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TRAVELS AND RESEARCHES

IN

CAFFRARIA;

DESCRIBING

**THE CHARACTER, CUSTOMS, AND MORAL CONDITION
OF THE TRIBES**

INHABITING THAT PORTION OF

SOUTHERN AFRICA:

**HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL REMARKS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE
STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT IN ITS
BORDERS, THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY,
AND THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.**

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verance, are forced upon our recollection : and the soul is at once armed against every difficulty which may lie in the path of a Christian Missionary.

Although there was too much reason to fear that the shattered habitation of our friend seldom echoed the sound of family devotion, he nevertheless handed to us his Bible after breakfast, the following morning, that we might read a chapter, and commence the day with prayer. It is not ~~only~~ interesting, but deeply affecting, to find individuals thus scattered about in these desert places, upon whose minds the importance of religious duties was impressed in the days of youth. Although now immersed in worldly care, and led away by sensual pursuits, the appearance of a Christian Minister painfully reminds them of the instructions of early life : the counsels of a pious parent, and the warnings of Christian friends, are hereby forcibly brought to their remembrance. The British settlement constitutes a field, into which have been transplanted the scions of many a pious family; whose ardent prayers are, in all probability, still ascending to the courts of heaven for the temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare of those several branches. For such, therefore, the Missionary cannot but feel, and that keenly; especially when he remembers, that his own kindred are amongst the number of those whose eyes are fixed on a foreign land, with mingled sensations of pleasure, hope, and fear.

For the remainder of the journey our viaticum was again replenished with bread and meat, which, with an occasional draught of water, constituted our stock of provisions. The day was exceedingly hot; and in the depths of the forest extremely oppressive. The sky was perfectly cloudless : no rustling of the breeze was heard, nor so much as the chirping of a single bird. When we arrived at the Beeka it was quite dark; and as the ford was usually much frequented by elephants, whose paths

we were obliged to traverse, it, of course, became necessary to proceed with the utmost caution. When once the elephant or rhinoceros has formed a path to any particular spot where they are in the habit of drinking, however far their grazing excursions may lead them from it during the day, they always return to the same course at night; and it is then extremely perilous to intercept them.

While we were ascending the eastern bank, one of these huge creatures raised the most hideous shriek I ever heard; the sound vibrated in the surrounding glens for several seconds. The animal was evidently right in front of us; and, judging from his horrid note, could not be many paces distant. On hearing it our horses made a dead halt; and how to act we knew not, the night being so dark that we could scarcely see each other, much less the beast before us. Our road led up a narrow neck of land, on each side of which were deep kloofs and tremendous precipices; hence, to turn off either to the right hand or to the left was impossible with any degree of safety, and to go back we were not at all willing. After pausing, therefore, for a few minutes, we gave a hearty shout, and then proceeded, trusting for protection in Him to whom darkness and light are both as one; and of whom it is written, "He that made him, can make his sword to approach unto him." To regard such narrow escapes from imminent danger in any other light than as merciful interpositions of divine Providence would argue ingratitude of the basest kind. Having safely passed the monster whose "bones are as strong pieces of brass, and like bars of iron, and the stroke of whose tusk would instantly lay man low," we broke the silence of the desert by singing an English hymn, with which our native companions were highly delighted.

The country between the Keiskamma and the Mission village, a distance of eight or nine miles, is extremely

by far the best criterions whereby to determine points of this nature : and on consulting one of these upon this and various other subjects, he very feelingly replied, saying, “ Until enlightened by the grace of God, my prayers were made to the stones only, as are those of thousands of my countrymen at this very moment.” This affecting and forcibly carries us back as it were to a view of the ancient Britons, at the time when Thor and Woden were their gods, and when these were the objects of homage amongst our ancestors.

CHAPTER IX.

War common—Preparations for Battle—Feudal System everywhere prevalent—Boochuana Army—Shot a Rhinoceros—Voracity of the Warriors—Encampment—Providential Escape from Lions—Arrival at the Marootze Capital—Description of the Town—War Council—Numbers killed—Interview with the King—Lamentation for the Slain—Moral Condition of the People.

Every page of African history renders it abundantly evident, that misery and destruction are in all the ways of fallen man ; and that to him the way of peace is altogether unknown. As in the western, so also in the southern division of this dark continent, its numerous tribes and clans are continually feeding the vengeful flame. By predatory incursions alone, Caffraria has often been made a field of blood. Other causes indeed there are, from which strife, contention, and bloodshed have arisen ; but in nine cases out of ten, at least, the native

According to his statement the travellers on arriving at his father's residence were kindly received, and directed to unyoke their oxen in the King's cattle-fold. They remained there for some days, and all appeared to go on peaceably until they began to talk of journeying to the eastward. "Then," said he, "my father desired various things which the visitors refused to give." This, coupled with some other circumstances, not very creditable to the party, induced the old savage to determine on making himself master of all they possessed. A plot was therefore laid, and secret orders issued to his subordinates, who were required to assemble at a certain time for the purpose of executing his barbarous design. Each was instructed in the part he was to act, and to watch for an opportunity when their victims were sufficiently off their guard at a distance from their arms. This opportunity at length occurred; and with the terrific air of a savage whose sparkling eyes seemed to express the very climax of a horrid achievement, he exclaimed, "We stabbed them! we stabbed them! we stabbed them!" He then stated that if I would accompany him into his father's dominions, he would show me some of the musket-barrels belonging to the company, together with a quantity of the iron-work of their waggons, of which the wood-work was all burnt. On making inquiry subsequently, we learnt, that this ambitious youth was at enmity with his father, and anxious to wrest from him the reins of government. This circumstance fully accounted for his free developement of the whole affair; and he, in all probability, expected hereby to induce us to lend him assistance against his aged parent. How far therefore his statements were to be depended upon, is of course hard to say.

During our stay at Mashow my perambulations led me into different parts of the town; and I could not but admire the superior cleanliness, taste, and genius of the people. In their domestic economy, as well as in the

structure of their dwellings, they are greatly in advance of the more southern tribes. In one of the lower canyons, I met with an Albino, whose appearance and skeleton-like form were ghastly beyond description. Her eyes were perfectly red, and her hair of a sandy complexion, but curly like that of the natives in general. Her parents were both quite black; and the father informed me, that he had a son likewise whose colour (white) and complexion were exactly similar, excepting in the eyes. She was evidently an object of great contempt amongst all around; and so completely neglected that she was literally perishing for want of food. One of my native guides offered to take her home with him; to which the parents unhesitatingly consented, on condition that he would present them with a sheep. This was done; and the poor girl, finding that she was likely to be much better fed, evinced as little regret in leaving them, as they did in parting with her.

Early the following morning all were actively engaged in warlike preparations; and about ten o'clock, A.M., the sable troops commenced their march with the two young Chieftains and the Morolong King at their head. The latter proceeded on foot, as did the whole of his warriors, without any other provision for the journey than what might be borne in the hand. Having to travel in the same direction, I was enabled to observe all their movements; and when the whole army had come together, the scene was at once novel and imposing. Our route lay over a fine tract of country thickly studded with clumps of trees of the *acacia giraffe* species, which rendered the aspect highly picturesque.

In the left hand each warrior bore his shield and spears; and in the right, a battle-axe; which with the bow and quiver (full of poisoned arrows) constituted his panoply entire. Round his loins was worn a peculiar kind of girdle; on the head a tuft of white hair, or a plume of

ostrich feathers; and on the feet a pair of leathern sandals, which completed his costume. All being dependent upon the chase for food, no kind of game whatever made its appearance without producing a simultaneous shout upon which every one bounded across the plains with the lightness and celerity of an hart; so that the panting and closely-pursued victim was speedily brought to the ground. It was then unceremoniously quartered, and borne away on the backs of pack-oxen; a number of which were driven along by followers of the army for this purpose expressly.

We had not journeyed many hours before one of the Hottentots shot a rhinoceros, from which an abundant supply of meat for many days was expected. No sooner, however, did the huge animal drop, than a band of the hungry warriors, like so many eagles, gathered round it. Every one threw aside his mantle; and in a state of perfect nudity began butchering for himself, conceiving that he was fully entitled to every piece he might be able to cut off; consequently very few minutes elapsed before this prodigious creature was completely dissected, and nothing but bones and dung left upon the spot. Such a scramble I never before witnessed; all wrought, as if for life, until the very last bit had been carried off. The moment the slaughter commenced, large fires were kindled, and steak upon steak thrown upon them while the flesh still quivered with life. In their eagerness to secure as large a portion as possible, several received severe wounds from the spears of their fellows; but for all this, the prey obtained in the scuffle seemed to be considered a sufficient compensation.

They now prepared for encampment and a feast; their companions in advance, and the object of their expedition, were alike forgotten. The meat was all hung up in trees numbers of which were decorated with slices of no ordinary size. Some went out in search of fuel, whilst others

cut down branches, and erected small circular enclosures, which served as their lodging-places for the night. In each of these were gathered together ten, fifteen, or twenty individuals; who, after allaying the cravings of hunger, lay down to sleep, without indulging a thought beyond the moment: their darkly-shrouded figures formed the radii to a circle whose centre was the fire. And although conscious that they were surrounded by beasts of prey, to which their stores of meat would naturally form an attractive bait, no one deemed it necessary to keep watch at all; wolves howled, and the lion repeatedly roared, but all seemed to enjoy their slumbers undisturbed.

Their indifference regarding these animals is truly astonishing; and the more so as the lion often makes dreadful havoc amongst them. It was but a few weeks previously that one of the natives had been literally torn to pieces: and when we were about fording a small rivulet the following day, no less than six (two old and four young ones) rushed forth from amongst the reeds on its bank, within twenty or thirty yards of us. The creatures were apparently startled, and therefore ran off, so that no one was hurt. While on my way to a Boochuana hamlet, in company with Mr. —, four or five weeks before, divine Providence interposed, and saved us under circumstances still more remarkable. Having to cross an extensive plain, and being unable to reach our destination before night, we strayed, and got entangled amongst the trees. One of the wheels of our waggon, coming in contact with a broken stump, was completely thrown off, and down came the carriage to the ground. The extreme darkness of the night rendered all search for the linch-pin fruitless; and obliged us to contrive a substitute of wood. We had not, however, moved many paces before this broke, and off went the wheel again.

The strength, therefore, of all present was immediately put in requisition to raise the waggon a second time: but at this critical moment, the paralyzing roar of a lion assailed our ears, and a conviction that he was at no great distance put an end to all effort for some seconds. Our situation now may be more easily conceived than described: the bare recollection of it produces an involuntary shudder.

Mrs. K. and our eldest boy being both in the waggon at the time, my anxiety for a few minutes was such as I never experienced, either before or since. Being wholly unable to see the beast, it was, of course, impossible to determine from what quarter he might attack us: besides which, there was reason to fear that the poor trembling oxen would start off, as they frequently do on such occasions; and in that case the waggon must have been inevitably dashed to pieces. Hoping that the report and firing of a musket might keep him at a distance, I laid hold of one, and discharged it, as did two or three others; and while we poured forth volley after volley in rapid succession, the rest of our company were employed in putting on and fixing the wheel. The scheme had its desired effect; and, moreover, disturbed the dogs at the place to which we were going, a circumstance which was truly providential, as we had entirely lost our path, and the guide himself was scarcely able to tell us in what direction the hamlet lay. By following the sound of their barking, however, we soon and safely found our way to it; but had only just got under covert, when the voracious animal, hitherto restrained, was let loose. While unyoking our oxen, as if disappointed of his prey, he again roared in a most fearful manner; and soon afterwards coming to the very cattle-fold, thence dragged away a fine young bullock, belonging to one of the natives, and completely tore it to pieces. "The

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
 With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.
 When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,
 With its scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife ;
 And the proud man's frown, and the base man's fear ;
 And the scorner's laugh, and the sufferer's tear ;
 And malice, and meanness, and falsehood, and folly,
 Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy ;
 When the bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,
 And my soul is sick with the bondman's sigh ;—
 O, then there is freedom, and joy, and pride,
 Afar in the desert alone to ride !
 There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,
 And to bound away with an herald's speed.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
 With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side,
 Away, away, from the dwellings of men,
 By the wild deer's haunt, and the buffalo's glen ;
 By valleys remote where the oribi plays ;
 Where the gnou, the gazelle, and the hartebeest graze ;
 And the gemsbok and eland unhunted recline
 By the skirts of grey forests o'ergrown with wild vine ;
 And the elephant browses at peace in his wood ;
 And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood ;
 And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
 In the vley, where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
 With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side,
 O'er the brown karroo, where the bleating cry
 Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively ;
 Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
 In fields seldom freshen'd by moisture or rain ;
 And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste
 Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste ;
 And the vulture in circles wheels high overhead,
 Greedy to scent and to gorge on the dead ;
 And the grisly wolf and the shrieking jackall
 Howl for their prey at the evening fall ;
 And the fiend-like laugh of hyenas grim
 Fearfully startles the twilight dim.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
 With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side,