

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN A
WAGGON

IN THE

GOLD REGIONS OF AFRICA.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

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to several millions annually, as the great stride towards civilization during my time has been most satisfactory. Twenty years ago, where one trader's waggon went in, in 1880 there were fifty, which was stopped on the retrocession of the Transvaal to the Boers, when a collapse took place, and has continued through the murderous attacks and robbery of the Boers on the natives, but which, I trust, will now be put an end to by the British Government proclaiming a protectorate over all this extensive and valuable region.

CHAPTER X.

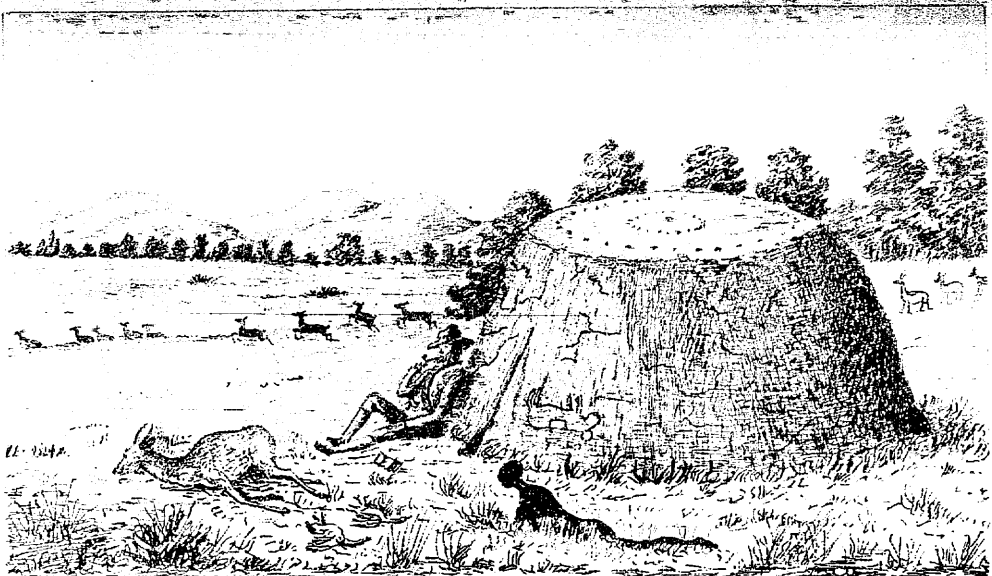
The Chief Khama's territory of the Bakalibari tribe of the Bechnana family.

From the last outspan on the Notuane, at the junction of the Limpopo, mentioned in the last chapter, the road for eight miles is close to the bank of the Limpopo river, where I had some fishing, but instead of catching any fish, I caught a young iguana, two feet long, and had great difficulty to land him. It was necessary to kill the beast to release the hook. At the bend of the river the road turns north-west, and goes on to Ba-Mongwato. There are several cattle-posts at the bend belonging to Khama's people and the traders at that station. There are some very fine trees, and also immense ant-hills, of the same kind as those at Molsodic. I measured one, twenty feet high and nearly sixty feet in circumference, made by these little white ants; my waggon looked quite small beside it.

The climate here is very peculiar, hot sun, 99° in the shade, with cold blasts of wind every four or five minutes in regular waves, reducing the heat to 70°,

which we feel very cold. This is one great cause of rheumatism and fever. To-day was almost melting with heat; I took shelter under the waggon, but had not been there three minutes when I had to get into the waggon, being so cold from the wind, which feels as if it came from a frozen region. If in a violent perspiration, fever comes on, if care is not taken to prevent a chill. The road from this place to Monogato is fifty-five miles. In the dry season there are only three places where water can be obtained.

On one of the tributaries of the Limpopo is a circular rock in the veldt, no other stones near it fifteen feet in diameter, and similar in shape to a ball cut through the centre, and placed on the ground only it belongs to the rock beneath the soil. This rock has been covered with carvings, the greater portion of which have been rubbed nearly smooth by large animals rubbing against it, giving it quite a polish. Sufficient lines are left to show it has been well cut with some sort of figures, and on one side where it curves in a little, and is out of the way of elephants, rhinoceros, and other animals, the carvings are nearly perfect. They represent paths with trees and fruit on each side; upon one is a snake crawling down with a fruit or round ball in its mouth, near it is a figure, and a little distance off another figure with wings, almost like an iguana, flying towards a man who is running away; his left foot is similar to that



ANCIENT CARVINGS ON A ROCK, NEAR A BRANCH OF THE LIMPOPO RIVER. TAKEN IN OCTOBER, 1866.

are Bartlanarme in the chalk-pits, and Lepepe, also Selene pan. Both are favourite localities for the giraffe, and here I have remained several days to hunt them, and was fortunate enough to shoot one out of five that were coming to drink. Eight miles from Bartlanarme we shot two out of seven, and at another time Mr. Hume, of Port Elizabeth, a hunter, came upon several, and shot three from the saddle, from my horse, which I lent him. One we had brought to the waggon, and left the other two for the bushmen. The flesh is very fine. It is a pity such beautiful animals should be destroyed merely for food and skins. In this part almost every variety of game is to be found. Such a vast extent of open country—where the white man is never seen beyond the transport-road, and its inhabitants bushmen only,—extending in an uninterrupted forest westward 500 miles, and the same in breadth, is no small hunting-ground to roam over for a hunter to pick his game. Twenty years ago, I may say up to 1875, game, as well as lions, wolves, and other beasts of prey, were much more numerous than at the present time. In the north and west of Khama's country up to the Zambese, along the Zouga river are the great Makarakara pans, and others; the large game such as elephants, rhinoceros, buffalo, and giraffe, were plentiful, but of late years many hunters have been for months and scarcely met with any.

The country along the Zouga river is very level. This river enters, or, I may say, empties Lake N'gami, the altitude being 2813 feet, and flows to the great pan above-named in April and May, and in June and July flows into the lake. The only outlet for the surplus water of the Zouga is the Mababe river to the Chobe, one of the main streams of the Zambese, and the water in the Mababe flows either way according to the rainfall, showing the perfect level of the country. Gigantic trees grow along these rivers and the region adjoining; baobab, measuring 108 feet in girth, the palms, mapana, and other tropical trees and plants. A great portion of this country the chief Khama claims, where there are many kraals of the Makalaka, Batletle, Barutse, Bakalihari, and others, also many of the Massara bushmen, and a few Hottentots and Korannas. This region is a portion of the Zambese basin, and the northern part is infested with the tsetse fly, the sting or bite of which is fatal to horses and cattle; but I have been told by the natives, that if calves and colts are bred in the fly-country, they are proof to the bite. We know that all the game in those districts are not affected by the bite, and that may be the reason.

The sickly season is from September to May. Many parts are open, with little bush; another part of the desert is thick bush, and very scarce of water in the dry season, and is a part of what is called thirst land