plentiful meal before them with a gusto indescribable, and then lay down to sleep. Lyle would have travelled on alone, but this was impracticable, as the only paths that could be safely traversed were new to him; so he was fain to stretch himself on the grass, and reconsider his plans, which could not be matured till he came face to face with his desperate colleagues, the disaffected Boers. Zoonah was to be questioned as to what he knew of colonial matters, for Doda informed Lyle that he was a well-known spy; but greediness and sloth are the principal characteristics of the Kafir, and till these inclinations were satisfied, nothing could be elicited. Lyle knew that; so, giving way to weariness himself, he, too, fell asleep.

But for this, the noise of the explosion at Umlala's Kraal might have reached them.

They slept on through the hour of noon, till the sun, reaching its meridian, pierced even the dense jungle with a ray or two of light, and Lyle rose, and would have rejoiced much in a cool bath, had there been a stream near; but the torrent that in the rainy season roared and tumbled over the rocks in the middle of the kloof was almost dry; he could only lave his face and hands in the pools, but even this was refreshing.

The three Kafirs were talking together as he ascended the bank, and Doda related to him the tradition of the Sunless Kloof.

It was here that the first white man had been seen by the Amakosas. "He came," said Doda, "from there," pointing westward. "The tribes whom this wild rider—for he was on horseback—passed on the way were too much terrified to stop him—the covering on his head was supposed to be part of it, but when he lifted it, it caused still greater surprise. He was seen to get off his horse at one time, and the people followed the spoor. They had never seen shoes then; and the print of his feet, so different to our own, made them believe he was not formed like ourselves. He carried in his hand a long hollow weapon, from which there came forth fire, smoke, and thunder; and the horse, being an animal never before seen by Kafirs, caused deeper dread. The natives shunned him as a being not of earth. Some killed cattle on his approach, and placed it in his way as a peace-offering, and, in return, he would leave beads and tobacco beside it. Some honoured him as a wizard; from him the 'Wizard's Glen' takes its name, for his footprints were discovered there one day. He had nearly reached the sea, when Narini's people, believing him to be some unnatural animal, determined to kill him, and, watching him from the rocks, hunted him down, and assegaied him. Since then, men have said that he was one of a tribe of white people, who had been sent by their chief to the country beyond Shiloh: almost all were murdered. Some found their way back by the Winterberg, but this one must have intended, to seek the Zooluh country, where it was known that a race with white skins, but hair dark as the crow's wing, exchanged beads for slaves." (The Portuguese settled on the south-east coast.)

Doda ceased to speak, and Zoonah and Lulu commenced singing a wild air, the first words of which were intended to imitate the clatter of a horse's hoof.

"Ite cata, cata mawooka,
Na injormane."

"Clatter clatter, he is going;
He goes with a horse, he goes with speed."

Over and over again they repeated this inharmonious, monotonous "Ite cata, cata mawooka," and then drew the embers of the fire together, and prepared to set to work anew upon some fresh steaks of meat.

So, sleeping, and eating, and talking alternately, these savages passed the day in the Sunless Kloof. Lyle was content to wait till nightfall ere he advanced, and as he was able to understand much of the language of these children of the wilderness, he listened not without interest to a conversation between Doda and Lulu, the latter never having been located, like Doda and Zoonah, among the missionaries. He had lately, however, paid, a visit to one of the larger frontier towns, where he had heard an account of a criminal's execution; he had not seen it himself, and therefore was sceptical.

"I do not doubt," said Doda, "for I have been told by the teacher that the English always kill a murderer." (The literal translation is, "one murders another.")

"And I," remarked Zoonah, "have conversed with people who have described the manner in which they kill them by hanging them with string by the neck on poles."

Lulu, after thinking for some minutes, observed, "The English must have more people than they can manage?"

"Why do you say so?" asked Doda, who, being the elder, took the lead in the conversation.

"Because I see no end to be answered in killing him; it is surely sufficient that the one already dead should die. Killing his murderer will not raise him to life again, neither will it benefit his family: besides, it is depriving the chief of one man more."

Zoonah interposed, "The English say that the murderer must be made to feel what the dead man felt—that was, to die."

"But what help," asked Lulu, who, though the least educated, was the shrewdest of the three in argument,— "what help is that to the living? Why do they not *eat him up* (a Kafir phrase for ruining any one by confiscation of his property), and let him live?"

Zoonah spoke, in a low, deep voice, "Where *is* the dead?"

"No more!" replied Doda; "he has ceased to be."

"Then," asked Lulu, "how will he know his murderer has been killed or eaten up?—he is not there to see him."

"What need," asked Zoonah, "for him to know he is no more?"

"It would compensate his heart for the loss of his body," replied Lulu.

"But," said Doda, "we have nothing more to do with his heart—his body is gone—he is no longer a man."

There was a long pause.

Doda was the first to break silence. "When," said he, "I inquire of my own heart, one view of the case makes me on the side of the English lawgivers. We know the two principals in a murder are the murderer and the murdered. The last has left this world, so we cannot call for his evidence. The murderer denies all about it. The English say, God made man; to destroy what God made is *ukwapula umsila*, to break His representative. It is clearly a case beyond the jurisdiction of man. It can only be understood and disposed of by the maker of the *dead thing*; and on these grounds it seems reasonable that the murderer should be sent the same path that he caused the other to go, in order that *they may meet and be judged before God.*"

"I see what you say," answered Lulu, after due deliberation; "it is too strong for me. Do the English do this from such views? They can talk: they do talk—but one cannot always believe them. His argument is good. My heart is satisfied; I have heard. My heart is satisfied with your words. Nevertheless, I do not comprehend—"

And Lulu withdrew to ponder in silence on this argument.

After this, Lyle bid Doda question Zoonah on all that he had seen in his late perambulations "to and fro" upon the earth.

Zoonah complied partially, but omitted the episode of his being discovered by May, and outwitted also by the bushman.

He described the two sportsmen, and the cavalcade with which they were attended; and added, that they had retraced their steps, and had joined the bivouac at Annerley, which was known by all the Kafir scouts to be the rendezvous for the women and children of the district farmers. The scouts, of course, were in constant communication with some of the Annerley herdsmen, who, as was shown in the last chapter, were spies, ready to desert at the right moment. One of these had, some weeks previously to the open demonstrations of enmity in the frontier districts, on overhearing Mr Daveney announce to a farmer that England was sending troops, quitted the settlement, travelled 160 miles without sleep, and, after delivering his message, dropped dead at the feet of his chief. All Kafirland now was ripe for war, the tribes were gathering in the hill, and the watch-fires beginning to smoke.

Zoonah, in his turn, put manifold queries to Doda. The former said his path was uncertain; his "feet were towards Umlala's Kraal, but his face turned away sometimes." He asked, also, about Amani's proceedings. Amani was his bitter foe. Lulu was bound for the settlements in the Annerley district, to look for plunder. Was Amayeka at Umlala's Kraal? He must get cattle to offer Doda, for his daughter. He thought he should go with Lulu; he must come to Doda with full hands, to ask for Amayeka. How many bullocks would Doda want for her—the girl with the shining hair?

And then there was the usual subtle bartering argument between the two Kafirs.

Meanwhile, a thought had struck Lyle. Taking one of Zoonah's assegais from the bundle, he scratched with his clasp-knife his name and a certain date on the blade of the weapon. Zoonah, who could elicit no decided answers from Doda, leaned over the convict's shoulder.

He had seen books; indeed, as a boy, in a former war, he had, with others, cut them up as wadding for muskets, but could not read. Nevertheless, he knew that letters were, as he called them, "silent words."

Lulu came too, and sat down beside Lyle—"Was he bewitching Zoonah's assegai?"

Zoonah grasped the weapon, and would have drawn it away.

Lyle explained to him, in a mingled jargon, that the words *were* mystical, but not intended to injure *him*. "Take it," he said, "to Daveney's Great Place, Annerley. Be like the asphogels. Watch them, but let them not see you till the time comes to cast the weapon before them. You know that Daveney is your enemy. Doda knows that I am the friend of the Amakosas. I have brought you guns and powder. I have made a path between you and the Dutch. The Dutch hate the English more than you do now. There are people in my country, beyond the great waters, who know that the English colonists are great liars. Can the white chiefs sent hither ever carry their threats as far they declare they will? No. You know that when they have laid schemes to drive you from your lands, a word comes to them across the foaming vley, and they are forced to eat their own words.—Your chiefs have many to speak for them in my country. I have been one of your mouths there. I was here long ago, when the son of Umlala's great wife was no taller than that mimosa: when I went back to my land, I spoke in council. I said you were under the feet of the English here; that you were not permitted to sit still in green places in your own territory; that you only wanted grazing-ground and patches of land to grow corn in; but that instead of rewarding you for refusing to help the Boers against the English, we have suffered your cattle and your land to be taken from you. You see, too, that the Boers are angry. They have cause. You and they were as two gnoos fighting for plunder. One gnoo comes first, and possesses himself of the prey; another follows, and would seize it. Up stalks the lion, he parts the combatants, seizes the plunder, and takes it to himself. What should the gnoos do? They should unite, go to war with the lion, take the plunder from him and share it. The

land is large enough for all; but when you would have justice, the lion puts his paw beyond his own boundary, shakes his mane, his eyeballs burn and roll like flames, he roars, and the very trees of the forest tremble at the sound. Up, then, Amakosas, and at this roaring, ravaging lion. Quarrel not among yourselves; the musket and the flint, and the powder and the bullet, are all good when used together; apart, what are they?

“Drive these greedy white men to the sea. The Boers are already trekking towards those great solitudes where the sun rises; divide this glorious country among you, and make a place along the shore for white men to come and traffic, bringing you beads, and blankets, and knives, and brandy, and all those good things which white men love best, but which they tell you, when they preach, that God has no delight in, and forbids.”

Lyle went on much further in this strain, standing up, and declaiming in a strange dialect with increasing spirit. The three Kafirs seated themselves at his feet, and listened attentively to his specious reasoning. He informed them that he was going among the Boers: that they too would make a stand for their rights; that there were more men like himself in the land intent on seeing justice done to all; and that if the Kafirs were overcame by numbers in the forthcoming onset, they had but to fall back to the sources of the white Kei, and mingle their war-cry with the thunder of the Storm mountains. There the Boers would answer them, and, ere long, the Zooluhs would echo it back, and bring their hosts to join them in the onslaught. The Zooluhs and the Amatembus, the Amapondas and the Amakosas, should be brothers; they came from the same father originally, they were brandies of the same tree. The Zooluhs were worthy to be the brothers of the Amakosas, for they were brave. What a day it would be for Kafirland when they should chant the same war-song, when, the Fingoes should be their dogs again. The Fingoes, who, like the Zooluhs and Amakosas, had once been a great nation, but who had lost their name, had no longer a place to sit, and were fain to do the white man's bidding now, and work! Lyle laughed scornfully, and there was a low chuckle among the three Kafirs.

He pursued the theme skilfully, and if he did not persuade the three men to believe him implicitly, he succeeded in stirring up their hearts to join hopefully in the coming strife. In proof of his allegations against his countrymen, he reminded them of what a Kafir chief, who had visited England, had told them—how he had been brought before a council (the Committee of the House of Commons), and questioned, and how even women had stood up and pleaded that their land should be restored.

They were fully aware, too, of the difficulties which many a “cruel white Governor” had met with in trying to oppress those whom he was sent to protect—how strong had been the words of those who spoke in their favour. They, the Kafirs, had heard of and seen English papers. They could not read them, but they knew that, like the Kafir watch-fires, they were silent messengers. They had heard the teachers read from books. Who asked the teachers to come? What good did they do? They drew the people away from their chiefs: they would break up chieftainship in Kafirland.

The shades of evening were beginning to gather over the glen, and the sky above was like a spangled banner of deep blue. Lyle was determined to proceed that evening, and brought his speech to a close by bidding Zoonah take the mystic assegai to Annerley, and having, when opportunity offered, cast it where it could not fail to be observed, warned him to note carefully, by means of household spies, the effect that would be produced on the whole family at the sight of the inscription on the blade. Lyle had already been in communication with Brennard regarding the present position and circumstances of the Daveney family, and Zoonah's information, gathered from various sources, confirmed him in the idea that the two young officers, now domesticated at Annerley, were, whether in earnest or not, on most agreeable terms with the whole family, especially with the younger ladies.

He knew every inch of ground about that settlement,—he could realise the whole scene;—he learned that the place had been made very defensible, and that a block-house was in progress. It was clear that the magistrate intended to hold out vigorously against all attacks; but there was much cattle, said Zoonah, most of which had been seized on commandoes, and the chiefs were outrageous at being deprived of their property, for Zoonah did not call it plunder.

Lyle knew his ground in thus sowing the seed of evil in a small way. A white man standing up, and venturing opinions among a tribe of Kafirs, would meet with argument from some, contradiction from others dissent from most, distrust from all; but these three men would soon be on different routes. Two were accredited scouts in Kafirland; wherever they went they were asked, “What news?” then they sat down, and “talked;” thus what he had said would spread gradually, but surely, and doubtless gain in importance.

He had already become popular at Umlala's Kraal; the trade in muskets, gunpowder, tobacco, and Cape brandy had been brisker under his guidance than it had ever been. He was an athletic man, a rider, a swimmer, a perfect marksman, and had once beat a Kafir in hurling the assegai.

He was wont to respond cheerfully to the cry of “Baseila;” would join in the games even of the boy warriors—this was the very class to conciliate; and with his fearless air, his reckless laugh, and withal a certain deferential manner to the chief, Lyle had contrived, to make himself much at home with the tribe: while poor Gray was looked upon with some distrust and much contempt; his step was slow, his whole air cast down and melancholy, and the women and the youths, had some suspicion of his passion for Amayeka; but Lyle was his friend, outwardly, that was clear; and as the whole population must suffer by quarrelling with the traders, Gray's presence was endured. The children liked him, for however abstracted or dejected he might be, he had always a smile for them, and the mothers thanked him for this. The Kafir women love their children as long as the latter are helpless, but cast them aside when, they become adults, and able to live by their own exertions.

Lyle's authoritative manner had due weight with the three Kafirs; the ox was divided into portions, and each man took a goodly piece with him. Lyle and Doda started ere the Southern Cross began to bend and tell the midnight hour had passed. Zoonah and Lulu bent their course westward, and idling as they went, resting here and talking there, lurking about the settlements, and helping the Kafir women whom they met in their commissariat arrangements for the ensuing periods of strife; they separated in the Buffalo Mountains, Lulu to join the warriors in the Amatolas, Zoonah to keep watch in the Devil's Kloof.

You have seen the result of Lyle's plan. The herdsmen at Annerley, who fled into the wilderness at the sound of the war-cry, caught sight of Zoonah at sunrise next morning, when he was skimming along a distant ridge, and recognising him, by the feather at his ankle, to be a special messenger, waved their karosses. He waited for them; they had not deserted empty-handed. Two fine heifers were driven before them, and dropping into a neighbouring kloof on the shady side of a mountain, they all met together to hold a parley, and fare sumptuously on one of the slaughtered animals.

The detention in the "Sunless Kloof" was so far fortunate, that it prevented Lyle and Doda from encountering the young Dutch burghers bearing off. Amayeka, and, by a strange coincidence, Gray, in his uncertain route, passed during the day within two miles of them; his course, however, lay more to the westward, for he no longer cared to conceal himself: but, as his ill-luck would have it, he was overtaken by his fellow-convict two days after, on the northern bank of the Kabousie River.

Weak from hunger, he had been obliged to keep to the more fruitful spots, and had subsisted on roots, Kei apples, and a little Kafir corn, gathered from deserted gardens. Utterly disheartened, he again yielded passively to his fate, and told the tale of the events which had driven him forth as a wanderer again.

After this, the three pushed forward night after night, and in the course of a few days, the heavy clouds that had veiled the horizon cleared off, and they found themselves within a few hours' journey of the Stormberg Mountains.

Gray's narration of the events which had been the cause of his leaving Umlala's Kraal did not particularly move Lyle or Doda; if the latter had any suspicion of the deserter's regard for his daughter, he did not betray it. Until a Kafir is excited by incidents passing before him, he never displays any decided emotion; hating Amani, he was more inclined to be enraged with him for his condemnation of Amayeka, than anxious for his daughter's fate. In the hands of white men, he felt certain enough of her safety to take the matter coolly, suggesting that he was now among the Boers in the Stormberg; and, under this impression, he tramped steadily on, staff in hand, and, with a loose assegai, ready to bring down any game that might cross the path.

Lyle, on learning the destruction of the ammunition, congratulated himself on having settled all monetary transactions ere he started. The articles of barter exchanged by the Kafirs for the gunpowder were all well on their way to the Witches' Krantz, and the only point now on which he was ill at ease, was Gray's faint-heartedness, as he termed it.

"What would you do?" said Lyle, as, side by side, the two Englishmen followed Doda through the tangled pathways intersecting the small plains, covered with fine pasturage, and watered by numerous streams proceeding from the Stormberg,—“what would you do? declare yourself a runaway convict, a deserter from the Royal Artillery? My good fellow, you are the man the Boers want—they have got guns, as you know, but few to handle them—you will meet some old comrades, though, I have no doubt, up in those hills.”

Then Gray spoke the first resolute words he had uttered for a long time.

"If," said he, "you think I will work a gun against my own countrymen, you are mistaken. You may call me fool, coward, if you will—I may be branded, shot as a deserter but I will not die a traitor!"

Lyle gave a long, low, contemptuous whistle, and then burst into a laugh. "What do you call a traitor?" he asked: "to my mind, he is a man who enlists in a good cause, and then, without rhyme or reason, or for some vicious purpose, turns against it. Why, they condemned me to transportation as a traitor, because I took the side of justice and the oppressed. It is more manly to fight for the weak than for the strong. Talk of might against right in this country—I should like to know who are the rightful owners of it—why, those little nations, the bushmen. As for justice, she may well be painted blind, for the strongest arm turns for scale, and she can't see to help herself. It is the same everywhere. We left the Government in England riding rough-shod over the poor starving devils, and when the worms began to turn, the law, as they call it, crushed them with its iron heel. The lion of England is a mighty fine fellow to boast of, but wherever he stalks, he leaves the traces of his bloody paws. They are beginning to find this out at home. Home!—it is no home to us." Gray heaved a deep sigh. "They are getting sick of being taxed for those hired assassins, the soldiers. I was one of those to show the people what they were taxed for—to pay men for shooting them like dogs, if they complained of wrong. I did not conceal from them that I had been a soldier myself and I pointed out the slavery of such a condition. I was licenced to talk of what I had been. I might have been pulled up and shown up, for I had got into a few scrapes from want of money; but this would have dragged forward some respectable names, so justice was deaf, as well as blind, on this question, and Jasper Lee was only talked of as a Chartist leader. The real traitors to the cause were those who sat safely at their desks in dusty offices, and made promises which gained them popularity at the time, but which they never intended to perform. One wrote, 'If Jasper Lee leaves the B— D— dock in a felon's van, it shall be over a hurdle of Chartists' bodies.' Another, that if I 'did not walk a free man from my gaol—free by the verdict of a British jury—thousands of armed citizens were ready to fling back the defiance I should hurl from the felon's dock.' One party 'resolved,' that the vessel carrying off Jasper Lee, as a convict, should have to cleave its way through an ocean of Chartist blood,—‘and,’ shouted another from a platform at a hill-side meeting in one of the manufacturing districts, 'so long as I live, the manacle will not be forged that will encircle the heel, or the scissors that will cut a hair from the head of Jasper Lee, the felon.'

"I did not take all the epistles I received for gospel, but I did reckon on a rescue. The miserable mob, however, terrified at the sight of the soldiers, quailed before an unloaded gun; but at last they began to show fight with brickbats. There was barely time to read the Riot Act—ha, ha! how the old mayor's hand trembled that held it, when a charge of cavalry came down the street and drove the poor devils right and left. We were the victims of treachery. Some of our pretended friends had been bribed, turned informers, and went over to the enemy. These were the traitors and deserters; they have pocketed the price of blood, and are at work again, no doubt, like spiders in their dark, gloomy offices, making false promises, deluding the people into the assemblies they convoke, only to bring the troops upon them, and then reap their reward for betraying their victims."

In this strain Lyle proceeded; Gray paid but little heed to his sophistry—his mind was intent on casting aside the thralldom under which he writhed; but fate seemed against him.

And Amayeka, what was to become of her? Lyle next pointed out the advantages of the prospect before them. It was by no means certain, he said, that the Boers must necessarily fight against the English government; it was well-known that Vander Roey had gone to the Commander-in-Chief to hold a conference; it was not improbable that terms would be made, and that a territory would be given to the Dutch settlers, where they might exercise their own laws.

“Here,” said Lyle, “we may find a place of rest, for, unless something is to be gained by it, I am not inclined for war for fighting’s sake.”

This was, as the reader may divine, untrue; but he adapted his expressed opinions to the tone of Gray’s mind at the moment.

“So, for the present, my lad, make your mind easy; you cannot get away from this if you would, and you would not if you could, for your dusky lady-love is, without doubt, yonder in the hills, and no bad refuge neither. By Jove, this is a fine country—ha! Doda told me it was a noble pasture-land for horses, and see, the mountain-sides are dotted with them; and here is a troop of jolly young Boers. Now remember, once for all, my lad,” continued Lyle, clutching Gray suddenly by the arm—“let me tell you to put a good face on the matter. As to getting these people just now to listen to your history, and give you a guide or an escort to take you back—you young fool!—to fight against them, it is of no use. All your reasoning would be as useless as whistling jigs to milestones—all your wrath like the grimaces, and the sputtering, and the swearing of the bushmen at a storm of thunder and lightning. So now say ‘good morrow’ to these young fellows with the best face you can.”

A party of youths rode up as Lyle spoke; the latter informed them, in tolerable Dutch, that he was the trader whom Brennard had located at Umlala’s Kraal, and, as he had no intention of at once avowing himself willing to be enrolled as a rebel, he affected to have started from the Kraal with mere prospects of traffic. He then related what had occurred since his departure, and Gray listened with a beating heart to the reply made to Lyle on his inquiring whether a Kafir girl had been brought to the mountains by the young men of the foraging party.

“Yes; but they had earned her over the hills to the Boers’ large encampment, where she would be taken care of by some of the women.”

With this information Gray and Doda were obliged to be content. The young Dutchmen informed Lyle that the ammunition was on the south-western side of the mountains, where it was carefully stored in some of the bushmen’s caves, long abandoned by their first tenants, until Vander Roey sent intelligence of the result of his conference with the Commander-in-Chief, Vander Roey’s wife was in charge of it, and, under her directions, instalments of gunpowder were daily forwarded on pack-oxen and horses, the passes of the mountains being impracticable for wagons.

The young Boers having turned their horses’ heads in the direction of the mountains, the convicts and Doda accompanied them to the temporary bivouac, where Vander Roey’s wife held sway in the absence of her husband. The three were left among the scattered tents and wagon-tilts of the few families congregated together in the sequestered spot, while the riders hastened to Mrs Vander Roey to inform her of the new arrivals in the camp. Lyle and Gray were soon summoned by the lady, who advanced to the door of the cave to receive them, and ask their business.

She was a woman apparently five or six and twenty years of age, though probably she was much less. She was not what might be termed a true specimen of the Boeress in Southern Africa, but was, in colonial parlance, an Africander, of French extraction, her father belonging to the race who established themselves at the Cape after the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and her mother, although the wife of a Boer, had a slight touch of dark blood in her veins. To these circumstances, which, in the eyes of the community to which she belonged, were objectionable, she owed her raven hair, drawn back from the temples, and bound round her head in classic fashion. The forehead was low, but well formed; the eyes long, dark, and fringed with black lashes, that softened their fiery expression; the nose aquiline, with the delicate nostril indicative of Indian blood; the mouth scarlet-lipped, and radiant with pearly teeth; her figure, above the middle height, and gracefully, if not perfectly, shaped, was set off by the dress, which, albeit coarse and rough, was picturesque; a petticoat of bright-coloured *voerchitz*, a bodice of the same material, but of different pattern, over which was thrown a rich silk handkerchief of orange hue—a gift from Cape Town; loose sleeves, reaching a little below the elbow of a beautiful arm; cotton stockings, passing fine, and *veldt scoons*, of better make than was common among her people, fitted to a tolerable foot and slender ankle. Such was the attire of Mrs, or, as she chose to call herself, Madame Vander Roey; and, as she came forward, the rays of the setting sun illuminated her figure, and set off the manifold hues of her costume in a very striking manner. Even the attention of the listless deserter was arrested by the vision of this showy dame, who, with a pistol in her belt, her arms folded across the orange handkerchief her head thrown back, and her flashing eyes bent eagerly on Lyle, awaited their approach in front of her rude but picturesque domicile. She opened the conversation by the direct inquiry addressed to Lyle in Dutch, of “Where do you come from, and what is your business?”

Lyle replied, with equal decision of tone,

“I am the trader from Umlala’s Kraal; I have been, in communication with Vander Roey for more than six weeks.”

“Vander Roey has been absent nearly a month, but I did not wish Umlala’s people to know this; the scouts were told he was ill, and have received the ammunition; some of it I have stored, some has been sent over the mountains. Are you here only as traders, and who is this boy?”

She scanned the dejected-looking Gray with something like glances of contempt.

“Doda, good morrow; you are to be trusted, because you would gain nothing by betraying us. Go, you will find meat

cooking at those fires in the hollow. Who, I say, is this boy?"

"A deserter from the service of my king," answered Gray, "and a miserable creature."

Lyle would have spoken; Madame Vander Roey forestalled him, by asking in English, "And what is your business here? Do you come as friend or enemy?"

"As neither," replied Gray; "but I am a most unfortunate young man."

"Neither friend nor enemy!" said Madame Vander Roey, elevating her dark-pencilled eyebrows; "then why come you here at all?"

Lyle, seeing that Gray had resolved on making a true statement of past occurrences, suddenly exclaimed, "At least accept me as your friend; I am one of those who have been banished by my country for taking part with the ill-used, the poor, and the weak—in a word, we are convicts, who escaped lately from the wreck of the *Trafalgar*, and from the moment that I set foot on shore, I resolved to seek Vander Roey, whose fame has spread to England—aye, and to the land of his forefathers, to Holland; but of this we can speak hereafter. We have been travelling for some days on foot, are weary and hungry, and long for the rest and refreshment which we believe you will give us. This lad will come to his senses by-and-by; if he does not," added the elder convict, with a bitter laugh—one of those laughs which Eleanor could not distinguish between jest and earnest—"we most teach him the use of his wits."

Gray knew it was vain to remonstrate with his evil genius. Madame Vander Roey invited both the travellers into her retreat, and Gray passively followed Lyle and the lady into the bushmen's cave, her present dwelling-place.

Chapter Seventeen.

The Patriarch.

It was, like most of these retreats, a deep recess in the rocks. The walls were ornamented with grotesque drawings, poorly executed in coloured clay, of men and animals, the figures of the former more resembling apes than men. The ground—for flooring there was none, save a carpet woven by Nature's tasteful hand—was partially covered with mats and skins, and the furniture consisted of a rickety camp-table and two or three broken stools. A long roer and a pair of large pistols were slung against the scarp of rock at the back of the recess, and the place was faintly illuminated by a primitive kind of lamp—a calabash filled with sheep-tail oil—from the centre of which rose a rush wick. The coolness of this retreat,—for the sun's rays never penetrated therein,—was delicious, after passing so many days in the open air during the hottest period of the South African summer.

The lamp only emitted sufficient light to make darkness visible to the travellers' unaccustomed eyes. On their entrance, they heard voices, and Lyle stumbling over some object on the ground, there rose up Madame Vander Roey's attendant pages, Lynx and Frolic, two small bushboy imps; they uttered a little screech at sight of the new-comers, and were tumbling out of the cave, when their mistress called them back and issued some orders, desiring them to send Hans, the Hottentot. She then lit another lamp, and thereupon they discerned another object in the corner of the recess.

This was the aged father of Madame Vander Roey, a venerable Boer, with snowy hair and a long silvery beard. His seat was an old arm-chair, which his daughter had rendered more comfortable and slightly by throwing over it a kaross made of the silver jackal's akin. His dress was of the usual coarse duffle, a good deal worn, and a crutch beside him indicated infirmity of body. His mind appeared less enervated than his limbs, and he bowed with an air of great courtesy to the new-comers, evincing no surprise at the appearance of strangers.

He shook his head mournfully, and inquired of his daughter if they were English; she replied in the affirmative, and added that they were friends.

His first thought was hospitable; he reminded her that they must need refreshment; he next begged them to be seated, and inquired whence they came.

Madame Vander Roey said that this question must be deferred for a while, and left the dwelling to see that food was provided for the evening meal.

The old Boer, Du Plessis, began to talk in soliloquising fashion as soon as he was left with Lyle and Gray; the latter reclining listlessly against the painted rock, the former with his full grey eye fixed intently on Du Plessis.

"Has my daughter's husband returned?" asked the patriarch; but, instead of waiting for an answer, he went back to memories seventy years old, when he was a youth and his father a landowner in the lower districts of the Cape. He repeated the usual tale of complaint. "They robbed us," said he, speaking of the kafirs. "We offered our humble petitions to the great men at Cape Town, and asked for help; but, while we waited, leaning upon promises—broken reeds!—our enemies swept away our possessions, stole or mutilated our cattle and sheep, and left us poor. Then we learned with great sorrow that some of our fellow-burghers were against us, and time was lost in disproving this, and our enemies laughed at us; therefore we sent messengers to their honours in Cape Town, and said, 'As we possess little, we pray you let us go and live in peace upon the Sneeuwberg, where, if you will permit us to remain, we will pay you rent; there is quiet there and much game; indeed, we need a supply of food, for many of us now have not a hundred sheep and five cattle. Let us go then with our small flocks and our wives and our little ones.' So then we waited, and could get no certain answer, and our great men advised us to go, and we went sorrowfully, and sent again messengers to implore forgiveness of their honours if we had done amiss in *trekking*, and prayed the Lord would bestow His grace upon them, that they might select a fitting person to arrange all disputes between

neighbours.

"We fared ill with the bushmen: if we went out to kill sea-cows, these robbers would follow us, or plunder our homes in our absence, or shoot at us with their poisoned arrows. So we grew more and more impoverished, and a generation passed away while we were waiting for help; and so, not being able to hold out against the robbers, we abandoned our places again."

Here Madame Vander Roey returned to make such preparations as the times permitted for setting the supper-table in array; her father went wandering on.

"Next," said he, "they took away our slaves. We had been told by good teachers that slavery was bad, that we had no right to traffic in human flesh; but we could not understand anything at first except that we were left without servants, and with pieces of paper in our hands, which we were told were money-bills, but that we must go to Cape Town to get them cashed, and so we did; but we had many hundreds of miles to go. Some trekked away with their slaves altogether, but my father inclined to the Government, and accepted what they called compensation, and I went with him to Cape Town, and we were glad to sell our bills for what we could get from the merchants, and when we came back we found our farms uncultivated, our cattle gone, and our wives and children very miserable; so, you see, my white brothers, we have come step by step further and further and further, and I am heart-sore, and would fain listen to the word that my son Vander Roey shall bring; for I had rather die in peace with all men and with my face turned to the west, than with anger in my heart."

Hans brought in, on some sticks, some slices of broiled gnoo, and there was a rusty tin dish, filled with rice and *carbonatje*; the savoury steam was grateful to the senses of even the melancholy Gray, and some coarse but sweet bread and a calabash of Cape brandy being added to the refectation, the adventurers did full justice to their hostess's hospitable display.

The bald rocks of Asphogels' Kop, a peak distinguished from the other heights of the Stormberg by this name, were shining like snow in the rays of the newly-risen silver moon, when Lynx and Frolic put their impish faces into the cave, and announced that Vander Roey and his escort were in sight of the Donder Berg, for a fire was blazing on the hill.

The old Boer crossed his hands on his breast, closed his eyes, and his lips moved, as Gray supposed, in prayer. The deserter sat down beside the aged Du Plessis; Madame Vander Roey, accompanied by Lyle, left the cave. On emerging from it, into the clear moonlit air, the latter saw that the whole bivouac was astir; there were some forty men and eight or nine women, several children, and a motley assembly of Hottentots, half-castes, and bushmen. These gathered together in a group near Madame Vander Roey, and the beads of approaching men and horses soon appeared above the long waving grass of the little plain, on which the encampment was spread in somewhat disorderly fashion.

The equestrian party came up leisurely, after the manner of those who bring no cheerful or decided tidings. The atmosphere was clear and light as that of day.

Madame Vander Roey said, in a low voice, to Lyle, "There is no good news!"

And so it proved. Vander Roey had not even been admitted to an interview with Sir John Manvers; indeed, there was little time for treating with any one; for, as we have shown, the brand and the spear were abroad, and the colonists were looking with anxious eyes for the "sea-wagons from across the broad waters," and their freights of "red men."

The captain of the bivouac, Lodewyk, a boater, with a race almost covered with hair, arms bared to the elbow, but garnished, Kafir fashion, with bangles of brass, and a ring of ivory, a large straw hat on his head, and equipped with leather trowsers, girded with a belt containing immense pistols, and carrying besides an elephant gun, stepped forwards as Vander Roey swung himself from his jaded horse, and said, in a loud, distinct voice, in the Dutch language,

"Vander Roey, is it peace or war with our white brothers?"

"War," replied the Boer leader, abruptly, and strode on without greeting his wife, who followed him to the cave.

"War!" shouted Lodewyk—"War!" echoed Lyle; and Lodewyk, recognising the trader, whom he had had dealings with of late, turned to Lyle, and offered his hand.

Lyle grasped it.

"Let us smoke a pipe of tobacco together," said Lodewyk, and the two men strolled off towards the habitation of the latter; it was a domicile, half hut, half tent, formed of withered boughs and skins, and screened from the east by a scarp of rock, on which many a grotesque and unnatural-looking creature was depicted in yellow ochre and different-coloured chalks.

Circumstances conspired to induce Lyle to develop his plans and purposes sooner than he had first intended; there was something in the bearing of Lodewyk that chimed in with his own feverish desire to be up and doing; and, on the other hand, Lodewyk had been attracted by the hearty, dare-devil style in which the Englishman had flung up his hat, in the moonlight, and shouted "War! war! to the knife!"

They talked fair into the night, as they reclined on a bank facing the habitation of the Vander Roeyes. Gray had joined them, and lay fast asleep, his head pillowed by a stone.

The people in the bivouac, through which the cry of "War!" had rung till the voices that uttered it were hoarse, were

all busied in preparing for the march at early day across the mountains, the chief having resolved to move to the plains, where the majority of the Boers and their families were awaiting his decision to *trek* or return.

The women were as busy as the men, collecting the few draught-oxen they possessed, and yoking them to the wagons with their own hands, that there might be no delay; and stalking in silence from group to group, and wagon to wagon, but chiefly intent on superintending the packing of all the gunpowder that remained, on the backs of the beasts of burden, might be seen Vander Roey, with his broad-flapped hat and dark ostrich plume, towering in height above his fellows, and issuing his orders, in a tone of lofty command.

Within the cave, Madame Vander Roey was making preparations for the journey, her father watching her movements with a sad, bewildered dr.

“Peace or war!” muttered the old man. “How many years have I been wandering without rest for the sole of my foot, without a roof to shelter these grey hairs? My son Vander Roey, let it be peace till I die. Whither would you take me? The mountains will sunder me from my dead—my buried wife—my three brave sons, all lying in one grave, killed within a month. I can see from these plains the blue peaks of the hills beneath which they lie. Let me, too, rest here, within sight of those blue hills!

“There has been strife too long, always strife. Let there be peace till I die!—peace! peace!”

And so the old man muttered on, his daughter proceeding with her preparations, and now and then remonstrating with him kindly, and begging him to rest as long as he could on the couch she had spread for him, and so arranged that it could be lifted like a litter. In this, with a light wagon-tilt, the aged patriarch was to be borne over the mountains on the morrow.

Ere the night had passed, three men rode into the camp; these were Brennard and two young Boers of Vander Roey’s party. The former had resolved to join the rebels, and due greetings passed between him and Lyle. Poor Gray, shuddered at the web gathering round him, but there was no escape. He was resolved, however, to keep to the one resolution he had formed during his miserable sojourn among strangers—he would not fight against his sovereign’s troops, come what might.

He could recollect many a loyal saying of his father’s; as a child, he had been taught to “fear God and honour the King.” In spite of the sway his passions had obtained over him, he remembered the lesson; and now, in spite of difficulties and danger, he determined to keep his fealty to his liege. Alas! many a soldier who forgets God abides by his allegiance to man!

Brennard confirmed all that Lyle had been striving to impress on Lodewyk. He swore that Holland had protested against the conduct of the English Government towards the unfortunate white Africans; that help would be sent to Natal, near which the Boers might establish a government of their own, backed by the mother-country; that France was favourably disposed towards the descendants of her sons. They might hear through the papers that France was perfectly peaceful; but it was not so—the people of France would dance over a mine till it sprung and destroyed them—they were deaf to all warnings; the rising Powers had already begun to think of the colonial possessions of England, and their unsatisfactory state. As for the colony, now was the time to make ready for war. The troops, although they fended the Kafirs would be easily beaten, would be thoroughly harassed—“used up”—before reinforcements could arrive. Every one knew that Sir John Manvers, the present commander of the forces, was an irresolute, sullen, haughty man, anxious for the arrival of the new Governor, who was reported to be Sir Adrian Fairfax. Every one knew, too, what Sir Adrian was; he had said that he compassionated the Boers, but was bound to carry out the orders of Government, and *must* shoot them as rebels if they attempted to show fight. What had they—these poor, unhappy white Africans—gained by passive endurance of ill? In England, men were already standing up for a fresh Charter on their own ground—but what did the Boers want? Only space to feed their cattle, permission to exercise their own laws, without interfering with the English—and this was not to be granted. Would they submit like dogs? At any rate, was it not worth while to *try* for freedom?

Vander Roey followed up this tirade by informing those who had not accompanied him to the British settlements, that he had been turned from Sir John Manvers’s door like a dog. “He sent me word,” said he, “that he had not time to listen to me. His messenger was a youth with careless mien. I opened my lips to speak, but he heeded me not. I could hear voices, and see lights through the doorways, and the young man passed away, leaving me to be shown out of the house by a servant. I walked by the front of the mansion; the man who ‘had not time to see me’ was receiving guests in a large lighted room. The windows were open, and I stood in the garden, grinding my teeth with rage. I strode out of the light into the darkness; my horse stood patiently at the great gates of that fine house. He hung his head; he was worn with hard riding—he had a sorry look—the sentry, standing under the lamp, was laughing at his miserable plight. I mounted him, dashed through the town, and never drew rein till I reached a river, the waters whereof bubbled and foamed, and I was forced to stop to give the good beast rest. We lay down side by side to sleep, and when I awoke, poor ‘Starry Night’ was dead!

“I had to carry my saddle many a mile before I came up with my people; they asked me few questions, but saw that hope was lost—so now for war.”

“War! war!”—it was not *shouted* now, but passed from lip to lip, as the chief occupants of the bivouac continued their preparations for the early journey. Only the children and a few of the elder people were asleep in the open ground, for the tents and other wretched contrivances for covering were struck, and all the poor property of these unhappy wanderers packed for the march.

“War! war!” was the dogged watchword of sullen men without. Du Plessis sat up on his couch of skins. “Peace! peace! let there be peace!” he murmured. His daughter laid him gently down on his rude pillow, a saddle, and, before taking an hour’s rest herself, stepped out beyond the cave to see how the people sped in loading, under Vander

Roey's superintendence, the patient beasts of burden.

Lo! a brilliant lunar rainbow spanned, with its broad, illuminated arch, the little plain over which the houseless people were scattered. "See," said Madame Vander Roey to her husband,—“see the sign of peace God sends us. Ah! I begin to feel myself but a woman; *must* you lift your hand against our white brethren?”

“We are aliens,” replied Vander Roey, sullenly. “We have no white brethren but those who will echo our cry of war.”

Madame Vander Roey re-entered the cavern, and, casting herself on a pile of dried leaves, was soon asleep.

Oh! the contrast of that shining arch, which God had set in the heavens, and the restless, feverish scene below; horses neighing, bad men swearing, children wakening from their uneasy asleep, and screaming in vague terror, women foremost in urging men to up-saddle and trek. Lodewyk, Brennard, and Lyle, strong in nerve and limb, forswore sleep till they should pass the mountain ridge which shut out the western plains from their sight. Gray lay betwixt sleeping and waking, and as he watched the hues of the rainbow blend one within the other till they faded into mist and veiled the beauty of the moon, an old fancy revived within him—a child's fancy—“that the rainbow takes its shape and hues from the gathered tears of Heaven,” and is set in the clouds by angel heralds, as a token between God and man of a covenant of peace.

The clouds which, like sheeted ghosts, hung about the sides of the Stormberg mountains, melted into drizzling showers, and met the party commanded by Vander Roey, in its journey up the steep and stony pathways.

First rode Vander Roey, his flapped hat and sweeping feather drawn down to his eyebrows. A little apart from him, watching his leader's countenance with keen and anxious glance, strode the wild hunter on foot, staff in hand, a handkerchief bound round his head, and this surmounted by a coarse, weather-beaten straw hat. Close behind were Brennard, Lyle, and Lodewyk. The former was a sworn ally of Vander Roey—he, too, had been a deserter. Lyle, introduced as his friend, had found a ready welcome, but as yet had had no opportunity of close discussion with Vander Roey; and poor Gray was mounted on a somewhat tired steed; but this signified little, as the acclivity was impracticable for a hurried journey; and, besides this, the feeble and infirm of the party could only proceed at a certain pace. Very few wagons accompanied the procession, and these halted often, that the smoking oxen might take fresh breath for the desperate task before them. Now a wagon was lifted almost edgewise on a huge block of stone, now it came down with a crash that threatened dislocation to every joint of the creaking mass; sometimes the poor animals, in utter despair at the sight of the almost perpendicular track, dashed at it at headlong speed, halted suddenly, and were almost dragged back by the weight of the huge vehicle in the rear; or, if they did succeed in gaining a ridge, overlooking a hollow in the mountain-side, would plunge recklessly on, and come down *en masse*, jumbled together in a confused heap.

But, apparently absorbed in thought, sullen, angry, smarting under a keen sense of wrong and disappointment, the leader expressed no impatience at the delays occasioned by the feebleness or incapacity of the most useless followers of the cavalcade. He made no reply when told that a halt must be called, for the sake of some sickly family, wasted with fever, from lying long in the open bivouac, or some patriarch of the tribe, head of three or four generations, who could not walk, was not strong enough to sit his horse, or whose rheumatic limbs needed a respite from the jolting of the wagon. Moodily silent, he sat upon his powerful horse, which he had kept fresh for the work before him, and apart from his fellow-men, save that Lodewyk and Brennard occasionally conferred with him. At last Lyle made his way slightly in advance, and, turning his horse's head to the westward, surveyed the panorama lying before him. They were on a ridge of table-rock near the summit of the lowest mountain, over which their path lay, and here it was intended they should outspan for an hour or two, and make a meal of some of the poor sheep, which with great difficulty had been driven up the steep by the bushboys, Lynx and Frolic.

Lyle's powerful frame, bronzed but handsome face, the very air with which he carried his rifle, his attitude on horseback,—in fact, his whole bearing, as he smiled cordially on Vander Roey, attracted the latter at once to his colleague. The two riders brought their horses together, neck and neck, and watched the party winding up the steep.

In rear of all was old Du Plessis on a litter. The mists had cleared away, the rays of the sun illuminated the hills above them with a glory, the clouds were tinged with flame. Nature breathed gently on the rocky soil, and as the aged Boer sat up in his primitive palanquin, the tilt partially drawn back, the balmy breeze lifted his white hair, and seemed to refresh him. His daughter rode close by, reining in, with no small skill, a horse of the same shape and power as her husband's, but with some attempt at smartness about his harness; the saddle was a man's, but she had learned to ride in the civilised districts, and with the left stirrup shortened, and the right one brought over to the near side, she contrived to sit with comfort and considerable grace; but the head-gear was unsightly,—a gingham bonnet, shaped like a wagon-tilt, almost concealed her face, yet from the depths of this miniature tunnel flashed out the dark and brilliant eyes; but when these turned upon her father, their radiance softened to a tender light.

As Vander Roey and Lyle sat conversing in short pithy sentences on the subject of oppression, the former believing Lyle's indignation to be as patriotic and disinterested as his own, the latter somewhat discomposed at finding Vander Roey as shrewd, resolute, and intelligent as himself, and withal comparatively honest of purpose, though blind in judgment, they both watched the last division, consisting of the chief Boer's wife, the litter, its bearers, and some of the younger people of the clan.

All at once, Madame Vander Roey dropped her reins, clasped her hands, sprung from her horse, and cast herself on her knees beside the couch of her father, then looking upward, beckoned her husband to her; her bonnet railing off, disclosed an anguished countenance. Vander Roey dismounted, and leading his horse, descended the few hundred yards, that lay between him and his wife. Lyle followed, and the little crowd, halting on the hill-side, looked down upon the litter and the attendant group.

Du Plessis had raised himself with a strength unusual to him; an unnatural light filled his eyes; his voice, though not

loud, was firm and clear. The air was so still, that the gentle breeze wafted his words to those above. Those who could, drew as near as they could do with due respect to his immediate relatives.

“My children,” said the old man, “draw near. Let me bless you before I die. I thank my God that he gives me light at the last. I shall die within sight of those dark purple hills, whose feet are washed by those pleasant streams beside which I dwelt through many a long, long year. There my forefathers came, pitched their tents, and tarried for four generations. There they sowed, there they reaped, there they were despoiled, but abided patiently for help that never came. My children, I would fain have you still wait for help; the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; God will take his own time to make the crooked pathways straight, and the rough places plain; think well before you lift your hand against your white brethren.”

Old memories seemed to flit in shadows before the eye of the dying “white African settler;” it looked into the past. A sudden flush crimsoned the ashy cheek, and the eyes shone with tears.

Folding his trembling and withered hands together, he gave himself up to thoughts of bygone days; the cheek paled again, but the tears of weakness rolled slowly down, and bedewed the old rough jacket. He was back again at the foot of those hills, purpling in the glory of the morning sun, but green and fresh in his memory even now. He mentioned father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, all gone; all lying beneath the sod near a ruined chapel. Of all his people, his daughter was the last one; his sons’ bones had bleached unburied in the waste.

Sometimes swiftly, sometimes slowly, he spoke of the days when the white men of Africa were all united: “But now,” said he, “our white brethren—where are they? Some tell us they are sorry. We were friends once. We ate bread together, we smoked our pipes together at sunset. We had no thought of strife—strife—strife. Peace, peace”—the wings of the angel of death swooped down, and overshadowed his recollection. A gleam of light irradiated his face for a few minutes, he raised himself higher on his couch, the wind parted the snowy hair on his majestic brow, his gaze was fixed westward, his arms were stretched towards the mountain ridges of his first home, his daughter clasped his hands in hers, he bowed his white head upon her breast, she uttered a loud cry, Vander Roey stooped to support the patriarch, but he was dead to human sympathy. The sable wings of Azrael had overshadowed him, and his soul passed away, while his outward vision was fixed longingly and lovingly upon those mountain ridges which he was never more to tread in youth or age, in sorrow or in joy.

They buried him decently upon the lone hill-side.

Few of the married families were without their Bibles; and he, who stood next in age to Du Plessis, said a prayer over the open grave. While they were occupied in closing it with safe blocks of stone, a mother gathered a little flock around her, and read them a chapter suited to the occasion. Madame Vander Roey sat beside her, weeping bitterly; the men stood apart in groups. Some had been impressed with the old man’s last words, “Peace, peace.”

But as in all disorganised communities the strong and evil spirit of man’s nature prevails over the good, there were not wanting women, as well as men, to step forward and urge even the incident of old Du Plessis’ death as an incentive to carry out the purpose of wrath and of revenge. He, the aged, the virtuous, the banished patriarch!—who had driven him into the wilderness to die, but his white brother, another Cain? Were they to submit to the will of these jealous, bad white brethren, who permitted the savage Kafir the exercise of his diabolical laws, his heathen rites, and denied the poor Dutch colonist the use of his own moral laws? Who had first robbed them of their slaves, and then pretended to make them compensation for depriving them of what was theirs by purchase? Had not Du Plessis himself urged the obligation of making a sacrifice, because it was disgraceful to white men to trade in human flesh? What reward had he gained? His cattle had been swept away, his sons shot down by the Kafirs, his home devastated; he had met with no pity or redress, and he had died sorrow-stricken amid the mountains of the storm.

And to add to these grievances, men had belied them, and were still belying them, in England. The traders, now with them, had brought them the evil sayings of wicked or ignorant Englishmen, who proclaimed to the world that the Boer was cruel and rapacious, never satisfied with the land he had pillaged from the Hottentots, but committing unequalled cruelties against them, entering their countries with commandoes, despoiling them of their cattle, devastating their villages; but men were among them now who knew how false these allegations were; that the commandoes, wherein many a life was lost, were undertaken to recover their own goods stolen from them by the thieving Hottentots, the bushmen, and Kafirs, who had no villages, except hamlets of huts built by the hands of women, their beasts of burden; a noble race were these to be indulged and pitied by enlightened men of the greatest nation in the world...

“Peace. Yes, they would have peace; but the waters of many a river must be turned into blood first ere this would be. On, on! to the land of promise, the land flowing with milk and honey, where they should have their own rules, and the judge and the criminal speak one language face to face!”

So spoke Lodewyk, the hunter, standing between, and at all times appealing by gesture to Brennard and Lyle. Alas! the sentiments he uttered had been strengthened by the agency of these two desperate men.

Gray sat moodily apart from all, resigned doggedly to the fate that awaited him, but resolute in his intent to die, rather than fight against “his own.”

Day was dying in glory on the hills Du Plessis loved, ere all the rites of sepulture were concluded, and as the moon came up calm, serene, and radiant, the sky cloudless, the elements at peace, the band of pilgrims halted on the mountain ridge, and, turning their faces towards the homes of their forefathers, sang their beautiful paraphrase of the 137th Psalm, “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept;” and as the last low notes floated dirge-like over the patriarch’s new-made grave, they descended the eastward side of the mountains, and held their silent course during the night, halting at daylight, when many an eager, carious gaze was turned to scenes hitherto unexplored by

these wanderers. As the mists lifted, a strong gleam of sunlight shot down upon a spot in the centre of a wide-spreading, treeless plain. Some men of the party advanced and fired a volley from their rovers. A thick wreath of smoke intercepted the glory of the sun's rays, and the signal was responded to. As the eye became accustomed to the glare, a large bivouac, dotted with tents, wagons, oxen, sheep, horses, and men, became distinctly visible. Soon a little body of horsemen were seen skimming the plains, and ere long the salute of their uplifted hats was answered by a similar movement on the part of Vander Roey's determined band.

Chapter Eighteen.

The Settlement Besieged.

How sped they at Annerley, when the war-cry rang loud and clear in the silence of that night in Kafirland?

Daveney and Ormsby were pacing the stoep in silence; Frankfort sat within the entrance-chamber, his head buried in his hands.

That unearthly cry was a relief to his paralysed heart: he started up, his host and Ormsby lifted the latch of the door as he put his hand upon it to go forth. Mrs Daveney and Marion stood by the bedside of the unfortunate Eleanor, who, pale and motionless as marble, lay insensible to the yells of the savages on the hills, or the voices of the poor settlers under the windows.

Mr Daveney was too good a soldier to be absolutely surprised; but so stealthy had been the Kafirs in their movements, that not even a distant scout had been seen for many days.

They were near at hand now, however: the mountains far and near shone with the fiery telegraphs of the warrior tribes. The master of the house summoned his people to arms, and bade the women and children come from the wagons to the interior of the building. It has been shown that the settlement was backed by hills, intersected with gullies or kloofs; one of these, by which Zoonah had approached, was wide and dense: it will also be remembered that redoubts had been thrown up; but the space enclosed was so vast that there were barely sufficient hands to defend all points in rear. The front was well protected by a fortification of wagons, drawn up in line with great precision; from these wagons the settlers were able to check the enemy in his advance; and a small six-pounder, brought in former days from an abandoned fort, filled the gap between the steps and the avenue.

In rear of the house, within the trellised passage, was a little *corps de reserve* of young men and matrons, the latter being in charge of spare ammunition, and provided each with a brace of pistols, which they had earned the use of by experience. It was of course certain that the Kafirs would make their first attack on the cattle, and as the herdsmen at sunset were driving in the animals from their pastures, the enemy poured down the hills in hundreds; by this cunning manoeuvre they at once cut off the communication between the settlement and the cattle herds; indeed the latter, of whom some were Kafirs, mostly deserted, the Hottentots flying off to conceal themselves where they could—they were not worth following while plunder was to be got; so the poor cows and oxen and bleating sheep were driven off by the detachment of the enemy told off for the purpose, and the others advanced, their dark faces reddened with ochre, their crane plumes waving, and their assegais and muskets ready poised for the onslaught.

Mr Daveney had adopted the wise precaution of dividing his flocks and herds, only sending half to pasture at a time; for, with so large a population to feed, and at such a distance from any emporium of provisions, it was necessary to husband the stock with peculiar care. Thus the kraals in rear of the vineyard were tolerably well filled at present, and the chief object now would be to keep the enemy at bay, lest he should carry the redoubt, and rush in upon the cattle.

But few shots had been exchanged between the herdsmen and the Kafirs; but, as the marauders carried off the plunder in triumph, a chief appeared, clad in leopard skin, and riding a noble white charger. Advancing at a smart canter, he was cheered by the cry of "Izapa,"—"Come on"—from the hill-sides, and, followed by those who had assisted in capturing the cattle, he passed the left of the buildings, turned sharp with his face towards the kraals, and bade his people advance; they did so, made a dash at the redoubt, were suffered to set foot on the top, and were received with a rattling volley of musketry, which tumbled them within the defences sooner than they had bargained for. A shout of laughter rose from the Annerley garrison, a yell of defiance burst from the savages.

Then the chief on the white charger drew back, rallied his forces, paused for the reinforcements which rushed down the hills in all directions, lighting their brands at the fires as they passed, and having formed them in a phalanx, of which he was the centre, the mass pressed forward, shouting their wild war-cry, and brandishing aloft their weapons of steel and flame. The blaze on the mountain slope gave all this a demoniacal aspect; the horrible screams, the excited, rampant gestures of the Kafirs, the dropping fire of musketry from Annerley, and the occasional hearty English cheer answering the war-cry, all combined to make as terrific a scene as the most imaginative eye or ear could conceive.

As yet the enemy reserved his fire.

Two women stood suddenly face to face in the entrance-room of the house.

"My sister, my little sister!" shrieked the girl.

"My child, my child!" gasped out the elder.

"I left her beside you sleeping in the wagon," said the girl.

"I woke frightened," said the pale mother, "and thought you had taken her—you did, you did—where is she?"

"I laid her beside you," again answered the girl.

The elder one burst through the group that crowded the room, and put her hand to the door-latch. Ormsby stood sentry there. "No one can pass," said he; "the house is closed while the enemy advances." The woman raised her hands imploringly, her lips moved, and she had just power to articulate the words, "My child!" Ormsby's heart had been softened by gentle companionship—he opened the door, the pale woman rushed upon the stoep, flew down the steps—soon they heard her laughing hysterically; "Let me in, let me in," she cried. Ormsby opened the door again, and she entered, bearing her infant in her arms. Something followed her overhead; a sharp whizz made all draw back; the door was slammed to, but not before a bullet had buried itself in the wall beyond—the little child pointing to the splintering bricks, with a merry laugh.

Then the occupants of Annerley knew that the enemy encircled the settlement; the shots soon began to answer each other swift and sharp.

That part of the building which was commanded by the hill in the rear was defended by a wall of earth some twelve feet high; fortunately, the hill sloped abruptly and was lower than the rest, so that there was no great range for assegais, and the enemy's shots were fired at random—they told, however, among the cattle, and the chief on the white horse, watching his opportunity, made a dash at a side gate, and succeeded in forcing an entrance to the kraals between the vineyard and the redoubt. The confusion that followed is indescribable; the settlers fearing to fire on the besiegers, lest they should kill the cattle; the beasts lowing, the sheep bleating, horses flying about wild and terrified, and the Kafirs yelling, whistling, shouting, and goading the frantic animals forward with their weapons, till they fairly succeeded in clearing the stock-yard, the spectators on the ridges above dancing about between the fires, and mocking at the poor settlers, four of whom had fallen, severely, if not mortally, wounded.

May was flitting about, perfectly reckless of the flying bullets, and when the Kafirs cheered their comrades, he would wait for a pause, and then set up a laugh of derision, crying out, "Shoot higher, shoot higher;" while, in fact, the balls were whizzing many feet above the heads of those at whom they were aimed. Now May would crouch behind the redoubt, single out his man, get him in a certain position, where the fires glaring on brim lit him up as a mark, and then, with an original remark, a grin, and a gibber, would bring him down, draw a long breath, cut a caper, and anon, lying at frill length, would load his musket in the dark, and go to work again, *con amore*.

The enemy in front meanwhile were busy in trying to dislodge the poor farm-people, who had tied their *span* (team) oxen to their wagons, and drew closer every moment to the building. Frankfort stood on the stoep directing the defence, and striving, by keeping the Kafirs at bay, to prevent bloodshed as far as possible; but the chief on the white horse, having seen the cattle from the kraals safely whistled off, resolved, in the true spirit of rapacity, to have more, and, with a phalanx of his warriors, advanced at a rapid pace up the avenue.

Then Frankfort, standing on the upper step of the stoep, said, in a clear, calm, but most decided tone—

"Man the gun."

And four men, who had been trained to the deadly exercise, took their stations.

The firing from the wagons ceased; in the rear all was comparatively still, for the enemy was resting on his arms, and the settlers were carrying in their wounded. The Kafirs, unprepared for the reception it was deemed necessary to greet them with, came up, quivering their assegais, and shouting their war-cry. In their imagination, the settlers were paralysed—they were within seven hundred yards of the wagons.

"Fire!" said Frankfort.

The word rose strong and clear above the savage chorus.

A dazzling flash!—a wreath of smoke—a roar—a sharp sound of a ball cleaving the air, and the dark mass of human beings burst asunder like a splintered oak.

The shrieks of startled men rose to the sky, that, lurid as the vaults of the infernal regions, burned fiercely overhead, and the compassionate-hearted Frankfort shuddered at the shout of exultation uttered by the settlers as they saw the havoc the discharge of the gun had effected, and the dispersion of the enemy in front.

It may be imagined that Daveney's mind had been so disturbed by the renewal of anxiety about his daughter, as to render him scarcely fit to meet the emergencies of the hour; hence the surprise of the cattle-kraals, an advantage the Kafirs fortunately cared not to improve, since they quitted their ground as soon as they had collected the stock. The aperture was immediately closed and manned with steady hands, and, as the besieged were beginning to suffer from the enemy on the hills, and the water irrigating the vineyard was discovered to be cut off, the magistrate deemed it advisable to draw the rear guard within the house; the front was not likely to be attacked again, the gun occasionally making play along the avenue.

Among the defences, Daveney had erected a small block-house, or square tower of stone; this was well provisioned, and contained the principal stores of ammunition. This building was now under the command of Mr Trail, who, with some of the younger hands, kept the enemy in check from attacking the trellis-work uniting the vineyard with the house. Bitterly, indeed, did the good man deplore the necessity for action; but there was no alternative, and he calmly directed the movements of his subordinates in keeping off the Kafirs, who drew near with lighted brands. The house, built of stone and roofed with zinc, would have withstood an attack by fire; but the destruction of property and inconvenience attending the ignition of the outworks would have been very serious.

To this block-house Mr Daveney determined to remove his still insensible daughter as soon as a lull in the siege permitted it; and the chief attraction being withdrawn, it was likely the enemy would retire for a time; indeed he would probably have done so before; but the destruction, at a single blow, of so many of the band, elicited a thirst for revenge, which the abler warriors declared their intention of satisfying, swearing, by the bones of the great chief Gwanga, that they would "eat up" the white man's kraal, and trample the inmates to dust!

Banishing for the time his own domestic anxieties, Daveney went from man to man of his little garrison, and, returning with them from the redoubt to the house, concentrated his rearward force, and, drawing up a body of men in line, poured forth a heavy volley of musketry just as the enemy, having rushed down the hills, had succeeded again in reaching the top of the parapet. This daunted the Kafirs considerably, and they drew off in skirmishing order, dragging their dead and wounded with them; and thus encumbered, the rage of the fight moderated, and the settlers had time to wipe the smoke and blood from their faces, take breath, and refresh themselves with some water, which Mrs Trail, aided by Fitje, served out to them as carefully as if it had been wine; for she believed, like others, that this was but the beginning of a long season of tumult and bloodshed.

Mr Daveney ascended the staircase leading to his daughter's apartment; he carried no light, for day was approaching. A shadow flitted by, noiseless and swift, and he heard the latch of a side door, which had been unbarred, lifted quickly, and the door cautiously closed. He thought little of it; but, on mustering the attendants, it was discovered that little Sana, Eleanor's especial *protégée*, was missing. She was Zoonah's sister, and, having been present at the scene which followed the examination of the assegai, had, in the confusion, possessed herself of the weapon, and, gliding along a vegetable garden flanking one end of the house, soon escaped to a kloof in the hills; and, ascertaining Zoonah's route from some of the scouts, followed his footsteps for two days, when she came up with him on the banks of a river, whence they could perceive, on a distant elevation, an encampment of British troops. She related the issue of Zoonah's manoeuvre, and he departed, and told Lyle, as will be shown, how his mission had prospered.

Poor Eleanor!

"She lay upon her pillow, pale," her cheek ashy white, and cold as clay. The expression of utter hopelessness is seldom blended with that of terror, for the grave of Hope is generally that of Fear also. But this poor young creature seemed to have been singled out by Fortune as a worthy victim for her angry caprices in every phase. Yes, utterly despairing, she lay moaning softly, like a child that can scarce comprehend its pain; but the large eye, usually so soft and downcast, now shone with a wild lustre, and glanced rapidly and uneasily around. Even her father's tread alarmed her—her lips quivered with affright, and she gazed long at him before she could quite believe it was he.

Marion was sobbing, as though her overcharged heart would burst. Mr Daveney took Eleanor's cold hand within his agitated palm. She tried to smile in his face; it was the saddest smile you can imagine. Mrs Daveney, overwhelmed with anxiety on her husband's account, had, on Eleanor's recovering from her death-like trance, descended to the trellised passage, and there watched the progress of the siege, till, on the wounded being brought in, she had shared with Mrs Trail and Fitje their duties towards them; poor Fitje running out at times to call May, that she might employ him within—May sometimes answering her summons, but oftener disobeying.

There were no cases requiring surgical skill—alas! those whose wounds had disabled their limbs lay dead within the redoubt, speared by the assegai of the relentless savage. Three had fallen, never to rise again, and within the house rose the wailing sounds of "lamentation and mourning and woe!" They reached the upper apartments. Eleanor's senses were awakened at the cry of sorrow from the women.

She spoke for the first time.

"The world seems filled with grief," said she, and then looked vacantly from her father's face to Marion's, and back again, with an air of sad inquiry.

Mr Daveney took his stricken daughter in his arms; Marion followed. Mrs Daveney waited for them at the foot of the stairs. Loud cries of anguish burst upon them. Children were sitting on the floor, weeping for lost fathers or brothers. A woman had fainted, and her baby tried in vain to rouse her.

May drew a little cordon round the father and daughters, as they hurried to the block-house, for shots were still interchanging between the besieged and the besiegers, and Mrs Daveney, vacating her office in favour of the matrons who had borne their part in the strife, followed with Mrs Trail and Fitje, the latter carrying her sleeping infant in her arms.

The grey light of morning was streaming through the loops of the little tower. The enemy was evidently on the retreat, and firing as he retired; and Mr Daveney, having seen Eleanor again laid upon a couch, and gradually awakening to the consciousness of her mother's presence, returned to the dwelling to restore order, as far as he could, among the mourners, the wounded, and the untiring, fighting members of the community.

Ormsby's first inquiry was for Eleanor—next for Marion; Ormsby was becoming accustomed to think of others before himself. Frankfort, for the first time since the beginning of the siege, cast himself on the sofa, and, after several minutes' deliberation, inquired of Mr Daveney whether he thought it likely that the troops had taken the field.

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," replied the magistrate; "the demonstrations we have witnessed to-night are the result of information from the tribes to the westward that the army is on the march; it will not be long now before the expresses reach us,—that is, if the savages do not cut them off. Sir John Manvers is new to this country; I hope he will be guided by good advisers, and send strong escorts with his dispatches."

"The escorts will of course return to the camps," observed Frankfort inquiringly, "or will they proceed further?"

"I shall take advantage of the first arrival," answered his host, "to communicate with some of the farms in the district; but," he added, anticipating Frankfort's intentions, "they will return hither with all possible speed after delivering their dispatches."

"Then," said Frankfort, rising, and clasping his host's hand warmly in his own, "it will be time for me to go; if my regiment is not in the field, I doubt not Sir John Manvers will permit me to accompany his force as a volunteer; or I may be useful to him in heading a band of burghers—"

All he could say in addition was, "I fear I shall ever remember Annerley too well. You will, I hope, sometimes think of me as linked to you by being a sharer of the calamity that haunts your house."

Only the commonplace remarks of life passed afterwards between these two good men.

Mr Daveney admitted that this was clearly his duty as a soldier.

Three weary days dragged their slow length along ere the expresses arrived. The Kafirs had occupied the immediate frontier in such multitudes, that no small force could move; but now, having plundered the settlements, and disposed of their prey to their hearts' content, they had dispersed, and spread themselves along the bushy banks of the great Fish River, waiting their opportunities of crossing into the colony, which, had they known their own strength, they might have devastated from the Fish River to the sea.

The dead were decently laid out beneath the mulberry-tree, the bell swinging heavily in the oppressive air of a sultry autumn day. Here the mourners gathered round to take a last look of the uncoffined corpses of the brave. The household, with few exceptions, assembled to listen to the prayer and exhortation pronounced by the good missionary, for the pressure of circumstances would not admit of their lingering over the grave, which was to contain all three. Then the comrades of the poor, sacrificed settlers, with muskets reversed, formed in funeral order round the bearers, and Mr Daveney having taken his place as chief mourner, the sorrowful procession wended its way to the ground which had been purchased for a chapel; and there, in sad and hurried fashion, the deep, deep grave was filled.

It was well, indeed, that the master of Annerley had provisioned his little fortress, the inmates of which amounted to forty persons, the greater proportion women and children. The defenders of the wagon barricades had saved their span-oxen, but it would have been imprudent to kill these unless driven to the necessity, as, without oxen, how were they to travel, if obliged to desert the settlement?

Daveney himself contemplated removing his family as soon as circumstances would permit; for, although the buildings were safe, a sad scene of devastation presented itself when day dawned upon it, after the terrors of the night attack—broken palisades, scattered thorn-bushes, the earth torn and bloody with the fearful struggles of men and beasts, the vineyard laid waste and trampled, assegais half buried in heaps of rubbish, and sheep that had been stabbed, and left to die, running hither and thither, mutilated, and bleating piteously. The pretty trellis-work was battered to pieces, and the walls defaced with bullet-holes.

The enemy had taken his departure towards the colony, but this was only suspected, till the fourth day, when the expresses from Sir John Manvers's camp brought news of his whereabouts.

Then the younger men of the garrison sallied forth to the known fastnesses for cattle, and brought back a few foot-sore beasts, which had strayed from the rest; and the good host held a consultation with Mr Trail, on the re-organisation of the little band under a stout old settler, no longer able to ride, but quite capable of defending a post.

Marion looked from the loops of the block-house, and saw the departure of her lover and Frankfort with an aching heart. It was known beyond doubt that the Kafirs were mustering in the mountains; it was fully believed that there must be an action; and even this, with such an enemy, in such a country, could not be decisive.

She consoled herself by contrasting her own lot with that of her unfortunate sister. Frankfort had not trusted himself to a last interview with Eleanor; Ormsby's adieu had been as tender to her as to her sister. Buoyant of spirit as he was, he yet could not help admitting that the aspect of affairs was very grave.

Marion watched the two young men and their heavily-armed escort as they traversed the plain through a slanting shower of rain, so determined, that the space between the sky and earth looked as if it was ruled slantwise with thick leaden lines. She could not see them long for the storm, and she was descending from her look-out to her sister's bedside, when she heard May, who was on the top of the block-house, exclaim, "More riders—more news!"

A dozen men galloped from the eastward at speed. They brought the welcome intelligence that Sir Adrian Fairfax had arrived at the mouth of the Buffalo River with reinforcements from Cape Town, and that the burghers from the upper districts had rallied round Sir John Manvers.

"Hurrah!" cried May, "we've got the Kafirs in a calabash;" and May was right—the warriors were in the mountains between the forces of the two generals; but the cattle, the great source of contention, was far eastward, under the charge of a chief professedly friendly to England.

Mr Daveney hastened to send Sir Adrian a dispatch announcing his suspicions of Lyle's confederacy with the rebel Boers, but suggested that the idea should not be mooted for the present.

The roar of cannon and the sharp rattle of musketry proclaimed to the settlers at Annerley, on the 18th of March, that the colonial forces to the westward were engaged with the Kafir warriors.

It thundered on till night; then the fiery telegraphs were lit again upon the mountain ridges—silence fell—heaven and earth grew dark again. Morning came, the sun struggled with flying mists, and again the echoes from shot and shell and musket reverberated from kloof to kloof, and filled the hearts of the listeners with terror and dismay.

The little bushman kept watch upon the top of the block-house from dawn till sunset, and Marion shared his vigil for hours. They were strongly contrasted, were those two beings, both fashioned by God's wise hand. The girl young, blooming, sunny-haired, and graceful; the bushman stunted, ugly, and uncouth; nevertheless, they had many thoughts and feelings in common.

Another day was passing, and still the battle raged; but in the afternoon there was a lull. The very elements were still, and a soft rain descended gently.

Still May and Marion kept watch together.

"Express!" shouted May.

Marion's lips were closed rigidly, her teeth chattered within; she knew not how she reached the lower apartment: her father had left it; the door stood open; the riders galloped in by the trampled vineyard paths.

"They are beaten, of course?" said Mr Daveney to the captain of the riders.

"Beaten, but not conquered," replied the latter gravely; "and we have lost—"

Marion, statue-like, appeared at her father's side.

"A hundred men and five officers," continued the burgher captain.

"We had friends in the action," said Mr Daveney, trying to be firm. "Can you tell us if they are safe?"

"Their names, sir?"

"Frankfort and Ormsby."

"I have the list of officers killed and wounded," said the man; and first he looked in his hat, next he fumbled in his capacious pockets, then he turned his haversack round,—it was not there; examined his pouch—"No; he was afraid he had lost it." How little could he understand the agonised suspense of Marion.

He took off his wide-flapped hat again.

"See under the feather," said May.

The bushman's quick eye had detected a paper stuck in the string encircling the hat; it was the list. May snatched it from him, and handed it to Mr Daveney.

Neither Ormsby's nor Frankfort's name was there.

Marion burst into tears of gratitude and excitement.

The burgher spoke truth when he said the enemy was beaten, but not conquered. May said there were holes in the calabash, and so it was; the warrior bands were broken, but they infested the colony in all directions, walking in and out of it as it pleased them, by manifold kloofs and passes untrod by settlers.

It was Sir John Manvers's division which had been engaged. Sir Adrian was still to the eastward, preparing to march beyond the Orange River; the messages of defiance addressed to Sir John Manvers were referred to him.

The master of Annerley, in utter dread of Lyle's reappearance at no distant period, determined on retiring, as soon as possible, to the lower and more civilised districts of the Cape Colony; and Mrs Daveney, eagerly according with his plan, prepared at once for the journey, which was to be undertaken as opportunities offered of travelling with escorts.

Meanwhile comforting letters were received from Ormsby. Frankfort had joined Sir Adrian's force. Eleanor tried to rouse herself to exertion, and the day arrived when the family was to quit Annerley for ever.

May, to his infinite joy, was, with Fitje and his child, to accompany the Daveneys.

"Be not heart-sore, missis," said he to Eleanor; "when the night gets darkest, day is nearest;" and taking the long whip from Griqua Adam, he gave the signal for departure by a loud sharp crack, that echoed like twenty whips up the kloof.

The colonists, men, women, and children, with Mr and Mrs Trail, stood at the gate of the avenue. Some begged to say "Good-bye" to the young "missis," and the curtains of the wagon were drawn aside for a minute; but those who caught sight of Eleanor turned away frightened and sorrowful at her ghastly looks, and begged the rest not to trouble her.

Her mother was beside her. Eleanor's head was pillowed on her sympathising bosom. Truly did that mother deplore her own blind, obstinate folly in trusting her unfortunate daughter's happiness to that which, had she chosen to look deeply into it, she would have seen was but a chance of well-doing after all.

Oh! how many are there who *will* work for themselves, instead of waiting for Providence's gracious helping hand.

Mr Daveney and Marion were on horseback.

The people pressed forward to say "Farewell." Father and daughter had a hand for each, and one blue-eyed, fair-haired child would be lifted up to be kissed.

"Ah!" said an Englishwoman, "bless Miss Marion! she has no pride."

"Troth, an ye'r wrong," interposed an Irish one. "Sure it's herself that has the real pride—the pride of the lady, that knows she does not demean herself by showing the good-will to all God's creatures."

The little procession moved slowly and silently across the grassy plain. The people at Annerley watched it till the glittering bayonets of the escort were lost in the haze; and when "the master" was fairly out of sight, Markland, the old settler, put the house in order, and assumed the command.

Daveney had planned his line of march intending to avoid Sir John Manvers's camp; but, on the third day's journey, the sound of harmonious voices swelling in chorus struck on the surprised ears of the party. A deep glen lay just below; the cavalcade halted; they could see nothing, for the cliffs overhung the gorge. The sounds drew near—'twas an old Scotch air, very martial and stirring, especially in that deep solitude. In front was an opening, an outlet from the glen. Mr Daveney and Marion rode forward, and looked down.

Soldiers singing on a march! Reader, did you ever hear it? Ah, it is worth a world of fine, well-taught, scientific melodies! You should have seen them in this mountain-pass. They were Highlanders, not kilted, but they wore the "tartan trews."

Beating time with steady tread to the noble chorus, they passed below the cliff from which Daveney and his daughter Marion watched them. Truly this had a singular effect in that ravine, so like a Scottish glen, with mountains looming far and near, and—oh! rare in Southern Africa—a waterfall tumbling and foaming over hoary rocks.

Softly it rose and fell upon the air, again burst forth in full harmony as the glen widened, and died away in the shade where the pathway narrowed between tall hills.

All was still once more, save the murmur of the waterfall. The Daveney's took their station for the night. The escort formed its cordon round the little bivouac, and May directed the lighting of the fires and preparations for the usual sunset meal.

Midnight—Daveney held that watch himself.

"Who goes there?"

"Friends," answered a voice—it was Ormsby's. He was in command of a company of soldiers. Sir John Manvers was extending his force. The Daveney's found themselves unexpectedly within the lines of the British troops.

Chapter Nineteen.

The Battle.

I have said that the salute of the horsemen who advanced to meet Vander Roey's band was answered by a corresponding movement from the latter. Each party moved along its path in stern silence. They met at the foot of the lull, and then palm met palm, as though sealing a sullen but determined compact.

Vander Roey's countenance proclaimed evil tidings. No one liked to ask him questions; besides, the very advance of the pilgrims over the hills was a signal that hope was lost. Lodewyk was the spokesman, while Vander Roey and his wife rode forward with Vanbloem, a son of the settler introduced in the early chapters of this work. He was young, active, brave, and clever. Each of these two men had much to tell the other.

Lodewyk strode on declaiming—Vander Roey told again how he had been turned from Sir John Manvers's door with scorn.

The colonists had sympathised with him at the insult, but what could they do? All hope of redress of grievances was over, and no better time could be chosen for *trekking*. The troops were marching towards Kafirland. Sir John was as bewildered as a bird in a mist. Here were men—pointing to Lyle and Brennard—who could tell them that the eyes of England, and France, and Holland were upon them. Lyle was a patriot, had suffered in the cause of patriotism; he had been cast upon the shores of Africa for a great purpose. They already knew the services that Brennard had rendered them; well, Lyle had been an able colleague—his plans had proved his ability; through his means arms and ammunition had been safely conveyed through various branches of the colony; every Boer was armed, every honest man was roused to a just sense of his forlorn and degraded position; but the time had come—if they were permitted to go in peace, well and good; if not—

"Ah! if not," said Lodewyk's brother, "we will dress ourselves in thunder, and mark a boundary-line for ourselves with blood."

They reached the bivouac: it was more wretched than the last. The plains were saturated with water from the heavy rains which had prevailed on the eastern flats. There were but few tents or wagon-tilts, and these were ragged and damp, serving as poor coverings to the sickly, shivering wretches beneath.

Lyle's first salutation from a sallow man, who sat making a coffin for his wife and baby, was, "Welcome to the place

of graves." He passed on; some squalid children in rags were stirring up a pool of stagnant water to find frogs; an ageish woman with parched lips remonstrated with them for troubling the waters; she wished to slake her thirst. Two women were grinding corn between stones, others looked greedily on. There was neither milk nor bread. Some wretched sheep, lately brought in by a foraging party, awaited their doom—they had been earned at great cost; three men lay dying of their wounds; in truth, it was a sorry sight.

Poor Gray was more disheartened than ever. The Boers had begun to look upon him with a suspicious eye; it was evident he was not a volunteer. He felt that he was despised, and his heart died within him. He sat down upon an old pack-saddle; he looked so weary, so dejected, that young Vanbloem's wife took pity on him. She was an Englishwoman. She spoke kindly to him in his own language. The deserter could have wept, but for very shame.

"Come hither," said she, "you poor young Englishman; has your country done you any wrong, that you should turn rebel? You look miserable enough in mind and body, but I can give you something for your heart to rest upon,—see here."

She raised a canvass screen, and showed him Amayeka fast asleep. Amayeka had found a kind heart, and trusted it.

Gray's face shone with sudden light.

Anne Vanbloem dropped the screen: "There," said she; "it is good for you to know she is safe; be satisfied with that for the present."

Poor Amayeka! Vanbloem was the man who had rescued her from the torture, and his wife "had compassion on her."

Gray would have given much to have poured out his heart to the young Dutchman; but Vander Roey's disastrous mission and its results had fanned the flame of rebellion to such a height, that no one could expect to meet with a hearing who was not resolved on freedom, or on fighting for it; besides, Gray knew that his confession might draw on him the imputation of cowardice, and then—alas for resolution!—here was Amayeka, the only being on earth who truly loved him.

Doda was as philosophical on discovering that his daughter was in safe hands as he would have been had he heard that she had died by torture. In the latter case, he would have excused his apparent want of feeling by alleging that grief was useless—a Kafir has as little idea of gratuitous sorrow as gratuitous labour.

Brennard expected that Zoonah would bring them news from the colony, and it was resolved in council that, on the arrival of the scouts from different points, if the intelligence of each agreed with the other, the bivouac should be entirely broken up.

Vander Roey had brought some supplies with him, and parties were formed to obtain provisions from the hunting-grounds. In these expeditions Gray redeemed his character for skill and courage, albeit he was no longer strong and lithe of limb as he had been.

He saw little of Amayeka. Anne Vanbloem had her own plans about her, and changed the subject whenever Gray alluded to her. He saw, however, that the young Boeress meant kindly, and was obliged to content himself with that idea.

Anne and Gray were left together one afternoon; he had been assisting her in carrying goods from her tent to the wagons, which were to move towards the Modder River on the morrow with various stores and a strong escort of the Boers, Vander Roey's object being to advance gradually beyond the colony, and to give battle, if driven to such an alternative, in a position of which he knew the advantages. Thus the elder men, women, children, goods, and arms, were sent off from time to time by small divisions. The Kafir scouts, and five or six more traders from the British settlements, were anxiously expected; and, although the Boers did not contemplate success on the side of the savages in the present strife in Kafirland, they knew that the warfare would be such as to harass the troops, and keep them employed for a considerable time. In the mean time he despatched his message of defiance to Sir John Manvers.

"It is very clear, young man," remarked Anne Vanbloem, "that your heart is not in this business."

"I am a miserable creature," replied the poor young deserter; "my heart is, indeed, quite opposed to the treachery I am called upon to join in."

"And mine also," said Anne; "I do not see my way; but, by God's help, Vanbloem shall have no part in this war."

It may be believed that Lyle improved every hour of his new acquaintance with Vander Roey. He ascertained from the chief that the great body of the Dutch had formed a settlement near a river, which, it was necessary to cross ere the English could satisfy themselves of the existence of the great Salt Lake. The Boers and aborigines had explored this part long ago (Note 1); but men of science professed themselves unbelievers on this point. Lyle showed his colleagues the advantage of such a position, and stirred up the rest of the unfortunate wanderers into the belief that it would be as unavailing as cowardly to yield without a struggle. Rumours had reached Lyle and Brennard of the prospect of Sir Adrian Fairfax's return to South Africa, but they determined on keeping this to themselves.

The scouts came in, Zoonah among them; Lyle took the latter aside, and learned from him how he had hovered about the neighbourhood of Annerley, holding daily parleys with his little sister—the traitress!—how she had brought him back the assegai, and related the issue of its discovery.

"Ha! ha!" thought Lyle, laughing bitterly; "they know now that I am not at the bottom of the sea, as they hoped."

The reports of the scouts encouraged some and daunted others.

On the one hand, Sir John Manvers was harassed by the Kafirs—on the other, Sir Adrian's sudden appearance in the heart of the country struck terror into the minds of the less resolute.

The season of dewy mornings and bitter nights was fast approaching, sickness was increasing in the camp; Lyle, Brennard—all the English traitors, in fact—urged Vander Roey to retire to the north-eastward without delay. With his usual policy, the former had contrived to send forward a member from almost every family, and thus all had an interest in falling into a position where they might make a stand against the British forces.

The chill dawn of an April morning saw the bivouac again broken up, and by noon the plain was vacant.

Vanbloem rode in the rear with a heavy heart—he was beginning hourly to repent; Gray was beside him. Each knew what was passing in the other's mind, but neither spoke.

It was midnight; the wanderers had halted at the foot of a bill on the site of an old mission station—part of the house still remained. The rain fell in torrents, a few stunted bushes were all that afforded shelter to the poor pilgrims of the desert.

Gray heard his name called.

It was Vanbloem—he came for help; he had removed his wife into the dilapidated building—Amayeka was with her; ere long he hoped to behold his first-born; but he was in dismay at the sudden pain and peril of Anne, who, hurried by the journey, and terrified at the prospect of her husband leaving her, had been brought sooner into her trouble than she expected.

Gray assisted Vanbloem in removing certain comforts from his wagon to the deserted mission-garden; Amayeka came out under the dripping trees, and received them from her master's hand, for the poor girl was now in the capacity of a domestic.

God was gracious. Vanbloem held a living girl in his arms ere the night had passed; but it was impossible for his wife to be removed, and he would not leave her desolate.

How Lyle cursed the woman!

"Oh!" thought Gray, "that I might stay with them, and wait my doom from the hands of my countrymen."

He liked Vanbloem; he had told him his history, and now proposed remaining with him, and stating to Vander Roey his resolution not to turn traitor.

"And," said Vanbloem, "what reply do you expect?"

"Perhaps," said Gray, very quietly, "he may order me to be shot on the spot."

Vanbloem looked at the young deserter. "You are no coward," thought he. "You are wrong," he continued, speaking aloud; "he would not shoot you, but they would brand you with a coward's name. I pity you from my soul. May God have compassion on you, and help you! I see the finger of Providence in what has just occurred to myself. I will remain in the desert with my wife and Amayeka."

Gray led the young Dutchman to a retired spot, and poured forth his whole soul to him.

"I leave Amayeka," said he, "to you and your kind English wife; tell her never to forget poor Gray, the deserter."

Vander Roey felt that Vanbloem would never join his band again. They parted friends, however, the latter resolving, if opportunity required it, to act as intercessor between the Government and his countrymen.

Sir Adrian was indeed utterly confounded at hearing that Lyle was alive, at liberty, and at work in such a field. His career from the time he had left the Cape had been, as I have shown, short and mischievous. He had been foremost as a Chartist leader, had organised bodies of men in Wales and Cornwall; but had, at a fortunate moment for his country and the people he had misled, been seized by the Government, tried, found guilty, and transported, ere the wretched men under him had recovered their breath, after their frantic but useless demonstrations.

Well, there was enough work before Sir Adrian for the cleverest and most active of governors. In front were thousands of savages at war with troops and colonists; to the north-eastward, with a space between of 400 miles, through a difficult country, was a sullen, determined enemy, well prepared with arms and ammunition, bent alike on revenge and the establishment of privileges "dearer to these Boers than life."

Mr Daveney soon found that it would be madness to attempt proceeding with his family to the more civilised districts. He therefore contented himself by forming a little encampment of his own, some fifteen miles from Sir John Manvers's. Major Frankfort, having received an offer of active employment from Sir Adrian, had joined the division on the banks of the Buffalo River. Ormsby was in command of a detachment of his own corps, under Sir John.

Here we must leave our friends for a short time. The good master of Annerley set to work upon the erection of a temporary dwelling, round which was drawn a *cordon militaire*. His advice and assistance would have been of the utmost advantage to Sir John Manvers, but circumstances, which shall hereafter be explained, prevented their holding any but necessary communications with each other, and no alternative was left the General but to harass his savage antagonists till they were compelled to sue for peace.

Meanwhile many Boers in the lower districts, hearing that Vander Roey was on his way to join those who had already *trekked* beyond the boundary, deserted their farms and bivouacs, and on coming up with him learned that he had resolved on halting in a position where he might give battle to the British forces, or pause in security till the helpless part of the community had reached a more habitable tract of country.

It was to Gray a melancholy thing to hear so many English voices among those who came, day by day, into the rebel camp. Most of these were deserters like himself; but, unlike him, alas! they entered with zest into the prospect of battle with their fellow-subjects.

It was June, but not like that balmy month in England. All day long a blinding shower of snow had been falling; it was bitterly cold, and a cruel north-east wind drove the storm before the Dutch videttes of Vander Roey's camp, who, posted on a stony ridge, kept the look-out for a reconnoitring party, long expected.

Night drew on; rain and sleet veiled the prospect; the videttes descended the ridge, and joined their comrades round the great bonfire, which was no easy matter to keep up, from the scarcity of wood.

Wrapped in their heavy coats, with hats flapped over their brows, their arms at hand, the red light of their pipes irradiating their bearded and swarthy faces, the rebels listened to the alternate tirades of Lyle and Brennard.

It was these two connoisseurs in human nature who had taken care that there should be plenty of tobacco among the stores of the bivouac. The Boers they knew would make the better listeners for this solace.

It was a scene fit for a painter of the wild and picturesque. Rising abruptly in front was the stony ridge, the outline dimly marked against the murky sky; two or three ragged tents and as many wagons were drawn close to the fire, which, from time to time, emitting its fitful light, shone on none but angry or anxious faces.

Vander Roey paced restlessly up and down between his wife's wagon and the fire. Madame Vander Roey was the only woman in the bivouac. She sat with the curtains of the wagon drawn aside, listening for the approach of expected horsemen. The wind had died away, and the sleet continued to fall noiselessly. The silence of nature was alone disturbed by Lyle's voice declaiming, and by an occasional challenge from sentinels. The two little bushboys, Lynx and Frolic, wrapped in skins and coiled up under the wagon, peered with their sharp eyes into the mist.

"Here they come," said Lynx. Frolic laid his ear to the earth, satisfied himself that horses' feet were beating the ground at a distance, and announced the fact to his mistress, who called Vander Roey.

He was already by her side.

"Who comes there?"

"Who goes there?" shouted sentinel number one; it was repeated by number two, and in an instant the rebels were on their feet.

"Who comes there?"

"Friends!" and about a dozen horsemen galloped in hot haste down the stony acclivity.

The foremost threw himself from his horse: it was Hermanus the stutterer; the light from the fire shone upon his face; in his endeavour to speak, he made hideous grimaces. Lynx and Frolic laughed. Lyle kicked the one aside, and struck Lynx such a blow with his rifle, that the boy was stunned for a few minutes, but recovered to gibber and curse—he had learned to swear in English.

The riders brought word that Sir Adrian was on his way to attack the rebels, if they were unwilling to listen to terms. The Kafirs were coaxed into quietude for a while, that Sir John Manvers might follow the Governor, if necessary, with a *corps de réserve*; it was clear that all other political questions were to be laid aside, that a heavy blow might be struck against the Boers.

Vander Roey had never anticipated the sudden appearance of Sir Adrian and his troops in the heart of the country, nevertheless there seemed nothing for it now but to fight or surrender, and the cunning English traitors implicated in the rebellion, men who had nothing to lose, persuaded him, through Lyle and Brennard, that to yield at once would be to draw on themselves greater odium, and as heavy a penalty as though they resisted the law to the death.

"Let it," said Lyle, addressing Vander Roey, in the presence of his wife, "be only a feint of resistance, if you will, but do not, after all your proclamations and messages to that insolent General, throw down your arms as soon as you face the troops; they will laugh, at you, despise you, and you will deserve to be beaten like a dog."

Vander Roey could not help reminding Lyle, that it was he who had dictated his very last "message" to Sir John Manvers, to the effect that, "as Sir John, had not written to Vander Roey, the latter should answer him as he chose, and that his determination now was to fight, to conquer, or to die."

Lyle laughed scornfully, raising his voice, and thus gathering a crowd round him, while Madame Vander Roey, undaunted, but anxious, watched her husband's countenance by the light of the wagon lantern.

"It is well for you to talk thus," said Hermanus the stutterer, who, once set going, could talk glibly; "you may run away in the scuffle, and you know you cannot escape justice if we yield—you are speaking in favour of your own interests. I say it is folly to fight now,—make a truce."

"Never," shouted Vander Roey, suddenly kindling with anger, as he remembered his contemptuous dismissal from Sir John Manvers's residence. "Fight or fly,—which shall it be, my friends? Speak, for before daylight we must be up

and doing.”

He raised his lofty figure to its utmost height and looked round, his wife leaned anxiously over his shoulder; the lantern, swinging to and fro, showed the expression on the face of each; hers was anxious, yet fearless; his brows were knit, his eyes flashed, and he added, “Let the majority decide; remember my watchword is still ‘War—war to the knife!’”

The English traitors sent up their hats in the air, and cheered the leader, and all the young Boers did the same. Our convict had taken care that not a youth should leave the force; within a circle of two miles behind the strong ridge there were four hundred good men and true, between the ages of twenty-five and thirty; the whole force amounted to eight hundred, and few of the oldest had reached the age of fifty.

Lyle turned to congratulate Madame Vander Roey on her husband’s decision; the curtains of her wagon were closed—he lifted a corner, her head, covered with her scarlet handkerchief, was almost buried in the cushions of her bed; by the light of the lantern he could see her whole frame was shaking with emotion, and stifled groans issued from her lips.

He dropped the screen with a sneer; “She will come to her senses by-and-by,” muttered he; and he was right. At dawn, in spite of a wind which cut like razors, she was busied with Hermanus and others at the stores hidden in the rocks.

Lyle and Brennard took charge of the “Cape Smoke,” and served out to every man his *sopie*. The *spirits* of the bivouac were never suffered to flag.

The horsemen had been sent on with all speed to the larger encampment of Boers, Vander Roey’s party being in front, to defend and keep possession of the strong ridge, along which, at intervals, the few guns the rebels possessed had been ranged. To the guns were attached the number of men necessary to work them. Gray had yielded passively enough to Lyle’s orders on the subject, but that very apathy made the latter more suspicious of his victim. Unnoticed by the deserter, he watched him narrowly, and, all-daring and subtle as he was, felt baffled in his conjectures as to the probable issue of Gray’s forced enlistment in the rebels’ cause.

The position taken up by Vander Roey was the strongest in the whole country, being a succession of hills covered with large loose stones. In his front rose the ridge, surmounted by a natural rampart, rendered more complete by the art of deserters from the corps of Sappers and Miners. In the rear was a stream, lined with rushes and long reeds, fordable to those well acquainted with its depths, but offering no easy passage to British infantry. The line of fire extended a full mile.

At dawn of day, the videttes reported the appearance of a mounted reconnoitring party from the enemy’s force, and within half an hour every man was at his post; Gray taking his place at the gun he was to serve.

Lift aside the curtain of that wagon, reader, and see within, a woman kneeling and praying in an agony. Ah! how many there are, who dare unseen dangers, who even meet the reality of peril with flashing eye, a fevered cheek, and brow unblenched, but who, in the dread pause between plan and action, quail at the loud beating of their own hearts!

For months, Madame Vander Roey had looked forward to some such moment as this—she was accustomed to scenes of danger, she had been present at those strifes in cattle-lifting which are the common occurrences of a South African settler’s life; but this sudden call to arms against men, whom her father had been wont to term his “white brethren,” rang on her ear like a knell, and a presentiment of evil overpowered her for the moment.

Still she was persuaded that her husband was right, and she knelt down and implored help and mercy from Him who is “the Father of the oppressed.”

Reassured after her devotions, she assumed the costume she had lately worn in camp, and leaving the wagon, untied her horse from the wheel, saddled and bridled it herself, and mounting it without assistance, rode along the foot of the hill, inspecting the defences with a steady eye and considerable judgment.

Her dress was simple enough, a long stuff petticoat serving her for a habit, her face being shaded by a large straw hat, with the ostrich feather depending from it. It was typical of the times, was that drooping plume, soiled and saturated as it was with the cold mist of that sad morning. Her horse, handsome, fleet, and with that easy action so peculiar to the mountain steeds of Africa, looked somewhat the worse for scanty rations; and her face, once so radiant with health and joy, wore a look of intense anxiety, as, on hearing a murmur among the Boers, she glanced in the direction indicated by their gestures, and saw her husband heading the large force which he had gone forth to meet, and descending the low ridge on the other side of the stream. It was traversed in silence, and, hurrying forward somewhat irregularly, they spread out in extended order.

In twenty minutes each had his station assigned him. Madame Vander Roey dismounted, and took hers beside her husband, to the right of the granite rampart. Gray stood as steady as the rock that screened him. Brennard assumed the command of the left wing. Lyle occupied the centre of the line, where there was a slight bend, and thus he was enabled to watch both flanks, and keep a close eye on Gray, to whom, as he fell into his place, he addressed a few words.

“Gray,” said Lyle, “do you intend to do your duty?”

“By God’s help, I will,” was the reply of the young deserter, in a tone of confidence quite unexpected by the Mephistophiles of the wilderness.

The latter looked at him, sneered, but was satisfied; and then, with his head bent below the ridge, scrambled over

stone and scrub, reached his post, and there knelt down, his rifle ready for work, and his eye fixed on the line of march by which the troops were expected.

But rain and sleet still occasionally veiled the prospect in vapour. The report of the videttes was questioned in its accuracy by some, and each man strove to pierce the mist, and give the first warning of the enemy's advance.

A death-like silence reigned throughout that expectant company.

At length the clouds slowly and almost imperceptibly lifted, and here and there some new feature in the scene developed itself—a solitary bush, the carcass of an ox, or a grave covered with stones—and, finally, two mounted men, soldiers of the Cape cavalry, moving leisurely forward, and, as May would have said, evidently *spinning*.

"By heavens!" exclaimed Lyle, "they see us, and have turned to report. Confound that fellow Gray, he has run out the gun too far, and these Totties (Hottentots; particularly those of the Cape corps) have distinguished its black muzzle among the grey rocks."

It needed no oaths to confirm the truth of his statement—the reconnoiters had faced to the rear so suddenly, that there seemed but little doubt as to the cause of the movement, and a few minutes decided it.

As the sun came up, the veil of mist was rent in twain, and fully disclosed to view a small body of English troops, under the command of Sir Adrian Fairfax. Lyle unslung his spy-glass, took a deliberate view of the encampment, and, closing the telescope in haste, exclaimed, "Every tent is struck—the advance-guard is on the march."

The word passed to the right and left.

Vander Roey, white as death, but steady as ever, glanced his eye, now along the line, now forward, now in the rear. His spies had evidently been mistaken as to the strength of the force; and now reason whispered him that his chance of success was small, but he had much dependence on his position. It was perfect in every way, whereas the British forces were on open, stony ground; they were new to the locality, and well worn with a march of thirty miles, which they must have made within twelve hours.

But, as the troops advanced, it appeared that a manoeuvre of Lyle's had answered his purpose for the present. To the extreme right, where a road cut the ridge in two, he had placed several men, who were only to affect concealment. It was to this point that the attention of the advance-guard was evidently directed, for, instead of making a forward movement, they took an oblique path, intent on attacking the detached party to their left, who were fully prepared to retreat within a narrow gorge, capable of containing some twenty men, and defended by a gun placed at the opening.

Poor Gray was guiltless of running out his piece of ordnance, as Lyle imagined—the error lay with a less practised hand, but the circumstance turned the fortune of the hour; for the Boers, misled by the diagonal march of the soldiers, were somewhat off their guard, and, in imagined security, watched the forces of the Government.

It was curious and painful to Gray to hear the cool way in which the deserters of the party made their observations on the scene before them.

"Ha!" said one, who knelt beside him, gazing intently through a fissure in the rock, "they have got up a company of the old Ninety —th; that rascal Zoonah said they were to remain in garrison."—An oath or two filled the space—"they know this part of the country."—"Matthews and Wilton, and you, Jem Blaine, you belonged to it."—"How they march!" said Jem Blaine; "they are as fresh as when I saw them at drill at Graham's Town;"—and the last oath was uttered heartily, and in thorough good humour, as a strange touch of pride in his old corps brought the red colour to his hard brown cheek. "By —, there's my old captain, Frankfort. Well done, grenadiers; well done, old fellows—step out. Look sharp, Frankfort. Oh! I see he is a staff man. God bless you, old fellow; if you had not been on leave when I had my last lark, I should have been marching with you now. You would have recommended me to mercy;" and then Jem Blaine sat down, turned his back upon the fissure, and would look no more.

Standing up, leaning on his long roer, his hat at his feet, and great drops of perspiration on his broad forehead, Vander Roey followed the troops with his eye. The mist had not yet quite cleared off, but he could distinguish the rear of the division. He saw that the force was small, but well chosen, but he said nothing.

"They have no artillery," said a young Boer.

Vander Roey made no reply, but watched his wife, who was looking through a telescope beyond the division.

In another moment Madame Vander Roey exclaimed, "They have artillery; I see a gun advancing."

She handed the telescope to her husband.

First came the division, consisting of infantry and a small body of Cape cavalry. The Boers had gained heart at sight of this little force, and Vander Roey took it as a sign of the Governor's contempt of his enemy; still he could scarcely believe that the great Sir Adrian Fairfax would head a mere handful of men; and, therefore, he did not exult prematurely. "Were this the only force," said he to his wife, "we should powder them to dust in an hour."

But it was not the only force. The mists hanging to the westward still screened the barren landscape far in rear of the troops, but ere the latter had moved half a mile across the broken plain, there emerged, as from the clouds, four "coal-black steeds," of great power. These drew a deadly weapon, and, following them, were two slender pieces of ordnance, the nature of which was incomprehensible to the unfortunate Dutch, who soon, however, learned what a rocket could do from their English opponents. Added to these was a strong body of infantry, and a troop of cavalry,

protecting the artillery.

Vander Roey's courage and presence of mind did not forsake him. He saw at once the advantage to be gained by the false move the enemy was making. His plan was to attack him on the broken ground, up which the infantry must move in skirmishing order, in the endeavour to dislodge the Boers on the left.

It seemed clear that the General had no idea of the strength of the rebel forces, and, believing that infantry would rout them out, was bent on bringing the wretched men to terms without using the artillery or charging with his cavalry.

But while nearly a mile distant from the stony ramparts, that looked so still and lifeless, Sir Adrian called a halt. Lyle watched him narrowly; the General conversed for a few minutes with Frankfort, who next rode into the ranks, and brought with him some old sergeants of the corps. It was evident that a council of war was held; it lasted but a few minutes, yet time was thus given for the artillery to advance. Still it was considerably in rear of the front division, and Lyle was slightly baffled in his conjectures.

Brennard would have had Vander Roey open out his guns upon the infantry as they drew near the rebels' right flank, but at this instant Vander Roey hesitated, and the opportunity was lost. Had the rebel chief followed this advice, he might have conquered, and retired far to the north-east; but his heart failed him at the thought of dealing death from a masked battery on the soldiers.

Probably he would have felt differently had Sir John Manvers headed the enemy, and Lyle, in that case, would have urged a death-blow without hesitation.

Steadily, although the ground was more broken at every step, the British infantry pursued their march; slowly after them moved the cavalry and guns.

"See," exclaimed Madame Vander Roey, who no longer needed a telescope, "they march still, but there is some stir among them. The tall man on the *skimmel* (sorrel) horse is flying backwards and forwards from the ranks to the General, from the General to the ranks, and now he gallops to the rear with orders; the artillery halt again, and the *skimmel* rider dashes back in spite of stones and stunted bush."

The troops suddenly halted, their bayonets glittered in the morning sun as they changed their position, and they paused for an instant within gun-range of both ridges.

This was the moment Vander Roey had anticipated; piles of loose stones still lay between the two divisions of the British forces; the ground was scarcely practicable for cavalry or artillery. At this juncture the rebel chief turned to the rugged valley in the rear, and lifting his hat from his feet, waved it three times. Five hundred rebels started up from among the reeds and rushes of the river, from behind the great stones, and from the natural caverns at the base of the hills. In rear of the left battery sprung up a hundred others. The summit of each ridge was carefully manned with the deserters, some from the artillery, some from the line, all armed with roers; and mingled with these were many traders and wandering thieves.

Sir Adrian's consultation with the old soldiers of the Ninety —th had caused him first to pause, and next to alter his movement. These experienced fellows had detected first the muzzle of Gray's six-pounder, next a Boer's hat, which, albeit nearly the colour of the stone near which the head leaned, was easily discerned by accustomed eyes. These two indications were quite sufficient to point out the real position of the rebels, and Sir Adrian changed his route accordingly.

"Sit there till I come for you," said Vander Roey to his wife, taking her by the arm, and placing her in a hollow some feet below the rampart, with a gun above her; he leaned over her, placed his hand on her shoulder, looked sorrowfully into her face, and uttering in a tender tone the words "Poor wife, poor wife!" dashed down the hill, sprung on his horse at the foot of the ridge, and galloped to the front of the rebel band.

Some of the Boers, like Vander Roey, were mounted, but many were on foot. The latter were speedily and silently formed into parties commanded by the horsemen. Each division was still screened by the ridge, and Vander Roey's plan was to rush out upon the enemy when he should have begun to mount the acclivity. The larger division of the British troops remained halted, and it was plain that Sir Adrian had no idea of the strength of the rebel forces.

But the General learned his mistake soon enough. Scarcely had the infantry advanced many paces up the steep and rugged hills, ere, with a shout of defiance, the rebel Dutch dashed out from their ambush. The road between the ridges was narrow. Horse and foot made a simultaneous charge, and pouring the fire from their long roers right and left with unerring aim, laid many a gallant fellow low.

Staggered at the unexpected appearance of five hundred men in a body, uncertain too of the numbers concealed behind the formidable rampart above, the infantry drew back. Sir Adrian galloped forward, a bullet took the peak from his forage-cap, he met the retiring infantry: he saw the madness of attempting to charge on such ground, and gave orders to retreat beyond gun-range till the artillery should come up, and be put in position.

Lyle laughed aloud.

The Boers, having expended their fire, retired before the infantry had time to return it with any kind of precision; five of the Dutch, however, lay stretched in their blood, and many came back wounded.

The scene now, with the exception of the dead and wounded scattered about, presented the same appearance as at first—the British troops forming for the advance, the ridges silent, and apparently unpeopled.

Madame Vander Roey, implicitly obedient to her husband's orders, sat where he had placed her, and with eyes of stone watched the sharp angle at the base of the ridge. The Boers came back in masses. She saw not Vander Roey; he was the very last, and then he turned and fired a parting shot at one gallant soldier who had lingered in rear of his company, and who paid the penalty of his imprudence—the roer's bullet laid him dead among the rocks.

Having thus crippled the infantry, a great point was gained, for foot soldiers were the only people who could work in such a position; and as for the artillery, the ground was equally against that, or cavalry, following up what it might begin. So thought the Dutch; "but," thought Lyle and Gray and some twenty others, "they have never seen rocket practice!"

"How d—d passive that fellow Gray looks," said Lyle to Brennard, as the latter, during the awful pause, held a parley with his colleague.

"I never could make him out," replied Brennard, indifferently. "I think the fellow is half a fool."

"He is no knave, certainly," said Lyle, contemptuously.

The British force now began to move, in that determined way which proved it was in earnest, and having reached the points whence the artillery could work against the enemy, again halted.

Lyle saw that the humane Sir Adrian was still awaiting a signal for peace, and what was his horror, his rage, when he saw Gray rise from his kneeling position, and leap on the rough parapet before him. There stood the young deserter, unarmed, erect, motionless, undaunted.

Then Lyle, furious beyond control, raised his rifle, and fired; the ball struck the poor youth, who fell forward, and rolled down the face of the ridge into a rocky hollow, his blood marking his descent.

"Frankfort," said Sir Adrian, "what can be the meaning of that?"

"I cannot tell, Sir," replied Major Frankfort; "the man who so suddenly rose to our view was either a coward and panic-stricken, or a traitor to the cause he has enlisted in."

"I rather think," said Sir Adrian, "he is some poor victim enlisted against his will, who chose to die rather than fight against us. He must have been sure that either we or his own party would have shot him after such a manoeuvre."

And then, too much occupied to give a second thought to the unfortunate young man, Sir Adrian proceeded to inspect his force.

But Lyle's shot was received by Brennard as a signal, and forthwith he poured forth a volley from his flank. That to the left of the troops, and the right of the Boers, followed his example; but they miscalculated their distance, and did little mischief; it was returned, however, by a hearty salute of grape-shot, which, however, did little harm among the Dutch. Screened from their opponents, they affected to treat it with contempt, and Vander Roey, having dismounted and joined the line above, took off his hat, and gave an exalting cheer.

Then Lyle, and the gunners under him, made the great gun roar, as Lynx and Frolic described it, sitting at their mistress's feet, and laughing impishly at the deadly game playing before them.

A sharp tongue of flame, and then a great volume of smoke, burst from a gap in the ridge, and the ball, moving swiftly through the air, fell into the very centre of the troops, and made a vacant space, where it burst.

The broken ground, the masked battery, the uncounted enemy, all were forgotten in the moment of indignation which followed this assault. Sir Adrian waved his cap, and advanced with his staff, but not too rapidly, giving time for the guns to work their way. The infantry proceeded in extended order. Another tongue of flame, another volume of smoke, threatened more mischief; but at this the force quickened its pace marvellously, and the ball fell harmlessly in the rear.

"Down the Trongate, my boys!" shouted an old grenadier of the Ninety —th,—the regiment was composed chiefly of Renfrewshire-men—"down the Trongate!" (Note 2) and away went the brave fellows over the rocky plain as steadily as though moving at the double along the peaceful streets of the old town of Glasgow.

This experienced little body of tried men, led by a cool-headed officer, were directed to their extreme left, where, it will be remembered, Lyle had placed a small party, which, by affecting concealment, was to divert the attention of the troops. In rear of this, it will also be remembered, was a gun fixed in the narrow jaws of a gorge. If a passage could be made over this ridge into the gorge, the gun, which was immovably fixed in the rocks, could be brought to bear upon the rebels themselves.

On the first grand movement of the troops, this smaller rampart was abandoned to a very small force, and as there were no guns to spare, was defended by roers and rifles. British soldiers, however, were not to be daunted even by these unerring weapons; unencumbered by their knapsacks, in lieu of which Sir Adrian had ordered them to substitute light haversacks, they persevered in spite of the dropping fire which slightly thinned their ranks, and gradually working their way through the stones and scrub, took possession of the *rossjies* (ridge), and speedily dislodging the besieged, scrambled down towards the gorge, and poured such a volley of musketry into it, as made the poor defenders of the pass cast their arms from them, and cry aloud for quarter.

The gun was instantly taken in hand, and, not without difficulty, brought to bear upon the right flank of the rebels in the rear, several of the Boers being detained in the gorge by the guard of the Ninety —th, who knew that, without this precaution, the roers and rifles above would pour their fire upon them.

Lyle, standing in the bend of the rossjies, saw by this manoeuvre of the old soldiers that all chance of defence was lost, and at once rushed towards Vander Roey, and advised him to meet the forces on the plain.

The manoeuvre would have answered, had the Boers been organised for battle face to face with the foe; but the plan of operations had been to begin on the defensive, and retire behind a succession of these rossjies, till they reached a river impassable save at a ford difficult to pass except by practised men.

It was not long before Madame Vander Roey found herself the only tenant of the stony hill; the battery was deserted, but below were ranged a party of Boers, who, contriving to keep out of sight of the soldiers in the gorge, stepped out one by one, and, taking with sad precision, shot several. This insolence the Ninety —th attempted to return by firing the gun, but the ball fell innocently among the stones in the valley.

Again a Boer advanced, and lifted his roer—it was Hermanus the stutterer, one of the most determined—but this time the soldiers were beforehand with him; ere he had time to lift his roer, he was stretched bleeding on the stones.

Madame Vander Roey watched the action from the very edge of the parapet.

Amid the din, the smoke, the groans of dying men and horses—a strange adjunct in that picture of strife and agony—was the figure of the rebel's wife; her long skirt falling far below her feet over the rocks, giving her the appearance of supernatural height, her head uncovered, and all her sable tresses streaming in the wind.

Many a stout heart quailed at first view of this singular apparition, as the sun, opening his crimson chambers behind it, threw out the tall form in bold relief between the rocks and sky.

On either side of her were crouched her impish pages, Lynx and Frolic, immovable and unappalled, as she was apparently.

But, ah! that woman's heart was beating as her eyes followed the plumed hat, which towered above the rest, and was always foremost.

The Boers had now all dismounted, and were fighting hand to hand, muzzle to muzzle, with the troops. Even the guns could not work, for the artillerymen had been the first to fall, and the rockets had had no opportunity for use.

But there is a lull in the strife; Madame Vander Roey sees her husband fall—he is seized, not by the enemy—but Brennard flings the wounded chief across his swift steed, mounts it, and, with his burden bleeding before him, gallops furiously to the rear.

“Vander Roey has fled!—has fled!—has fled!” passes from mouth to mouth among the rebel ranks—they break asunder, fall into disorder, and retreat. In vain Lyle attempts to rally them—he sees that he must run like the rest, or fall into the hands of a governor from whom he must expect justice rather than mercy.

But he is cool, as usual, selects the swiftest horse at hand, gallops a few paces through a shower of bullets, turns, faces the troops, takes aim with his rifle, and brings down the man next Frankfort—he marked this “fellow on the staff” for his prey—again retreats—again pauses between the ridges to fire, and finally dashes like lightning beyond the range of the gun in the gorge.

The poor rebels, caught in that trap, became at once prisoners of war; they surrendered unconditionally, and were sent to the rear with the wounded.

The British troops pursue, the guns are limbered up, and dragged through the rocky pass; the Boers succeed in crossing first the stream, and next the stony neck beyond, and Lyle again posts a strong line of defence along another natural rampart; but Sir Adrian is better prepared now for the attack.

A long streak of light shoots upward from the river's brink, and, breaking far forward towards the sky into a thousand golden drops, falls among the fugitives, scattering them apart, and strewing the rough ground with bleeding corpses!

Madame Vander Roey had turned to watch the retreat of her husband; she tried to descend the ridge, but her heart sickened and her limbs failed her; she sunk, terror-stricken and shocked, upon the stone where her husband had bid her wait for him.

She was found there that afternoon. Lynx and Frolic brought some old soldiers of the Ninety —th up the slope; they spoke in Dutch, and begged her to go with them to the wagons in the rear; but she told them her husband had bid her wait for him there.

But he never came; the kind soldiers brought her provisions, but she would accept nothing at their hands.

She sat there through the day, still watching the combatants, as the English pursued the Dutch from ridge to ridge.

The sun went down amid the vapours that rose from the conflict; night fell moody and dark; the din of battle was succeeded by the whistling of the wind through the rocky passes; the sleet began to drive; the dress of the miserable watcher was saturated with damp, but she was reckless of bodily discomfort. The mind, for many months wound up to a pitch beyond its powers, gave way, “started aside like a broken bow,” and, helpless and “infirm of purpose,” she continued to keep the vigil till nature was exhausted, and she fell insensible upon the cold earth.

She awoke to consciousness under the kind hands of an English surgeon; she was lying on a couch in a comfortable marquee, Anne Vanbloem and Amayeka were watching beside her—a baby slept on Anne's lap—Amayeka, mournful

but very quiet, sat sewing at the opening of the tent. Madame Vander Roey could see far out upon the plain; she pressed her hand to her eyes, looked again, collected her scattered memories, and recognised the position of a former bivouac; it was occupied now by the tents and wagons of the English. Soldiers were lying on the ground, or passing to and fro, or engaged in merry games, or singing beside the scanty fires. The air came in cold, but dry and balmy; it gave her strength to rise and look around, and to question Anne.

And then she learned that Vander Roey was dead.

She waited many minutes before she uttered any remark, and then she said—

“Did they take him prisoner?”

“No,” replied Madame Vanbloem; “he died of his wounds among his own people.”

“It is well!” said the widow, and, turning her face from the light, she never spoke again.

Note 1. The lake lately discovered is said to have long been known to the Dutch. Pretorius, the rebel Boer, will not allow travellers to pass through his settlements to explore the locality.

Note 2. A story is told of the regiment, which was composed of many men from Glasgow. Being checked in their charge in battle, an old soldier cried out, “Down the Gallowgate, my boys,” and away they dashed.

Chapter Twenty.

The General.

From the head-quarters of Sir Adrian Fairfax, I most transport you, my reader, to one of the most lonely and romantic districts in Southern Africa, where Sir John Manvers, with the second division of the army, had pitched his camp. Stretching in a south-easterly direction rose the green Chumie Mountains, their verdure contrasted occasionally with bold grey columns of rock; beyond these again, the Amatolas blended their purple heights with the roseate clouds; northward, the Winterberg range formed a barrier between the colony and Tambookieland, where dwelt the “royal race” of the Kafirs, and, towering to the sky like a gigantic elephant, with a howdah on its back, the Great Winterberg, nine thousand feet high, lifted its lofty head, crowned with a diadem of snow.

On a fair green plain, the clear stream of the Kat running through the midst, were ranged with beautiful precision the white tents of the little army, which had been at first employed against the Kafir warriors, and afterwards held in reserve, lest the Dutch should rally in their strongholds. But Vander Roey’s fate had been the death-blow to all further opposition for the present, and the troops were only waiting Sir Adrian’s return from the Orange River to disperse, provided the aspect of affairs was peaceful.

It promised to be so, for the Kafirs were considerably dismayed at the news of the severe loss the Boers had suffered, in spite of their unerring roars and strong position, and now promised submission with the meekness of the dove and the williness of the serpent!

Sir Adrian’s detention arose from delay in diplomatic measures. Several prisoners were yet to be disposed of. The principal traitor, Lyle, still eluded discovery, but a price was set upon his head.

On the outskirts of this encampment, just where the bright waters of the Kat River and the Mancazana meet, were scattered over a few acres of ground some temporary dwellings. Simple and rudely fashioned as they were, these thatched tenements looked exceedingly picturesque among the natural groves overshadowing them. The walls were white-washed, the little windows neatly glazed, and the verandahed fronts were gracefully wreathed with the wild creepers that grew about in profusion.

These dwellings, albeit not quite proof against the storms that often sweep in terrific grandeur through this lovely region, were comparatively luxurious, contrasted with the poor shelter of the tent or marquee, and one, divided far apart from the rest by a *banquette* of earth, would have made apparently a sufficiently pleasant summer dwelling in England.

Mr Daveney finding it impracticable to reach the lower districts in safety, and earnestly requested by Sir Adrian Fairfax to accept an appointment of trust and responsibility, if only for a time, had taken up his abode here. The whole fabric had been run up within six weeks, despite untoward weather; a few days of sunshine made the little habitation of wattle, clay, thatch, and whitewash fit for the reception of his family. The ladies occupied one bed-room, a small office served the Commissioner—for such was Mr Daveney’s new appointment—for a reception and sleeping apartment. The common sitting-room opened as usual from the verandah, and the simple cookery was carried on by the old Malay in the hollow of a tall rock, backing the premises. A couple of tents added materially to the accommodation and comfort of the tenement.

The intense anxiety of Eleanor’s mind had produced a low fever, which kept the unfortunate young creature on her couch—wasted to a shadow, she lay beneath a little casement, her only rest snatches of fitful sleep, her only enjoyment the fresh air, that brought sweet odours with it from the heath-clad hills. Her mother and sister watched day and night by turns beside her. The Trails were again their neighbours, and were a great solace to the afflicted invalid.

“It is a sad strait for one so young to come to,” said Eleanor to Mr Trail one day, “to wish to die.”

"Sad, indeed," replied the good missionary; "sad, because so sinful."

"Ah, me!" said the sufferer, "this suspense is killing me—is it not natural that I should long to be where the tears will be wiped from off all faces?"

"Patience, Eleanor, patience," whispered Mr Trail. "God has His own means of bestowing happiness; you *have* been sorely tried, my poor child; but you are young, a long future may lie before you."

And the invalid lifted up her large luminous eyes to Heaven with the most hopeless expression of despair.

Hark! horses are galloping past the dwelling—the rattle of accoutrements announces that soldiers are on their way. They soon go by; there are but few—it must be an express.

And the question passes along the tented line, "Is Lee taken?"

"Not yet; but the dispatches from Sir Adrian relate that a clue is obtained to his discovery."

In a word, Hermanus the stutterer, who, rebel as he was, hated English traitors, succeeded in persuading his comrades that Lee and Brennard had never had any view but self-aggrandisement. It was therefore resolved in council to purchase their own pardon by delivering up the trader and the convict. Poor Gray had been carried off with the wounded to the hospital tent, and found to be seriously, though not mortally, hurt. He had not an enemy among the Boers; but it was proved that he had consented to serve a gun, and despite the decided step he had taken to avoid firing upon his countrymen, there was no evidence to show whether the act was the result of panic, or repentance.

He was, however, not to be condemned without a further hearing, when more evidence could be collected, and was sent to Sir John Manvers's division, with other convalescents, after the action.

Perfectly passive and resigned to his impending fate, the young deserter met with compassion and solace at the kind hands of Mr Trail, who obtained permission to lodge him in his own little dwelling. Gray was, however, ironed whenever he passed the threshold; but, in spite of his bonds, the poor lad confessed himself happier than he had been for years.

Marion and Ormsby were, as in happier times, sitting, side by side, under the willows that bent over the rushing waters of the two rivers. They were not many paces from the house, and hearing the tramp of horses' feet, hastened to learn the news brought by the express.

As they passed Mr Trail's cottage, they saw Gray walking up and down, as he was permitted to do at certain hours of the day, between two sentries.

Marion shuddered at sight of the manacled limbs of this slight, handsome, and frank-hearted looking youth. He had been the associate of Lyle! She was turning from him with a feeling of dislike, when his poor attempt to salute her with his fettered hands disarmed the sentiment and filled her heart with pity.

She passed on with her lover, and on entering the house, they learned from Mrs Daveney that the express had brought private letters from Sir Adrian to Sir John Manvers and Mr Daveney.

The latter was at this moment sent for by the General commanding the division.

Sir John Manvers's marquee stood in the centre of the "canvas city," distinguished from all similar habitations by its superior size and the greater space of ground allotted to it. The marquee was closed, two sentinels were pacing silently up and down before it; the still aspect of the domicile strongly contrasted with the life and stir of the encampment, which, as usual in hours of peace, presented an agreeable and busy scene.

The afternoon sun shone brightly on the gleaming waters of the winding river, groups of soldiers dotted its banks, some sitting, talking quietly together, some wrestling, some running, some cutting wood to replenish the cooking fires. Among these were intermingled the dusky forms of of Kafir men and women, the latter with long bundles of sticks, accurately poised on their heads, which they had brought to exchange for tobacco, or money where it could be got. Intermingled with these scattered and motley groups might be seen the tall, manly form of the young English settler, the diminutive shape of the lithe-limbed Hottentot, the swarthy Griqua, and the grave Dutch colonist, and collected in knots, or waiting apart in twos and threes, in grave communion, were the officers of the division.

I have spoken of this division as a little army; in truth, it might so be called, for on either side, parted from the encampment by a little wilderness of mimosas, were the lagers and bivouacs of the native levies, in all amounting with the regular troops to 3,000 men, who were waiting the decision of Sir Adrian Fairfax to be disbanded.

Daveney walked through the encampment, neither looking to the right nor the left, but not unobserved by the officers, who, heartily tired of the inactivity without the excitement of the field, were longing to return to quarters, and anxiously looked for news of all descriptions.

The General, Sir John Manvers, was not popular with those he commanded. Cold, abstracted, haughty, self-opinionated, he was a striking evidence of that mischievous system of *interest*, which, like a destructive insect in a noble structure, injures and often destroys the whole.

Sir John had been appointed commander of the forces in Southern Africa and temporary governor, not because he had served his country, not because his judgment, his experience, his temper, or his principles fitted him for the deep responsibility he assumed, but because he was the brother-in-law of a man who had long held sway in the House of Commons, and whose silence or vote could determine a question of vital importance to certain landed proprietors of

rank and power.

Sir John was provided for, and the bill was passed.

But a very short essay in the management of affairs served to prove that the General was not the diplomatist for the Cape colony, with its extraordinary mixture of tribes, its extended and complicated interests, its untried population, its vague lines of demarcation between the varied races occupying the pasture-grounds; and on the first substantial information of the prospect of a war, one member of the Ministry fortunately recollected that a former one had proved expensive, and that Sir Adrian Fairfax had been the man who succeeded in bringing it to a close. But Sir John Manvers could not be dismissed without a saving clause in the document that gave him his *congé*; by this clause he was offered a more agreeable and more lucrative government in a less troublesome country. With this arrangement he was perfectly satisfied.

Thus it was desirable for all parties to bring the warfare to a close; but Sir Adrian was a conscientious man, who did the duty he was paid to do, and would not hurry over proceedings involving great results.

Sir John Manvers was chafed at the delay, and angry because Sir Adrian would not take himself the office of Governor, and thus relieve the former from his duties. With a delicacy as graceful as it was politic, Sir Adrian delayed his installation as Governor till peace should be proclaimed, contenting himself with the command of the principal division of the army.

But, on hearing from Mr Daveney that Lyle was one of the principal instigators to mischief, he deeply regretted the arrangement he had made. It was, however, too late to alter his plan without compromising his character for consistency.

On looking through the list of killed appended to the humble memorial of the conquered Boers, it must be owned that a feeling of disappointment arose in the breast of the General, all humane as he was, and he could not conceal his uneasiness from his secretary, Frankfort, when he was officially informed of Lyle's whereabouts, and of the convict's intention to rally the Boers, and cause further trouble to the Government.

But Daveney is wending his way across the camp-ground to Sir John Manvers's marquee.

He held in his hand a letter, which he was requested by Sir Adrian to place in Sir John's hands, when the latter should have been duly prepared for its reception. Sir Adrian felt that the Commissioner was one of the few men in the world whom he could trust with the unthankful task.

Sir John Manvers bowed coldly on the entrance of Daveney, and pointing to an open note before him, said, in a tone of vexation, "That note is from Sir Adrian Fairfax; I confess its contents are beyond my comprehension, and I am utterly at a loss to know, sir, why my friend has thought it necessary to make you the medium of communication to me, instead of addressing me on a point which he chooses to invest with mystery."

Sir John Manvers had been accustomed to see men bend at once to his haughty, imperious manner; but this was not the case now. Daveney bowed with due deference to the General, but the mild blue eye of our good friend expressed sincere compassion for the man, as he replied, "I grieve indeed, sir, to be made the medium of communication on a subject which will cause you not only surprise, but unmitigated pain. Sir, I must beg you to be prepared for exceedingly unwelcome intelligence."

The last words were uttered less blandly than at first, for the proud General sat with his arms folded and wrath darkening his brow, as the Commissioner stood before him; but the latter was too kind at heart to be overcome by the arrogant bearing of one who he knew must suffer bitterly ere they parted, and checking the indignation incident on Sir John's arrogant bearing, he said gently, "I admit that I am in your eyes, sir, unduly honoured; but Sir Adrian Fairfax is my friend as well as yours, and he has chosen that I should impart to you personally what he dreads to write."

"Dread, sir! what do you mean? Speak out; what is there that *you* can tell me to make me shrink from hearing it?" and the stern man rose and stood up with an air of defiance and contempt, as his eyes gleamed from beneath his bent brows upon the kind countenance of the Commissioner. "Speak, sir!" he continued, "I command you."

"This communication," replied Daveney, quietly, placing Sir Adrian's letter on the table, "is private, as you perceive; this," laying a larger document before the General, "is official. In the last, Sir Adrian informs you, that a man of the name of Lee has been, with one or two others, the chief confederate of the rebel chief Vander Roey, has assisted the Boers in every way by facilitating the trade in gunpowder, and is now on his way to the Singpoo River, where he purposes establishing a settlement, and defying the laws of the colonial government—"

Here the Commissioner paused.

"Well, sir!" said Sir John; "and again I desire to know why this communication is not forwarded to me directly, instead of through you."

"Sir," replied Daveney, "I had imagined that my name was not altogether unknown to you." A sudden flush suffused even the bald forehead of the General; but he recovered himself instantly, and coldly remarked, "I had not forgotten it, but you will excuse my saying that the reminiscence is not agreeable to me, and expressing at the same time my perplexity at your referring to private matters when employed—very strangely, it seems to me—on official business you must excuse my requesting you to speak to the purpose for which you came."

"The real name of the offender," replied the Commissioner, "is communicated in the private letter; he is a convict, who was supposed to have been wrecked in the *Trafalgar*, but who was wonderfully saved with the deserter Gray,

and succeeded in reaching the Amaponda country, spent some months among Umlala's people, encouraging them in sedition, trafficking in brandy and gunpowder, and at last made his way to Vander Roey to fan the flame of rebellion among the Dutch."

Mr Daveney had summoned resolution to convey the above intelligence with perfect calmness, and as he spoke he clearly perceived the inward working of the heart he probed, despite the struggle against the display of outward suffering.

As he referred to the "private letter," Sir John Manvers re-seated himself, but forbore to take up the document, although his hand was impulsively stretched out to take it. At the mention of the wreck of the *Trafalgar*, the handsome face of the proud General was again deeply suffused—the flush passed away, leaving a livid ring round the eyes and mouth, and when the Commissioner ceased to speak, the countenance before him, with its ashy lips and stony orbs, more resembled that of a corpse than a living being.

The stern man moved his head with the rigidity of a figure worked by springs—he waved his hand, indicating a wish to be left alone, but Daveney did not stir. Hat in hand, he still stood contemplating with an air of earnest sympathy the unfortunate Sir John Manvers—the *father of Jasper Lyle*—the *convict*—the *rebel*—the *doomed traitor*!

Several minutes elapsed, mind and body seemed equally prostrated; but Sir John's senses had not forsaken him, he had still the *capacity to suffer*. His right hand lay fixed as marble on the table beside the fatal letter, the nails were blue from the stagnant blood within, his chest heaved with stifled sighs, the stony orbs grew bloodshot, the ghastly features were convulsed.

He fought manfully, desperately, against nature, and conquered. He rose, and trembling violently, Daveney was prepared to see him fall; but although he tottered, he kept his ground.

Still he could not speak. A watch ticking on the camp-table sounded like Time passing with a heavy tread; the din of the camp was but a murmur in the distance, but it seemed strangely distinct. So did the sentry's foot on the grass. How close he was; a canvas screen only separated the suffering General from the careless happy soldier. A chorus rose clear and joyous from the banks of the river, and laughter, shrill and boisterous, pierced the air.

All these accustomed sounds now jarred harshly on the Commissioner's ear, as before him stood the stern, cold, haughty man, suddenly assailed by trouble, his ride tottering in the dust. He, the centre of this busy crowd, had not a friend to whom he could turn for support or consolation. In the kind Daveney's breast he might have met with sympathy, but his was a nature which resented pity. Again he bade the Commissioner depart, and the latter, regretful and anxious, retired, leaving the unhappy man to the solitude of his marquee.

The sun was setting, the camp-ground was dotted with fires, the games were over, but the laughter and the song continued as the soldiers lounged over their evening meal. The herd-boys were driving the flocks and cattle over the heathy uplands, and Marion, Ormsby, and Mr Trail stood at the rude gate of the new-made garden, watching the Commissioner's approach from the lines.

He was so intent on what had passed between the General and himself, that he forgot to ask the usual question, "How is my darling?" but he was reminded of her by Marion telling him that her sister had fallen into a deep and quiet sleep, and that the medical attendant foretold improvement from the moisture which already bedewed her tense brow and wasted hands.

At midnight Daveney looked forth upon the hushed camp-ground. The stillness was only broken by the occasional challenge between the watchful sentinels, and but one light burnt strong and clear in the vast and tented field; it was in the General's marquee.

Before daybreak the Commissioner, accompanied by Mr Trail, and followed by May, reconnoitred the location in which he had placed his dwelling. Perfect silence reigned throughout, but still that light shone steadily.

Oh! to have lifted the canvassed screen of that pavilion, and seen therein a strong man and a proud, pacing, pacing, to and fro, to and fro, with arms lightly folded across his chest, striving to stifle the emotions which rose and fell like a heavy tide, as his thoughts dragged him back, and forced him to look upon the wasted, the irredeemable past!

And the laughing sun came forth from his gorgeous eastern throne, and poured his beams alike upon the sleeping soldier and the waking General, and it mocked the light of the poor lamp even as the things of heaven mock all things of earth!

Both the public and the private despatch from Sir Adrian Fairfax to Sir John Manvers lay open on the camp-table.

The first simply contained the official information respecting Lee; the second was as follows:—

"My dear Sir John,—

"I have requested my good friend Daveney, the present Commissioner for the Gaika tribes, to prepare you for intelligence which it gives me unmitigated pain to write. My resolution not to accept the post of Governor till my work here was done was founded on the best principles; but I regret it now for your sake, since as you will have learned, before opening this, the man Lee, named in my official despatch, 10th May, 18—, is no other than Jasper Lyle. At present his identity is known only to the Daveneys, their immediate friends, and myself, and I see no way of your avoiding personal contact or correspondence with him, unless you resolve to throw over publicly the reins of government to me. Would to heaven, my dear friend, that this man had perished among the unfortunate passengers of the *Trafalgar*, or that he had fallen in the encounter with the Dutch at the stony ridges! My chief desire now is to

hear that he has got clear into the upper districts; but unhappily he has made enemies among the people he affects to assist, and I am told they are determined to yield him up to me. In such a case, as a soldier, you know I have no alternative.

"In a word, my dear Sir John, my mind would be greatly relieved at hearing that either you or he had quitted the colony. Pardon language that appears uncourteous; my pen fails in expressing as it ought all that I feel, all that I am ready to do in any way in which I may serve you at this lamentable crisis.

"With great regard, and assuring you of my earnest regret at this unfortunate and unlooked-for result of the late action against the misguided Boers,

"I beg you to believe me most truly yours,

"Adrian Fairfax."

"To Sir John Manvers, Bart, K.C.B."

"Known only to the Daveney's, their immediate friends, and myself!" Sir John Manvers stopped from time to time in his circumscribed walk, and read and re-read these odious and degrading words frequently during the night, and as the sun poured his beams athwart the sickly lamp, he held the letter to the flame, and finally casting the blackened paper to the ground, crushed the ashes beneath his boot.

"So so—I am a gazing-stock for the Daveney's and their immediate friends,—that soft-voiced, cautious missionary, that idler Ormsby, that Frankfort, who writes such d—d laconic memoranda, that are in reality orders! I am a mark for bad men's scorn and good men's pity. *Good* men! What constitutes a good man? Is he one whom the devil has not been *permitted* to tempt?—*permitted* to tempt, mark that!

"That one fatal error of my life. Was it my misfortune or my crime that the citadel of my heart was weak, and that I could not drive out the Tempter, who had been permitted to besiege and enter it?

"I am utterly confounded—which way shall I turn?—There seems but one remedy."

He took up a pistol which lay, loaded only with powder, on the table. With this he was wont to summon his valet, who occupied a tent too distant to distinguish any other call.

Had it been loaded with ball, he might have lifted it to his head. He cast it impatiently from him; the trigger caught in his watch-chain, and the weapon went off. The valet, who stood with his master's coffee at hand, entered the marquee almost immediately.

The General instinctively turned his back upon his servant; the latter, accustomed to execute his duties without observation and without, thanks, placed the little tray, with its small silver service, on the table, and stood waiting further orders.

"You may go," said the General, in his usual voice; and the valet retired.

It is indeed strange how a mind torn for hours by conflicting emotions can in a moment, when pressed by necessity, bring itself to act in the most trifling occurrences of life; reaction once produced, the brain partially recovers its tone.

The morning light, the sound of the stirring *réveillé*, its bugle echoes answering each other from kloof to kloof, the rattle of accoutrements, and the roll of the martial drums, with their shrill accompaniments, the fifes, awoke the little world around.

Day is well represented as scattering roses in her path, for she brings much comfort to the wretched, whose wretchedness is not all of their own making. Amid the multitude who wake to the sunlight, some kind hand may be stretched out to those who suffer. Hope is ever moving among the crowd, but her mirror, remember, turns its bright face only to the repentant—the truly repentant—to those who lift up their hearts to an offended God, and pray that they may sin no more. Those who suffer remorse, and dread only the world's contempt, have no part in the bright promises of Hope; and all the freshness and the fragrance that life offers to the humbly sorrowful falls to dust and ashes before the breath of pride, which trembles before man, but seeks to defy the very laws divine.

Yes; Sir John Manvers repented him truly of his former sin, not because he feared God, but because he dreaded man's scorn and pity.

Reader, do we not see this day by day?

Sir John Manvers's destruction of Sir Adrian Fairfax's letter was perfectly characteristic of the man. It was a written record against him, therefore it should perish; and could he have seen all those who were initiated in his secret perish likewise, he would have gone forth to the world apparently unmoved, or with satisfaction so predominant as to smother all remorseful sentiments.

Still they did not know all.

The real secret lay dormant in a little dark nook in one of the remotest corners of Cornwall, and was inscribed in letters, now somewhat browned by time, in a huge old volume, a parish register, kept as securely as if the clergyman's whole welfare depended on the safety of its contents, in a dim oak-wainscoted Vestry-room of a dilapidated church.

In a leaf of that register might be read these words, among the Marriages solemnised in the parish of G—, county of Cornwall.

“John Lyle and Mary L—, residing at G—.

“In the presence of us, etc, etc.”

By this time, dear reader, you will have given up all hopes of learning the early part of Sir John Manvers's history from himself. He was not the man to indite a record of his sin, or “folly,” as he would probably have termed it, even to his friend Sir Adrian Fairfax. I shall therefore relate as succinctly as possible those events connected with his opening career which influenced him through life, and finally brought him to the strait in which he stands so miserably before you.

His first prospects were uncheering. His father held a small curacy in Devonshire, and the circumstance of this poor curate marrying the daughter of a baronet, in whose household he held the appointment of chaplain, instead of leading to prosperous results, was the means of impeding his progress in the Church. The union was cursed with the deep and undying resentment of the lady's father, and the poor curate struggled on till the grave gave him that rest which earth had denied the living.

The wife he had chosen was not worthy of him. She had married him from pique, and when he felt the world's frowns most keenly, she told him so. But she did not often remind him of the wrong she had “done herself.” Cold, sullen, impatient of misfortune, and angry with him whose fault had been in loving her too well, she nursed her wrath in silence. But it was stamped upon her haughty brow, her dilated nostril, her curled lip. She lived upon it! She looked upon the whole world as her enemy; but the world did not think her worth quarrelling with—some called her “poor Mrs Lyle.”

“Poor Mrs Lyle! Who made me so?” she would say; and then, because her Christian husband met her scorn without retort, she would utter some bitter word, indicative of contempt, and relapse again into gloom.

But the iron entered into *his* soul. He died, leaving her with a son, who had little knowledge of his father, save that his mother spoke of him as the author of all her misfortunes.

The child did not understand this. All he could recollect of his father was the good man's deathbed—the thin hands held out to wife and child—and pale lips parting, and blessing them that had mocked him; for the boy had been taught to laugh his father to scorn.

An elder brother allowed Mrs Lyle a small annuity. She accepted it, grumbling, because it was scanty; but the baronetcy was not rich, and the brother did more for the sister than she deserved, for she had always been ungracious.

Her son, although he resembled her, was not happy in her society; he was glad when he went to school, and he found companions there who drew out his better qualities; at sixteen his uncle desired that he should be sent as a private pupil to a clergyman; at seventeen he lost his mother; and at twenty, his uncle being also dead, he found himself without a profession, and with two thousand pounds, a remnant of his mother's fortune, for patrimony.

One being in the world loved this proud and gloomy boy—she was the daughter of the Cornish clergyman whose pupil he had been. She was not beautiful, but there was a graceful gaiety about her which relieved him from himself. The principles of this poor motherless creature were not what her father imagined them to be; indeed, he was too learned to have much knowledge of human nature; but when he discovered the result of Lyle's intimacy with his daughter, the old man's grief and terror were overwhelming.

The sight of those white hairs bent to the dust with shame and sorrow, was more than Lyle could bear—he, who had never known the strength of a parent's love, was overcome. He married his victim—married her on her deathbed: for, five hours afterwards he was a widower, and the father of a son—the convict, Jasper Lyle.

The poor old clergyman wrote the record himself in the parish register, and died the day after. By one of those fatalities which for a time are permitted, to arrest the course of truth's clear stream, the medical attendant and the nurse, who were the only people present at this melancholy bridal, were laid together in the narrow churchyard of the remote village, and the poor boy was committed to the care of a woman, who, so long as she was regularly paid, was content to let him share her scanty living with her own children. This woman believed the boy to be young Lyle's natural son, for her husband was a new-comer in the village, and neither of them could read, nor had they any acquaintances there. After a while they left it, and carried young Jasper to London. The stipend paid for him was unexpectedly raised to what was to them a considerable annuity.

The baronetcy of Manvers, for want of male heirs, passed to the female line, and, at the age of five-and-twenty, John Lyle found himself, by an unlooked-for concurrence of circumstances, Sir John Manvers, with but a slender income for his position.

Interest, however, got him a commission, though he was beyond the regulated age—interest placed him on the staff of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and he, whose destinies had once appeared of no account, was now the admired favourite of a showy court, for such might then be termed the official residence of the Duke of L—, in Dublin. His tall, aristocratic form, his grave beauty, his proud reserve, attracted the attention of the elegant and witty Duchess of L—, and her admiration stamped him with a *prestige* surprising even to himself.

His past love! what was it now to him?—a dream-one, however, to which he looked back with uneasiness, for was there not a living witness of this “fantasy?” Every day, every hour, deepened the gulf between him and the dark paths of his young life. He had never made a friend. No one stood at hand to whom he might unburden his soul, and

each succeeding week found him placed more irrevocably in a false position. He was looked upon as a rising man, poor in patrimony, but sure to force his way to better things.

While he was halting between two opinions, a familiar face suddenly carried him back to the old parsonage, and its dim and silent groves.

Although we may not have been intimate with an early associate, our hearts are strangely stirred at sight of one with whom we have been in communion under circumstances different or distant from those in which we again meet.

Something of pleasure lit up Sir John's intelligent eye as he recognised the open countenance of Sir Adrian Fairfax, who was younger than himself, and whom he had known during the last few months of his residence at the vicarage; they were the first months of love—months in which life had been presented to him in its happiest phase.

But while the proud mind was debating which ought to be the first to speak, a vision stood between the two which riveted the gaze of both, and turned the current of young Manvers's thoughts.

It was the Lady Amabel, who in all the purity of beautiful and innocent sixteen, suddenly appeared—the lily of the dazzling parterre. She leaned on the arm of the Duke of L—, and moved up the room to the dais, on which the Duchess was seated with the handsome and favourite aide-de-camp.

But love is ever at cross purposes. The heart of this gentle being stirred not, the eye was not illumined, as the young and handsome baronet bent over her. She smiled when Sir Adrian came to greet her; but he, at whose approach she blushed and trembled like a rose at morning prime, was Daveney, then a young ensign, without a prospect in the world save that to which blind fortune might lead him.

But the reader has seen that Daveney thought not of his gentle cousin. Both were much together in the early part of that brilliant Dublin season: but the young soldier changed his quarters—some said he withdrew purposely from the light of those eyes, that tempted him to love one whom it would be ruin to marry—some, that he was blind—some, that he was heartless; no matter—they were sundered.

Meanwhile Sir John's heart was chilled towards one in whom he might have found a friend; and when some months afterwards he saw that Lady Amabel suffered Sir Adrian to talk to her for hours, the circumstance widened the gulf.

Later, at the age of eight-and-twenty, Manvers became associated in Ireland with the sweet and gracious being who eventually became his wife. She had wealth, connection, talent, and, above all, the most amiable disposition. The grave, austere young soldier was drawn imperceptibly towards this happy, ardent being. She shone upon him like sunlight upon snow—she was like a beam from heaven gilding the darkest recesses of a mine.

He might have told her all. Many a time he was disposed to throw himself at her feet, and disclose his early history; but her father—it was from her mother she derived the stamp of aristocracy—was a *parvenu*. Manvers dreaded, to lose this first real love, this darling of his heart and albeit she would have gone with him to the desert, he knew full well that his title and military interest, weighed heavily in his favour with the father.

He kept his secret, and married the heiress; and, in the course of time, he had almost forgot the very existence of his eldest born, when one day he received a letter from the woman Watson, informing him that his son had run away from her home; the boy, she said, must have been led astray, and she hoped to trace him. The annuity must be paid as usual. She doubted not he would be found, in some of the haunts of the metropolis, and she would inform Sir John as soon as she received tidings of the boy.

Upon this, after some hours' deliberation, Sir John Manvers wrote to Mrs Watson, and, making it a condition that she should never again address him on the subject of this miserable child, he settled an annuity of two hundred a year on this woman and her husband for the boy's maintenance, till of age, if he returned and reached the age of one-and-twenty. At the age of one-and-twenty some other steps were to be considered.

Sir John believed that the Watsons had some reason for endeavouring to overreach him, but it was not so in this instance; the child really was missing.

The man Watson would have pocketed the annuity without acting further in the matter. Mrs Watson was "used to the child," and "had a liking for him;" so she did her best to discover him, but for a long time without success. Her husband kept back part of the sum allowed, and she afterwards learned that he bribed some infamous people to keep young Jasper out of the way of his nurse, who, though without firm principles, was not bad-hearted.

Sir John soon began to hope—God forgive him!—that he should hear no more of the poor boy cast upon the troubled waters of the world. In those days there were no railways, nor electric telegraphs, nor police; sin prospered much more secretly than it does now. Even now the little church in Cornwall lies remote from populous places, for no *iron road* can penetrate through the rugged defiles that lead to it.

Oh! that men would consider the future, and calculate even the chances of the evils which may accumulate from the commission of one solitary sin.

We are inclined to pity the youth, who in the poor curate's daughter found relief after the gloomy days spent at home, and surely for him whose heart was softened at the sight of the father's anguish there were hopes of better things; but his besetting demon was pride—pride fostered by his mother. Oh mothers! do you deeply weigh your responsibilities?—do you remember that it is to your hands the virgin soil of the garden foils for culture?

And lo! see what a strait this pride brought him to at last! And is it not always so? Are we not perpetually punished by the very instruments we have ourselves employed for evil? Do we not constantly stumble at the pit we have digged

to serve our own purposes?

Pride made Sir John Manvers hesitate ere he recognised Sir Adrian Fairfax in the lighted saloons of Dublin Castle; he would have been his friend, but the opportunity was lost; and, though in after-years the incidents of their profession brought them nearer to each other, it then was too late to remedy the evil.

When a man is embarked in a bad scheme, he is at no loss for reasons, or rather excuses, for persevering in mischief; and Sir John Manvers, becoming day by day more accustomed to look on the sin he had committed as an error which could not be repaired, at last satisfied himself with the notion, that to place his son in his true position would be to entail irremediable sorrow on his household, and in nowise benefit the unfortunate Jasper.

Jasper!—what could have induced him to permit the child to be called after his grandfather, that poor, imbecile, wretched old curate?

Still, who was likely to search through an old parish register, and, in doing so, who would stop to inquire into the identity of John Lyle and his wife Mary and their son Jasper?

The very devils, we are told, “believe and tremble;” but how short-sighted are men, who only calculate on human chances!

No; there was little chance of the old yellow-leaved parish register of Tremorna ever being brought in evidence against him; and, besides, where *was* this boy—this Jasper?

Nurse Watson at length traced the child at last to some den of iniquity in the heart of London. She had a woman’s heart—it yearned to Jasper—he was a fine, manly child; and when she had relieved him of his soiled habiliments, and purified his strong young limbs with water, she was pleased with herself at having rescued this gentleman’s son from filth and vice.

She had, it is true, no fixed principles; but she had benefited by this child. She and her husband and children were living in ease and plenty on the money paid for him; and she believed that, in spite of what he had said, his father would rejoice at hearing that the lost sheep was found and in safe keeping.

She sought Sir John at his house in one of the squares; she was ungraciously received by his confidential valet, who would not give her admittance to his master. She was of a passionate and determined temper, and, enraged at the imperative tone of the saucy London menial, she told him, in plain terms, that as he would not let her see Sir John, whom she had watched into the house a few minutes before, he might carry the message himself, and tell him that “Jasper was found.”

Her voice was raised, her cheeks were crimson, her eyes flashed at the cool impertinence of Sir John’s “gentleman,” and at this juncture a lady descended the staircase and crossed the hall.

Lady Manvers, for it was she, stopped at once; and instead of retiring, as some fine ladies would have done, or ordering the angry woman from the hall, she walked quietly up to Mrs Watson, and with a look of reproof to the valet, whose temper she knew, said, “My good woman, what is the matter, and who is Jasper?”

The voice, the calm sweet face, the graceful air of the gentle questioner, disarmed the wrath of the irritated woman; but she was at a loss what to say. She stammered, looked confused; the valet’s self-satisfied mien provoked her, and, in a word, Lady Manvers was very soon made aware that her husband had a secret which it was not his intention to share with her.

Lady Manvers trembled exceedingly, but not with anger. No; after a short time she was able to question herself as to what it would be her duty to do. She led Mrs Watson into her dressing-room, and bid her wait there till sent for; but Lady Manvers asked her no questions. No; this high-minded, generous lady went at once to her husband.

She would scarcely have believed the truth from his own lips. She was so proud of him, she would as soon have dreamt of his making her his wife while another claimant to that title lived, as of his having an heir to his estate unknown to her, the mother of his beautiful boy, his darling Gerard.

Sir John was utterly startled and thrown off his guard, as his wife, in her softest accent, but with her clear honest eyes fixed on his, asked him to “trust her with the secret which the woman Watson would not tell?” Who was Jasper? Who was Mrs Watson? Surely, if there was concealment, there must be something wrong; or did dear John think she, his own Nina, did not love him as she ought to do? Oh! if he had a sorrow or anxiety, might she not share it? If the sin of an early day hung heavy on his mind, would he not let her bear the burden with him?

And a hundred other such persuasive things she said, hanging on his shoulder, with her sweet face lifted imploringly to his moody countenance.

He bade her wait till evening for his reply; but she would not. She drew from him that Jasper was his son; but, he added, she was never to ask him about the boy’s unfortunate and ruined mother.

So the father tacitly stamped the brand of illegitimacy on the brow of his first-born; and the innocent woman he now deceived thanked him for such concessions as he had made, and resolved, without asking further permission, to send for Jasper.

But when Mrs Watson reached home, he had again absconded; and of this she did not fail to inform Lady Manvers, whose gentleness had won her regard.

The idea of this unfortunate child of ten years old, her husband’s son, wandering from haunt to haunt of iniquity, was

a source of perpetual anxiety to Lady Manvers. She drove from one magistrate's house to another, trying to discover the little recreant. She dreaded compromising her husband, yet was resolved on doing her duty. She met with nothing but courtesy and kindness, but all seemed unavailing; and she was beginning to despair, when, on the eve of departing for Scotland, where Sir John's regiment was quartered, her attention was riveted by a paragraph in the newspaper, which she could not help connecting with the object of her search.

It was an extract from the minutes of a magistrate's court. A little boy, "apparently between ten and eleven years," had been brought before a magistrate, having been found among thieves and pickpockets in some disorderly meeting.

The evidence presented a sorry picture.

There stood the child in the dock.

The magistrate, a man esteemed for his benevolence, examined the little prisoner attentively ere he questioned him. At length the good man said,—“How old are you, my boy?” The child did not answer. The magistrate put the question again. No reply.

“Do you know,” said Mr M—, “how old you are?”

“No,” said the boy, his head bent down.

“Have you been brought here before?”

“No.” Here a constable intimated that this was not true.

“It seems,” said Mr M—, “that you *have* been brought here before. Why do you say no? Do you know that is a falsehood?”

“No:” still the same dogged look.

“Have you any parents?”

“No.”

“Who do you belong to?”

“No one.”

“Do you know what a lie is?”

“No.”

“Do you know that it is wrong to steal?”

“No.”

“Did you never hear of the Commandments?”

“No.”

“Do you know the name of God?”

“No.”

The kind-hearted magistrate stopped in these interrogatories, and laying down his pen, leaned forward; sorrow shaded his benevolent face as he said,—“My poor boy, what *do* you know?” (This scene is taken from a record in the *Times* newspaper of 1850.)

These were the first words of kindness which had ever been spoken to Jasper Lyle in his life, for he was the little prisoner; for though Mrs Watson had, as she expressed, “a liking for him,” she was rough-spoken to her own children, whom she always *ordered*, never *asked*, to do her bidding.

The unfortunate child lifted his face to Mr M—, and looked half-wonderingly at it. The mode of speech was evidently beyond his comprehension: he looked round at his evil associates, older by years in crime than he was, and laughed.

The magistrate had the young prisoner removed from the dock, and taken to his own house.

Lady Manvers ordered her carriage as soon as she had finished reading this paragraph. She drove, without delay, to Mrs Watson's at Lambeth, and then hastened to Mr M—'s.

She found him at home, and told her mission with her accustomed grace and tact. Mr M— rose from his chair, opened the door of his library, and led from an inner room a handsome boy, who, accustomed to resist, would have run back, and even now drew his curly locks against his large speaking eyes, and strove to shut out the sight of her who stood before him as an angel of compassion.

Mrs Watson was summoned, and as Jasper recognised her, he dropped the magistrate's hand, and went to the woman; but there was no demonstration of tenderness on the part of either, and Lady Manvers, agitated and dismayed, burst into tears.

When Sir John Manvers found that his wife had actually stood face to face with his first-born son, he felt the reality of the secret buried in the old Cornish church.

The departure for Scotland was delayed for some days. He spent many hours in his library, affecting to be engaged in business with his agent; but oh! the tortures he suffered! Now he would go to Nina, and confess all. He opened the door; a merry voice echoed from the stairs, his boy Gerard came bounding down, crying "Papa, papa." Sir John closed the door abruptly; the boy cast his whip upon the ground and sat down weeping on the mat. He had never been denied admittance before; but his father's countenance had frightened him; he dared not lift his hand to the lock, but he did not move; he sat there sobbing as if his little heart would break.

And the father sat within; he had no tears, but his youngest son's honest sobs struck to his heart.

He heard his wife come down the staircase; he heard her carry off the weeping Gerard. The child went sobbing up the stairs on its mother's shoulder, and Sir John felt that she would not intrude upon his privacy at a juncture when old associations were so seriously revived.

Ah! how could that pure-minded, high-souled woman understand or believe in his remorse?

Remorse without repentance!

Sir John Manvers easily taught his amiable wife to believe that she having succeeded in persuading him to adopt his son and provide for him, her mission was over; still Lady Manvers entreated that she might continue to interest herself in the boy, till he became accustomed to his new sphere of existence. She sought out an excellent clergyman at Clapham, who took a limited number of pupils; she candidly admitted the chief points in Jasper's story, she anticipated for the good man much trouble and discouragement, she prepared him for the worst. He tried his best with the child, but he had not strength either of mind or body to cope with young Jasper.

The boy passed from one master to another, till a resolute man was found to take charge of him as a Westminster scholar, when he battled through life in Dean's Yard, Westminster, for twelve months; headed a conspiracy against the assistant-masters, and would have been expelled, but that his "uncle," as Sir John was reputed to be, had interest enough to withdraw him privately, and finally to get him a commission.

It was Jasper Lyle's luck to be ordered at once to join his regiment in India. He opened his military career before a fortress which surrendered to the British arms. The banner planted on the battlements was a rag dripping with gore. The young ensign was mentioned honourably in general orders, and for a time the laurel wreath of fame acted as a talisman in checking evil principles; but ill weeds are hard to eradicate, and he would have been disgraced for debt; *had debt in the army been disgraceful*. Sir John found himself answerable for bills which his son had chosen to draw on his father's bankers, and an angry correspondence took place, in which the baronet threatened to leave the young man to the consequences of his folly and dishonesty.

And at every fresh revival of error, Lady Manvers pleaded for the recreant, who each time promised fair; for his connection with the upper classes of society had taught him to dread the ills of poverty.

Although he had been first made to believe that he was a distant relation of Sir John's, he soon ascertained, through Mrs Watson, the real position he held in Lady Manvers's eyes. Of his true condition he could not dream. He was specious enough to keep his ground with his father's gentle wife, and so, alternately in disgrace with the former, and in treaty with the latter as a mediator, he contrived to keep his commission and to satisfy his creditors.

An opportunity for an exchange to a regiment at the Cape occurred during the government of Sir Adrian Fairfax, and Sir John Manvers, anxious to rid himself even for a period of Jasper's presence, addressed a confidential letter to Sir Adrian, with whom of late years he had become more intimately acquainted, through the friendship existing between Lady Amabel and Lady Manvers, and introducing the reprobate to him as "the issue of an unfortunate connection," asked his Excellency's patronage.

Lyle had capital credentials as a soldier; his *domestic* principles were but lightly touched upon. He had been "rather wild," was "careless in expenditure," etc. Sir John trusted that under Sir Adrian's kind patronage he would "become steady;" in a word, the kind Sir Adrian, on reading the letters of introduction forwarded to him by Lady Amabel, on Lyle's arrival at Cape Town was more inclined to pity than condemn the young man, and accordingly wrote, as we have seen, to his wife, requesting her to receive the new-comer with hospitality.

From the period of his arrival at Newlands to his departure from the colony, the reader has watched young Lyle's career. Afterwards ruined in fortune, overcome by his evil passions, possessed, so to speak, by a devil, he abjured all allegiance to his country's laws. Branded as a swindler, he resolved on making a new road for himself in the great wilderness of life, where bad men think that the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. The details of that career need not be enlarged upon. Lyle himself related to Gray how the disciples of his evil creed treated him: they abandoned him as recklessly as he would have abandoned them.

Tried and convicted of seditious leadership at a time when other nations were shaken to their centre by the thunders of republican eloquence, he was condemned to transportation for life, and Sir John Manvers, striving to suppress the whispers of conscience, reconciled himself to the issue of events by hoping that he had "done the State some service" in substituting for this vicious heir to his title and estate the docile yet manly Gerard.

Ah! he *would* not, he dared not, look into first causes.

News came home of the loss of the *Trafalgar*; a list of survivors and of those drowned accompanied the official notification of the event. Sir John Manvers was absent from his wife when informed of the dreadful tidings. He shut

himself up for some days, and people looked at him when he emerged from his solitude, and whispers went about—"What a shock Sir John Manvers had sustained in the death of his nephew, or, as people believed him to be, his son, for whom he had formerly done so much, but who was so incorrigibly vicious."

Next Sir John took steps to ascertain, through Sir Adrian Fairfax, all the particulars of Jasper's marriage with Eleanor Daveney. He had heard of the birth of a son, and he received with breathless thankfulness of heart the tidings of poor little Francis Lyle's death.

He tried to wash his brain of these awful realities; he at times rejoiced in some of the pleasantest things that life could give—a lovely wife, with the sweetest temper and the firmest principles, graced his hearth; beautiful children made his lofty halls musical with laughter; many partings and meetings had endeared him more and more to that beloved wife, those noble-looking children. He was in the prime of life, and had won many laurels; but he was restless, eager for command, impatient of solitude, yet reserved and abstracted in society.

He could not keep away the dread remorse that haunted him. All the sophistry in the world could not veil the sin he had committed against the helpless, unoffending infant, the melancholy legacy of his ill-starred Mary. True, he had a strange facility of suppressing deadly memories by the aspirations of some new ambition; but there were times when, like our fallen parents at noon-day in the garden, he "heard the voice of God," and was "afraid."

But all the remorse, all the repentance in the world, could not compel the sea to "give up her dead;" and, if the strict performance of his duty to his family and his country could have made atonement for his early crime, God would have had compassion on the sinner. But God requires another kind of repentance, another atonement, than that existing between man and his brother. The thief on the cross was justified and pardoned at the last moment; but albeit the justification and the atonement sufficed to save, he acknowledged the justice of this world's condemnation.

There was nothing of this in all Sir John Manvers's regrets for the past. He trembled at the warning voice that pierced the worldly din surrounding him, or disturbed the repose he sought; but he did not say with David, "Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

And so it is ever with sin prosperous; there may be warnings, there may be misgivings, there may be heavy regrets for the ill we have done our neighbour; but there is not that depth of remorse which bids us cast ourselves before God for pardon and for grace to "lead a new life."

Still, long association with an amiable woman and an innocent family had softened the heart of Sir John Manvers, and he would have given worlds that he had never been tempted.

The command at the Cape of Good Hope was offered to him soon after the loss of the *Trafalgar*; his acceptance of it was requested as a favour, since every one knew it was eventually designed for Sir Adrian Fairfax, then absent in India. Change of any kind was agreeable to Sir John, who was weary of a country gentleman's life at home, and whose finances would be advantageously recruited by a measure which would lead to something better. He parted from his family with the less regret, that, on obtaining a better appointment, they were to join him.

But when Mr Daveney presented himself before this proud General, with the information that the wretched prodigal was not only alive, but would ere long be brought forth to be tried for his life as a traitor, Sir John Manvers beheld the truth in all its hideous nakedness.

"Better, oh better, had the sea engulfed him!" exclaimed the sinful father, in the solitude of his tent, "than that my hand should sign his death-warrant."

Sir John Manvers uttered these words as he heard the sentry again challenge some invader of his privacy. He re-seated himself in his easy-chair, tried to quell the anguished thoughts that surged within his breast, and turned, with apparent calmness, to his aide-de-camp, who, putting aside the canvas screen, stepped into the General's presence, and laid before him a packet of letters brought in by another express.

Chapter Twenty One.

Conclusion.

It was a bright autumn day in Kafirland. Eleanor was borne out into the garden. They laid her on a couch on the sunny side of the cottage; the lime-trees and acacias met over her head. May had shaped them into a bower; they were the remains of a grove planted on the spot by some poor colonist, who had been long since driven by the savage from his homestead. The cheek of the invalid had resumed its marble hue, the eyes shone less brightly, the fever had abated.

The morning was delicious,—it reminded one of June in England; the canaries were singing their last summer melodies, and the swallows trilled their farewell lays to Kafirland. Below the willow bank, the stream murmured with a sound that pleased the ear and refreshed the senses.

Eleanor had been told by her father that her husband had again eluded justice. By a tacit agreement, the convict's name was never referred to. All hoped alike that he would never more occupy a prominent position in the world, and the patient wife, daily praying for strength to support her in her trials, daily grew more resigned.

She longed to get away to some quiet nook, and be at rest.

She leaned on her mother's bosom—Mrs Daveney was devoted to this sad daughter now. A faint colour tinged the sufferer's wan cheek, the soft air lifted the dark braids from the temples: how tense they were! What a picture of desolation she presented—that young, intelligent, graceful, desolate being!

Mr Trail was reading, His wife working, the little Trails were watching the antics of May, who was dancing for their amusement, after making herds of clay oxen for them. Marion and Ormsby were walking up and down, talking earnestly, for both had grown more serious of late; and Mr Daveney was superintending the irrigation of his garden, when the quietude of the party was disturbed by a message summoning Mr Trail to his cottage, which, it will be remembered, was only separated by a lane from the Daveney's home.

Presently there was a clatter of arms, and the steady tread of soldiers; then the guard passed by—it soon re-appeared, bringing with them the young prisoner Gray.

Mr Trail walked by his side. The party passed close to the garden fence—Gray, though handcuffed, contrived to salute the compassionate people, who had in many ways softened the miseries of his confinement.

On the afternoon of that day, it was understood that the evidence on the court-martial was entirely against him—that his showing himself to the troops was pronounced the effect of terror and panic, and that it was proved he had lived for months among the Kafirs and Boers, trafficking in gunpowder with the former, and assisting the latter in their preparations for trekking and for war. There was little time given for the defence. The accused could only affirm on oath that he had constantly remonstrated with Lyle on the course they were both pursuing, while, on the other hand, a Dutch prisoner related Gray's reply to his fellow-convict, when the latter desired him to "do his duty."

Poor Gray also admitted that he might have made an effort to remain with Vanbloem, when the latter fell to the rear with his wife, but he also urged, that by doing so he might have involved the young Dutchman in serious trouble. In short, he had no sound ground or defence to present, and the court-martial closed, after sitting four days. The finding was approved, and the sentence ere long promulgated. The poor youth was condemned to be shot as a deserter and a rebel.

Mr Trail was with him soon after this was made known to him. He bowed his head in silent submission to the laws of his country, and requested the good missionary to come to him that evening, when he should be glad to impart his last wishes to him. "That done," said the poor youth, "I will turn my back to the things of earth, and give all my thoughts to heaven."

And, as the sun went down, Mr Trail went again to the condemned man, who was now a solitary prisoner, strongly guarded. They talked far into the night. Poor Amayeka! thou wert foremost in the thoughts of thine ill-starred young soldier-love. He gave Mr Trail some tokens of affection and kindness for the friends of his early youth, "if they still lived;" but for Amayeka, he entreated the missionary's care of her welfare, "that she might know there was a future, where the tears shall be wiped from off all faces."

No further intelligence of Lyle—or Lee, as he was denominated officially—reached the British camps. The last accounts of Sir Adrian Fairfax referred to his being deep in diplomatic business with the conquered Dutch beyond the Orange River; and, save the anticipated execution of Gray, matters remained in abeyance with Sir John Manvers's division until the two Generals should meet, to hold a parley with the Kafir chiefs and people; for, although subdued for a time, these restless savages would not "sit still"—the great array of forces scattered over the face of the land kept them in check; but though their words were "sweeter than honey in the honeycomb, and smoother than oil," there was war in their hearts.

Mr Daveney had long asserted this to Sir John Manvers, who, jealous of all interference from the Commissioner, and haughtily reserved alike in communicating or receiving opinions, especially from him, made no serious objections to the return homeward of some of his best burgher captains. Troops and colonists rested on their arms, and the usual amusements of camp life were entered into with all the avidity of excitement-loving soldiers.

Poor Gray had now but three days to live. Mr Trail could not help thinking, that if all the circumstances of the case were related to Sir Adrian Fairfax, that kind General might mitigate the sentence. The missionary had drawn the young deserter's history from him, and every word he spoke increased the good man's interest, and made him long to rescue the youth from an ignominious death.

Even the eyes of the president of the court-martial, Colonel Graham, were observed to fill with tears when the question was asked of the prisoner—

"How old are you?"

And Gray replied, "I am twenty-two to-day."

His air was so different to the reckless, daring manner of men hardened in crime, and every one felt the force of the words he uttered in his defence.

"I acknowledge my crimes," he said; "but I have been very unfortunate."

His open countenance when his eyes were raised, for shame and sorrow usually weighed them down; his slight boyish frame, attenuated by illness; his air of deep humility—humility without fear—for every question was answered unhesitatingly and honestly; the gentle way in which he met the accusations of the chief witness against him, a man who hoped to purchase his own freedom by the blood of his fellow creature; and the straightforward manner in which he related his history from the time he and Lyle had been cast ashore from the *Trafalgar*, taking more blame to himself in the matter of gunpowder traffic; than he deserved, were all adjuncts in his favour with the honourable court; but, alas! there was the damning evidence to prove the life he had lived for the last six months, and nothing to confirm his assertion that he deprecated his occupation or position.

Under present circumstances, Gray was not permitted to occupy his little chamber in the kind missionary's cottage; but Ormsby—no longer the thoughtless, selfish Ormsby—gave up his hut to the poor young prisoner, who, patient

and resigned, sat within, looking through the open door upon the distant plains of Kafirland.

He was fettered, and safely guarded by sentries, who would fain have avoided their sad duty.

Mr Trail sat beside him—the Bible he had been reading was closed upon his knee—the two were silent now —“thoughts too deep for words” filled the breasts of both. The missionary’s eyes were overflowing with a sorrow he could not repress, and the tears fell drop by drop upon his sleeve.—The deserter took no notice of this; he continued to gaze upon the plains. Between him and the great space beyond was spread the camp-ground—the troops with glittering arms—the sturdy burghers scattered in somewhat disorderly fashion—the Fingo warriors dancing their untiring dance and chanting their war-song. But he noted not this stir—his interests were no longer of earth—his eyes were lifted above those vacant green plains to those “aisles of light,” beyond which men have a vague idea that God dwells in heaven.

At the foot of the camp-ground the waters of the two rivers spread east and west; eastward the stream widened considerably, foaming and tumbling over gigantic blocks of stone; westward the current was comparatively smooth and shallow; precipitous banks, intersected with kloofs, formed the boundary on the opposite side, the cliffs overhanging the eastward being densely-wooded.

The ground above these cliffs sloped up to a long green ridge, sharply defined against the clear breezy sky of a Cape autumn day. The young prisoner’s eye swept this ridge with a purposeless look; but the sentries who watched him, following that look, were surprised to perceive several men on horseback with one in the midst, whom they soon discovered to be unarmed and bound upon the saddle he bestrode. This body of men inclined to the bank leading to the smoother waters of the river, dipped suddenly into a gorge, and did not reappear till they ascended the slight declivity at the extremity of the encampment. The horses, somewhat jaded, flagged in their pace till they came in full sight of the troops, when the party, some fifty strong, cantered to the guard-house, demanding to see the commanding officer of the troops, to whom they desired to deliver up Lee the convict.

Bound in limb, but with the dauntless spirit blazing in his eye, Jasper was led into the guard-house, and there, surrounded by his captors and the soldiers, awaited the arrival of the officer who was to receive him.

Colonel Graham was directed to dispose of the contumacious rebel for the present—no words passed between this officer and the prisoner. The elder Boer of the party delivered him to British authority, and claimed the reward, which was to be applied to kindly purposes among the sufferers by the war; and Lyle was conducted to a cell, rudely but strongly built, adjoining the guard-house. It contained a bench, a table, an iron bedstead with a straw pallet, and was but faintly lighted by a narrow slit high up in the thick stone wall. An iron ring in this wall showed that, if necessary, the prisoner could be chained to his desolate abode.

All that could be seen from this narrow chamber was the blue vault of heaven, with sometimes a bird careering freely in the clear ether.

The door swung heavily behind Jasper Lyle as he entered the cell—we must leave him there for the present. No one visited him for some hours—the chained eagle was left to beat its wings against its cage.

It was on the afternoon of this very day that an advance-guard of cavalry emerged from a glen heading the encampment, and announced that Sir Adrian Fairfax was at hand; the little knots of officers, dotted about the ground, canvassing the various reports which had lately floated about concerning the convict so unexpectedly delivered up to British authority, dispersed instantly. The bugles gave warning to fall in, and Sir Adrian, attended by his staff, and followed by a small body of troops, rode at a sharp pace into the square, where all, save Sir John Manvers, were in readiness to receive him.

It may be imagined that rumour’s busy tongue had not been still as regarded Jasper Lyle, for it began to be known that Lee was not the real name of the man who had made himself so notorious beyond the borders of the colony.

It was first ascertained that this rebel had been in South Africa before; then, some one remembered having heard of a so-called nephew, but, in reality, as it was said, a natural son of Sir John Manvers, who had given him an infinity of trouble, but who had been reported lost off the Cape of Good Hope; in short, one link after another was furnished to complete a chain on which to hang something very like the truth.

But the Daveney’s were unconscious of the curiosity and interest they excited. Eleanor as yet knew nothing of what had taken place, and Marion, although she felt acutely, was consoled by Ormsby’s generosity.

Mr Daveney parted these two young people, and led Ormsby away to Mr Trail’s cottage.

There, in the presence of the missionary, the Commissioner proposed to release the young man from his engagement with his daughter.

“You see the strait we are in,” said Daveney; “there is no shutting our eyes to the fact that my wretched son-in-law must die the death of a traitor. You must not ally yourself to the sister-in-law of a malefactor.”

“It is my Marion’s misfortune, not her fault, that she is so allied,” replied Ormsby. “I love her, and she loves me, and we will not be parted.”

Mr Daveney’s mind felt somewhat lightened of its weight of anxiety on seeing his old friend Sir Adrian Fairfax. He did not believe, for an instant, that, by any circumstances, Lyle could be absolved from punishment; but a vague hope filled his breast that the convict’s life would be spared. Stern and cold and unfeeling as Sir John Manvers had been in his communications with him, the mild-tempered Daveney experienced the deepest compassion towards the father of such a son.

But what if he had known that that son was the legitimate first-born of the baronet?

And how had Sir John received the fatal news that his ill-starred son Jasper was a fettered prisoner within a few hundred yards of his own marquee?

On the day after hearing who this Lee really was, he had sent for Colonel Graham, who stood next in command, and desired that whenever the convict should be brought into the encampment, Colonel Graham should be ready to receive him, without reference to the higher authority. He dreaded lest a panic should seize him on suddenly hearing of Jasper's unwelcome approach.

Accustomed to his cold manner, his aide-de-camp had, on the convict's arrival, placed before Sir John the document from Colonel Graham reporting the outlaw's capture.

"You may go, sir," said Sir John, on receiving this dire intelligence; and he did not lift the paper, on which he recognised the handwriting, until the canvas screen dropped between him and the young officer.

He opened it and tried to read it through; the letters swam before his eyes, they turned blood-red, they blazed like characters of fire, the paper fell to the ground, and for the first time in his life the strong man fainted away.

A very few minutes sufficed for the hasty review Sir Adrian took of the assembled forces, and profiting by Colonel Graham's offer of his marquee, he retired thither, and sent at once for Mr Daveney.

Frankfort, who, with the General, awaited the Commissioner, wrung the hand of his friend in silence, and all four entering the tent, where some refreshment had been hastily spread, Colonel Graham informed Sir Adrian of the apprehension of the rebel convict.

Frankfort was a stranger to the old colonel, who was fortunately too much occupied with matters of duty to notice the death-like hue which suddenly overspread the young man's face. At a signal from Sir Adrian, Mr Daveney drew Frankfort into the air, but he turned from the sight of the busy camp. At this moment the Commissioner's attention was attracted towards a little cavalcade of a couple of wagons drawn by mules, and attended by a mounted escort of one of the town levies: it passed the guard-house, and was directed by a soldier to the dwelling of Mr Trail.

Anon, a messenger hastened across the square, and announced the arrival of Lady Amabel Fairfax. The messenger was fortunately Ormsby, who knew by Frankfort's expression of horror and surprise, that he had learned the tidings of the day. Daveney hurried off; neither of the young men spoke. They strode on till a thicket shut the camp from their sight, and, descending a bank, cast themselves on the turf.

"Where is Eleanor?" asked Frankfort.

"Do you see those willows?" said Ormsby, pointing up the little rivulet; "the tops of them wave just below her window. She has been almost dead, but is better and more resigned, for she thinks—"

"That he is still dead?" said Frankfort; and, in the bitterness of his heart, he added, "Would to Heaven he were!" The next moment he prayed God to forgive him, and, burying his face in his hands, groaned aloud.

"She believes," replied Ormsby, "that he has again escaped."

"Lady Amabel arrived!" exclaimed Sir Adrian, in great surprise, as Mr Trail entered Colonel Graham's tent with the information.

"Arrived—impossible! have you seen her?"

"I have, sir."

"Now, then, thank Heaven," said Sir Adrian! "had I known yesterday that my wife was travelling, I should have been less able for the work I had before me. Mr Trail, it may be well to inform you that, in spite of this calm, which apparently pervades the whole of Kafirland, the Gaika warriors are assembling in the mountains, and my trusty Fingoes have warned me that they are meditating an attack on the camp. I have long had the idea that Sir John Manvers was not so prepared for mischief as myself and I hastened hither; but I have distributed my forces I hope advantageously; and although we may not keep the enemy out altogether, we may check his advance, and meet it with caution. It is time that I conferred with Sir John: it is strange that I should have received no message from him."

The three gentlemen left the marquee. Colonel Graham bent his way to the tents of his regiment; the other two directed their steps to the canvas pavilion. A military surgeon met them at the door—dismay was painted on his face.

General Manvers lay as dead upon his camp bedstead—his jaw dropped, his cheek sunken, his eyes glaring and fixed. He had been found in this state by his servant. The document relative to Lyle was crushed between his fingers.

While Sir Adrian stood beside this rigid object of despair, the eyelids quivered, a faint sigh stole from the blue parted lips, and some low words were breathed, not uttered, but Sir Adrian distinguished them.

"My son! my son!—my first-born! Save my miserable son Jasper!"

The sudden surprise of seeing Sir Adrian Fairfax caused the unfortunate man to start up; he was bewildered—looked first at one, and then at the other, of the two kind men who leaned over him. The surgeon was utterly in the dark as to the cause of this sudden seizure.

Greatly disturbed at what he saw, deeply anxious about his wife, and keenly alive to the responsibilities of his

command, Sir Adrian was anxious to withdraw, but Sir John held him firmly by the hand.

"Fairfax," said the latter, "I *must* speak with you alone."

The interview lasted but a few minutes. Dr E—, who had only retired to a tent close at hand, was speedily summoned again. "I am obliged, you see, Dr E—," said Sir Adrian, "to leave this unfortunate gentleman. I fear he will disclose to you much of a history which it will shock you to hear, but I leave him, I know, in honourable hands, and his valet is faithful. The sentries had better be removed beyond ear-shot of the marquee. You are aware that there are symptoms of a warlike nature among the Gaikas in those hills; but, come what may, you must not leave Sir John. Delirium, I have little doubt, will supervene, for he is fearfully excited, and, alas! there is no earthly comfort for him. In a word, the convict who has been brought within our lines to-day is his son."

The good surgeon stood confounded. Low moans struck on his ear—then a bitter cry; he had only time to send for the valet and a trusty sergeant before the patient was wild with delirium.

Miserable man! we must leave him; his pride is humbled to the dust—he weeps aloud, and implore his servant to intercede, to pray for his son, his first-born son.

Sir Adrian Fairfax did not seek his wife till he had made a minute inspection of the defences of the camp. He entered the guard-house. A thrill of anguish pierced his very soul at sight of the heavily-barred door of the convict's cell. All was still within.

The day was more than half spent ere the general had time to greet the Lady Amabel. Mr Trail's cottage was appropriated to her use, but the kind and gracious woman had found her way to Eleanor's little white-washed room. Still equipped in her riding-dress, she reclined on cushions spread upon the floor.

She looked like some fair lily, beaten by the storm. Her riding-hat was laid aside, and her hair, still beautiful, hung disordered about her face, which had lost in loveliness of outline, but had preserved all its grace and sweetness of expression.

She silenced her husband's tender reproof at having undertaken such a journey without his knowledge or permission. "Permission, dear love!" said she; "I did not ask for what I knew you would not grant, and it has been my great pleasure to surprise you in this beautiful desert. Besides," she added, with a grave face, "truth to tell, I hastened my journey in consequence of news gathered by the way by my trusty Klaas, the Hottentot.

"Preferring my travelling accommodation to the discomforts of the little village inn at B—, where we halted last night, thirty miles from this, I sent Klaas to the mission station, for Mr M—, who I knew would give my people milk and vegetables; but Klaas, hearing on his way that Mr M— was absent, descended towards a Kafir Kraal in the valley. You know how cautious he is—he never trusts a Kafir in time of peace, so he crawled on his hands and knees to a bush crowning a height, where he stopped to reconnoitre. He was horror-stricken, when, on looking down upon the location, he saw two murdered Englishmen lying among the stones and thorn-bushes, and, at a little distance from them, sat a council of Kafirs. He waited till it grew dusk, and then crept down to listen to their conversation. He brought me back the fearful intelligence, that all the Kafir servants in the colony are to be mustered this day, by the Gaika warriors, in the mountains.—Ah! I see," exclaimed Lady Amabel, looking from her husband to the Commissioner, "that this is no news to you. Gracious Heaven! is it possible that these fearful savages are likely to come down upon us? Oh! Adrian, Adrian! I am glad I have come."

"There spoke the true soldier's wife," said the General; "but I trust we are too well prepared, for the enemy to approach our lines; they may harass us in many ways. They have already, I understand, swept off our cattle from the hills."

But all day long the wary foe, from his mountain fastnesses, watched the proceedings in the British camp. All idea of attacking it was given up for the present, and, at the close of day, several Kafirs, graceful, gentle, dignified, and smiling, came to offer milk and corn and wood for sale.

Lady Amabel, who had never seen these wild beings before, looked from the garden at the dusky groups mingling with the soldiery, and could scarcely be persuaded that these were the people meditating a fiery onset with the burning brand and the gleaming assegai upon the camp they entered like messengers of peace.

Men and women, however, were armed with the weapons used by their race of old.

Despite this fair seeming on the part of the Gaika Kafirs, every preparation was made for their reception in hostile array. All day long scouts had been seen skimming along the ridges; much of the cattle belonging to the burgher camps had been carried off, and here and there glimmered a telegraphic fire.

No member of Mr Daveney's household retired to rest: the night was spent much as I have described one on a similar occasion at Annerley. Still there was a certain feeling of security in being surrounded by a large, well-disciplined garrison, *well prepared*.

Wearied with her journey, and attired in a loose morning robe; Lady Amabel reclined on a camp chair; Eleanor was seated on the cushions at her feet, and both had dropped into an uneasy slumber, when they were awakened by the echoes of the morning gun.

No sign of scouts upon the ridges, no smoke from dying signal-fires; all was still, calm, and peaceful in the outer world. The heavens shone serene and clear, the sun careered in brightness along the hills, and the busy camp was soon astir.

And so passed another day. Kafir men and women and children again came among the soldiery, bartering and chattering and laughing; you would, indeed, have thought they were the "pastoral and peaceful race" described by some deluded men.

The door of Gray's hut was closed that day, and none saw him but Mr Trail.

Midnight went by; the camp was hushed in deep repose, though the ear at intervals was startled by the challenge of a sentry, or the rattle of muskets, as the officers on duty went their rounds, and, fatigued with the excitement and harass of the previous hours, most of the community, except the watchful sentinels, were hushed in sleep. Even Sir John Manvers's delirium had yielded to the anodynes administered, and he lay stupified and still, watched by Dr E—and his servant.

But Eleanor, who had longed to be alone, and who was too wretched to fear for herself, sat with the Book of Consolation before her, in her little chamber. The sofa-bed was undisturbed, her light burnt low, and she had just unfastened her hair to bind it up again ere she lay down to rest, when the flame of her candle flickered in a sudden current of air. In the room were two tiny windows, scarcely two feet square, at right angles with each other. That to the east was uncurtained and was lighted by the coming dawn; she looked up at the one opposite to her; it was open, and a face filled it as a picture would fill a frame.

It was the face of her husband—and the large full eyes were fixed upon her in a fashion that riveted her own as though attracted by a rattle-snake. They had not met since that fearful night when, with throbbing heart and bleeding feet, Eleanor had rushed from her home to the sanctuary of the mission station.

Each looked in silence at the other. Only a minute passed away, there was a low growl from the hound Marmion, a foot pressed the ground below the eastern window, and the dread presence vanished.

She heard the willow boughs breaking, Ormsby's dog barked furiously, hurried footsteps again passed her window, and before she had strength to rise, Fitje with Ellen in her arms crept quietly into the room.

Voices sounded through the cottage, in the garden,—the dog's angry bark retreated up the ravine, the whole camp was roused, and the cry went along the lines—"The prisoner has escaped."

With his usual tact and presence of mind, though death stared him in the face, Jasper Lyle had contrived to conciliate the young sergeant on guard so far, that the latter did not turn a deaf ear to the man who, though he knew him to be a rebel, he believed to be brave and adventurous. Lyle asked but few questions, and these in a careless way. He ascertained that Sir John Manvers was "like to die, he was so ill;" that Sir Adrian was in command, and that the family of the Commissioner, Mr Daveney, was living in a cottage within five hundred yards of the guard-house.

Sir John Manvers ill—delirious! Had the blow told? Sir Adrian in command! He was the last man to punish by death, if it was possible to avoid such an extremity. Life might be spared, but there would be no more freedom for Jasper Lyle. Gray convicted—condemned!—how, then, could he expect favour? Something like a spasm of remorse touched his heart as he thought of the young deserter. His wife!—was she so near?

There are moments in the lives of evil men over which good angels hold their sway. Gray and Eleanor!—were they not his victims? He would fain have said a good word for one,—a strange desire arose to see the other.

He had not been an hour in his prison ere his quick eye had descried a possible means of escape.

The walls were of stone, the roof of shingles, the loop-hole a mere narrow slit high up in the wall. Lyle drew his bedstead near it, he stood up and looked out; he could see the southern plains and part of the encampment, he could hear the reliefs passing too and fro; he listened and distinguished the parole, "Albany." He rubbed his hands with glee, he examined the loop-hole, and discovered that no coping-stone supported the roof. A bar of iron from his bedstead would remove the shingle overhanging the loop.

He sat down upon the bedstead in a desponding attitude. When the sergeant entered with the afternoon meal, the prisoner was weeping.

Fortune favoured Lyle. The sun set in heavy clouds, torrents of rain began to fall, the sentry who paced below the loop-hole retired to his box in the angle of the building, the thunder roared, the lightning flashed, and the convict worked amid the din of the elements. Every now and then he listened at the door; in the pauses of the storm he could hear the sleepers in the guardroom breathing hard; he went to work again, the roof had rotted from the effects of the rainy season, it gave way, and Lyle raised his head through the aperture.

In another instant he had slid down the wall, and was on the turf.

The sentry was within a few paces of him, but the wind, coming from an opposite direction, blew the blinding rain in the soldier's face. He was wide awake, though, and, on finding something was astir not far off, uttered the usual query, "Who goes there?" The steady reply of "Friend," and the countersign "Albany," were sufficient; the sentry imagined it was some officer passing from one tent to another; the convict plunged below the bank in rear of the guardroom, which was on a line with the Daveney's cottage; and, scrambling on till he came to the group of willows, sprang into the garden, and saw before him a window. A light shone through the muslin curtain.

It readily yielded to his touch; he looked in—his pale, sorrowful-looking wife was before him.

What a contrast with the turmoils through which he had passed, with the wild uncertainty which made his bosom throb, was the sight of this grave, sad, innocent woman, alone in the stillness of dawn, with her Bible beside her!

It was so totally unlike what he had experienced since he had first known her, that he was softened, though

confounded, at the sight. He wanted words; he felt as if he could have said something kind, but did not know how.

Ah! the scorched and fiery ground of the sinful man's mind hath no resting-place for the angel's foot. The good spirit halted on the threshold; nevertheless, Jasper wore a look unusual to him, and when it had passed away, it haunted Eleanor like a vision. Her memory of it was touched with something like compassion, and it was well that it was so.

The cry was raised, "The prisoner has escaped."

The morning broke cold and chill, and the vapours hung about the hills, as the little force of Cape cavalry and its infantry supports were mustered, ere they started on the *spoor* of the convict, with orders also to reconnoitre the ground haunted by the enemy. It was May who had discovered the *spoor*.

Devoted to the Daveney's, and especially attached to Eleanor, he had built for himself a little pent-house, a *lean-to*, beneath the eastern window of her room. In this he, and Fitje, and Ellen, and Ormsby's gallant hound—May's friend and playmate—all slept at night. May was always ready to accompany the Commissioner in his rounds; he was at hand any moment during the twenty-four hours; he was as watchful as the hound. Although he had never enlightened Fitje on the subject of Eleanor's miserable connection with Lyle, he had followed her through her whole history, and a vague sense of dread for her sake hung about him as soon as he learned that her tormentor had reappeared in the shape of Lee the convict.

On the night in question, May, like a true bushman, was too much disconcerted by the commotion in the elements to sleep. He never could banish the idea, entertained by his race, that evil spirits were working mischief in the stormy air; and he had just turned round upon his mat, comforted by the streaks of daylight penetrating the shed, when his quick ear detected a foot-fall to which he was unaccustomed—

"By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes," thought May, in words not unlike the text; and, creeping from the shed, he saw a tall, dark form between him and the white wall of the cottage.

Lyle's ear, almost as keen as May's, was disturbed by the bushman's movement, stealthy as it was; the next instant the hound sprung out. The convict swung himself down the bank by the bough of one of the willows, and, lifting a stone, cast it with such sure aim at poor Marmion, that he fell lame on the spot. Still the beast managed to follow him up the ravine, and May tracked the steps from bush to bush till Marmion sank down whining piteously, and holding his bleeding limb up with an imploring look that May could not resist.

He returned to the house, informed his master of the route taken by the convict, and honour left no alternative to Mr Daveney but to report it to the commanding officer of the party of soldiery about to start in search of him.

It was the fate of Frankfort and Ormsby to be of this party; but whatever they felt on the occasion was not expressed between them. Doubtless each had the same wish—never again to behold the miserable being, who spread sorrow and dismay wherever he went.

But the advanced guard of gallant Fingoes has entered the defile; the troops proceed with cautious steps and muskets loaded, for, peradventure, many a dusky head is peering out from behind the green tufts and rocky masses that make the way so steep and toilsome.

The sun poured a flood of golden light upon a scene so fair, that it should have been peopled by beings as guileless as our first parents when tenants of Eden. It was an open tongue of land stretching from the kloof through which the troops had passed, and planted by the graceful hand of nature with those clumps of bush which give to African scenery the air of a noble park. On the one side a mountain, wooded from the base to the summit, rose majestically to the clouds, all golden-tinted with the radiance of the east; on the other rose a krantz, abrupt and rugged, the white rocks standing out in strong relief from the dark foliage of the yellow-wood trees, among which the monkeys were chattering, and swinging by their long tails from bough to bough. The foot of this grand barrier was watered by a stream clear and still, being gathered into pools between the rocks; and over the shining waters hung groups of willows, weighed down by the oblong nests of those pretty birds which most dread the snake, sure denizen of the loveliest nooks in Southern Africa.

There were cattle drinking at the stream, and these were unattended by their guards, as usual. It was this circumstance which made the Hottentot soldiers in advance halt, and keenly examine the locality.

A slight elevation concealed part of this little prairie from the soldiers, who, with May and three or four Fingoes, plunged into some intervening bush to reconnoitre. Those in rear dropped behind the embowered rocks, and kept strict silence till ordered by the commanding officer, Frankfort, to advance upon the enemy, who was soon discovered.

Half way down the slope stood a noble grove of trees; interspersed among these were several Kafir women and boys, all carrying assegais and knob-kierries, and all in a state of excitement; for, although silent, they were dancing in their strange way upon the flowery turf, and waving their weapons aloft with wild gesticulations. A few aged Kafirs contemplated the scene with manifest satisfaction, but grinned a noiseless applause; and far down were gathered some sixty or seventy Kafirs, ranged in a semicircle round a stately oak. They had been sitting in council, and rose at the very instant Frankfort's eye fell upon them.

They were, however, unconscious of being overlooked; they stood up, cast aside their karosses, and began to dance a solemn measure, which soon changed to the wildest gestures. They leaped high in the air, swung themselves round and round, brandished their spears, and presently a low hum of voices ascended the bank, and swelled into a chorus.

A great pile of sticks was gathered round this tree, and Frankfort began to believe that they were performing some heathenish rite, when a sharp, clear whistle issued from a clump of euphorbias and mimosas on the right, and a yell

from the women proclaimed that the soldiers were discovered.

It was not ground on which Kafirs would make a stand under any circumstances, and it was not their policy to fire the first shot. They began to retire slowly, as if peaceably disposed, and retreated to the krantz; but, as they went, the boys cast their knob-kierries at the oak-tree, and raised a shout of defiance to the troops, who showed themselves on the green ridge. Finally, the savages collected in a body near the pools, and, casting back a shower of assegais, disappeared with their cattle among the yellow-wood trees.

The echoes of that savage yell rang far and wide, but a dead silence ensued; the Cape cavalry galloped down the slope, and poured a volley of musketry amid the trees and cliffs; they were answered by the shrill war-cry of Kafirland, and in a few minutes they beheld the savages and their cattle on a ledge of rocks far beyond the white man's reach. The savages uttered one derisive shout, and vanished.

It was useless to attempt to follow them. The first signal of defiance was given, there was no further doubt of hostility; but the troops were left upon the lovely prairie without an enemy.

Many a gallant fellow lay bleeding on the flowery turf; Ormsby was stretched beside one of the pools, the blood poured from an assegai-wound in his side; his soft shining hair was matted with gore from another in the temple.

A horrible object presented itself to the troops as they faced about, carrying their wounded up the slope; it was the figure of a white man bound with thongs to the oak, round which the faggots had been piled, but happily not ignited. The arms were stretched out, and fastened to two wide-spreading branches of the noble tree; the feet rested on the sticks, which it had been intended should blaze beneath them, and there were the marks of heavy blows upon the fine athletic limbs; the face was distorted, the eyes glared in their sockets, and the body was transpierced by assegais.

The Kafirs, athirst for blood, afraid to attack the camps, had gone roaming about for days seeking whom they might devour. Here, in this lovely and sequestered spot, a group of Gaikas had halted with their cattle; a solitary white man suddenly appeared among them—he was alone, unarmed—miserable wretch that he was!—he was in search of freedom in the beautiful desert. They rushed upon him, seized him, and, pinioning his arms, fastened him to the tree, and sat down before him to deliberate how he should die by their ruthless hands.

Reader, he understood their language!

He heard them, and was powerless.

They were all of one opinion.—

He should be killed by slow torture!

But how?

And then they talked together, and the victim, for the first time in his life, called on God to have mercy upon him, the sinner.

And Zoonah was there—Zoonah, who, in early youth, had been fostered and kindly trained by white men, and taught who God was, and how all the beautiful and pleasant gifts of earth came from God—and Zoonah mocked him, and cried aloud—

“Is your God black or white?”

Then all was still again, and it was decided how he should die; and they took their assegais, and drew a red circle round his throat, and sat down to see the beginning of their work, sharpening their weapons, and bidding the young boys take good aim at the quivering and bleeding form with their knob-kierries. Some of the women came, and looked shyly at him at first, and so went away, and danced and returned; and it was at this period of the tragic drama that a girl caught sight of a carbine in the bush above, and shrieked her warning—

“The soldiers!—the soldiers!—and the Fingo dogs!”

They fled, but left their victim no chance of life from his fellow-men.

Jasper Lyle was quite dead when they unbound him from the oak, down the bark of which the blood streamed from his mangled limbs.

It was riven by lightning afterwards, and, till Mr Trail had it cut down, stood all white and ghastly, an unsightly memento of the convict's awful death.

The hour fixed for Gray's execution passed by—the world was already dead to him; but had Mr Trail, the kind, the thoughtful, the unselfish, forgotten him?

How clear are the heavens! how serene and still! how balmy the autumnal breeze of Kafirland.

Hark to the sullen roar of artillery close at hand! It shakes the darkened hut of the poor prisoner.

Cries of anger and defiance disturb the silence of the majestic hills; men rush by with clattering arms.

The dusky host has gathered on the mountain slopes; they hover about in clouds. Gray recognises the well-known challenge, “Izapa!” it is answered by a volley of musketry. Again the deep-mouthed guns open wide their fiery

throats, and a hearty English cheer announces that shot and shell have told upon the savage foe.

But the wild war-cry rings out shrill and strong again; it draws nearer, and is answered by the Fingoes.

Gray could see but little from the aperture of his hut. He noticed though that the Kafirs, emboldened by their superiority of numbers, came muzzle to muzzle with the infantry; they grappled with the soldiers, they snapped their reed-like assegais in two and gave back stab for stab; they gibbered, they leaped, they dropped as if dead into the bush, only to rise the next moment and wound their adversaries in the back; they came bounding down the hills in fresh bodies, among which the British artillery soon began to make havoc; but, for those that fell, numbers started from behind the rocks and shrubs, and dashed forward to the onslaught.

They stepped into the open ground. Up rose the warlike Fingoes from beneath their shields! Their spears glittered in the glowing sun; the mass extended, it spread east and west, and they advanced to the charge.

Slave and master meet in the deadly strife! How the dark eyes of each glare with vengeance and detestation! but the Fingoes not only know the warfare of their enemy, they also fight with the skill and coolness of the British. They will die rather than yield, for they feel that to surrender were worse than death.

And they do conquer, before the outlying picquets posted in the mountain glens, by the experienced orders of Sir Adrian Fairfax, emerge from their ambush to meet the retiring warriors.

It was a deadly struggle. The Kafirs, beaten back from the encampment, hoped to find safe shelter in their strongholds; but Sir Adrian's policy was as deep as their own. He, too, had had his spies scattered through the land; and albeit these specious savages had sworn to sit still—had humbled themselves like dogs, and sworn by the bones of their dead chiefs to keep faith, he knew that when they professed most they meant least; and, on being informed that Sir John Manvers's large force was scattered, and that some of the burghers had anticipated their dispersion, and were about to depart, he hurried his march, after closing his treaties with the Boers, whom he contrived also to conciliate, and made such an admirable disposition of his troops that the Kafirs were deceived completely.

The soldiers, dispersed among the kloofs, appeared to the Gaikas to be making roads and hewing wood: they little knew that, at a certain sound of the bugle, they would be up and ready at any hour of the day or night.

Hundreds of the enemy were left dead, after the action, near Sir John Manvers's camp: and, alas! many a family in England, whose best sympathies had been enlisted in favour of this "ill-used race," "driven from their land"—"a peaceful, inoffensive people, asking only grass for their cattle," mourned the loss of a gallant son or brother shot down or assegaid by these cunning and untameable beings.

And all day long, and through the dark night, the wailing cry of women mourning for their dead resounded in the mountains, and, lo! from the British camp the triumphant chorus of the Fingoes answered it.

The enemy were beaten, and councils were held, and the warriors crawled to the feet of their "white Father," and prayed to be forgiven as little children!

But melancholy experience teaches us the value of a Kafir's word!

A little pyramid marks the spot where, on the evening of that fatal day, a funeral party of British soldiers dug a grave for the comrades who had fallen in the fray.

There are other monuments around it, for a town stands now where long lines of tents dotted the green-sward, and a church is rising in the midst. Within it is a grand monument to the memory of Sir John Manvers, who died ere the body of his murdered son was brought into the encampment.

Divided in their lives, are they united in eternity?

Within the encampment there were no great signs of the struggle which had taken place on the preceding day. On the contrary, there was an unusual stillness about it, for short and conclusive as had been the battle, the heavy wings of Death had cast a dark shadow on the scene, which had its influence on all. The cottages were closed, there were no people at work in the gardens, men spoke apart and in whispers, and, though morning was in her prime, a stillness like that of night prevailed.

Presently, there came forth from the tents soldiers fully accoutred; then their officers; next Sir Adrian Fairfax and his staff. All wore the same grave aspect.

But the brilliant uniforms, the glittering arms, the waving plumes, made a dazzling array, as the troops fell in and formed three sides of a square.

Nine or ten men stepped out from the rest.

Beyond the soldiery, were the Fingo warriors, seated on the turf; and a few Kafir women and children looked from the hills upon the scene, which they could not understand, for, with arms bound, and head uncovered, there walked into the square a young man, whose whole air and aspect bespoke him anything but a malefactor—a rebel doomed to die: it was Gray!

Mr Trail was with him. The prisoner advanced with steady step, but the flush of shame overspread his face, as he felt that the gaze of hundreds was fixed upon him. He would have read sincere and sorrowful pity in that gaze, had he seen it, but his eyes were fixed upon the ground.

Anon, there swelled upon the air that solemn march for the dead that thrills to the very soul when we hear it. The

sudden burst of the drum startled the prisoner, and he looked up. He saw his coffin borne before him; he moved on mechanically to the time of the wailing music; he passed the long lines of soldiers; he did not lose his presence of mind. As he drew near Sir Adrian Fairfax, he raised his eyes for an instant, and lifting his fettered hands, bowed on them. Frankfort's heart beat with the dread of being overcome to tears; Colonel Graham brushed the drops away from his eyes, and one young soldier fainted in the ranks.

All at last was ready; the drum ceased to beat.

The prisoner's eyes were bound; it was observed that he cast one long, lingering look upon the bright and lovely scenes around him, ere this was done.

He wished to take a last look of earth!

He was told that some moments would be allowed him for prayer at the last. He pressed Mr Trail's hands within his own, and the good minister left him.

The lightest whisper might have been heard while the prisoner was absorbed in prayer. He never moved when the firing party knelt down, although their arms and accoutrements broke the silence sharply. The officer in command of this party uttered the word, "Ready!" in a voice so clear that it penetrated to the farthest in the ranks.

Did Gray hear it? None could tell.

"Present!"—he heard that, for he lifted his head and dropped his hands before him, awaiting the fiery shower of musketry.

Still, not a movement in those disciplined ranks!

"Prisoner!"

It was another voice that spoke.

The General had bid the party wait his order to fire, and, lest any fatal error should occur, had warned the men, that he should step before them to address the prisoner.—"Remember," said Sir Adrian, "if you do not strictly adhere to my orders, you will shoot me."

None but the firing party and Mr Trail were prepared for this pause in the ceremonial.

"Prisoner—"

Gray remained kneeling, but bent his head in recognition of the voice addressing him.

"The offence of which you were found guilty on the —th of — should have been punished yesterday by death; but the events of that day delayed your doom. Extenuating circumstances induced your merciful judges to reconsider your case, and finally to accept your own assertions as evidence in your favour. God is the judge of your word, whether true or false. In the name then of Him, who loves mercy better than sacrifice, I entreat you to redeem your past errors by a deep repentance. Prisoner, rise!—you are pardoned!"

Some one removed the bandage from Gray's eyes—the light dazzled them—he could see nothing; but, though faint and powerless, he knew it was in Mr Trail's kind arms that he reclined.

He heard the clattering arms of the dispersing soldiers, and the drums and fifes beating merry time in marching off the ground, but he felt utterly unable to help himself. He was lifted up—he fainted as they carried him away, and on reviving, found himself in the little room he had occupied in Mr Trail's cottage.

But it was strangely metamorphosed—a carpet covered the hitherto matted floor, snowy curtains shaded the small windows, there were books on the table, and a glass with wild flowers, and, beside the sofa on which he leaned, stood a lady tall and fair, who looked to him like some ministering angel.

It was Lady Amabel Fairfax.

Peace was proclaimed in Kafirland—peace for a time.

There were busy artificers on the camp-ground; fortifications were in progress, and traders were opening their stores. Everything gave promise of establishing a thriving town; wagons were winding down the green slopes of the western hills, and fine herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats were passing through on their way to fresh pasture-lands.

A cumbrous and old-fashioned, but comfortable, English carriage with four fine horses stood at the gate of the Daveney's cottage. Ormsby, somewhat wasted by his wounds—happily the one on the temple, was but a cut from a passing assegai—led Lady Amabel to her equipage, and Mr Daveney followed, leading Eleanor in deep mourning. Major Frankfort stood at the gate with Sir Adrian; he gave his hand to Lady Amabel—she felt it tremble.

He could not see Eleanor's face, it was closely veiled; they had never met since that fearful night at Annerley, but now she held her hand out to him. He heard her utter the word "Farewell."

Sir Adrian shook hands with him, and Lady Amabel leaned forward to say "God bless you."

But Frankfort answered not a word.

"Farewell." In after-years, in the deep solitude of midnight, on the sea, in the still noon of summer days in English

woods, where he loved to cast himself beneath the umbrageous oaks, and dream of Kafirland, that soft and sorrowful voice still whispered "Farewell."

Lady Amabel retired with her young and mourning guest to the shades of Newlands. Eleanor never accompanied her friend to the busy scenes of Government House. Her father and mother soon established themselves in a lovely spot within a day's journey of Cape Town, and here she hoped to find that seclusion and repose, which she had vainly sought before.

Marion and Ormsby were married, and embarked for England; soon afterwards, Lady Amabel and Eleanor bade them adieu, as they stepped into the boat awaiting them in the treacherous waters of Table Bay; poor Marion's cheeks were flooded with tears.

Eleanor was calm and pale, but it seemed now as though she never could weep.

Lady Amabel longed to see some change in her demeanour, but nothing seemed to move her. The evening after her sister's departure she sat so still within the embrasure of a window, that her kind friend thought she must be asleep; but no, the large mournful orbs were fixed on the darkening heavens in which the sentinel stars were mustering their radiant hosts. Her thoughts were not of earth—they were with her angel boy—her lost Francis—that link between herself and the mysterious world, of which we know nothing, save that there is no sin there, and therefore no sorrow.

The dwelling purchased and improved by the Daveney's commanded a magnificent view of the sea.

Eleanor sat in one of her mournful reveries, as was usual with her at eventide. In the daytime she resolutely employed herself—mechanically, if possible. She never sang now, but she would play whole pages of difficult music, then work in the garden; walking, or riding for miles with her father, filled up the afternoons; but the evening time was truly the dark hour with her. She loved best to be alone at this time.

So there she sat, her book dropped listlessly on her knee, and her melancholy gaze fastened on the shining waters of the moonlit ocean, that washed the rocky boundary of the grounds she had helped to fashion and to plant with orange-groves.

Her father and mother were in an adjoining room; she heard a door open, and some one, not of the household, spoke in a low voice; but she recognised it—it was May's.

She went to meet him, and give him welcome; the poor little bushman cried and laughed with joy.

And Fitje came, and Ellen, and they sat down in the doorway, and said they would stay, if they might. May was going to Cape Town, and would come back again, and be gardener and groom, and everything, if Daveney would have him.

"Going to Cape Town?"

"Yes, with Master—Master Frankfort." They were travelling by land from Algoa Bay, and had come to see the Knysna River, and May had a letter for the *Bass*. It contained an inclosure.

Eleanor retreated into the other room.

Eleanor's Note to Frankfort.

"Most generous Friend,—

"I love you too well to take undue advantage of your kindness. Return to England; there, earlier and happier impressions may be revived; and although I would not have you forget me, think only of the unfortunate Eleanor as one whose hopes are fixed on Heaven.

"Farewell."

The Trails, weary with the repeated aggressions on their property in Kafirland, came nearer the civilised districts of the Cape; they established a mission and a school within a few miles of the Knysna River. A young assistant of Mr Trail's attracted the notice of all the farmers' daughters around, but he paid no heed, did "that handsome young teacher," to the bright glances aimed at him. He seldom entered the houses of the richer settlers, except in cases of sickness, when Mr Trail was absent from home.

The Vanbloems had returned to an old family farm, which they had deserted in the hopes of bettering themselves by seeking "larger pastures;" they were wiser than their rebellious brethren, for, instead of flying beyond the boundary, they retreated to their original settlement, and contented themselves with less land but surer ground. I speak of the elder Vanbloem, with whom Frankfort and Ormsby made acquaintance in their first days of travelling.

Gray—for he was the young teacher—had resolved one day on asking Mr Trail to make some inquiries of Amayeka, albeit he dreaded the issue of such inquiry.

Poor Amayeka!—Surely the younger Vanbloem's had not deserted her; but she might have been taken from them by violence.

That day old Vanbloem came to tell Mr Trail that his son's wagon was outspanned in a valley an hour's ride from the station; he and some neighbours were going to meet him, would Mr Trail go too?

The party passed the mission station that evening; there were horsemen and wagons, quite a cavalcade—for some one from every family had gone out to welcome the new-comers, returning to the land of their forefathers.

It was dusk when Mr Trail returned home; Gray started on hearing his master's voice.

"Master"—so he called the missionary—"master, are there bad tidings?—has she survived the fury of her people?"

"Come hither, Gray," said Mr Trail; "Amayeka is here."

Meek and trembling, poor Amayeka had seated herself on the lowest step of the stoep; her head was bent low, and her cloak drawn around her.

"Amayeka," said Mr Trail, "rise, and come in."

She shook her head, and crouched lower.

"Master," whispered she, "I am ashamed—"

"Amayeka," said another voice beside her.

Mr Trail had prepared her to meet her lover.

He left them together.

Next day a group entered the chapel of the mission station; it was said there was to be a wedding—a strange wedding; the young English teacher was to be married to a Kafir girl—it was quite true.

At first the settlers in the neighbourhood turned away their heads when the young teacher and his dusky wife passed them by; but Amayeka was so humble, so industrious, so neat, what could be said against her?

Mrs Trail helped her to establish a school. To look into her room on Sabbath nights, and see her the centre of a crowd of children, would do your heart good. She is no longer young—at thirty the women of her race are old—but her voice is musical and girlish as ever; and were you to hear her and her husband leading the Evening Hymn, you would never recognise, in the grave and neatly-dressed catechist and his wife, the young unhappy pair whom I once introduced to you sitting forlorn and wretched by the riverside in Kafirland, with the eyes of the Wizard Amani glaring at them from his ambush.

Ormsby's patrimony was large; his family at first were disposed to receive his wife with hauteur—they were among that class of English owls who fancy themselves eagles, especially in their own county.

Ormsby took possession of his fine estate, and left the army, glad that he had been a soldier for many reasons; but, above all, because he had thus been given the means of finding a fair and happy-tempered wife in Kafirland. He made his sisters welcome to Ormsby Park, and they confessed, among their country friends, that she was to be "tolerated."

Frankfort's cousin, the Duchess, the former friend of Mrs Daveney, begged to be introduced to young Mrs Ormsby at a ball, and asked affectionately about her mother's welfare. The Duchess was childless, had led "the most monotonous life in the world;" she was dying to hear of Kafirland.

"Did the people there live on the white men they killed in war time? and how was it that Marion was so fair, and would Mr and Mrs Daveney ever come to England again?" etc.

"Yes; Marion expected them to spend a year with her, and, after that, they would return; for her father and mother had many interests and occupations in Southern Africa which they would not wish to give up."

"Interests and occupations!"—the Duchess yawned, and begged Mr Ormsby to find her carriage, and "was glad the ball was over; but it was marked by one pleasant fact, that of meeting Marion, the daughter of her old friend."

They shook hands cordially.

"Who on earth is the Duchess of M— shaking hands with so heartily?" said the member's wife.

"Mrs Ormsby, of Ormsby Park."

"Oh! yes; the uncle is dead, and has left young Ormsby seven thousand a year, has he not?"

"Nine, they say," replied the other speaker.

"Dear me, how fortunate!—his wife is pretty, rather; I should like to know her."

Summer was dying in all her pomp, the woods of Ormsby were arrayed in their mantles of green and gold and crimson and rich brown; the shadows from the old oaks were lengthening on the grass, when the lodge-gates were thrown open to admit the carriage which had been sent to Portsmouth to meet the voyagers from Kafirland.

A touch of the old ambitious feeling thrilled through Mrs Daveney's heart, as the elegant equipage swept along the noble aisles of horse-chestnut trees and beeches, through which the mansion, with windows illuminated by the setting sun, showed fair and stately.

But Eleanor's face was opposite, revealing its mournful history of past suffering. It had lost its look of anxiety, and something like pleasure shone in the large dark orbs as they caught sight of Marion's home, and her sister and husband, with Marmion between them, in the open doorway, waving their handkerchiefs.

Who thought that, instead of an embowered porch, rudely built and thatched with rushes, they now met beneath the stately colonnade of a noble mansion!

Oh! those precious meetings, when the sea has long divided us.

The cultivated lands of England! the fields crowded with reapers! the heavily-laden wains—women and youths and children singing along the roads, as if rejoicing in the plentiful harvest; the noble woods, stretching afar, and glowing in the mellow light of autumn!—all contributed to bring repose to Eleanor's soul. She lived a new life—she seemed to begin a new career in a new world. Here she was indeed at peace—no fearful storms, no savage war-cry, no dread of an enemy stalking in and making desolate the hearth! The space between her and the past seemed suddenly widened.

Sir Adrian and Lady Amabel were of the party; there were no strangers—neighbours there were none within five miles.

The events of former years were scarcely ever alluded to; Marion's twins were painfully like their little cousin buried in the African desert; but no one spoke of him. The children lived almost in Eleanor's room.

One evening, after she had gone upstairs to dress for dinner, these little creatures detained her till the second bell rang. Her hair was hanging over her dressing-gown, and, finding that she could not possibly be in time, she ran to Marion to say she would join the little circle at tea.

"Marion! Marion!"—but Marion had gone. Ormsby's study door was open; there was a light within! She called to him—no answer.

The children ran up to her; they threw the door wide open; two wax-lights were burning on the table, and before the fire stood Frankfort.

And for the first time for many long years Eleanor uttered a cry of joy.

She forgot that she was in her dressing-gown, that her hair hung disordered about her, that the children were half-frightened at the sight of a stranger.

Frankfort opened his arms again to her—

"Never again to part, Eleanor," said he.

"Never, never," she answered.

He strained her to his breast, and her tears of unutterable joy mingled with his kisses.

"Nurse—nurse Abbot, here is Aunty crying, and a strange gentleman kissing her. Oh! nurse, do come here."

But nurse Abbot drew the twins from the corridor into their nursery, and kept them there as long as she thought proper.

When Colonel Frankfort had been married a year or two, people who had been mystified about Mrs Lyle's widowhood forgot everything but that she was the sweetest and gentlest and most, lowly-mannered lady they had ever seen. The old air of melancholy was so habitual to her, she would have been less charming without it. The sisters were near neighbours during half the year, and for one month in their lives were united with all their South African friends; for the Daveney's paid another visit to England, and the Trails accompanied them. May and Fitje and Ellen were on the establishment; Mr Trail had brought them home as honest and rare specimens of what Christianity had done for South Africa. Gray and Amayeka—we never *can* call her Mrs Gray—were left in charge of school and pupils, and did their duty well in the good teacher's absence.

Sir Adrian Fairfax himself examined the register in the old church in Cornwall, and finding that the death of the curate's daughter preceded Sir John Manvers's second marriage, he never revealed the sad history of Sir John's earlier years.

Not long since, I saw two charming pictures of the sisters in the exhibition of the Royal Academy. They were in the characters of Day and Night. I recognised them, though they were not mentioned by name in the catalogue. Marion stood in the sunlight, with a smile on her face and the glow of summer on her azure scarf. Eleanor was seated in the shade of twilight, with the sea in the distance, and a star rising over her head and irradiating her pale and thoughtful brow.

Were her thoughts wandering over those shining depths to the wilderness where her boy lay buried far from any kindred?

I heard a deep sigh behind me as I stood contemplating these sweet portraits. I turned, and recognised in the somewhat roué-looking young man behind me Clarence Fairfax. A celebrated *danseuse* of the day hung upon his arm, but she was too much occupied with another admirer to notice his abstracted gaze.

I hope Eleanor did not meet this idol of her former fancy. I saw her five minutes after with her husband and sister. Her veil was down, and I could only hear the music of her gentle and cordial salutation. And then, as exciting intelligence from Southern Africa was filling the papers of the day, she asked, "Is there any news from Kafirland?"

The End.

[Chapter 1](#) | [Chapter 2](#) | [Chapter 3](#) | [Chapter 4](#) | [Chapter 5](#) | [Chapter 6](#) | [Chapter 7](#) | [Chapter 8](#) | [Chapter 9](#) | [Chapter 10](#) | [Chapter 11](#) | [Chapter 12](#) | [Chapter 13](#) | [Chapter 14](#) | [Chapter 15](#) | [Chapter 16](#) | [Chapter 17](#) | [Chapter 18](#) | [Chapter 19](#) | [Chapter 20](#) | [Chapter 21](#) |

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JASPER LYLE ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in

the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement

copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected

by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.