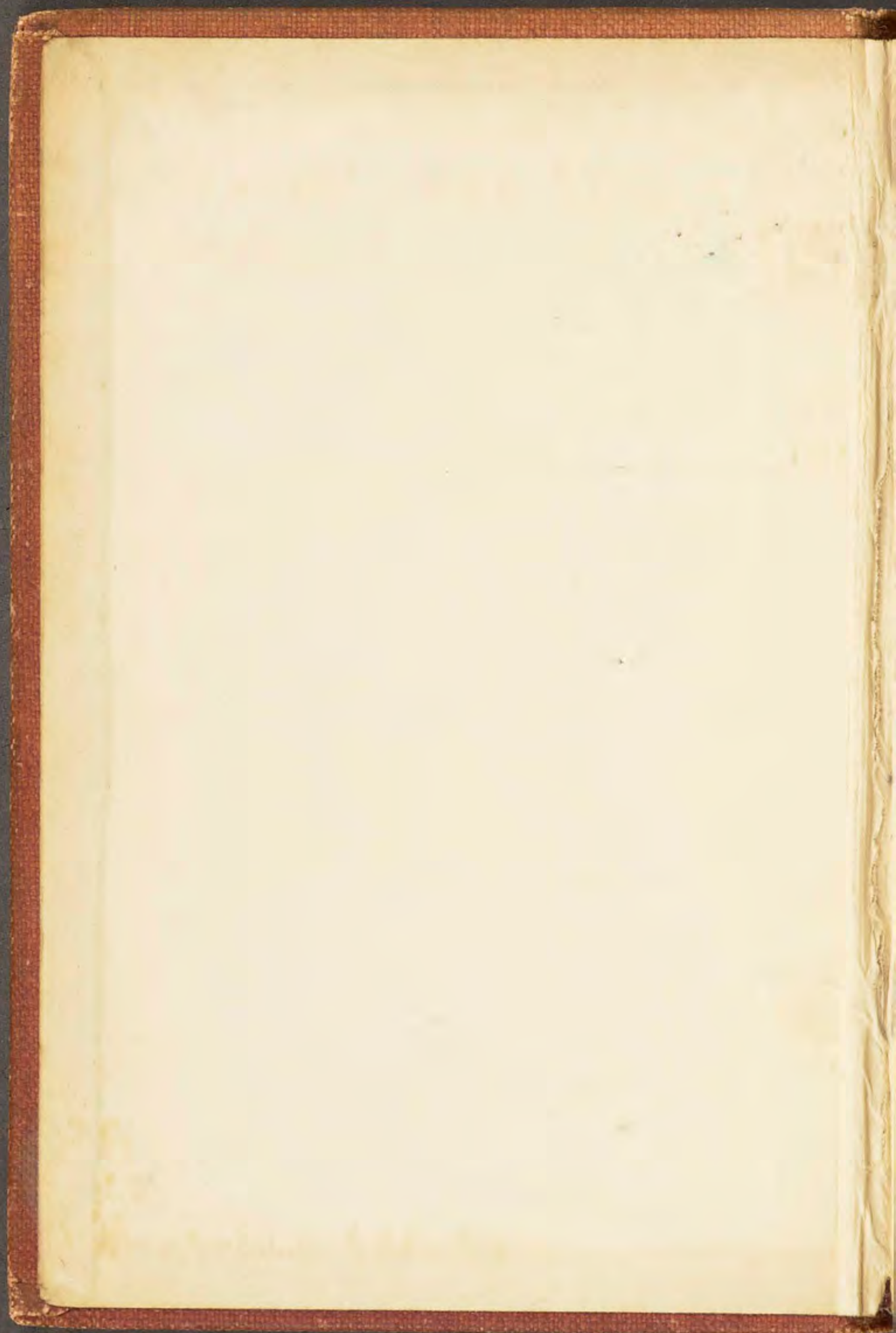
REMINISCENCES OF KIMBERLEY

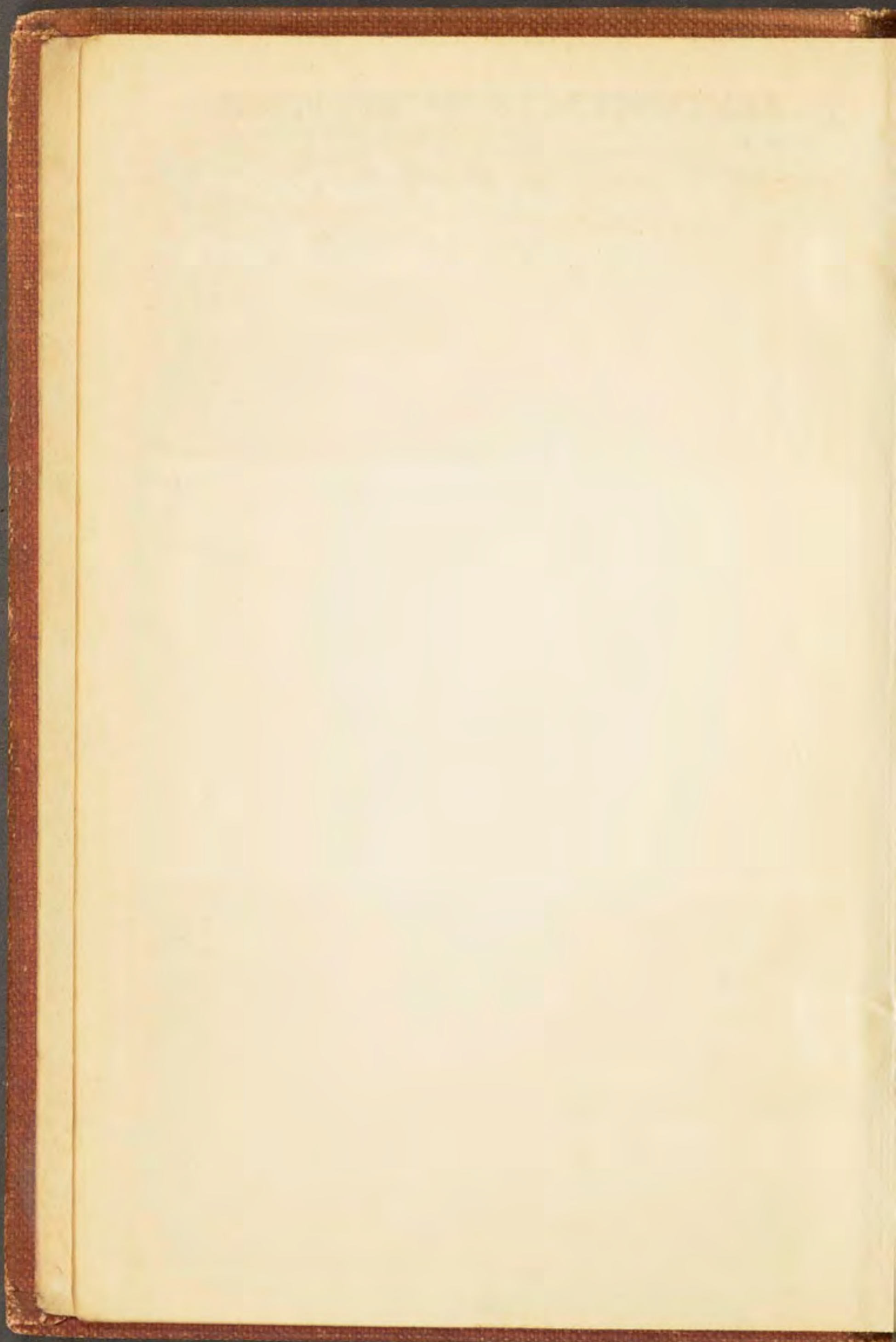
LOUIS COHEN



To S. Farrar Esq
with the author's best regards
Louis Cohen
1911

28 JAN 1941

Of this Special Edition Eighty Copies only have been printed and bound and no further copies will be issued.



REMINISCENCES OF KIMBERLEY

By the Same Author

REMINISCENCES OF JOHANNESBURG

BY

Louis Cohen

Crown 8vo :: 6s.

In preparation

London: The Century Press

356
00070887

REMINISCENCES OF KIMBERLEY

BY

LOUIS COHEN

"And the story he tells you is true"

PAGLIACCI

LONDON
BENNETT & Co.
THE CENTURY PRESS
8, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

[*All rights reserved*]

...cut, economic stringency might drive anti-empire sentiment to a point where Smuts would have trouble holding Britain's "other route" to India and halfway house at Capetown. Not even the anti-British Prime Minister Hertzog (1924-39) could, short of crippling the country's economy, find a way to carry out campaign talk about getting tough with the gold mines. During World War II, when many Afrikaners were pro-Hitler, Smuts endorsed the industry's attempts to get U.S.

CAUSES, THEIR EFFICIENCY LEVEL IS LOW

patch tattered clothes, pass idle hours, perhaps try to comprehend the life the white *baas* has made for them. Right, miners window-shop; this off-compound store stocks such items as frayed overcoats from the U.S. at $8 (fifteen days' pay) and ...

BARNEY BARNATO . . .
a cockney who came to Africa in 1873, was one of the gaudiest of the original colorful men of enterprise whose biographies tell much of the Rand's early history. Barnato ...ked his way up in diamonds at Kim- ... Rand

TO

MY SONS

BARNEY BARNATO . . .

a cockney who came to Africa in 1873, was one of the gaudiest of the original colorful men of enterprise whose biographies tell much of the Rand's early history. Barnato worked his way up in diamonds at Kimberley, and then acquired extensive Rand gold interests. A ham actor, he would close a big deal in the morning and appear on the local stage in the evening. On a trip to England in 1897, he jumped overboard and was drowned.

CECIL JOHN RHODES . . .

consumptive son of a British clergyman, had an unquenchable lust for power. He looked on diamonds as a certainty, on gold as a gamble. Though he became interested in the Rand only after others had skimmed the cream, the mining house he formed—Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa,

Ltd.—became one of the biggest. Rhodes acquired so many assorted interests that eventually he could not figure out his own worth. He plotted to take over the two Boer republics, won the Rhodesias for the empire, called imperialism "philanthropy plus 5 per cent." Since his death in 1902 there has appeared no financier big enough for his mantle—unless the new gold strike sufficiently exalts Sir Ernest Oppenheimer.

O

SONS

THE WESSEX PRESS, LTD., PORTSMOUTH

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

Start for South Africa—Cape Town—A Dignity Hop—The Journey to the Diamond Fields—Du Toit's Pan—A Ne'er-Do-Well—Diamondland—Chez Nous—The Diggers—Kopje Walloping—New Rush (Kimberley)—"The Accomplished and Scientific 'Arry"—Early days of Kimberley Mine 11

CHAPTER II

Lewis Woolf—Food Prices—Tent Burning—The Power of Music—The Turn of the Tide—The Vine Hotel—"Seggnor" Barnato—The Du Toit's Pan Dutch Sam—A Venus for Twenty-five Pounds—Red-Haired Nell . . . 31

CHAPTER III

Slippery Financiers—Cecil John Rhodes—A Comparison—Harry Walter "THE DOCTOR"—The "Scarlet Bar"—Barney Barnato—His Complex Character—I Become His Partner—"What Ho"—A Constable—"Forward the White Horse"—Barney's First Cheque—The Cradle of the Barnato Millions—Wooing of Fortune 45

CHAPTER IV

The Envious Fatherland—Ikey Sonnenberg—The Gallant Schlickmann—The Soldiers of Sedan—Dr. Matthews—A Little Bit of Hanky Panky—A Lutheran Israelite—The Grand Advance—Barney Makes a Book . . 66

CHAPTER V

Diamond Merchants—Jack Hinton—A Fight—Barney's Inspiration—Dr. Emil Holub—Barkly West—Up a Tree—A Yiddisher Jockey 78

CHAPTER VI

A Soldier of Fortune—J. B. Robinson—Sweeny Todd—A Strange Hobby—Erin Abroad—Lord Rossmore—A Peer and His Poultry 91

CHAPTER VII

PAGE

A Mail Cart Robbery—A Kimberley Magistrate—The Special Court—McNeumann—Sport — Coursing—"Extraordinary Charge"—Paddy's Proposal 103

CHAPTER VIII

A Game of Bluff—A Bargain if You Like!—An Office Removal —The Butcher Bewitched—A "Vicar"—The Fire Brigade —Gambling Hells—Captain Louis Goldschmidt . 121

CHAPTER IX

Illicit Diamond Buying—The Fouché of the Fields—Fagans with Fur Coats—The Famous Mr. Fox—Judah and Babylon—Detectives—A Brobdingnagian Diamond—The London Hotel—The Red Light 141

CHAPTER X

A Trio of Thieves—The Brilliant Mr. Benjamin—Some Villains of the Veldt—A Successful Swindle—Cockney Liz—Mr. Fox makes a call 159

CHAPTER XI

The Blacklock Case—O Rare Tom Lynch—De Profundis—Two Diamond Venuses—The Little White House by the Shool —Dissolution with Barney—Barney plays 'Possum . 178

CHAPTER XII

Prize Fights and Boxing—A Gentlemen's Evening—A Galloping Colonel—Kings of Diamonds—A Baby Rebellion—Alfred Aylward 200

CHAPTER XIII

Spring-heeled Jack—A German Peruvian—A Poster—Diamond Fakers—Mr. Harry Tucker, M.L.A.—Emperor of Crooks —The Land of Diamonds 225

CHAPTER XIV

Abodes of Bliss—Colonel Lanyon—Gunn of Gunn—A Claim in the Kimberley Mine—The Evil Eye . . . 250

CHAPTER XV

The Theatre Royal—On the Rampage—Tattersall's—Woolf Joel —Dr. Jim—The Opera—Journalists—Sam Height . 266

CHAPTER XVI

PAGE

All is not Gold that Glitters—New Rushes—Anthony Trollope—Times and Manners—Painting the Lily—Black and White 278

CHAPTER XVII

Inspector Percy—A Rescue—The Rocky Road—Lydenburg—Pretoria—Paul Kruger—Joubert—Pilgrim's Nest—The Gold Fields—Back to the Land 296

CHAPTER XVIII

A Descendant of Kings—Two Wise Gentlemen from Warsaw—The Polak's Paradise—Masks and Faces—A Double Event 315

CHAPTER XIX

Acting—A Playbill—The Lion and the King—A Courtesan from Courland—How are the Mighty Fallen . . 334

CHAPTER XX

'Andsome 'Arry Abrahams—Phantom Stars—Barnato as Fagan—One Touch of Nature—Little Brownie . . . 347

CHAPTER XXI

Not so black as he's painted—Love Pirates—The Boys—In the days of my youth 363

CHAPTER XXII

The History of a week—The Norfolk Patriot—Mr. and Mrs. Othello—A Son of the Soil 379

CHAPTER XXIII

The Transvaal—Waggons that pass in the night—A Drama in Dutch—Our Mutual Friend—Back to Kimberley . . 395

CHAPTER XXIV

The Roll of the Drum—Natal—Ladysmith—John Dunn—The Prince Imperial—Arrested—Ladysmith Goal . . 409

CHAPTER XXV

All's well that's ends well—The Basuto War—Carrington's Column—Tangesberg—Homeward Bound . . . 424

REMINISCENCES OF KIMBERLEY

CHAPTER I

Start for South Africa—Cape Town—A Dignity Hop—The Journey to the Diamond Fields—Du Toit's Pan—A Ne'er do Well—Diamondland—Chez Nous—The Diggers—Kopje Walloping—New Rush (Kimberley)—"The Accomplished and Scientific 'Arry"—Early Days of Kimberley Mine.

In writing these reminiscences I will attempt to describe men and things as I have seen and known them for the last thirty-five years. Thirty-five years! I feel quite startled penning these words, and think how quickly time flies, and of the many faces I shall never behold again. "And where are now Jem Roper and Jack Hall?" But often the past is pleasant to remember. My chronicles, however, will have to depend a great deal on my memory, as I have never kept a diary; nevertheless one thing is certain, and that is that what I relate will be absolutely veracious, and free from exaggeration or personal feeling. Also, there will be nothing set down likely to give a liberal-minded man a moral squint. Mrs. Grundy may occasionally grumble, but I am not writing these memoirs to reform her, and so shall always be out when the lady calls.

I take it, also, that my recollections should be of some intrinsic value, as they ought to serve as a warning to any unsophisticated individuals who, even in this year of grace, believe in Throgmorton Street as the royal road to Ali Baba's cave—to be awakened, perhaps too late, from their error by the looming in the distance of a first-class workhouse. The admiration which is felt in so many quarters for millionaires, billionaires, and self-styled magnates should have a distinct slump if my

yarns be believed; I claim that they ought to do more good than even Father Vaughan's lectures, and for this reason—his clever orations were founded purely and simply on personal opinions, while my paragraphs have solid foundations in facts. An ounce of fact is worth a ton of opinion. The stories I intend to tell will, I trust, point a moral, and adorn a tale—if only the tail of such a donkey as I have been.

I had just turned seventeen years of age, green and early days, when I made up my mind to go to South Africa. I knew no trade or profession, and had never been in a situation. My father bought me a modest wardrobe, a revolver, and a tent, paid my second-class passage to Cape Town, and gave me twenty-five golden sovereigns, and a lot more blessings. Thus, in company with a cousin named Lewis Woolf, I embarked some time in the year 1872 on the good ship *European* (Capt. Vivian) bound for Cape Town. Among the passengers on this vessel—which ultimately had an unfortunate end—were the brothers Wilson, the late Phineas Tallerman, of the firm of Ansell, Tallerman, and Mankiewicz, his brother Harry, and Leopold Loewenthal. Mr. Leopold Loewenthal, who is yet alive—he lives somewhere on the banks of the Thames—I met frequently in my after life, sometimes with pleasure and profit, and sometimes, to tell the ugly truth, with quite the reverse. Loewenthal, who is a Scotch Jew, became a decided personality in time, and was the principal in many South African *causes célèbres* in those long-past days. The Blacklock case was one of them. He prided himself on his fistic abilities, had been a great follower of the English prize ring before and after the sixties and could give a good description of the Sayers and Heenan fight, at which he was present. That nearly made him a god in my youthful eyes, but when I saw him box a passenger on the ship, called Harrison, and nearly knock the stuffing out of his opponent, I felt certain that Scotland had another hero as well as Bruce. Now, "Low," as in after years he was called, was thoroughly Scotch. Scotch in accent, Scotch in appearance, Scotch in caution, and he could take a drop of Scotch—when he met a generous friend.

He was a native laddie of many parts—not partings—and ultimately became the bosom pal of Barney Barnato—when the latter had prospered—to the great horror of Harry Barnato, and not to my entire satisfaction. Yes, Loewenthal was very clever. Could do a little of everything—and well, too. A commercial man? Rather, and an all round sportsman—loved a horse, a fighter, and a girl. And couldn't he play cards; m'yes! He could hate, too, at times; for when the deadly quarrel between Barney and him came about I felt inclined to sit on damp clouds and sing "God save Scotland." I am digressing.

Nothing remarkable happened on the voyage. There was some disturbance between the passengers and sailors, to be sure, but after Captain Vivian had called the crew on deck, and threatened to punish them, the time of the travellers was chiefly employed in devising a series of stupid, and at times cruel, practical jokes. The principal victim was the fat steward, who got perceptibly thinner as the voyage proceeded, and I do believe he would have disappeared into space if it had lasted much longer. At last we reached Cape Town, and beheld the shores of the continent which was to be my home for so many years. Like a bird from an open cage I hopped from the ship. Woolf and I stayed at the Masonic Hotel, and for some days we enjoyed ourselves seeing the sights, such as they were, of the town, and driving in the suburbs, which were really beautiful. The city itself seemed busy enough, but such a cosmopolitan and heterogeneous population I had never beheld before. Hindoos, Hottentots, Negroes from Mozambique, "Cape Boys" from St. Helena, Half Breeds from Anywhere, Malays, Jews, Germans, Dutchman, Africanders, Americans, Europeans, jostled and pushed one another in rude but picturesque confusion as they swarmed through the streets of South Africa's most important town.

One night whilst at Cape Town I went to a dance, or what was called a "dignity hop." The scene of the festival was in a kind of loft. As I entered, the musicians, who were all smoking like chimneys, were playing

and singing a favourite Dutch song, entitled, as I learnt afterwards, "Janny met de hoopel been." The room was full of men and women of various types. Many owned Kaffir curly locks, others straight, lank hair. It was a mixed breed indeed, and yet the majority of the girls were quite good looking, as behoves young ladies who are not more particular than they ought to be.

Some were white, some nearly black, or tan, or snuff coloured. A few of the European passengers were there, and other visitors, unmistakably new arrivals from England. Nearly everybody was dancing, or attempting the art. The girls and their partners looked supremely happy and joyous as they circled round the room. Lord, how they skipped and hopped and capered and flirted and grimaced and chased and crossed and smirked and put "on side," and said things as they passed to the few spectators who were leaning against the wall admiring the vivacious lumps of joy. The musicians worked unceasingly, but without entering into the enthusiasm which prevailed among the dancers. They seemed to have been scraping all their lives, and to have become mere machines. It was decidedly primitive, and my thoughts wandered back to the Argyll Rooms, but it was very pleasant all the same. A pretty, pouting brunette, who looked engagingly unrighteous in her scarlet stockings, came sailing up to me all smiles, white muslin, scent, and red ribbons, asking, in most peculiar English, if I would dance with her. At first I said I couldn't, and then with beautiful ingenuousness, and a grin that showed a set of splendid white teeth which brightened up her dark countenance, she exclaimed: "Yer lieck (you lie), we all do it, and so must you!" and getting hold of my waist the sensuous syren dragged me into the giddy maze. At about two o'clock in the morning the gambols of these sportive lads and lasses became more pronounced, and when the band struck up "Vat you goed en trek" all restraint was abandoned, and they danced like wild things, or as if they had been bitten by a tarantula. Then they became boisterous and a trifle quarrelsome. I saw one young lady Bohemian, with the wickedest little moustache in the

world, quite charming to behold, playfully seize a bilious-looking gentleman's nose, and after pulling it as if she desired to straighten his proboscis, lift a neatly-shaped foot and sportingly administer a vigorous kick in a certain region of the gay Don Juan's back. She screamed with laughter, and so did I, but failed to find out the victim's exact opinion, for he gave no explanation beyond exclaiming : "What a shlock in the tochus."

It was at one of these "hops" I first saw Alf Abrahams (now of the wealthy firm of L. and A. Abrahams Bros., Diamond Merchants, Hatton Garden), the late Harry Walter (the "Doctor"), and Dave Harris (now Colonel Harris, and chairman of De Beers), one of the nicest fellows one could hope to meet. All the same, I had a dreadful quarrel with him a few days after a "hop" at Winburg, but that would not have mattered a great deal; the serious part of the situation was that I had spent the remaining portion of those golden sovereigns upon which my father had lavished so many blessings, and from which I had extracted so much fun. I felt inclined, like Whittington, to turn back, but the bells were ringing in my ears. It is certainly a fact that I would not have been in a position to proceed to the Diamond Fields if my partner Woolf had not been better endowed with this world's goods than I—and good enough to divide between us all that remained of his gallant £90.

There were three modes of conveyance to Tom Tiddler's ground—the most expensive being by the post cart, the next in a huge coach carrying fourteen or fifteen passengers inside, and drawn by teams of mules, and lastly the exceedingly slow, but more comfortable, ox-waggon. We decided on the mule train, and I shall never forget the uneasiness and misery of the experience. Travelling day and night, with very short intervals for rest and refreshment, the journey became a horror, especially towards the early morning. Packed like sardines as we were, it was impossible to move our legs from one position to another, and they got so cramped and painful that one felt, many hours at a time, in absolute torture. For the women in the coach it was

much worse in every way. And there were three or four very nice ladies with us. One pretty Americenne, from Chicago, travelling with her husband, who had evidently seen better days, suffered poignantly. It would be impossible to describe in these pages what a shock such a journey as this must have been to a tender and modest woman. And then the discomfort of the whole thing made the passengers quarrelsome, and there were incessant wranglings going on, which increased as we sped on our pilgrimage. One day was very much like another. It was perhaps pleasantly exciting when we were crossing a river, and confoundedly less so when it rained in torrents, and thundered and lightened as it only can in South Africa. The flies, too, were not cheerful companions, and I would rather travel to Monte Carlo any time.

Sometimes, when the mules got tired and the driver wanted to give them a "blow," or when they were negotiating a particularly stiff hill, the passengers would venture out and walk, and often get wet through. I remember indulging in some of this pedestrian exercise, and being, from information gratuitously imparted by a travelling wag, very much on the look out for big game, espied what I considered excellent sport for my revolver, with which, by-the-by, I was anxious to be on firing terms. What I saw, I know now, were goats; but then they seemed quite a strange sort of animal, and as I had never shot anything in my life, had two pots for luck. I really do not know if I hurt any of them; indeed, am inclined to think not, for they all scampered off, and to my grave concern, too, prompted by the above-mentioned wag, so did the team of mules. I had a very heavy bag of cartridges in one hand, my revolver in the other, and thus laden pursued the coach for three or four miles, but the vehicle did not stop until I was utterly exhausted. No doubt I ought to have consoled myself with the thought that I had contributed somewhat to the gaiety of the up-to-then-depressed voyagers, but when an hour or so afterwards, as the driver pulled up at the next changing place, a couple of bearded Dutchmen rode up and swore two of their precious goats were

shot, my gratitude to the wag was expressed in rather forcible terms, which only added to the general hilarity, and to my own further annoyance. However, I had to pay the Boers, since which time I have left the field of big game hunting to that mighty sportsman, Mr. Selous, and would not go across the road if I thought a brace of lions were there.

Everything has got an ending, even the opening tiresome paragraphs of these reminiscences, and so, one afternoon, I caught, in the distance, my first sight of the Diamond Fields. The people gazed with the same interest and excitement as travellers will when they see the outlines of an unknown land. Many a heart beat faster as the Diamond City of the Plains became less and less indistinct, and those whose everything depended on the success of their expedition watched this ghost-like series of tents grow whiter and whiter as they outlined clearer and clearer. It was an anxious time for those who had imagination and ambition, and hardly a word was said until a rude gentleman at the back ejaculated, "Well, as I hope to get the use of my blooming legs once more, if it don't look like Derby day without the people." Nearer and nearer we came. Canvas shelters were everywhere, and as the coach got into one of the roads leading directly to Du Toit's Pan, the only wooden buildings seen were made of packing cases, though dismal-looking iron shanties intermingled with mud-heaps, wells and washing apparatus were on view by the score. However, on we went; the tents got more numerous, less lilywhite, and unwashed diggers popped their heads out to see us pass. Naked Kaffirs and dogs appeared in plenty, and acclaimed the mules outside and the passengers inside, as if the precious lot was Lord Sanger's circus before the flood.

The driver, livening up the tired mules, showing his gleaming teeth, and looking supremely proud and happy, drove us up the Main Street of Du Toit's Pan in what he considered fine style. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the place was full of people. Niggers and negresses of different tribes were walking about in the roadway, diggers in woollen shirts and

sombrero hats standing without the canteens or drinking inside, and coolies, arrayed in white turbans and linen suits,ringing bells outside the eating houses. There were numerous medium-sized timbered buildings, and a few large ones, also, although it was the principal thoroughfare, many small bell and wood-framed canvas tents lined either side of the Regent Street of Du Toit's Pan. Talking to the diggers could be seen quite a number of men—mostly young—dressed in semi-European style. A few, a very few, appeared well bred, but most of them postured like pilfering tinkers who had got their best clothes out of pawn. They were, as a rule, smoking large cigars. On driving up the Main Street I had noticed the self-same species of gentlemen standing in front of their framed canvas habitations, and when I read on the signs displayed outside these tented offices that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had recovered from their long celestial sleep, and gone in for earthly diamond buying, "at the very highest prices for the European market," I felt a real glow of hope as I inwardly ejaculated, "Thank the Lord I'm with my own people—and it's *not* Jerusalem." But they certainly looked as if they had come from the Sublime East—of London.

A group composed of mixed nationalities gathered curiously round the coach to watch the new chums alight. Two or three of the passengers were effusively received by friends who expected them, but I felt like Robinson Crusoe on his island, and quite as lonely. You will always feel that when you drop into a strange town and see crowds of people, none of whom nod or say "How d'ye do." It is the saddest loneliness. I looked ruefully around as many of my fellow travellers disappeared with their luggage inside the large wooden hotel (kept by a man called Martin), before which the coach had stopped. We, myself and Woolf, had little luggage, as the coach regulations admitted of only a limited weight. The remainder was to come on by ox waggon, so we took off the mule train what belonged to us, and put it on the hotel verandah. Knowing that hotels are very expensive on the Diamond Fields, and

wishing to husband the few pounds we possessed, I determined, in my ignorance, to set our tent up at once, more especially as it had proved a rather costly job bringing it on the coach. So we got the tent from the side of the mule waggon, and hiring a Kaffir, proceeded to find a site. We had pegs and a hammer, and soon selecting a bit of ground a little distance in a by-street to the right of the main road, attempted the rigging up of the shelter. Now, I had never slept under canvas, and as to pegging a tent I was almost helpless, and my partner was as great a novice, and certainly much less energetic. The Kaffir was useful and unlearned, and after we had struggled for three-quarters of an hour, the weather became very threatening; suddenly it commenced to blow, and a dust storm sprang up, the like of which you have to experience to appreciate. It was impossible to see half a yard in front of one's nose, and in a few minutes I felt almost blinded. Then it blew a hurricane such as one could not imagine, except at sea, swept me off my feet, and when I got up Woolf and the Kaffir had disappeared—and so had the tent. After some considerable time, when the dust storm had apparently cleared, with great difficulty I found my way back to Martin's Hotel, which Woolf had reached, guided by the nigger. With a sore heart I asked for two beds. No, they were all taken, but we might occupy the floor at bed prices, and on the floor, fully dressed, our small portmanteaux for our pillows, we slept, with drunken men tumbling over us all night. How often did I wish I was back at Maida Vale. The tent that we had brought 7,000 miles I never saw again, but I have a grave suspicion who had it. You can see him in the season driving his motor or phæton in the Park. Of such are some magnates made. I'd write his name here, but *cui bono?*

When I awoke next morning, as doleful as a dripstone, and supremely unhappy, I wandered into the backyard, got some water from a large tin tank, and commenced, well, not to wash, but to clean myself, which I did, in truth, indifferently well, making a rare mess of the table cloth on which I dried my hands and face. On

entering the yard I had noticed, lying on a bale of chaff, the figure of a man dressed in the ordinary attire of a digger—felt hat, top boots, corduroy breeches and coat. He was a big fellow, and although he had evidently been drinking deeply all night, and his hair and red beard were in deadly need of a barber, there was yet a look of unmistakable refinement about his well-cut features, his high white forehead, and the kindness in his heavy blinking eyes. "Hallo," exclaimed he, stroking his beard and looking at me. "Hallo, sonny. Cock-a-doodle-do! Newcomer, aren't you? Where from?"

"Oh, I'm from England."

"Good country—good country. I long to see its mud again. I haven't heard the cuckoo's note for fifteen years," said he, shaking his head sadly. "Have you ever been to Liverpool?"

"Born there," I answered.

"Were you?" he replied in a surprised tone. "So was I; have a drink, two drinks, three drinks, forty drinks." He called a nigger waiter and ordered a bottle of "Three Star."

"I don't drink," said I.

"No? I do!" he remarked, pouring out half a tumbler of brandy. "Here's to England!" Another bumper he quaffed as a toast to Liverpool, and replenishing the glass for the third time cried, "Here's to Charles Blount—that's myself," swallowed half the contents of the goblet, and then dashed it and the bottle to the ground. I never saw him but once again, when he did me a service.

I found my friend and companion, Woolf, fast asleep upon a bed which some busy bee had deserted for his early labours. There he lay with dust-begrimed face and his top-boots, making a dirty acquaintance with the not over white sheets. Lew Woolf and his top-boots were destined to become almost historical afterwards on the fields. How that man could sleep! Rip Van Winkle was surely never in it. With some difficulty I got him up, and in due time, after paying the bill, which took away my breath as well as money, we sauntered

into the street. It was kindling with sunshine, and the throngs of people about seemed happy and smiling. The clock had not yet struck nine on this blue-skied, glittering morning, yet from the many different canteens could be heard the popping of champagne corks, and in a couple of favourite liquoring places the rippling laughter of a brace of white barmaids, the joy and pride of Dutoitspanians, who had gallantry in their very temperaments and demeanour. The diamond buyers were plying their trade, and from the numerous offices diggers came forth cramming bundles of bank notes into their pockets, and riding away from Jacob's or Isaacs's office with, "You'll give me another chance, Mr. Stuart," or "Don't forget to let me have first look next week," haunting their ears. The coolies were manipulating the breakfast bells, and the storekeepers doing a rattling business. There were Knights of the Hammer galore, selling anything and everything—from a live springbok to a lady's chignon. At one of these auctioneer's stands (Mather's) we stopped, and when he put up a bell tent for sale purchased it for £8, and then partook of breakfast at a cheap place across the road, presided over by a dusky and credulous virgin of about fifty. After the meal, feeling much refreshed and more hopeful, but anxious about shelter for the night, I asked Woolf to look out for a site whilst I did the same, and promising to meet him in the same place in four hours' time, wandered about, ultimately walking up Du Toit's Pan Road—the road that leads to Kimberley (then called New Rush and Colesberg Kopje), which was about three miles distant from the "Pan." Halfway up I struck upon a suitable spot, and then retraced my steps to keep the appointment with Woolf, and hear what he had discovered in his stroll around the Dry Diggings.

As I marched through Du Toit's Pan again, and had just passed Martin's Hotel, I looked up, and saw a large wooden store with the name Hond painted on its front. Standing at the door was a young man in shirt sleeves, but otherwise dressed quite immaculately for these parts. He was evidently perfectly satisfied with himself and

surroundings, as he stood with his hands stuck in his waistcoat pockets, surveying mankind, such as it was, with a supercilious and scornful gaze. I have always had a splendid memory for faces, and in a second I recognised him. He was Montagu Davis, whom I had known all my life in my native town of Liverpool, and who, with his brothers, had been at school with me at the Mechanics' Institute, Mount Street, in that city. You do not know perhaps what the feeling is when, anxious, lonely, and friendless in a strange land, you meet a face you have known in your boyhood. My heart leaped with joy as I advanced towards him, a smile on my face, and a greeting in my eyes. I extended my hand and said, "How are you, Monte?" He never removed his from its comfortable position, and regarded me with anything but a look of welcome. "Don't you know me, Monte?" I said, looking up, and feeling rather crestfallen.

"Oh, yes," said he, still in the same attitude and with the same repellent stare, "You're Loo Cohen. What are you doing here?" in a tone as if the place belonged to him.

"I'm doing nothing now. Only arrived yesterday," I said, feeling much in the dumps. "Humph!" responded he; "have you got any money?"

"Very little."

"Friends?"

"No," I said emphatically and meaningly. "You're the first man I've met here that I knew in England."

"It's a bad look out, I can tell you," he replied, inflating his cheeks.

"Well, I can always get a situation," I remarked with a sinking heart.

"Can you? Not so easy. Nobody knows you."

"You do."

"Don't depend on me. My advice is work, work. I'm busy and you are not. Good day." Upon which he showed the back lining of his fancy waistcoat and turned and left me. In my life of fifty-five years I confess I have had many rebuffs, but nothing equal to the bitterness of this grim jest, worthy of Juvenal. With a

twitching lip I sought my pal Woolf, found him fast asleep in the same place I had left four hours ago, and could see by his top-boots he had never stirred an inch.

It gives me great satisfaction to relate that some fifteen months or two years afterwards, and near to Hond's store, Mr. M. Davis, having retired from that business, had acquired a diamond office, in which he bought for me, and it was my habit to ride down from Kimberley on an old racing mare called Ganymede, and purchase his diamonds. He found my patronage very useful, I assure you, and was never too busy to receive me then. You see, God is always good to the Jews—especially if they have been in the diamond trade.

But to return to Du Toit's Pan. In the afternoon we hired a small cart and two off-coloured workmen, and by five o'clock the tent was set up—and we had a home. The site I had chosen was nearer Colesberg Kopje than Du Toit's Pan, and no other habitation was visible within a mile of ours. Its inside adornments consisted of a large empty packing case, which held a common kettle, three tin cups, a few cooking utensils, a loaf of bread, sugar, and some coffee. We had likewise a spade, a couple of green woollen blankets, two small portmanteaux, containing our clothes, some firewood at the back of the tent, and that was all. Outside we made a fire, boiled the water, and soon we were enjoying bread and coffee. We talked over our prospects, and found, after paying for diamond dealing licenses, we would have six or seven pounds between us, and two pairs of diamond scales. In the evening we crept into our inhospitable tent, sat upon the ground, looking ruefully at each other, and anon, straight before us, at some invisible object. When darkness came, we each took our blanket, and lay down to sleep. I was anxious and regretful, and thought with anguish of the home I had left, and how black the future appeared. In the middle of the night I heard sounds like sobbing coming from Woolf. As I felt bad myself, I did not ask him any questions, but a day or two afterwards he assured me it was his top boots that had creaked

as he pressed them together. Next morning, after bread and coffee, he walked into the New Rush (I will call it Kimberley from now) to get our diamond licenses, whilst I busied myself digging a small trench around our abode. When he returned with them, I put my permit in my pocket, and started out for Du Toit's Pan, whilst he, on the same errand, bent his face towards Kimberley.

Never shall I forget this, my first diamond trading expedition. In Hatton Garden a relation certainly did once show me a parcel of "rough," and gave me a six-penny pair of pliers on my departure (he subsequently claimed to have made my fortune), but that was all the experience I had of diamond dealing. All the same, I sallied out to make a start, not knowing what kind to be sure. Once again in Du Toit's Pan, I betook myself to the different mounds of débris, on the top of which were claim holders, seated each in front of a rough table, piled with carbonaceous earth, brought from the mine to them by Kaffirs, which the former sorted over, picking out any diamonds they could see. How carelessly and hastily this sorting was done is attested by the fact that for years after a number of men made their living, and sometimes more, by débris washing. Upon each mound I saw I climbed and accosted the workers. They were of all nations, Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Africanders, Germans, Boers, &c. Many of the Britishers were army and university men, and they were labelled gentlemen as plainly as an eighteen carat gold ring is hall-marked. They did not, they could not, know the anxiety and uneasiness I felt, but in every case they treated me as if I were their equal —and not a Kopje walloper (a name given to the gentry who made a living by buying diamonds round the mines). And so did the Dutch; quiet, simple folks they were, and if I could not speak their language, I could make faces and gesticulations—and they understood me. Some of them showed me their diamonds, and asked me a price, but I had little money, and no knowledge. So I sweated and sweated, and ran from mound to mound with my heart on fire. Not one of the men

was uncivil, they were more than kind, and honest and sympathetic, especially the Boers, and these last would have remained so to this day had it not been that in times to come, the scum of Germany and Whitechapel —they have crystallised into "magnates" since—taught them to be otherwise. These last stole from their simple-minded victims by intrigue and theft their claims and ground, and then, when they were in full possession, if anybody touched a glittering gem belonging to them, they howled like dervishes. They took good care no drastic laws were made until they had got nearly all worth having. What matters if they were robbed of diamonds, they did the same themselves, the lot of them, and "bought" the very foundations of their wealth, with the money amassed by their initial thefts from the original claim-holders. I could a tale or two unfold, if I liked, but there is a blue pencil suspended over my head, like the sword of Damocles, fear of which stays my hand, to the great relief of certain South African "financiers," who are really the greatest rascals that Nature ever spawned, and who would sell their souls if a purchaser could be found for such vile trash.

But I am wandering, as I wandered on my diamond buying honeymoon on that sun-scorching day. Every Jew is a born gambler at heart, as nearly every woman is a rake, and having, as well, some Irish blood in my veins—for which I thank my mother—after about four hours of useless toil, I got impatient, and thought I ought to strike a blow of some kind. In front of me I saw a raw and whiskered Africander, sorting away in a dreamy manner, as if he didn't care if it snowed. I approached him, and asked if he had anything to sell. He sorrowfully shook his head, and said, "Only that," showing me a small splint of a diamond. I knew nothing of its value, and the digger about as much; but after haggling and bargaining, I bought the chip for thirty-five shillings. Then, giving him a decided assurance in the future to accord him my distinguished patronage, hoping in return, etc., etc., I, in some excitement, hurried back to the Main Street of Du Toit's Pan. At the end of the thoroughfare was a diamond office,

owned by an elderly man called Klisser. (He was, I think, proprietor, too, of the Royal Hotel, Cape Town.) I entered bravely enough, and threw the splint on the blotting pad in front of him. He picked it up with a pair of pliers, and said, "How much?"

"Three pounds ten," I replied, wondering if I had asked too little. He examined it for a minute, and said, turning his spectacled eyes up to my anxious face, "I don't think it's a diamond at all. See here," he continued, laying it on a heavy brass diamond weight, and poising another in his hand. "See here." With that he struck it a blow, and the "diamond" went to pieces. It was like hurling a rock at my heart, and I left the office a sadder and poorer man. In the tent number nothing in Du Toit's Pan Road, the eminent firm of diamond dealers, Cohen and Woolf, had a serious business altercation, which, not being reported in the financial journals, did not affect the market.

I had not yet been to Kimberley, so the day after my unfortunate diamond speculation, at about five o'clock in the evening, I visited the young Carbon City for the first time. Its original name was Voruitzight, but the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who could neither write nor pronounce the awful Dutch tongue-twister, re-christened it Kimberley, refusing to associate Great Britain with anything so rowdy in sound as the New Rush, which, by-the-by, was sold in 1871 for three hundred pounds, and then changed hands for one hundred thousand four years after. It was a strange sight, and Du Toit's Pan was quite insignificant when compared with the life, vigour, and movement in Kimberley. From the direction of the mines, on their way home, came troops of dusty, naked natives, singing Kaffir songs of glee, and following their white masters, who walked ahead of them, as would a leader of a regiment. They were a splendid stamp of men these early claim-holders. Big, brawny, fine-made fellows, and in many instances highly educated; they did honour to England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. I knew where most of them came from at once by their accent, when they had cause to speak reprovingly to their stalwart

"boys." There was no nonsense about this breed of miners; nine times out of ten they were Anglo-Saxon to the core, and looked it. Each band of Kaffirs, docile as children, as they followed their boss, numbered about thirty to forty, and when, after a fortunate day, their great gaunt master stopped them in front of a canteen for a "soupee," then their joy knew no bounds. "Zing! Zing!" they sang as, standing in a row, they chattered to each other, their huge mouths open, and their eyes gleaming in anticipation of a glass of Cape smoke. Carefully the white man, probably an erstwhile naval or military officer, sees that each of his servants gets his quota, at times handing the beakers round himself. After the drink there is a wild display of enthusiasm on the part of the Kaffirs, who do a war dance, and with their eternal "Zing! Zing!" follow the silent and self-immersed figure of their master home. The Main Street was alive with people, and really it was a wondrous place to see. Everybody appeared prosperous, and the fat foreigners, who owned many of the stores, stroked their capacious stomachs as they stood in their premises, and seemed glad to be alive. The canteens, too, were crowded with merry visitors, and all was life and jollity. On rare occasions a well-dressed young English-woman could be seen tripping up the street, and then would bars, shops, and tents be practically deserted for a look at the White Lady, who, proud and conscious of her rarity in these parts, hid her supreme satisfaction in an affected indignant demureness which penetrated the men's souls, and made her personality all the more alluring. The buildings in Kimberley's business centres were, to my eyes, distinctly good, though made of wood and corrugated iron, and there was an important and substantial look about them, quite wanting in the Du Toit's Pan structures. Outside the town proper, nine-tenths of the dwellings were the common roped tents and the remainder were frame houses with canvas stretched over them. Many of the comers had not any shelter to cover them and camped under the starry canopy, thus dispensing with candles.

It may not be out of place to jot down a few retro-

spective details about the dawn of the Diamond Fields. Du Toit's Pan was the first of the dry diggings to be discovered, then followed Bulfontein, and a few months later Old De Beers was rushed and exploited. Thus in the space of three months as many valuable mines had been unearthed and were in full swing. Every few weeks there would be a report that a new treasure kopje had been located and a general rush to the place indicated would be the result, but soon the diggers came to disregard the many rumours flying about and "rushes" were at a discount. The time, however, was not far distant when a kopje was to be opened which for richness would surpass anything yet in the world. One day in 1871 a report was spread amongst the diggers that a ten carat diamond had been found about three miles from Du Toit's Pan, on a farm owned by young De Beers. The prospectors who found the stone were under the direction of a man called Rawstone, at one time a resident in the small colonial border town Colesberg, hence Kimberley's first name. The new kopje was rushed feverishly at once by an army of Griqualand West diggers and traders, and work commenced; the most persistent toiled for about a week, at the end of which the "new find out" was voted another swindle, and the spot was deserted by all except Rawstone and his party, who stuck to it. In a few days another rumour got about that a valuable diamond had again been unearthed on the almost abandoned ground. Once more the place was rushed and worked and abandoned as an undisputable swindle of the worst class which had been engineered by some dishonest traders to sell their wares. Yet this "swindle" turned out to be Kimberley Mine.

It was about this time, although I did not know it then, that Mr. Harry Barnato gave sparring exhibitions in the Market Square, Kimberley, for which the price of admission was two shillings. His opponent, or, rather, partner, was Fred Abrahams, a tall, handsome man, who had been in the Natal police. The last-named and Loewenthal were never friendly after the Blacklock (of which more anon) case, and they fought once or twice

in the old style to gratify their own passions, and enhance the glory of their names.

After rambling around I took my way to the Kimberley mine, and for the first time beheld this wonderful depository of the world's fairest gems. I walked across it, for many of the claims, now worth fortunes, were used as roads From these roads it was possible to jump into the holdings then being worked on either side. When I think of my first promenade through the Kimberley mine, and contrast it with the marvellous city of workers it became in after years—the most tremendous hole in the world, hundreds of feet deep, and with fourteen or fifteen thousand whites and natives busy as bees—I confess it makes me exclaim, "Prodigious." I was feeling tired and exhausted, as I had had nothing to eat or drink since my coffee and bread in the morning, for I made it a rule never to spend a penny of my few remaining pounds (there were two left) upon my personal comforts. Presently I found myself in one of the different roads which had sprung up around the claims, in which were many canvas restaurants of a most inferior class. Their speciality was a very thick soup full of flies and flour at sixpence per bowl. I shudder as I think of the mixture now, though then I had many a time hungered for it. Well, suddenly, as I was walking along, I noticed a figure emerge from one of the tents that I thought I recognised. I looked again. Yes, it was Woolf. With quick and angry steps I advanced towards him, and tapped him smartly on the shoulder. My partner turned round in a surprised manner, and started when he saw me. I eyed him sternly. He quailed before my hypnotic glance with an aspect of injured innocence.

"Woolf," I said, in quiet, but deliberately severe and accusing tones, "you've had soup."

Woolf quickly drew one of his hands across his guilty mouth, as if to obliterate all traces of his crime, and then exclaimed, hurriedly, "I swear by all that is holy, Loo, I—Smell my breath." I declined, for, although Woolf had a good heart, he had also a bad breath, so once more fixing my eagle eye on him, I retorted ;

"Don't lie. I saw you coming out of the place. Woolf, you—have—had—soup."

"Well, so I have," replied my haughty colleague, as firmly pulling his hat over his forehead he strode off. There was no doubt about it, Woolf had broken out—on soup. That very evening, as the shades of night were falling fast, there was a regrettable tumult in our abode when I discovered my partner. Woolf had been indulging in other luxuries besides soup galore, as he had spent nearly all his money. I spoke like Cicero, but it was too late, of course, and it really had no effect, for at the finish up of the oration he told me to go anywhere.

CHAPTER II

Lewis Woolf—Food Prices—Tent Burning—The Power of Music—The Turn of the Tide—The Vine Hotel—"Seggnor Barnato" The Du Toit's Pan Dutch Sam—A Venus for Twenty-five Pounds—Red-Haired Nell.

So for weeks this life continued. Tenaciously, however, I scoured all four mines—Kimberley, De Beers, "The Pan," Bulfontein—and if I did not make any money, began gradually to get a slight knowledge of diamonds. Now, my partner, Woolf, was not so industrious, and one early morning as he lay in his green blanket, adorned, of course, with those famous top-boots, he confided to me his unchangeable opinion that diamond buying was no "bally good," and intended to sleep till noon, and then have breakfast for lunch. "You can dissolve if you like," he determinedly added, glancing meaningly at my left trousers' pocket, where he knew I kept the only two pounds we had in the world. He had only a few shillings. "Ah," said I, looking scornfully down on him, "all you want is a quid to squander." "Quite wrong, my boy," lazily replied Woolf. "I have plenty of money. Hear it rattle." He made an effort under the blanket to get at his trousers' pocket, but the strain was too much. The top-boots creaked as he changed their position, and lay upon his side. Mr. Woolf was asleep.

Mr. Lewis Woolf blossomed into a bit of a character. Born in London, his father owned a large pottery in Ferrybridge, Yorkshire, and a brother, Sidney Woolf, became M.P. for Pontefract. Lew was well educated, clever, good-hearted, certainly not a money-grabber, and game as a pebble. He was one of the best card players—no

hanky-panky—I ever saw, had a splendid head for figures, and one irremediable fault—laziness. I verily believe that his awful love of sleeping all day wrecked at the onset, and for ever afterwards, what might have been a brilliant career. Woolf had many opportunities, as you will see as I proceed, but would not take advantage of them. He liked gambling—it was in his blood, as was the love of bed in his bones.

In these primitive days illicit diamond dealing was punished by fine, and in consequence the diggers, feeling that their interests were not sufficiently protected, took the law in their own hands, and a considerable amount of tent-burning was the result. The miners themselves, without any disguise, would surround the suspected man's abode (generally the lowest class of canteen), and with very little ado the whole structure was in flames, the powerless proprietor standing nigh, glaring like a wild cat at the destruction of his all, and lucky if he chanced to escape the crowd's violence. Of course, this justice was no justice, as it left individuals at the mercy of jealous rivals or personal enemies, and consequently many an innocent man was ruined. So the laws were quickly altered, and as the years went by they became more and more severe. The "Diggers Gazette" in its issue of July 19, 1872, remarked: "Day after day, and night after night, one or another quarter of the camp is regaled with the edifying spectacle of natives flogged, tents in flames, white men surrounded by angry crowds hardly to be restrained from exemplifying their vengeance with a short shrift and a stout cord." They used to beat the niggers nearly to death, and once I saw a white man laid across a barrel and thrashed unmercifully.

I must mention that about a week or so after we had settled in our dwelling place, a Mr. George Moss put up a canvas-framed tent, comfortably furnished, next to ours, and on the left side we acquired another neighbour in the person of a Frenchman—he had long resided in Egypt—called Simon, with his Abyssinian servant, who was as faithful as a dog to his old master. George Moss, who represented some firm in England, had a diamond office in Kimberley, and his reason for electing

to live in Du Toit's Pan Road was soon apparent. He had an idea that he could play the violin, and all night would scrape away until the Frenchman's dog began to howl, the placid Simon (a decent fellow) to swear in his native language, and I to shout to him to be quiet. It was no good, he would play if he died for it, or for the matter of that if his neighbours did. He "performed" at five o'clock in the morning, at twelve at night, all day Sunday, and no hotel would stand that. But Lew Woolf snored all the same. I asked him sarcastically one morning after a terrible harmonical debauch, what he thought of the music last night. "Well, to tell you the truth," said he, "I didn't think much of it—too gloomy, wasn't it?"

"But didn't you hear it?" I asked.

"No," he replied. "I did not. What's the good of music if you've got no money?"

"But you said you didn't think much of it. You must have heard it."

"Eh—oh, yes; so I did. It sent me to sleep."

Sunday mornings were our cleansing days. We had to roll a barrel two miles or so to buy water, and take a bath as best we could from a couple of pails of it. After that we washed our linen and rested. There is no doubt that we were in a most unhappy state, and that bad luck was a very persistent lodger in our tent. Many a time I felt inclined to look for a situation and throw up the sponge. But when things look darkest they are apt to mend. I could almost see starvation staring us in the face, and I was losing heart. However, there came a turning point. One windy day, late in the afternoon, I was kopje-walloping in Kimberley, feeling more depressed and dispirited than usual, when in the course of my rounds I came across a Dutchman sorting at his table—a kindly chap, who spoke broken English. I asked him if he had anything to sell, and he said, "No." Feeling tired, I sat on the ground, and chatted while he scraped. Suddenly, the Boer stopped working, uttered an exclamation of satisfaction as, picking up a fair-sized diamond from the table, and diving his hands into one of his coat pockets, he pro-

duced a common snuff-box, in which was hastily deposited the gem.

"Hallo!" I said, "you've found something good. Let me see."

He laughed, muttered something about showing it first to his own buyer, and that then I should have a chance to-morrow, etc. I forcibly called his attention to the importance and eminence of my firm, also to the indisputable and well-known fact of our invariable practice of giving far and away the best and highest prices for all descriptions of diamonds in small or large parcels, or by the hatful. I spoke with all the eloquence and earnestness that a destitute and almost starving boy could command when he sees a chance, however small, of betterment in front of him. It was all of no avail; the Boer went on sorting, occasionally ejaculating "Ya!" in solemn agreement with me when I spoke a weighty phrase of quite Miltonic sublimity. But he would not show the stone, and I was feeling very cross, as is pardonable to any of the hungry ones of the earth. Suddenly a basis for a fresh argument presented itself to my busy brain as he was scraping his blessed table with eyes cast down, apparently tired of my fervid persuasions. Now I knew that Boers were exceedingly superstitious as well as religious—the two states are very near relations, anyhow—and resolved to play my last talking card. The Dutch claim-holders in those days were always called "Boss" (it was a term of endearment among kopje wallopers, and as it didn't cost anything was lavishly distributed), and in return Boers were very generous in conversationally returning the compliment.

"Ah, boss," I remarked, half-rising as if to go, "you are driving good luck away." The Dutchman—his name was Vrede—I knew him well afterwards—looked up interrogatively.

"It was I who brought you good luck, wasn't it?" I asked, pursing my lips, and looking him straight in the face. "And you wouldn't," I continued, "even show me the stone in return. Was I lucky or not to you?"

"Yes, I think so," assented Vrede.

"Well, if that's the way," I rejoined, "you treat good

luck, how would you treat bad luck? I'm going, good-day, boss!"

"Alamachtig," he ejaculated, "I'll show you the "klip. Here it is." With that he pulled out his snuff-box, and handed same to me; inside was a fairly sized beautiful octahedron diamond, called in the trade a glassy stone. It had been my fate during these starving days on the Diamond Fields to stand aside and see others "deal" possessing knowledge and money, and who unmercifully snatched from my impotent and poverty-stricken hands clients I could not manipulate. From these scenes I carried a remembrance of the jargon of the traffic which served me well on this occasion.

"Yes," said I, learnedly examining the diamond with the critical eye of an erudite connoisseur. "Yes, a very nice stone," I commented patronisingly. Of course I knew little or nothing about it.

"Ya!" replied the smiling Vrede, taking it between his big thumb and finger, and looking at it. "Isn't it?"

"It is, indeed," I agreed, hurriedly recapturing the prize, and continuing my learned examination. A look of assumed surprise and horror spread over my features. I'd seen the others do the like in Kimberley, and it was impossible to breathe that tainted air without being contaminated, so I ejaculated, "Why, boss, it's got a spot." I couldn't see one.

"Are you sure?" exclaimed the digger.

"Look yourself," I replied, showing him the gem on the palm of my hand.

"And it's off colour, and a trifle smoky—might burst to-night," I continued.

"Give it to me, then," said Vrede.

"It has its price," I put in consolingly.

"What does the stone weigh?" enquired the Boer. It was windy, and very difficult to be exact, but I put it in the scales. It went seventeen to nineteen carats, and the Dutchman saw that in such weather it was impossible to be exact.

"What do you want for it?" I asked.

"One hundred and fifty pounds," he said.

Following the kopje walloper's formula, I started with feigned surprise. (I had thirty-five shillings in my pocket.)

But your lowest price?"

"One hundred and forty."

"You are joking, surely," I said, wondering what on earth the blessed thing was worth.

"Well," cried Vrede, "the laaste (lowest) price is one hundred and thirty pounds; where is your place?" I pointed in a vague sort of manner to the line of white tented offices, as if any one, or all of them, belonged to me, and for the sake of truth, let my deceiving hand wander towards the direction of Du Toit's Pan Road. The thought of that bedless, bread and coffee, cursed damp shelter came in all its misery before my eyes, and inspired my brain.

"Where is your office?" repeated Vrede. Another lordly wave of my hand in the direction of nowhere in particular.

"You say one hundred and thirty pounds is your lowest price?"

"Yes, that's so, vrachter" (truly), emphatically cried the Dutchman.

"Then," said I, with cool assurance, "I'll just see the exact weight, and let you know if I'll buy at that price." I hurriedly left the sorting table, and walked quickly towards the line of tents. Of course, if the Dutchman had stopped me I was done, and should simply have returned the stone. But he did nothing of the kind, but went on stolidly sorting. I hastened towards the first diamond buyer's office I could see, kept by a man called Curtis, entered, and threw the stone on the table. The merchant eyed it, turned, twisted and weighed it.

"How much?" he enquired, head, like a stallion sparrow's, cocked on one side, and an inquisitive glint in his anxious eyes.

"Three hundred pounds," I answered.

Same old kopje walloping gabble from him. "Cracked, spots, smoky, off colour, etc." At last I sold it to him for two hundred and ten pounds, receiving

part in notes and part in gold, Curtis looking as pleased as a cat which licks its whiskers after a saucer of milk. Out I went with a beating heart, but full of anxiety. I had sold the diamond, it is true, and my option on it was at one hundred and thirty pounds. Now, Boers are very distrustful people when once their suspicions are aroused, and I felt that if I at once went back, and with alacrity paid him the hundred and thirty pounds, he might want to call off his deal, and I could not afford that. A Dutchman loves to bargain. Walking towards where Vrede was working, I stooped down and picked up a pebble from the ground, which I put in the snuff-box. On reaching his sorting table he greeted me with no sort of animation, but simply said, "Give it me back." I turned pale. It had to be done or I would have difficulty with him.

"You want one hundred and thirty pounds for your diamond," I said, showing him the snuff-box, and rattling the pebble in it as if it were his stone. He gave no sign.

"Now, I can't give that," I continued, "but want to make a customer of you. I'll give you one hundred pounds in gold if you like," said I, pulling out a handful of sovereigns from one of my pockets, and again rattling the pebble in the box with the other. "Now, here you are, your diamond or the gold—which will you have?" I expected him to argue, and would have been pleased to give the hundred and thirty pounds. But he didn't: he simply stretched forth his hand, and said, "Give me the gelt." I paid him, dropped the pebble into my hand as if it were the diamond, and returned him his snuff-box. As I went home the world seemed bright. This was the first time I ever attained fame at diamond buying, and that night Woolf and I dined at the Vine Hotel, quaffed Madeira red wine, and slept in beds.

It was a right glorious time for the next week. You never miss a bed until you haven't got one, and I felt superlatively happy, and used to beg Woolf to waken me up in the night, if possible, so that I might have the pleasure of dozing off again. But he never did—wanting all the sleep to himself. The hotel was kept by a

Mrs. Parr, a woman as ugly as Judy, yet who had the fascination to induce a Jewish gentleman to leave a really beautiful home and charming family and live with her. Nobody could ever make out where the enchantment came from. There was a fire once, to be sure, at the Vine Hotel, but what is that compared to the fires in the hearts of the fifty-year-old commercial Mr. L. and the romantic, but plain and elderly, Mrs. Parr. L. was certainly below Parr, and it's a wonder somebody didn't catch him, and send him to the Zoo as a punishment for his bad taste.

We stayed some months at the Vine Hotel, and I worked on the kopjes twelve hours every day, with varying success. A knowledge of diamonds had to be acquired, and sometimes I made grave mistakes in my purchases, notwithstanding which at the end of the week was always in pocket, and saving money. But I had grown extravagant; commenced to make a few friends, and was known as that *rara avis*, a kopje walloper who could read and write. Mr. Woolf did not do any business; it was rather impossible, for he hated work and those who liked it, never rose from his bed till three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and gradually got into the habit of staying out all night. It did not matter much, except that we had a common bank, though no banking account, and it came rather as a shock when I discovered he had lost a hundred pounds at some gambling resort. Then one of the passengers on the boat honoured him with a game, and, of course, he lost again, and after a few visits to Ashwell's (the name of two brothers who owned the famous gambling hell run then in Kimberley) we found ourselves pretty low in the purse, and removed to a cheaper hotel. I stuck to Woolf all the same, not forgetting his goodheartedness in Cape Town.

Of course, I often visited Du Toit's Pan in pursuit of my calling, and began to know a few of the personalities, who, as I got better dressed, and always had some diamonds to sell, were quite pleased to see me. One day, in passing through, I noticed a bill affixed to a boarding, announcing the solid and important fact that a

Signor Barnato, "The Great Wizard from London," would appear, and delight all comers, causing "great laughter and amusement." This was the first time I had ever seen the name of Barnato. I do not know, I cannot tell, why I kept staring at the name—until I heard a husky voice exclaim, as if the owner of it were addressing himself to me, "Blyme, he's great!" I turned round and saw a very typical Eastender, with an unshaved face, and coloured tie, grinning over my shoulder, and regarding the poster with sincere admiration.

"You're a Yeuhooda (Jew), ain't you?" he asked, turning his dark eyes on me.

"Yes."

"So I heard, as you passed the other morning. Good luck to you. You don't know me, well, I'm second cousin to Seggnor Barnato, ''Arry Barnato,' I am. By my life, it's true. Strike me up a tree, I knew he was a topper, but I never dreamt to see his name writ so big in print. It's a honour, that's what it is, and can't he shlock (fight). I don't think so, neither," remarked my husky friend, as he wagged his head to and fro, in silent sympathy for any unfortunate opponent of the handsome, versatile, and formidable 'Arry.

"I see the Wizard preform every night, for I takes the checks for nothing. He won't trust no one else," he informed me solemnly, putting his right finger to his nose and winking. "I'll parse you in to-night, if you don't say nothing—there you are," he added, shoving me familiarly in the region of the left lung, and looking as if he had conferred the V.C. "You don't know his brother, Barney, do you?" he enquired.

"No, I don't think so."

"Well, he *is* a corker," responded my hoarse companion, turning up the whites of his eyes in very ecstacy at the thought of the professor's gifted brother.

"I knowed him—the Seggnor—when he was a tosher spheiler in the Lane," continued the conjurer's admirer proudly, as he pointed with his dirty nail-tipped finger to the bill.

"Which Lane?" I interrupted.

"Which what?" he answered, frowning slightly. "Why, Pie Lomad, what do you think? Don't make foolishness."

"Don't know it at all."

"You go and kid your fat aunt, not me, see, and don't come near the Seggnor's show to-night; so sling your hook. You're no class. A mocker on you," and away he trudged muttering, now and again turning round to grimace and spit on the ground. And yet this gentleman-in-waiting to His Majesty King Tosher-Sphïeler became in course of time quite an important person.

But I did go to the Professor's show that evening, and for the first time saw Harry Barnato. He had left the two-bob sparring exhibitions in the market square of Kimberley, and elected to become Signor Barnato, the great Wizard. The hall where the performance took place was fairly attended, and the "Seggnor" appeared to advantage in a dress suit, for Harry Barnato then, though strikingly vulgar, was rather a good-looking man. But of legerdemain talent he absolutely had none, and the wonder is how he ever managed to get a street audience even in Wentworth Street East. In those days the present millionaire could scarcely read or write, and that being so, it follows just as surely as night follows day, that he could not speak properly. Being himself convinced of this fact, he uttered but three words, at certain intervals, as he did his marvellous tricks, and this golden trinity was, "A la me." The husky relation at the door no doubt accepted them as the language of Voltaire, and from their first utterance by the "Seggnor," I am creditably informed that, in Petticoat Lane, there was a herculean legend to the effect that 'Arry Barnato had mastered the whole French language, though knowing hardly a word of his own.

It must be recorded that, occasionally, after these necromatic performances, the Signor would have a rough and tumble outside with a picked customer, for the Wizard was discreet, and didn't take on all comers. As a matter of fact, he was a fairly good street fighter, which elegant art he had acquired in fierce encounters

with the Irish element in Petticoat Lane, whilst defending the honour of that noble hostelry, "The King of Prussia," at which pub. he was barman. I remember he once fought and beat a man called Bellew here, an old Cape Mounted Rifleman, who used to drink like a fish—but not water. The Wizard of the East, in the first round, got hold of the chap's legs, and threw him on his head. Heads lost, the "accomplished 'Arry" was acclaimed for miles round the dry diggings as a good man, and the Yiddisher Champion.

Often undesirable ladies, who, all the same, were most desirable, made their appearance on the Diamond Fields, to the great delight of those men who had something human in their hearts, and something tangible in their pockets. One day, a plump, nicely-dressed, bright-eyed, young woman jumped from the post-cart when it arrived from Cape Town. Sa Singularité was well-known, and did not conceal the fact she desired to be better known. She joked freely with the surrounding miners, and after absorbing a brandy and soda or two, hopped into a Cape cart that was waiting for her, shouting as she went, "I'll be at Graybittel's canteen to-night." And at Graybittel's she was, and the boys turned up fine. Some of them had dressed for the occasion, and when the lady entered there was some disturbance. Quiet men got restless, restless men got thirsty, vain men posed, and quarrelsome men fought—but the saffron-coloured woman drank with all. The quiet, the restless, the bibulous, the vain, the quarrelsome were alike to her. She frolicked with the lot. As the hours sped potations grew deeper, and after two or three lively rounds outside, settled in most instances to the evident satisfaction of one of the parties concerned, the real business of the evening commenced. Everybody present wanted to be her knight—all creeds and denominations—until at last the delightful creature, who had probably cried over twenty victims, and ruined two hundred, demanded to be put up by auction. Amidst intense excitement the South African octoroon was offered for sale—not for life, of course. As she stood upon a champagne case she beamed on all. The bid-

ding commenced at five pounds, and ultimately the erring one was knocked down, after a keen and heated competition, to Mr. John Swaebe for twenty-five pounds and three cases of champagne. With a soul on fire Johnny departed with his bargain, to the envy and disappointment of many of his rivals. Now, Johnny had a framed canvas abode across the road, and to this humble dwelling he escorted his bride. But after half an hour had elapsed, "the boys" got round the tent and carried it bodily away, thus exposing to view the amorous pair—and the honeymoon was over.

This same Johnny Swaebe became one of the principal diamond men in Kimberley, and was a real, good-hearted, charitable fellow. In later years he was Barnato's favourite and trusted broker. His end, I grieve to say, was sad, as has been that of everyone who came under the influence of that firm.

An incident such as the one I have just narrated brings back to my mind others. I remember some time later being at Haliburton's canteen in Kimberley with some choice spirits, among whom were Loewenthal, Harry Walter, Alf. Abrahams, and others. "Haliburton's" was a favourite evening rendezvous for diamond buyers after the day's work was over. It wanted an hour to supper time, and some half-dozen sports stood in the bar as the fair but frail Nelly Maguire passed the door. This merry flame was a well-known character on the diamond fields, and she gloried in her red hair and a brogue you could cut with a knife. Nelly, let it be set down at once, mingled with her contempt for virtue a decided liking for Ireland's national drink, but sometimes after she had been to a priest would give her elbow a rest. On this eventful evening, as the woman passed Haliburton's, one of the boys asked her to have a whisky. "No, shure," she said. "There's nothing under the sun will make me drink again. Drink is the devil." "Well, have just one, Nelly, for the sake of old acquaintance," proposed one of her tempters.

"Not half a one, my jewel," replied the red-headed jade smiling, and smacking her lips to show she appreciated the sacrifice she was making.

"It's because you're frightened, and can't trust yourself," retorted the man.

"Frightened, am I?" echoed Nelly. "Frightened, is it? Bring me that glass of whisky, and you'll see how a Maguire can leave you after drinking it."

It was the same old story. This one glass brought back her appetite for liquor, and she drank until hopelessly and fearfully drunk. I am sure these men did not mean to make her so; it was the fashion to stand Nelly a refresher. However, if such was their intention, it had its punishment, for the question arose what was to be done with the helpless woman. After an animated debate it occurred to a certain genius present that as he knew Sam Alexander had gone to Wessels's for the night, it would not be a bad idea to give the lady the benefit of Sam's empty bed. Alexander, as a rule, slept in his office, which was just across the road, and so after a vote of thanks to the brilliant proposer had been passed, Nelly was escorted to Alexander's place by a strong and efficient bodyguard. It did not take long to force an entrance, and with some little difficulty she, fully dressed, was safely packed away in Sam's luxurious couch, her long, red hair completely hiding her face. After securing the door as best they could, the crowd returned to "Haliburton's" to congratulate themselves, and had not been in the saloon long when they were much perturbed by the sudden and startling entrance of Alexander, who had been dining not wisely but too well. He was a short-sighted man, and wore glasses. Pale with fright, he stammered, "Boys, there's somebody in my office."

"No?" cried out everybody in great surprise. "Are you sure?"

"Sure? Rather, I wish I wasn't. It's making a horrid noise, too."

"Go on," said Alf. Abrahams, opening his eyes wide in pitying sympathy. "What kind of a noise, like a dog?"

"Dog be d——!" exclaimed Sam testily. "More like a lion."

"Is it a man, do you think?" inquired another.

"How the devil do I know?" answered Alexander.

"Did you see anything?" gravely questioned Harry Walter.

Sam blinked for a minute, and then slowly said between his hiccoughs, "As I struck a match I did see something," and then he added solemnly, "it was all red."

"Red?"—from the entire company chorus-like.

"Red, sirs," replied Sam impressively. "Of course, I scooted."

"Not red—like blood?" put in another, assuming a look of deep horror.

"Not red—like cheese!" retorted Sam getting very angry.

"Well, if it's not a man, what can it be?" queried mischievous Alf. Abrahams. "It can't be a woman."

"I wish it was," said Alexander, mournfully shaking his head. Sam, followed, by seven or eight of his tormentors, who had kindly volunteered to accompany him, crossed to the office, and with great circumspection and feigned fear his crowd of friends entered. Lights were struck, and when the identity of the bed's fair occupant was revealed, Alexander realised that a trick had been played on him. He was wroth, but Sam being a decent fellow, and as it was raining, and impossible to rouse the woman, he left her in peace, and slept at an hotel.

CHAPTER III

Slippery Financiers—Cecil John Rhodes—A Comparison—Harry Walter "The Doctor"—The "Scarlet Bar"—Barney Barnato—His Complex Character—I Become his Partner—"What Ho!"—A Constable—"Forward the White Horse"—Barney's First Cheque—The Cradle of the Barnato Millions—Wooing of Fortune.

As it is my intention to scribble all I remember of my own story, and not to spare myself, it follows that there is no particular reason why I should not tell the truth throughout, and in writing of those with whom I have come in contact treat the facts with as little fear as I shall relate my own history. I do it in the sacred cause of financial and social history, and history, especially early Kimberley history, would remain a mystery without such a chronicler as the one who tells this gentle tale. Besides, there are so few people alive who could write authentically of that period. Certainly none who had the unique experience of being in partnership with Barney Barnato, at times with Solly Joel, in Sunny Spain with Brother Jack, as well as having my aquiline nose once turned from its straight course by the scientific and incomparable 'Arry. I think also that in telling my experiences I may be doing a real good, and it is no fault of mine if there are to-day several slippery financiers who are in the waste-paper business and resent revelations. It is nothing to them that orphans should be in garrets, widows in dire poverty, husbands under tombstones; but it does appear to irritate the gentry that the truth, like murder, will out. With their ostentatious power they imagine that they can buy anything—women's honour, a proud man's servility, or a poor man's soul. Believe me, if there were no such men as

these there would be no such thing as Socialism. From their high altitude of rascaldom they have disgraced everything they have ever touched—Society, sport, and when Hebrews, even their own religion. A Jew has had always oppression and antipathy enough to combat, without the effect of the ignominy and hatred these parvenus engender. They have made as nought all the noble work of good Jews like Disraeli, Mendelssohn, Hirsch, Montefiore, Rothschild, and a score of others who brighten Israel's story.

Practical joking at this time was exercised to such an extent that the professors of the game almost considered it a science or a fine art. Of course, there were many serious-minded men who regarded anything of the sort with indignant loathing. For example, the silent, self-contained Cecil John Rhodes, who at this period was a clerk with Wallace and Rudd, Kimberley. I have many times seen him in the Main Street, dressed in white flannels, leaning moodily with hands in his pockets against a street wall. He hardly ever had a companion, seemingly took no interest in anything but his own thoughts, and I do not believe if a flock of the most adorable women passed through the street he would go across the road to see them. Rhodes was a great and good personality, but he would have been a greater and better had he married. It is not good for a man to live alone, but take him all in all it will be a long day ere Africa sees the like again of the glorious Englishman who, now "far off from kith or kin," sleeps in the bosom of the country which he gave to the Empire he served and loved so well.

It is such stupidity to compare, as some parasites have done, who have been caught by glare, Barney Barnato with the great Rhodes. One was a mighty patriotic Empire builder, the other merely a money getter, who lived only for "monish," when he got it trembled for its safety, and died overbalanced by the fear of losing it. Were it necessary, their respective wills would show the complete difference between the two men. The one grand, comprehensive, human—the other "kept it in the house." Nothing to charity, for the amount sup-

posed to have been left to its cause was an afterthought of his heirs.

Barney Barnato's name would have been drowned with him if it had not been for the irremediable harm he did in his life-time, from the effect of which hundreds of families are now suffering. As to Cecil John Rhodes, he will be forgotten when Clive and Hastings are no longer remembered. It will no doubt be argued that some people lost money by Rhodes and his ventures. Quite so; he had his failures as well as his successes; but when he died he didn't forget to present the bulk of his earnings to the Empire. I am certain that Rhodes was never a happy man. That great brain of his was always breeding Homeric plans, the very extent of which would seem to prove their impossibility. Barnato often told me that Rhodes was "dotty," and I'm sure he fully believed it. He used to gasp with mocking laughter as he spoke of Rhodes's "crack-pot" schemes. Yet all the same, the Colossus recognised in Barney a certain power, for when he was in London before the amalgamation of the mines, he remarked to a high financial personage that the only man he feared in South Africa was a "cunning little Jew called Barnato." I can see Barney now as he told me of this circumstance. His bright blue eyes beamed with a boastful merriment, and he laughed loudly and heartily in describing what he was pleased to consider the honour done him.

Rhodes made few friends, was a lonely man, fond of a glass or two, but could, when jolly with the bottle, talk like a Mirabeau. For the fair sex he cared nothing. He hesitated even to have Benedicts about him, and in one of his cynical moods once told a man who applied for employment that something might be done for him if only he "could forget the West End of London." A Suffragette he would have called a notoriety-seeking hussy; but, all the same, perhaps if some gentle woman's refining and composing influence had crept into this great man's life, things would have been different, and he might have been alive to-day. What was wanting in Rhodes's life was missing—the Woman and the Baby.

A baby is a lovable thing, a ray of brilliant sunlight. To see it red and fresh, like Diana, blossom into something that lisps your name. How you wait to hear the dear uncertain feet, with the tiny unbuttoned shoes crawl upstairs to kiss you "good-morning," or watch the flaxen head as a chubby hand is laid tenderly against the blue veins of a gentle mother's breast. The child feeds so that when you are dead you may live again in that little bundle of your own flesh and blood. There is nothing like a baby, except two; and nothing like two, except the mother—sometimes. It is true that they grow up and swear and follow in the footsteps of their dear old dad, but, bless me, you wouldn't have them different from yourself. Children should shoot up as game as roosters—except when they wear petticoats.

The clock ticked on with calm, unaltered tone, and time grew older. I still kept in partnership with Woolf, though he was very trying. During one of my diamond buying expeditions I came across a Mr. Harry Cohen, and we were in the habit of going into partnership for the day as kopje wallopers. Cohen subsequently became a rich man. However, the diurnal partnership didn't last long, and when we one afternoon finally settled up, I took some cheap jewellery in lieu of cash. Finding a difficulty in selling it, and hearing there was a public auction of miscellaneous articles held every evening at Nutzorn's Hotel, in Du Toit's Pan, I handed my trinkets to the auctioneer, who proved to be Alfred Abrahams. The room was full of people, and the bidding was pretty spirited, but I noticed it came mostly from a group of my own co-religionists, at the head of which posed Harry Barnato. They were offering for their own goods, and when in due course my wretched stuff was put up, the Hebraic speculators became strangely silent. So I commenced to bid myself. A little fair man (I remembered him from Cape Town), standing close to the accomplished Wizard, with whom he appeared to be on the most intimate terms, commenced to chaff me in quite good East End fashion, and followed that up by attempting to queer the sale of my "jewels." I warned him several times, and then, with

good results, as far as I was concerned, "set about" him. Barnato did not interfere, but after the squabble spoke to me, and thus we became acquainted. My opponent was the late Harry Walter ("the Doctor"), who at one time amassed, through his connection with Barnatos, a vast amount of money, the greater part of which, in later years, was gobbled up—and "the Doctor" worried himself to death.

In the same hotel, a few evenings after, while Harry Barnato was asleep on the couch, his bosom pal, "the Doctor," for a joke, took his watch and chain. When the "Seggnor" awoke and missed the property, his horror was indescribable, and the joy of those in the secret intense. However, there is a traitor in almost every camp, and some Judas imparted to the "Wizard of the East" the true facts of the case. Now, 'Arry, although possessing a frugal mind, had extravagant notions, which, as they cost nothing, he freely gave away. He said not a word to Walter, but communicated his plan to four or five intimates, who were quite delighted to turn the tables on the grinning "Doctor," who considered himself the hero of the hour. Going outside, they induced a man to impersonate a detective, and when he entered the room, Barnato complained about the "robbery," and in a pretended indignant and angry manner gave the now gasping "Doctor" in charge. There and then searched, and the watch and chain being found on him, he was at once roughly collared by the sham detective, and shedding tears and protesting his innocence, was led down the street in the direction of the gaol, his mischievous associates following in high glee, and pretending to condole with him. "It looks a bit black against you, Harry," said one, "but you have a good character."

"If they won't grant you bail to-night, I'll come and see you early to-morrow," soothingly spoke another.

"'Arry, my boy, be game," advised lame Harry Harris, as he limped by his side, "and ask for a cell to yourself."

There was a stammering fair Jew with white eyelashes, who, though not in the secret, dodged about and

around, talking volubly with a Whitechapel brogue which he possessed inordinately.

" 'E'll get it 'ot, believe me," he kept repeating loud enough for the wretched "Doctor" to hear. " 'E'll get it 'ot, I'm a tellin' of you."

"Yes," said I, "he was caught *in flagrante delicto.*"

"You're a liar, you donkey-head," stuttered my fair-haired friend, looking up in an indignant manner. "He weren't caught there at all. He was caught at Nutzorn's Hotel. By my health, I see it myself," he explained as he tapped his breast to emphasise the information.

"But will they keep him in gaol all night?" I enquired.

"Well," replied the albino, anxious to show his education at the expense of four syllables, "Aperiently, aperiently," just as if he had taken a dose of intellectual pills.

Unhappy Harry Walter was by this time in an agony of fear as he was hurried along, followed by an excited crowd.

"Oh, Alf," he murmured to Abrahams, who was supporting him with consolation as they walked on. "You know it was only done in a joke. Oh, my God, what will my poor brother say, and what's going to become of the next shipment of goods?" (His brother used to ship him cases of ready-made suits).

"Well, I'll look after them—if it's not for too long," replied the artful Alf.

"I shall go mad," said the "Doctor." "Here," in a hoarse whisper, "can't you bribe the 'copper'? Give him three suits of home-spun," and the commercial spirit, strong in trouble, added impressively "The ones with the shlenter linings."

Alf accepted the commission with all solemnity, and putting the question with unmistakable tact and delicacy to the high-minded detective, the latter, after great difficulty and persuasion, refused the garments, but reluctantly accepted a ten-pound note, which passed. There was an immediate adjournment to a favourite bar, where champagne freely passed from hand to hand.

When, however, Harry, the pride of Israel, entered the room, and the "Doctor" realised how he had been spoofed, he drank deeply of the wines of France, and went home, to use a homely phrase, drunk to the world.

We had saved a little money when a more than unfortunate visit of my sleeping partner, Woolf, to Ashwell's altered the whole course of my life. I dissolved with him, giving him half of all I had, and went to live at a cheap hotel yclept the Scarlet Bar, kept by a man called Crawford, who had been in the Natal Police. He took a partner named Williams afterwards, and on sundry evenings when they balanced up their cash they indulged in fisticuffs outside as the only way of settling their disputes. The hotel itself consisted of a huge marquee, and the bedrooms at the side were canvas framed tents, lined with green flannel, which in the rainy season were so waterproof that my sleeping place was more like a bath than a bed. I possessed abut sixty pounds, had acquired a little knowledge of diamonds, and confidence in myself. My friend, Lew Woolf, went to Du Toit's Pan, where he entered into partnership with Alf Abrahams, whose diamond dealing firm at present (L. and A. Abrahams) is one of the wealthiest in the world.

I was lunching one warm day, or what passed for lunching, in the Scarlet Bar's huge marquee, when my attention was directed by a casual acquaintance to a young man just entering, who, after pitching his soft-peaked cap on the hat rack, threw himself on a form quite unceremoniously and roughly between two visitors without a word of apology, and then glanced round the tent. My place at one of the tables was close to the seat he had chosen, and it rather interested me to see the way in which he beamed on everybody in general, without taking the slightest notice of the frowns and muttered curses of the two foreigners he had separated. He was a strongly-built young fellow, wore a pair of spectacles on his dust-stained face, and had the ugliest snub nose you could imagine, but as good a pair of large grey-blue eyes as ever flashed through a pair of glasses.

"Do you know who that is?" asked the man next to me.

"No," I replied.

"Barnett Isaacs; he's Harry Barnato's brother; just come out."

Barnett Isaacs, still beaming, pulled out a soiled pocket-handkerchief and wiped his hands and face. When his soup came he ate it, but not at all in the manner affected at the Savoy. Suddenly he spluttered, and the soup was everywhere, threw down his spoon, displayed once more his *mouchoir,* and blew his nose as if hailing the Messiah. I was slightly bespattered, and consequently annoyed. He glanced at me over the top of his spectacles, and said in a most pronounced cockney accent: "You'll excuse me, but a fly fell up my nose."

And that was the first time I met Barney Barnato.

Barney Barnato's complex character has never been understood or accurately described. He has either been depicted as a devil, or a spectacled angel on stilts. When people made money out of him, which was seldom (they never kept it long in any case), he was represented as the Napoleon of Finance, the Hercules of Organisation, and, on the other hand, when they lost their guineas their heroic Crœsus degenerated into "the dirty Cad from Whitechapel," or "that lying Ghoul of the Ghetto." He deserved none of these descriptions. Except for a quaint originality, native cleverness, strange personality, his meteoric rise to fortune, and fictitious fame, there was nothing very alluring or repellent about Barney, who was more libelled by his flatterers than his enemies. I propose to write of him as he appeared to me, and you will read of a decidedly unscrupulous character, who had, nevertheless, a grain of gold in his nature. The portrait I intend to draw may be badly executed, but all I claim is that it will be the real Barnato, and not the sham one described by toadies and traducers who, between them, helped to drive this man of inordinate greed and vanity to his early grave.

After his death the utter nonsense printed about him was sickening, and in general about as true as the well-trumpeted Barnato legend that he was related to the late Sir George Jessel. No doubt it was something for

the Isaacs' dynasty to boast about, but I should like to have had Sir George's opinion on the subject. At all events, I have never heard of the presence of a Jessel at any marriage, funeral, or social function in which the Barnatos or Joels were interested. They are related in about the same degree as they are to the naked Moses—he of bulrush fame.

A couple of days after my first sight of Barney I was working Kimberley mine trying to buy diamonds, when walking along the reef I suddenly encountered the gentleman, on the same errand bent. He had a little black satchel by his side, in which to carry scales, and looked tired and as dusty as "the marvellous hole" that lay at our feet. When he saw me he stopped, smiled, asked how I was getting on, and walked by my side, talking the while. Presently he produced a small box from his pocket, and paused as he showed me the diamonds he had purchased. There were not many—I should think about ten or twelve pounds' worth, and he seemed to have some anxiety as to their exact value.

"What do you reckon the lot?" he inquired, glancing at me anxiously.

I told him what I thought.

"Corst me more money," he replied, but with such a joyous look in his eyes that I could see he wasn't telling me the truth. "Will you make me an offer for them?" he asked. "I will take a small profit," he continued, "because, you see, my sight is not good, and when a spot bobs up my brother 'Enery kicks up such a blooming row. You know 'Enery, 'Enery Barnato, don't you; he's in partnership with Van Praagh in Du Toit's Pan, and doing grand? They bought a 'motza pudding' yesterday morning," said Barney, making a face and holding up his two hands to signify the magnitude of the bargain. "I wouldn't be a bit nervous of the game," he put in rather mournfully, "if I had eyes like yours. I know you; I've seen you often on the kopje, you're Loo Cohen; I'll tell you what"—an idea striking him—"let's go pardners to-morrow, just to try," he added earnestly.

I'm not given to making friends quickly, but some-

thing in the man attracted me, uncouth and vulgar as he was in speech and appearance. He had an honest pair of blue eyes which looked you squarely in the face, and not an unkindly mouth. I agreed to go kopje walloping with him the next day, and then we wandered amongst the sorters for two or three hours. Seeing he had a silver chain on I asked him the time.

"I ain't got the time. This is a mark of respect; but it don't go." With that he pulled out a rather dilapidated watch, and proudly showed it. No wonder it didn't go, the way it was knocked about. "Mark of respect, mark of respect," he repeated quickly, "given by friends in London," as if to impress me with his importance. We walked as far as the "Scarlet Bar," where I took him into my bedroom, and weighed the diamonds. He had bought them all right. Barney left to go to Du Toit's Pan, three miles off, and walked all the way (something, too, after a hard day's work in the sun), for the fare was two shillings. On departing, he said, "Now, you'll find we'll have some mozel (luck) to-morrow, see if we don't." And thus commenced our partnership.

Next morning, at seven o'clock, he called for me at the "Scarlet Bar," and we sallied out together. All day we worked, except for half an hour devoted to a plate of soup, and although some diamonds were purchased which yielded a profit, I did not think it a very successful beginning, but Barney appeared satisfied, made another appointment, and so it went on. I knew my new associate didn't have much money, for directly we bought up to forty pounds in value (an expenditure of twenty pounds each) he would advise an adjournment to the nearest diamond dealer to sell our purchases. About the fourth or fifth afternoon, as we were leaving the Kopje, we passed a corrugated iron canteen, kept by an Irishman called Maloney. At the side of this canteen was a small vacant site, and it struck me what an admirable position for an office this would be, situated, as it was, right amidst the miners. I expressed my opinion to Barney, entered the grog shop, ordered two lemon syrups, and interviewed the proprietor.

Maloney, a typical Irishman—some time after a fall from his horse killed him—asked a guinea a day for the stand, and agreed to put up a small iron structure. When outside, I said to Barney, rather disconsolately, "That's a bit too stiff, isn't it?"

"I don't know," commented Barney. "If you can make two pounds a day out of it, it ain't dear for a guinea, and you've an office in the bargain. I'd go you pardners."

"How much money have you got?" I enquired.

"How much have you?" he returned cautiously.

"Sixty odd pounds."

"More nor me. I've only got thirty," Barney replied, but added eagerly, "I've got forty boxes of the best cigars that ever came from Havana."

"I can't tell you the brand," he continued; "but it's a French name—grand." The manner in which he described these wonderful cigars left me in no manner of doubt but that he owned some of the choicest perfumes of Cuba, which had been acquired, quite accidentally, and through amazing luck and perseverance, by the acumen and sharpness of his brother-in-law—that famous cigar connoisseur, Joel Joel. His enthusiastic description of those marvellous, aromatic gems quite overcame me, and I believed in them more than Barney—until I smoked one. However, to make a long story short, I entered into partnership with Barnato, he putting his thirty pounds and forty boxes of high-flavoured and delicately-perfumed cigars against my sixty odd pounds. Cornydon, the lawyer, drew up an agreement, and one fine morning we entered into possession of an iron shanty about eight feet by six. The cigars duly arrived, and were piled in a corner of the office. I tasted a sample; and Barney, who wouldn't try one himself, beamed on me as I got pale, and encouragingly ejaculated, "There you are, what a 'buckey.' I knew my brother-in-law was no mug." I felt sick, but the man's wonderful earnestness (of course, it was all acting) convinced me that it must be my own fault, and not that of the "Havanas." But those cigars cost me dear.

Barney had come up to the Land of Promise from Cape Town by bullock waggon, and he told me how a much diamond bedecked "gent." in Cape Town had informed him that he, the jewelled one, and others had cleared the country of all the gems it contained, and advised him to return home at once, if not sooner. In relation to this anecdote, it is strange to narrate that twenty odd years afterwards B. B. met this same sapient adviser in the Market Square, Johannesburg, and when Barney reminded him of the incident, he asked, "But how did you become a life governor of De Beers?"

"By not taking your advice and going home," replied Barney, who really had a pretty wit when he could forget his youth, ofttimes mirrored in the brutalities of his conversation.

I soon realised the class of man I had taken into partnership, and for the place and times, could have discovered much worse without being a Captain Cooke. All the same, the Barney Barnato that I knew in 1873 did not convey the idea of being (as some papers said after his death) "the third son of a gentleman of Devonshire Terrace, Hyde Park, who had been privately educated by tutors." The true account of his very early days, and therefore the one I like best, is that of the neglected and unkempt little fellow who was famed for his skill at marbles. "He was a pale-faced, weakly, sorrowful small chap as a child, and I used often to give him a penny to comfort him, as he sat crying on the doorstep," said a barber who lived in Middlesex Street many years ago. The shaver's portrayal, and Barnato's total lack of education, make more remarkable his surprising career, and throw an illuminating light on some of the causes responsible for the defects in his character, which unmistakably showed themselves as he advanced on the road of success.

It must be, however, admitted that Barney never described himself "as the son of a gentleman of Devonshire Terrace," but, on the contrary, gloried, and sometimes too much so, in relating the sordid and, in many cases, discreditable surroundings of his unsavoury youth. He has many times told me how, when a boy,

he used to stand outside the Garrick Theatre, Leman Street, and beg pass-out checks from those theatrical visitors who had had enough of sock and buskin for the evening. These he disposed of to other theatrical patrons who were willing to pay a copper or two to see the last act. With much glee he narrated how one night he sold a pass-in check for a penny, receiving, as he thought, two half-pence in exchange. On going, however, under a lamp light he discovered he had been given two shillings by mistake.

"And what did you do, Barney?" I inquired.

"Do?" he replied grinning. "Do? Why, I never stopped running until I had put eight streets between me and the theatre!"

Later on Barney took a few lessons in Kimberley from a retired schoolmaster, named Norrie, who was some relation to Loewenthal; but I doubt if he profited much by these studies, as the following anecdotes, which had their *locale* in London in the eighties, will prove.

Now, although Barney knew nothing about art—except artfulness and the Noble Art—he would constantly refer in conversation to his famous pictures in Village Park West—his residence at that period. Certainly he knew they were oleographs and nearly valueless, but without mentioning the artists' names it was his habit to describe the subjects of some half-dozen of his masterpieces, and leave his listeners quite certain, and without a shadow of doubt, that he, Barney, possessed one of the finest galleries of "pitchers" in England. He, however, remembered he had a canvas painted by Sydney Cooper, and this famous name he always trotted out. I call to mind one particular evening at the Pavilion Music Hall, when I introduced him to a certain lady. It is true she was only half married, but was as good and honest as if she had been blessed a hundred times in every church, chapel, and shool in all England, and had been glorified by every clergyman, priest, and rabbi in these broad lands. She was a delightfully pretty woman with a garden in her sunny face, her rose and lily skin, and beautiful golden brown eyes bright and fresh as dewdrops. Her smile, appearing on a mouth

red and luscious, was enough to quicken a dead man, and when all these charms were added to a provoking *diablerie* (heightened by the knowledge of her slightly imperfect past) the effect produced in her most fascinating moods was sweetly provocative. At times Barney could be decidedly witty, and make himself amusingly agreeable. To a bright and merry creature of the world as this woman was his quaint mode of expressing himself and half-suggestive yarns appealed to her humorous side, and quickly they became quite friends. In due course Barney trotted out his "pictures," and confidential Madame in turn told him of her treasures. I must mention that she possessed a picture by Watteau, on which she prided herself. As they were parting the goddess bent in an irresistible and charming manner towards him and said invitingly, cordially beaming the while with the sunniest and most fragrant diffusing of smiles: "Good night, Mr. Barnato. I am glad to have met you. I like you." Then leaning forward whispered, "Come and see my Watteau." Barney looked as if somebody had pinched him, took off his glasses, wiped them, and, glancing keenly at his fair inviter, ejaculated, "Eh?" "Yes," repeated the lady with emphasis, "you must come and see my Watteau." "Do you mean it?" queried the millionaire, as if striving to discover if the lady was in earnest. "Well, of course I do," responded the merry dame showing her white teeth. Barney's face gave birth to a broad, enraptured grin, and he winked in a peculiar manner to himself as he replied in a subdued tone, "All right. When's the old man out?"

"Oh! don't bother about him," put in Madame, playfully tossing her shapely head and laughing.

"Well, that's all right; but I'd rather meet you somewhere outside, if you don't mind. We won't be seen?" he added cautiously, as if to strengthen his suggestion. A puzzled expression came over Mrs. D——'s comely features, then an irradiating look of intelligence, and blushingly smothering her laughter with a handkerchief she tripped hurriedly downstairs, scenting the air with sweet perfume, showing a glimpse of the daintiest

Morocco-shod little feet ever seen, and leaving Barney pondering over a deep problem. His solution of it was uncertain, and to ease his brain he blew his nose. In the cab going home he told me, and I explained. Barney relapsed into a profound silence. When his house was reached, and I was bidding him good-night, he suddenly tilted his head on one side, his eyes glinting through his glasses. "Damn fool, ain't I? Phil Garlic!" he exclaimed, and then burst out laughing.

"What's up?" I asked.

"Up, nothing. Good night! What oh!" And I heard him chuckling as he used his latch-key.

I do not believe Barney had ever read a novel in his life, of music he absolutely knew nothing, and as for pictures, in his idea the frames betokened the value of the paintings. He had, as I have said, one good small picture, a group of sheep, by Sydney Cooper, which was genuine. I said to him one day, "That's a nice study."

"Is it?" he answered. "Well, I bought it because one of the blessed sheep looked exactly like me!" As a matter of fact, he only knew this one artist's name, and hardly that of any other painter of note. I was one day in an art dealer's sanctum with him and the proprietor of the shop, when an assistant entered and whispered audibly to his employer that "the Constable" had come. As the picture seller hurriedly left the room Barney inquisitively said to me, compressing his lips, "What's the 'copper' here for, I wonder?" It never occurred to him for a minute that a painter once lived called Constable.

Another time I remember Barney was busily engaged whilst in conversation with a lady in condemning some of his opponents. "Oh!" said the lady, consolingly, "if I were you, Mr. Barnato, I would eschew them."

"You're quite right, Mrs. B——," briskly responded the millionaire. "Chew 'em up; chew 'em up!"

But to return to Kimberley. One night during some labour troubles, passing down the Main Street, Kimberley, I saw advancing towards the Market Square a most formidable torch-light procession of diggers,

miners, artisans, etc. It was a weird and impressive sight as hundreds of rugged and hardy men, their determined features set and glowing with the gleam of the torch-lights, marched on resolutely to demand their rights. At the head of these valiant children of the spade and pick I espied a conspicuous figure on a white horse, who seemed strangely familiar. I looked again and rubbed my eyes. If I had seen Saint John the Baptist on a bicycle I could not have been more surprised. But all doubt was soon dispelled—the leader of these sons of toil was that son of rest, Lew Woolf. Oh, shades of Weary Willie and Tired Tim! In my heart there always has been a soft place for my first partner, and realising that his present *rôle* was no *rôle* for him, and likely to end in trouble, I called out to him, "Lew Woolf, Lew Woolf, don't be a fool."

He turned, saw, and heard me. A look of intense disdain flitted across the flame-reflected face, and with great enthusiasm, worthy of a better cause, he lifted that hard-worked right arm of his and in voice sublime with fervour ejaculated in quite a gallant manner: "Forward, the White Horse!" And the "White Horse" forwarded. It was heroic. Cardigan's historic words at Balaclava—"Here goes the last of the Cardigans"—could not have impressed me more. Murat at Jena, Bonaparte at Lodi, or Skobeleff, with his kid gloves and milk-coloured steed charging at Plevna, were not more romantic. And the dear chap who hated Labour was leading Labour, and quite right, too, for I have never met a man who loudly professed he liked work who didn't detest it, yet loved to see the young 'uns at it.

"You'll get into a bother. Don't be foolish." I shouted to my clever cousin, but again that clarion voice replied:

"Forward, the White Horse!" And then, sad to say, my poor Woolf put fingers to nose and made what is popularly and vulgarly known as bacon. Which was distinctly wrong, considering we are both descended from the Princes of Israel.

Before I met Barney he had spent a month or so

kopje walloping in Du Toit's Pan with different people under the watchful eye of the head of the distinguished dynasty, Mr. Harry Barnato, who had gone into partnership, as diamond buyers, with a friend from the East called Van Praagh. It seems that whilst there B. B. got acquainted with a certain Joe Levy (a Scotch Israelite, and real good fellow), and one day they agreed to go "walloping" in Bulfontein. Barney bought a stone there, and went into an office to sell it at a profit, if possible, leaving Levy outside. In five minutes or so he rushed breathlessly out of the diamond buyer's tent flourishing a cheque, and shouting triumphantly to Levy: "Joe, I've got a checker; I've got a checker." This was the first time Barney ever saw a cheque.

When we got fairly installed in our new abode, we set about to put the house in order, which was practically the cradle of the Barnato millions. There was little money left between us—less than a hundred pounds—for furniture had been bought for the office. We divided the latter, small as it was, by a partition into two portions—a box in front where I sat buying diamonds all day, and the back into a sleeping place where we slumbered, without mattresses, on the earthen floor. Beds were out of the question just then, so we were satisfied with a blanket each. I had experienced such a dose of misery since I had struck this Golconda that I was naturally very suspicious, and the clauses of the partnership were severe and unreasonable. But people had begun to tell things (and not the truth, either), and I didn't care much for the "spec." My terms were that the joint capital be deposited in the bank in my name, and I alone should have power to sign cheques, and that Barney's part of the business was to be out all day walloping on the kopje whilst I sat in the shanty—a much more comfortable job, I need not explain. You can hardly realise what it is, as wet with perspiration one minute, and the pores of the skin clogged with deadly dust the next, you toil from mound to mound under a glaring sun. And this to a man with rather defective sight. But he would have been useless in the office, so agreed to all my terms, and duly commenced

to work like a slave. We engaged a coolie for the culinary department (at something less than a lac of rupees per week) to do the cooking outside, which was performed under a bit of canvas held up by two sticks. Breakfast was easy, lunch nothing, but dinner—ah! The establishment closed, we two would sit in the front office discussing the mess (nearly always currie and rice) with two empty Bass bottles having candles stuck in them for lights. Neither of us drank alcoholic liquor, and seldom smoked—and *never* our own cigars. After dinner we undressed a little, arranged our blankets, and slept comfortably. And sometimes happily, too, if we chanced to have had a good day. Years after Barney said to me:

"I will forgive you everything we have differed about except one thing."

"What is that?"

"Why, when we slept together in our office you used to pull my blanket off, and I didn't like to say a word!"

It was almost painful to witness the dogged determination with which my partner went about his work. He would return to the office sometimes five or six times a day; in fact, whenever he bought anything, and great was his anxiety to know if I thought the purchase dear. But dear or cheap, out he would wander to try again. We disagreed violently often, and I am afraid in the majority of cases I was wrong; but though a stronger, bigger man, and ever so much a better boxer he never threatened me in his life, and it is only fair to add that whatever Barnato's conduct was to other people he was straightforward to me; a patient, hard-working, honest, trustful partner, and I never had a better. But as he grew prosperous the seeds of his early training took root, and there came forth weeds where flowers might have been.

It didn't matter much what hardships were endured at first, it made the present all the sweeter, as week after week we found ourselves growing richer and the banking account waxing fatter and fatter. We had reared quite a good trade, too, and had learnt something about diamonds. Necessity is a good tutor. The cigars were

a dire failure. After I saw that we were in a fair way to prosper, it was my practice after a "deal" to offer the client a cigar. Many of the recipients never returned—at least, to our office. One day, however, an exceptionally good customer rushed in with his mouth inflamed, and swore the cigar I gave him was made out of gunpowder—or worse. Barney, however, asserted they consisted of the purest Havana leaf, and had perhaps been spoilt by the sea water. The incensed Dutchman's patronage we lost, causing a bit of a bother between me and Barney, but I insisted on selling the Havanas by auction and sacrificing them at half-cost. After living a month or so in the office, we decided to sleep and board at an hotel, and did so, for we were becoming important in our own eyes, and business was increasing, to the great envy of some Aaronic gents in the kopje-walloping profession who daily watched us through a telescope from a neighbouring mound.

Huge sums of money were not floating about Kimberley in these pioneer days, but nearly everybody had a little. Millionaires of South African make had not been heard of, and the future magnates were then merely "maggots" financially, as they have since become socially. A man who had a thousand pounds was considered pretty well off, and he thought so, too. The yearling filibusters had only, as it were, jumped from the starting-post, and the race for wealth was in its infancy. Beit was very little heard of, Rhodes was digging in De Beers, Robinson had a diamond office in the main street, where, dour and sour, he sat waiting for customers; Lewis and Marks were busy on the kopje, Woolfie Joel was doing broking, Jack Joel was doing anything, and Barnato and I were doing everybody. George Farrar and Bailey were not known. It was much later on that Bailey and Farrar travelled up to Barberton in an ox waggon. These two letters (B.F.) looked at conjointly, hardly describe the bouncing Bailey or the astute Sir George Farrar. Wernher was diamond buying, as was H. J. King, in partnership with Wilson. 'Arry Barnato was in Du Toit's Pan, spending his time—nothing else—with Aaron von

Praagh, and Neumann was God knows where in Cloverfield, and I don't think He cared. The Albus had not yet even dreamt of possessing their fiery red untamed chariot which adorned the City streets recently, for whilst George was in a humble situation with Stuttaford's, the eminent drapers of Cape Town, the proud and 'aughty Leopold honoured the same seaport with his presence, where, on the market place each morning, he trafficked with the Boers in forage, mealies, etc. This particular commercial spot was an African Rialto, and it would be unfair not to mention the important and solid fact that the versatile Leo was looked up to as a marvel of cleverness and honesty by the myriads of Yiddisher Boer vernoekers (Boer besters) who frequented the place with a view to buying forage or selling a "vatch," both operations, known euphemistically as "doing pizness" being, as a rule, fatal to the unsophisticated Dutchman. Leo almost commanded hero worship, and for this reason : He had been in a Berlin school, and through no fault of his own, had suffered on account of the racial feeling called "yüden hetze." So you see he was quite a hero among the foragers, who looked upon him as being something between the patriot Kosciusko, of Warsaw, and the Reverend Rabbi of Cape Town. I remember the poet Campbell wrote two lines, something like this :

> "And Freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell—
> So did the Boers, *after* they'd nothing to sell."

As for "Tickey" Ehrlich, he'd hardly been conceived, much less invented; at all events, South Africa had not yet financially been brought to bed with excellent Ehrlich. The man who loomed largest in the public eye at this early period was Mr. Thomas Lynch, who later on had the whole of Kimberley under option, and came to England to negotiate. But I am afraid he had not the cuteness to compete successfully with his rivals; it is no use running races with people who have longer legs than you.

To give you an idea what was meant when the scarcity of rich men on the Fields was noticed, I will just relate

a little anecdote. I was standing outside my office one afternoon talking to a couple of German kopje wallopers who had been trying to sell me some diamonds when a young chap passed with a square black jewellery case, which he carried in his left hand—these receptacles were called "mosh" boxes. He was a simple-faced looking youth enough, but evidently a most industrious one, for his pleasant fresh features were brown with dust, which the perspiration had caked upon them. His clothes, too, betokened almost a walk from London to Brighton. It is well known that the national failing of the German is envy. They are all envious, from the highest to the lowest, and imbibe the vice with their mother's milk. Quoth one of these Teutons, pointing to the man with the "mosh" box, putting his hand over his mouth, and speaking gravely as he moved his head to and fro. "Vat do you think of 'im? He's got the mosel (luck) of a Goy (Christian). May he take a fit!" "But what's he done?" I said, regarding the alleged lucky individual with curiosity. "Vat's he done!" echoed the person from Posen. "Vy, by yours and by mine, if that schlemihl (fool) ain't worth 600 pounds!—six hundred pounds!" he repeated crossly, as if the possessor of that immense sum had done the jealous alien a grievous harm. The Posener's an Englishman now with a Scotch name, and lives, or lived, in Kensington. The man with the box is one of the best-natured of fellows, a real good chum, as well liked and respected in London as he was in Kimberley. His name is Joe Lewis.

CHAPTER IV

The Envious Fatherland—Ikey Sonnenberg—The Gallant Schlickmann—The Soldiers of Sedan—Dr. Matthews—A Little Bit of Hanky-Panky—A Lutheran Israelite—The Grand Advance—Barney makes a Book.

GERMANY herself is quite proud of her defect, and openly admits she envies England her Colonies and Fleet; France, her art and glory; Holland, her ports; Belgium, Antwerp; Austria, Trieste; Russia, the Baltic provinces. Germans ought really to erect in Unter den Linden a statue to Envy, for this Vice is their only Virtue, and will in time either make or break them. I sincerely hope the latter, and that I may live to see the day when outraged Europe will drive them to their lair, this greedy breed, whose greatest pleasure is to bag what belongs to other people. Pardon this incidental passage, but I thought these aliens, having all I have enumerated to envy, might have left Joe Lewis's six hundred pounds alone.

Many times have I since sat and thought of the different forms and faces I saw flit by my office door. Some passed like ships in the night, never to be viewed again; others reappeared in Hatton Garden and Park Lane, where the less they are seen the better for us all. Some rested on the road to put in a "bit of time" before they made a trip to Mayfair, but most of them are commercial carrion, whose Teutonic chorus done into English means:

> "All we hope of mortal man,
> Is to fleece him when we can."

Few days passed without my seeing Barnett Lewis, of the well-known firm of Lewis and Marks, gallop by on

a big white horse—and a good rider he was, too. Sometimes Isaac Lewis would be *en evidence*—a man much liked and respected—and anon his partner, silent little Sammy Marks, whose good humour dimpled round his mouth, and sparkled in his eyes, would go sauntering past. It was at Vereeniging, Lewis and Marks' estate in the Transvaal, that after the late war peace was made, and Sammy Marks exercised all his influence (which, over the Boers, was considerable) to the furtherance of that end. Again, it is not generally known that when Lord Roberts arrived at Cape Town to take command of the troops, there was only one authentic map of the Transvaal in existence, and that a hand-drawn one in the possession of Mr. Marks, which he handed to Lord Roberts. It may seem a paradoxical thing to say, after disclosing this fact, that Sammy Marks was always loyal to the Boers, to the British, and to his friends. I have known him for thirty-five years, and not spoken to him thirty-five times, but he is a good-hearted, simple, and quite an uneducated man, who ran into millions by dint of his untiring industry and popularity. To my mind, the Lord only sent four good Teutons to South Africa—Harry Sacke, Schlickman, "Paddy" Cohen, and Sammy Marks. The remainder the devil sent to teach men how to sin, and I know his Satanic Majesty will get them back with interest.

Down in Du Toit's Pan there dwelt an individual whosẽ personality will endure as long as the early days of Kimberley are remembered. He didn't, to be sure, achieve a Mansion House banquet, or give extraordinary dinners at the Savoy. He didn't again float banks that lasted nine months, an interesting period for even an illegitimate offspring; but he held banks—faro banks—for ten minutes, and often longer. If ever nature treated the world to a genuine gambler, she did so when Ikey Sonnenberg came into the world. He was a tall, lank man, with the biggest feet ever seen, and withal the largest and tenderest heart. Although cunning as a fox in some things, he was in others simple as a child; and Bret Harte would have given a day's work to have caught a glimpse of this kindly individual,

who had the quaintest wit, quite untouched by malice, one ever smiled at. Ike was most cute in his business transactions—dealt in everything, was no saint, and didn't pretend to be. Regarding the Boers as his legitimate prey, he acted accordingly. And yet here was a man you could have trusted with your life, and the whole town loved him. All the dogs in Du Toit's Pan wagged their tails as Ikey slouched along, and not a barmaid who didn't have the glad look as the ungainly Abe Lincoln-like figure passed. Sonnenberg, of course, knew everything that was worth knowing, had fought in the American Civil War, and ardently sympathised with both sides—as he said, to show no ill-feeling. In the evenings, when his daily occupations were over, he presided regularly at a gambling séance in the "Pan," patronized by the most distinguished inhabitants of that unlovely city of inverted paraffin tins. I must tell you that outside Ikey's establishment flourished a well, of which he was the proud owner, and from which he sold water at three pence per bucket. The game favoured most by Sonnenberg's visitors was poker, and one night, very late, he was having a dire tussle with a hard nut, who "went better" for £2,000. Just at that propitious moment the door of the room opened, and a woolly head appeared.

"Please, boss, you're wanted, there's a girl come for a bucket of water," explained the Kaffir. Ikey never looked up, as with a big cigar in his mouth, and his imperturbable face, he considered the £2,000 proposition, but drawled out in his slow American way:

"Give it her, Piet, and charge her three pence extra."

Ikey was no Nimrod, but one night he was induced to go in a bullock waggon with a party of keen sportsmen porcupine hunting. Ikey didn't want any porcupines; all he needed was to smoke and drink with his companions, and enjoy the freshness of the veldt, so when the huntsmen departed in quest of the fretful animal, Sonnenberg rolled himself in his blanket, and went soundly asleep in the conveyance. In about an hour's time one of the sportsmen came running back

in great excitement, and with some difficulty roused the slumbering Ike.

"Who are you? What's the matter?" asked the half-awakened Yiddisher chasseur.

"Get up! Get up at once, Ike. We've found a lion. Come on."

"A what?" queried Sonnenberg.

"A lion."

"Well, that's all right. *I* ain't lost no lions," quoth Ikey, as he turned over on his side, and went to sleep again.

Another time he bought a waggon-load of forage on the Market Square at so much a bundle from a Boer. He paid the farmer according to his own calculation, which was not exact to a fraction, but at all events, an hour later, the Dutchman came running up to him in some perturbation with a ready reckoner in his hand, and pointing to the figures in the book, said, "You have paid me too little. Two thousand bundles of forage at so much is that amount," sticking his finger on the tell-tale place. But Ikey was not in the least put out, as he answered quietly in his nasal voice:

"You silly man, why that's last year's ready reckoner."

This is no doubt now a chestnut, but Ikey was its originator.

Ike also owned a diamond office in Du Toit's Pan, and though he knew as much about uncut gems as pig-sticking, managed somehow always to get over the Dutchmen; yet there was no greater favourite among the Boers. I have never heard him called Mr. Sonnenberg—not even by the cab drivers—and I don't think he would have replied to so respectful an appellation. There were countless Ikeys on the field for years after, but when one spoke of Ike nobody ever inquired which Ike. His diamond buying was funnier than a farce to watch. I call to mind a Dutchman coming to his office with a mixed lot of stones to sell, that is to say in the parcel, as they called it, there were some diamonds worth ten shillings per carat, others perhaps three pounds or probably ten pounds. The Dutchman asked

Sonnenberg eighty shillings per carat round, just as the collection was—good and bad. Ikey commenced to turn over the "goods" with his pliers, the while he suddenly conceived a most passionate interest in the Boer's family—past, present, and to come. After a particularly sympathetic outburst of friendliness Ike offered three pounds per carat. A little bargaining followed, and the Dutchman agreed to accept his offer, and then Ike calmly and deliberately picked out the best stones, weighed them, and as he paid the Boer, handed him the poor stuff he had rejected, saying:

"Here's your money, Piet; give these to your frau and kinder as a present from Nunky Ike." The Dutchman took the proffered money, the diamond "present," and with a puzzled expression on his face went out scratching his head, quite uncertain whether he ought to congratulate himself or kick up a row.

Ike told me a tale of a gambling friend of his, which runs thus. B., of course, stayed out late habitually, and sometimes got home slightly merry from the fumes of the flowing bowl. On one unusually festive occasion on reaching his house he wandered by mistake into the servant's bedroom, and only discovered his error when he got to the bedside and groped. He hurriedly departed, like a decent citizen. Next day he said to his servant:

"Lizzie, I'm sorry I stumbled into your room last night. You weren't alone, I noticed," he added.

"No," said the off-coloured Hebe, turning copper-red, "I asked Jane to sleep with me."

"Right oh! but the next time Jane sleeps with you, ask her to shave herself first."

Sonnenberg was a good, charitable soul, generous to a fault, and is alive now, I hear, in Johannesburg, but very ill, and not blessed with all the good things of this earth. He had, however, a heart of gold, and the needy never asked in vain. I hope sincerely he may read these lines and hear my greeting as I take off my hat to "good old Ike." (Since writing these lines I hear, with deep sorrow, that poor Ike has passed over.)

The Crimean War appeared to me in 1873 much farther off than it does in this year of grace. Strange it should be so, too, considering that veterans of the Russian campaign and Indian Mutiny had found their way to the Diamond Fields. I knew many of them, and they talked of Alma, Inkerman, and Balaclava as some of our soldiers of to-day speak of Colenso, Magersfontein, and Paardeberg, but with more pride. When I went out to South Africa the Franco-Prussian War had been over only a short time, and it was surprising the number of Germans who had served through it who were already in Kimberley. Frenchmen fighters at Reichoffen, Forbach, and the battles round Metz, were there, too, but comparatively few.

I hadn't been long installed in my diamond office when I struck up a friendship with a stranger well worth knowing in his way. He was a tall and exceedingly handsome man, with a most striking martial bearing, and had been a captain in the German Guards. His name was Schlickmann; favourite nephew of General Manteuffel, decorated with the Iron Cross for Weissembourg, where Douay was put to rout, and had been *aide* to Count Von Arnim. As a diamond digger he came in once or twice to sell, and I noticed how distressed and tired he appeared, especially if he had just come up from the mine. One day he entered looking terribly fatigued, and sinking down on a chair commenced to bring up blood, and then fainted; so I ran into Moloney's and brought him brandy. On recovering he told me he had been shot through the chest at Sedan. He often came to my place, and I liked him, except for a certain *hauteur* he could never put aside; but I don't think he did much good digging, for soon afterwards one of those tantalising little native wars breaking, he went North in command of a contingent of Colonials, in the pay of the Transvaal Government, and fell gallantly fighting at their head. At all events, he was a fine fellow and deserved to be an Englishman.

In relation to Schlickmann, I must set down that I knew, at the same time, a French officer—I forget his name—who also served at Sedan with a Chasseur

D'Afrique regiment, and rode in Marguerite's wild charge there. He was a typical Frenchman, a decent chap, and I call him to mind coming to my office one day when Schlickmann was there. I introduced them —these two old opponents. They conversed together; the Gaul all politeness and amiability; the German reserved, cold, but courteous. The Frenchman, I am sorry to say, got into serious trouble, for whilst the Guardsman went to glory, the Chasseur went to gaol. I saw him there.

Another frequent visitor was a little Breton, who, silent as a statue when sober, on the other hand became very loquacious in liquor. He followed the ginger-beer business, and his one idea was "la revanche," which he fully expected every five minutes, especially when drunk. The Frenchman had been with Bourbaki at Besançon when the Imperial soldier attempted to shoot himself on discovering that Von Werder had surrounded him; and often described Bourbaki's distress of mind, and how he used to roam about the roads by himself distracted and miserable at the plight of his half-frozen and famished troops. I may mention I had been two years at school in Brussels (Anschels', 21, Rue Imperiale, where I had as schoolfellow Sir Rufus Isaacs, the K.C.), and Frenchmen came to see me, because I spoke a little of their language, a distinct advantage possessed over many of my neighbours, who only knew Yiddish.

Dr. Matthews, once M.L.A. for Kimberley, and among the earliest arrivals on the Fields, was one of the best known men in South Africa. He is an author of no mean merit, a good politician, a fair speaker, and vigorous *chanteur*. His favourite song was "Let me like a soldier fall," a sentiment which he tootled with quite extraordinary enthusiasm without in the least desiring to do anything of the sort. All Kimberley believed in his medical application, but drew the line at his military ardour, though he vaunted it with triumphant, de Reszke-like thunder. *Tout de même*, the doctor was a real good-hearted fellow, a thorough gentleman, and exceedingly popular. I knew him well, and

he would cure you if you hadn't a coin, or ease your pain without easing you of a penny. But Æsculapius had one weakness—he dearly loved a gamble, and wasn't particular at what—cards, dice, horses, or billiards. A "sphiel" was necessary to his soul, and if he couldn't have found a flutter floating around he would have "sphieled" with himself, which was highly undesirable. Again truth compels me to say he was not an astute gambler, a fact which rendered him an entirely interesting personality to the clique of "boys" who flourished in Kimberley, and looked on the medico as a permanent source of income of fluctuating value. At the head of the "boys" was a strange character called Lowenberg—a German Lutheran—who through long association with the "Yidden" had become, *ipso facto,* one of them. Even when this Teuton got hopelessly paralysed I have seen him in his invalid's chair, extensively patronised, playing under and over seven on the racecourse, which was not very disgraceful, considering a present member of the London Stock Exchange was keeping him sympathetic company. However, one fine evening the doctor, spoiling for a "sphiel," looked in at a certain canteen near the diamond market. Seated at the head of a faro table, busily presiding, and surrounded by the choicest "boys," who in the intervals of play amused themselves with conversation that made too free with God and the ladies, was the eccentric Lowenberg, a notorious evil-liver, glancing round with shifty eyes deep set in his keen, dissipated, black-whiskered face. As soon as the doctor entered everybody beamed, and Lowenberg smelt money. The German genially saluted the new arrival. "Ah! good morning, doctor. May your strength increase. *Nu?* A leetle game, ain't it—a punt—ah vasn't it—oh, no—I don't think so, neither?"

"No," replied Matthews, "I won't play to-night."

"Quite right," agreed Lowenberg. "Quite right—Gord forbid—never gamble if you don't fancy your luck—dat's de veese. Is it not so? Vat a vonder! I should tink so, rather—but you can vatch—corst you novings."

The doctor had thirty or forty pounds on him, in due course joined in the game, for once swept the board, and, terrible to relate, the "boys" were hopelessly broke. I must mention that the players were punting in fivers, and South African notes looked like dirty abandoned book leaves. Now, the medico had a habit of twisting them into a resemblance to curl-papers and holding same between each of his five fingers ready for calculating operations. There was gloom indeed around that table until the resourceful Lowenberg, still gaily gabbling his broken English, whispered to his neighbour, a cross-eyed, shock-headed Judas coloured rascal of consummate audacity. A look of hope illumined the visage of this inspired hope of Israel—now a flourishing financier—as he left the table. In the next room he procured a newspaper and tore it into strips, which nobody without opening them could distinguish from the doctor's bank notes. When he returned the game went on to the crew's satisfaction and they soon had got safely in their pockets all Matthews's real five-pound notes. Everything must sooner or later come to an end, and when at last the medical gentleman had lost a side bet to the elusive German dealer, and passed him two strips of what he considered five-pound notes, the sagacious Lowenberg opened them, and with assumed surprise, astonishment, and indignation, exclaimed with a tragic sniff:

"Vell, by yours and by mine, I know I'm a schlemihl (fool), but not such a damned schlemihl as to let you —— me mit bits of paper. Isn't it? Vat! Vy not! I should tink so, dank you." The remaining "notes" the bewildered and indignant doctor held preciously between his five fingers were all strips of a diamond field journal.

As Father Time went on his relentless way, the fame of the Diamond Fields spread far and wide, and men of all kinds and conditions, from all countries and continents, hurried to the glittering source of wealth. Each post-cart and bullock-waggon brought its load of sordid and impecunious humanity. Rabbis, rebels, rogues,

and *roués* from Russia and the Riviera, transports from Tasmania, convicts from Caledonia, ex-prisoners from Portland, brigands from Bulgaria, and the choicest pickings of the dirtiest street corners in all Europe, many of whom were very devout, but nearly all decidedly improper. Dalgettys and Jack Sheppards, and Cagliostros, and Artful Dodgers, all came here to escape the grinning poverty which had driven them from their native heaths; or, in many cases, the punishment of their crimes. Unfrocked clergymen, with the air of saints and the souls of sinners, who had never known the stain of work; broken, stalwart soldiers, with fair moustaches and freckled faces, caring for nothing but billiards and brandy; lawyers who knew Horace well, but Holloway better; and *divorcées*, with a variegated past printed on their features, who had plucked the periwinkle blossom not wisely, but too well, and acknowledged the fact with charming intrepidity, and their desire to go one better. It was a horde that increased and multiplied, and would have made a fine haul for the devil. Many well-known names in literature, war, and art were to the front in the grand advance. Sons and daughters of Thespis, too, began to pop up, and some ruby-faced, flatulent members of the defunct Prize Ring. About sixty per cent. of the new arrivals knew as little of work as they cared for it, and consequently there was a rapid increase of crime, and in the consumption of whisky. The police were augmented, and, in a measure, succeeded in keeping the iniquitous crowd in order. Working in the mines in this particular earth's spot of sin and sorrow and sore eyes was hardship indeed. A slight break in the skin would speedily develop under the festering attentions of the myriads of poisonous flies into a villainous and terrible wound of ghastly appearance, and to the hundreds who suffered from ophthalmia, caused by the fearful and nearly ever present dust storms, the conditions must have been torture indeed. No wonder many looked at mine work with eyes askance. Still, on they came, the world's adventurers in search of the Golden Fleece, which had lured on these Argonauts.

Barney, in pursuit of his calling as a diamond buyer, would often visit De Beers (I wonder if he ever came across Rhodes working there), Bulfontein, and Du Toit's Pan. As things improved with us, he went every day to the latter place, as most of his London friends had offices there, and naturally he liked to see them. But there existed another reason for his predilection for the "Pan," and that was good-hearted, big-nosed Joe Levy lived there. This Joe Levy was a born gamester (he has since been a bookmaker in Australia, but is now in Johannesburg), and so, for the matter of that, was Barney; but Barney would never play unless it was heavy odds on him, and took good care that they always were. Now, Joe gambled at anything, and though he would have liked the odds to be on his side, hadn't the requisite brains to make them so, but had wit enough to discover that Pug (as Barney was nicknamed) had all the qualities he lacked, and I am afraid they had many a little hanky-panky on their own in Du Toit's Pan. Up to this period I had never gambled or betted, and when I found out what my partner was doing, strongly objected, in no unmeasured tones, to the waste of time. At this Barney smiled, and in a conciliatory manner said:

"Well, look here, Levy and I intend to make a book on the racecourse on Saturday. Let me off and you can go me halves."

I refused to consent to his going, or to have anything to do with the book. But at last he pestered me so that I felt inclined to give way, and he certainly turned the scales when he suddenly exclaimed:

"If you write the advertisement for us, and we win, I'll guarantee you twenty-five pounds." That did it. He had appealed to my poetic soul, and my Yiddisher spirit rose to the occasion. I remember the doggerel verse I appended to the advertisement as well as if I had written it yesterday:

> Oh, Joe, oh Joe, that nose of thine
> Will never perish with thee nor time,
> And when thou art dead and gone to dust
> For the sake of thy nose I'll have thy bust.

Joe, what did Napoleon say (in prose),
This, "Give me a man with a long nose."
And he had his will, for at Waterloo
The Iron Duke had enough for two.

"Thine" and "time" are bad, but I got the £25. Barney and Levy won a "monkey" between them.

CHAPTER V

Diamond Merchants—Jack Hinton—A Fight—Barney's Inspiration—Dr. Emil Holub—Barkly West—Up a Tree—A Yiddisher Jockey.

THERE was no doubt our business was prospering, and that Barney had become quite an expert Boer manipulator, and with lots of confidence in himself. We had acquired a pony, and in the morning, perhaps from six to eight, I would go out kopje walloping, and many a time make twenty or thirty pounds before breakfast. Often our purchases were so large that we had to stop dealing until after bank hours, or wait until we disposed of the diamonds in hand, which last procedure necessitated at times the selling of them at below their value. Our great buying day was Saturday, as the banks closed earlier, and the cheques could not be presented until the Monday following, therefore giving us all the afternoon to sell and provide for them, and we hardly ever made a loss. Sometimes we purchased two or three thousand pounds worth of diamonds after one o'clock, which, added to those we had bought in the morning, made an important parcel. They were always sold the same afternoon to the more important shipping dealers. At first we disposed of them ourselves, but as we thrived brokers were very glad to come begging for a chance to vend our goods on commission. So we gave them a chance, and some of the dear souls took it, for many of them diddled us more than the kopje wallopers did the Dutchmen. You see, it was a game of catch-as-catch-can, and the first catch, of course, was the Dutchman.

It was no uncommon occurrence for a diamond buyer to make seven or eight hundred pounds on one stone.

Indeed, I have known of a single piece of cleavage sold five times in a day, and each man that bought and sold it became richer by nearly a hundred pounds or so. I call to memory one afternoon, when at the post office getting my letters from Home, a digger showing me a large yellow diamond he had just found. I took him to my office, bought it, and within an hour sold it for two hundred and fifty pounds profit. These gains, however, were few and far between, but the really important diamond firms in Kimberley at this time, such as Mège, Webb, Fallack and Bordinck, Dunkelsbühler, Schwabacher—men who really knew something about diamonds—must have amassed fortunes. As it was, some of the gentry from Duke's Plashe were doing quite well, thank you.

By this time I had got to know all about Barney, his accomplishments, and his peculiar traits of character. We used to go about together in the evenings to the different hotels and billiard-rooms, but as I never touched spirits, and didn't play billiards, the nights were as a rule rather uninteresting. I learnt, however, that Barney was a very fair cueist, and sometimes would go halves with him when the stakes were not too high. He invariably won; if he lost he would promise to settle the next evening (he never carried any money for fear anybody should hear it rattle), and when that time came handicap his opponent for the return match, and come home triumphant and blessed. I found he could box, too, and many a time have seen him have a bout in the back saloon of Grussendorf's canteen in Stockdale Street. To be sure he had nothing to beat, only strong yokels, but he always proved victorious, and then had a drink with them. And he was a splendid domino player—hardly ever beaten. When I came to London in 1882 he took me to Petticoat Lane, and showed me with some pride the eating-place where he had graduated as a domino professor. He beamed on that old coffee-house as Rhodes would have beamed on Magdalen College. Very soon nobody would play evens with him, then he would give them half the game, often two-thirds, but he scored notwithstanding. And

he didn't meet dunces, either, for he contested with coves who came from the same part of London as himself, and some of these toffs rather than not play the game would have made dominoes out of their fathers' bones.

The "Gridiron" was a restaurant, owned by a man named Richardson, who had been an officer in the Hussars. One bright and sunny day, when the sky was blue as an Englishwoman's eye, an interesting rumour spread among the boys that a "tip-topper," a flasher, from Brighton had arrived. In the evening Barney and I sallied out, and hearing that the fair creature was at the "Gridiron," we honoured that noble hostelry with our presence. The lady was there sure enough, in company with a certain Captain Hinton (he is, or was, a magistrate in some small Griqualand West town), who had been a lieutenant in an English line regiment, and had promoted himself. Also, seated next to the charmer, was the gallant "Capting's" brother, Jack Hinton—the same personage who was erroneously described in many newspapers as the train-wrecker during the Boer war. As a matter of fact, the two men are not identical, as Hinton served on the British side throughout the struggle, and after the campaign talked of bringing an action against the accusing journals. Jack Hinton was a fine young man, over six feet in height, and the Captain was good-looking, too, until one Doyle broke his nose in Mrs. White's bar. Our diamondiferous "Capting," born in Madeira, was a bumptious and showy individual, and used to perambulate the town in a most extraordinary costume—huge sombrero hat, and a silk sash all the colours of the rainbow. I remember Gray, the photographer, exhibited a caricature of the "milingtary" gentleman in his studio window, and *instanter* the redoubtable warrior armed himself with a stick, and smote the glass. This is the most gallant deed the tremendous "Capting" ever performed, and for it obtained no mention in despatches—only in the police court.

However, to return to the "Gridiron." As we entered, the lady smiled kindly, at which the heroic

"Capting" glared, and the brother showed his teeth. The Brighton Beauty was fair, fat, and forty, and her dyed golden hair was as much a sign of her trade as are the three balls of a pawnbroker a sign of his. She no doubt had been handsome once, but to me she appeared like a Ninon in decay—she didn't look a honey draught. We had not been there long before hot words passed with the Hintons, and I departed with a lurid and sanguinary description of the Hebrew race ringing in my ears.

The next day on passing an illustrious canteen in Stockdale Street, a certain Madame Judas beckoned me in. If I had not in my life reverenced the Lord as much as one ought to have done, I have always loved the ladies, and so, at beauty's smile, I entered. As I did so somebody rushed from behind a door and knocked me down. I thought the end of the world had come; but staggered up and faced my assailant—Jack Hinton. He fought me into the billiard room, where I caught pepper, for he was too big and strong, and beat me on the ground in a most cruel and unfair manner. Dr. Matthews—he who wrote "Incadi Yami"—came in, but didn't interfere though. Going out fearfully damaged, I met Barney, who had an altercation with Hinton, and challenging him they went across the road to the back of Cowie's salon and fought. Hinton could not box at all, consequently Barney escaped punishment; but he was very weak through some medicine he was taking for a skin disorder, and his blows lacked power. After three or four rounds Dr. Prince, who had been prescribing for Barnato, stopped the battle. Jack Hinton afterwards developed into one of the best fighters on the Diamond Fields, and though afterwards we became friendly, I never forgot the unfair manner in which he put me to bed for three days.

There thrived one Kimberley diamond buyer in a comparatively large way who had a splendid connection among the Dutch diggers, of whom in these early days there were many. The Boers were always the best people to buy from, because, to be plain, they were the most ignorant, and consequently the simplest to trade

with. But, strange as it may appear, it was a difficult job to find among the wilderness of tents, huts, and débris heaps the domiciles of the more prosperous Boers. Hundreds of them were poverty-stricken and barely existed, and a couple of hours canvassing among them became extremely depressing work. The very respectable ones, those descended from the oldest Dutch families, and bearing such names as Pretorius, Potgieter, Botha, du Plessis, etc., the very flower of frontier farmers, looked, as Calvinists, askance at the Hebrew, and as far as they (Boers) were concerned were glad "to be hid and proud to be forgot." Some of these agriculturist-diggers were sensible enough to employ a broker, and when they did wallopers were to them as the cohort of the damned. However, this one kopje merchant I refer to did a roaring trade. He was always mounted on a pony, and out morning, noon, and evening. Time after time Barney and I followed to discover his clients, but in the maze of tents, etc., he invariably got lost, and his track became a Titanic mystification. Each day at sun-down we would watch this man as he rode from the kopje, and make first for a particular office and then for a canteen called the Blue Posts. The pony usually walked slowly towards the town, the rider sitting still the while with loose rein, and when the steed reached either of its two habitual destinations, it stopped of its own accord. One fine morning an intimation appeared in a local newspaper to the effect that Mr. S.'s pony would be sold by auction. Now, Barney was one of the most cunning men ever born. When I read the advertisement he turned up his eyes in a manner peculiar to himself, and rubbing his nose and chuckling, asked: "When's the sale?" "Wednesday," I replied; "why?" "Because," exclaimed Barney winking, "on Thursday I'll show you where S.'s customers live." We bought the pony for £27 10s., and sure enough the animal stopped at the different diggers' habitations he had been accustomed to visit. The loose rein and halts at the office and Blue Posts had given Barney the idea if the animal stopped in town he would do the same among the tents, and that when

the man was parting with the animal he was virtually selling the list of the people with whom he traded. The pony was introduction enough to get into conversation with the Boers, and we made much money out of Barney's inspiration.

I believe most well-informed people have heard of Dr. Emil Holub, the renowned South African explorer, who a few years ago died in Vienna? The Austrian was a constant visitor to our office; in face he much resembled Kipling, though at that early date, of course, the famous author of "Soldiers Three" was not known. There can be little doubt as to Dr. Holub's ability and value as an explorer, but as a "physical" gentleman I have reason to doubt his capacity. Somehow or other he had impressed Barney with the idea that he was a great doctor, and could easily cure him of the wretched skin disease from which he was always suffering. Poor Barney listened with wondering eyes and open mouth to the traveller's description of the medicinal value of this plant and that plant, culled from the lord knows where in Africa, and destined, according to Holub, to revolutionise pharmacopœia! B.B., however, had tried so many doctors, and with such ill success, that no doubt he would have passed the explorer and his plants if Holub had not startled his imagination by asserting that he had discovered a plant five times as valuable as ipecacuanha, which new discovery he called by some magnificent term. This was too much for Barney, who evidently thought a plant with such a grandiose name and gathered in "furrin" parts must surely have special curative powers, so he put himself under the explorer's care. I am not certain that Holub was an incompetent doctor—perhaps, like many other medical gentlemen, he diagnosed the case wrongly—but I do affirm this, that after a month of plants and baths Barnato was more dead than alive. He became so weak that I insisted on him giving up the treatment, and am sure saved his life, an opinion shared by him later on, when he grew more enlightened, and big names and new ideas did not appear as novel as the transformation scene in a pantomime to children.

Klipdrift (now called Barkly West), on the Vaal River, is situate about twenty-one miles from Kimberley. It was the centre of the river diggings, and thirty odd years ago looked a bright and picturesque little townlet. How primitive it all was will be better understood when I mention that although this village was the diamond river's capital, the Standard Bank of Africa's *locale* consisted of one small wooden room in charge of a single melancholy individual, the routine of whose daily life consisted of three meals a day and an evening exciting game of billiards—with probably the neighbouring butcher an enthusiastic spectator. Now there was one digger down there (we'll call him Bob) who judged the solidarity of the Bank by the meanness of its building, and decided after mature consideration and introspective communings to trust his hard-earned money neither to the sombre servitor nor to the security of the shabby shanty. Having resolved on this, our friend went prospecting on the opposite side of the river, and in due course came across a tree which took his fancy, and, climbing up same, deposited his money in a snug and convenient hollow curiously covered by foliage. Thither as he sold his diamonds he repaired to deposit the proceeds. All went well for a considerable time, and Bob slept peacefully without dreaming of broken banks or ruined hopes. But, alas! one summer's morning a wood-chopper saw him coming, and, hiding behind some bushes, watched Bob as he clambered to his arboreal treasury. Naturally, with considerable alacrity, as soon as Bob was out of sight the wily lumberer in his turn climbed the tree like a squirrel, and, merciless marauder that he was, transferred all poor Bob's wealth to his own pockets. He then came down to *terra firma*, and, procuring some manure returned and filled the hollow with cow dung. Bob when he discovered his loss became philosophically taciturn, and, being an innocent kind of fellow, did not realise he had been robbed. Shortly afterwards visiting England, he was met by a friend of mine in London, to whom he related the circumstances of his loss, and the perturbed digger concluded the tale of his woes by exclaiming seriously and

impressively, "God is great! God is great! God is great! That my money should have gone I quite understand, but how the devil a cow got up the tree licks me."

George Moss was a decent little chap, but he had a tongue that went like a water mill. He would gabble for an hour, and nobody ever knew what he said, except himself. Although very diminutive, he was quite the contrary in conceit, and his belief in himself was only equalled by that at present enjoyed by the benevolent Bernard Shaw. Now, my friend George, one fine morning in the early seventies, bought in Kimberley a racehorse, as colossal as he was tiny. Thereupon Moss, without the slightest hesitation, discovered in his soul the latent proclivities of a heaven-born sportsman, and at once acquired by honest purchase a pair of riding boots and breeches. Thus equipped he hied, as was only proper and respectful under the important circumstances, to the well-known great sporting authority amongst us Jews—the one and only Loewenthal, who received the ambitious equestrian most politely, and with all the solemnity the occasion warranted. As a result of this historic interview, Mr. Moss put himself and his noble steed—called Adventurer—into strict training for the next race meeting. That all should go well, he allowed nobody to give advice or share his labours except Loewenthal, so every morning he did his gallops, his sweating, etc., and then rode through the crowded streets of Kimberley, shining above his fellow men (the horse stood 18 hands high), and acclaimed by every white-throated barmaid in the town. The whole-hearted sporting Scotch expert was nearly consulted to death. If the horse coughed, Low was interviewed. If it didn't, Low was interviewed: if it perspired, consultation; bots, consultation. A couple of weeks before the meeting came off, Loewenthal, wearing an anxious face, called on the game and gallant George, and said something like this to him: "George, the more I think of your chance the more I like it." The jockey's face brightened.

"I like it much, and there's only one thing troubles me," added the Caledonian Yid.

Moss looked alarmed and asked what it was.

"Well," replied Loewenthal sagely. "This will be the first time your horse has raced, and I'm very much afraid that the row and the music on the course will frighten it."

George faintly ejaculated, "Do you think so?"

"I do, honest," quoth Moss's mentor, squaring up his mouth, seriously.

"What's to be done?" gasped George.

"Only one thing," advised the expert. "Only one thing."

"And that is?" enquired eagerly the budding sport.

"Why, train him to music," replied Loewenthal decisively.

A look of joy overspread George's features, and in a few minutes the horse was brought from the stable, and Moss, placing the bewildered animal beside the piano, as if it was going to sing, played the blessed instrument for all he was worth for an hour. The erudite and learned Loewenthal then departed, after prescribing for the unfortunate quadruped a morning, mid-day, and evening dose of the mighty orb of music, which medicine was conscientiously ladled out by the untiring Moss. Therefore, Adventurer for breakfast had brilliant "Barber of Seville," long, luscious lullabies from "Lohengrin" for luncheon, delicious dishes for dinner from divine "Dinorah," and so it went on until the date of the race arrived. On that auspicious occasion Moss was on the course early, esquired by his ever faithful friend and adviser. Before fearlessly mounting for the supreme combat, Loewenthal instructed the adventurous rider to tie a bunch of ribbons on the horse's tail, which Moss immediately did. Thus, gaily adorned, amidst great excitement and applause, the gallant George advanced proudly up the racecourse, looking like some gladiator who could, if necessary, die smiling. I grieve to say, however, the Fates were not kind, for Georgie came in a long way last.

It would be a pity to lose sight of that marvellous magician, Mr. 'Arry Barnato, who all this time was fully occupied buying diamonds, saying prayers, and

looking after his partner, whom we will call Mr. Aarons. Mr. Aarons was a highly delectable, very respectable citizen from the East End of London, whose sole claim to fame is the fact that he became the plucky associate of the wonderful wizard, whom I have immortalised in these pages. However, I do not want to idealise or boil Mr. Aarons—only to sketch him. He was chiefly remarkable for being the happy possessor of a prodigious nose and a tiny brain, which, combined with the incomparable 'Arry's long hair, served to establish this eminent firm of diamond experts on a pure and solid basis in this Land of Goshen. They tenanted a rather small office, to be sure; but what would you? The scales were large, and as for the cheque-book—oh, Pickles! In fact, there was nothing so large in that famous abode except Aaron's proboscis, and even that had a purpose—it saved a sign. Now, reader, if you think you deal "mit childrens" you make a mistake. There was a substantial reason for the ostentatious display of that huge cheque-tome. The Cape boys, off-coloured licensed diggers, were always paid by cheque when they sold their "finds," therefore it was assumed by the partners that the sight of a bulky bank-book would inspire confidence by implying that a multiplicity of cheques represented a multiplicity of coins. So thought the Cape boys, and thus among them the famous firm of Isaacs and Co. came to be regarded as surpassing far in riches the other diamond merchants who had smaller volumes of the kind. In fact, the celebrated "house" under review paid everything by cheque. I declare that there is no more beautiful sight than a frigate in full sail, a galloping horse, a maiden dancing, a regiment charging, or, best of all, a little golden-headed child praying. However, every morning, at eight o'clock, as sure as ever was, the highly religious 'Arry, and the no less painfully devout Aarons, would stand like soldiers facing each other, and commence, in quite a matter-of-fact manner (as if shelling green peas), to lay their phylacteries, which ceremony consists of strapping on the left arm and forehead a diminutive leather wallet containing strips of

parchment, on which are inscribed sacred texts of Scripture. Thus 'Arry to Aarons, as they simultaneously clap on their hats, as if in mutual distrust, and open their two small bags to get their tephillen (phylacteries). "Aarons," affirms 'Arry sourly, as he twines his tephilla on his left arm, "you was a fool to give eight pounds for that bit of cleavage this morning." Aarons, on his side, doing the same operation, mumbles in Hebrew, "*Blessed art thou*, etc., etc., etc.," and adds, in reply to his partner, "Was I! A fat lot I care. You're so clever, ain't yer?" 'Arry, who is now placing his tephilla on his forehead, drones:

"*Blessed be His name whose glorious Kingdom is for ever and ever,*" and looking savagely at his Aaronical associate, remarks, "A —— sight cleverer than you, you crack-pot. For my part, you throw in the street a day's work."

Aarons: "*And I will betroth Thee unto me for ever.* I bother myself! Go to ——. Can't you see I'm saying my prayers, calf's head?"

'Arry: "Say them and be damned to you, leaven fowl. *Yea, I will betroth Thee unto me in righteousness.*"

Aarons: "*And in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercy.* Shut your tongue. May you take a double-breasted fit."

'Arry: "*I will ever betroth Thee unto me in faithfulness.* On your own head. If you say that to me again I'll —— well give you a punch on the boko."

Aarons: "*And thou shalt know the Lord.* So help me, I'll dissolve after breakfast, you Momzer. *Amen.*"

'Arry: "*Amen.*"

Now, if any man can prove that such mummery is praying, I'll eat my hat. Nobody reverences religion more than I, but to attempt to gammon Heaven gracefully with an unintelligible gospel gabble is not prayer. Half-a-crown, given to a starving creature, would, I am convinced, land one nearer it. At all events this pretty yarn tends to show how little God thinks of money by the class of people He permits to amass it.

I once went with a friend on his recommendation to stay for a week-end at an hostelry some few miles from

Kimberley, and when, after travelling in a Cape cart, I reached my destination, was surprised to find behind the hotel bar an alluring fairy of the most graceful though *petite* proportions, and gifted to the full with a rare and racy wit suggestive and daring enough to be doubly tempting. Though not dazzlingly handsome, she was a very pretty girl, and had what is called *la beauté du diable*. Her eyes were black as sloes, diamond bright, and contrasted in a ravishing manner with the lovely parted lips which expanded and shut like the petals of an opening crimson flower. My fellow excursionist was double my age, and we, after the luggage had been deposited in our respective rooms, and the numbers of them imparted to us, partook of dinner, and then separated—he to play cards (a pastime seldom indulged in by me), and I to lounge about the inn and ultimately to find my way into the bar graced by the divinity. It may be said now without vanity that in those days I was a good-looking boy, knew it, and dressed myself with extreme care. I speedily got into a spirited and lively conversation with the Wine Goddess. Assisted by the lady, I drank under the influence of her sparkling eyes a fair amount of port wine, and its roseate scintillations made me bolder and bolder.

She responded gamely enough, and as the only way to cure temptation is to yield to it, I pressed my suit like Don Juan. At the finish she made a solemn promise to meet me after the bar was closed outside near a muddy wall erected adjacent to the stables. We were to be careful, as visitors might be about, and if I could not in the darkness quite descry her, I was to whistle, cuckoo-like in a manner the lady indicated, and she would reply. Her sanctum in due course being closed, I wandered towards the trysting place. It was a rather black night, but presently a cloaked figure appeared in the gloom. A female, it certainly looked, but I had to be heedful, so whistled mellifluously. The reply was as true as the dial to the sun, so I advanced cautiously as a cat, and cuckooed a second time. Answered again, I plucked up courage, and had got to within about four yards from my merry maid when, hey

presto! three heads rose simultaneously from behind the wall, and with the active and cordial assistance of the hooded figure I was unmercifully pelted with—no matter, but it wasn't sugar. I ran away as if the devil was after me, and on stopping and examining myself, found my clothes in a fearful state, likewise exhaling an odour not reminiscent of Rimmel. I wandered a wiser, but dirtier youth towards an outhouse, and was lucky enough to find a nigger to do the best he could, and then sneaked towards the hotel, creeping like a burglar to my chamber. The door was locked—locks were not much in those days—and being in a temper, I threw myself against it; it flew open, and inside sure enough was the little butterfly girl and my friend. I had gone to the wrong room. The cloaked figure I had met outside the mud wall and who had pelted me was her companion.

I hastened to my room, and you can imagine was in no hurry to rise the next morning, fearing to be made a laughing-stock, and cursing myself for being trapped. When I did, however, go gingerly to breakfast my man friend had wisely flown, but the luscious peach was spry as a sparrow in the bar looking fresh as watercress after her night's repose. I felt sore, but did not for personal reasons say much, but, as I was departing, whispered softly to her of the roving eye:—

"That was too bad what you 'got up' for me last night."

"I don't know what you mean," she said, laughing merrily.

"No? Ah! But I don't care!" I rejoined recklessly.

"Nor I," she replied.

CHAPTER VI

A Soldier of Fortune—J. B. Robinson—Sweeny Todd—A Strange Hobby—Erin Abroad—Lord Rossmore—A Peer and his Poultry.

DIGBY WILLOUGHBY, who afterwards had a command in Basutoland, and subsequently became commander-in-chief to Her Dusky Majesty of Madagascar, I met in these early days. I can see him now as I first saw the gay spark cross the road in the Main Street; a tall, thin, handsome man, with clean-cut features, and black moustache. He was particularly noticeable on this occasion, as he was accompanied by his wife, a decidedly pretty woman, although her face was marked with a huge scar, which defect, however, rather added to than detracted from her winning charm. Later on she acted in Kimberley with great success, and when I came home in 1883 she "starred" at the old Gaiety Theatre, also appearing in "Lady Clare" at the Globe, in the green-room of which now demolished house I called on her one evening. Of Willoughby I shall have lots to tell anon. The last time I saw him, some two years ago, was at Lyons's bar in Throgmorton Street, where we had a drink together and spoke of old times and faces. He died shortly afterwards, but my drink did not kill him. Willoughby had a unique character; a gentleman, he was as brave as a lion, possessed most sublime audacity, and had such a whole-hearted belief in himself that one only remembers the childishness of it in thinking of his extravagant vanity. However, among the flabby members of a society, in this Land of Parvenus, rotten to the core, Digby Willoughby was conspicuous by being quite unlike the majority of them.

Of course, in the Craven Club, Kimberley, there were

many highly respected and decent men, such as Rhodes, Lynch, Beit, Wernher, Mège, King, and a score of others. Very few Jews were members, perhaps two or three, and in choosing these the committee were highly diplomatic, for it is a well-known fact that once elect a trio of Semites, and they will move heaven and earth to keep out their co-religionists. Take, for instance, that highly aristocratic swell, Mr. Montague Davis, at one time a fancy goods merchant's assistant (Silber and Fleming), then an outfitter's (Fisher's, Cape Town), and afterwards a digger in Du Toit's Pan, where he was lucky enough to acquire some claims. These this son of toil put in a company called the Anglo-African, promoted by Lewis and Marks, and coming back to England, as a result, with some thousands, the city of London couldn't hold him. He swaggered down Regent Street as resplendent as Turveydrop, displaying conspicuously a cambric handkerchief adorned with a ducal coronet of magnificent proportions—M.D. in a laurel wreath, surmounted by a golden crown. People wondered whether it meant Montague Davis or Medical Doctor, in memory of his scientific dad. But to come back to the Craven Club. I had almost forgotten to mention the important fact that the great and eventually powerful J. B. Robinson was, to the admiration of mankind, and, for the matter of that, womankind, a member of this important institution. Sour visaged and unsympathetic, he looked as yellow as a bad apple, and green with spleen like a leek. Before the financier came to Kimberley he was an honest Free State trader in the Boer winkle and wool-buying vocation, which two professions combined are sometimes called Boer verneuking. (If you don't believe me, ask Leopold Albu, who swears when he is knighted he will call himself Lord Verneuker—with Robinson's permission.) There are some interesting tales told of J. B. R.'s business acumen whilst trading with the Boers. If I had space to narrate them you would not think that grand people are always great. Robinson was never a popular man with anybody in Kimberley; he had no personality, no magnetism, but resembled a mortal who had a

tombstone on his soul. As for charity, nobody ever connected his name with that, for he belonged to those kind of folks who are ready enough to act the Samaritan if it costs them nothing. Notwithstanding that he looked cold as a fish, there was no denying his admiration for the fair sex in those salad days. But surely languorous love could hardly be expected to take up its abode in his uninviting heart and body, and if he did run after the petticoats that's no proof of love; besides, when he chased 'em he didn't always catch 'em. I call to mind when he was Colonel of the Diamond Field Horse, and I a trooper in the same regiment, how fond he was of parading us, and getting salutes, and giving them for all the world as if he had a winkle again and we all cheap wool to sell. There is no doubt he is a great soldier, as mercenary as Marlborough, as cold as Wellington, as ambitious as Napoleon, as greedy as Blucher, and as patriotic as Keir Hardie. He conquered the world of wool, and now he can't look a sheep in the face. It is a wonder, too, courageous Colonel, considering your predilection for a military life, you did not rush to the front during the late African War and emulate the deeds of George Farrar, who, as enemies and friends will admit, richly deserved his knighthood. A more gallant man the campaign did not produce. You, Sir J. B. R., not only failed to show us your fighting powers, but never put hands in pocket except to buy a halfpenny paper to read something about your precious self, your expensive routs, your aristocratic visitors, and your learned and far-seeing orations, which last, between you and me, show you as an ignoramus of sheeplike simplicity. What about your speeches re the deep-levels of mines in Johannesburg, when you denounced the whole theory as an invention of swindlers? You didn't expect everybody to be as wise as wool-winklers, did you? But for all your great strategy, Barney and Beit—to say nothing of Rhodes—made cat's meat out of you, and a life governorship of De Beers, your great ambition, you never obtained. *Vous voyez*, they wanted to shear the lamb all to themselves, and having a great respect for J. B. R. as a

wool-winkler, they probably thought that when the selling or buying took place you might manipulate the scales with your feet, as dear old Ikey Sonnenberg was wont to do when he was in the same trade as yourself. Then, Mr. Robinson, I mustn't forget old Dr. Pantaloon Pry, your chief adviser, a really wicked specimen of the *genus homo*. He is alive yet, but very venerable. I believe he'll live for ever. No doubt, we will meet again, Sir J. B. Robinson; in the meantime, I do not know how to say anything more affectionate than that I wish you may be always what you are.

Being one day on the outskirts of Kimberley, and noticing that a brand new barber's shop had been opened, I entered the portals of same to have a shave, for, young as I was, a "scrape" was necessary sometimes. The saloon was small, and smelt of undried paint; there was a picture of the Crucifixion on the right side of the walls, and on the left another representing the execution of Charles the First. On a form sat a big man, eating bread, cheese, and an onion, which commodities he cut with a huge clasp knife, and by his side on its haunches, watching with great interest his master's masticatory operations, glared a mongrel brown bull bitch, which growled ominously as I entered. The Knight of the Razor, for so the occupant proved to be, was a grim muscular fellow, with a black beard, who looked more like a village blacksmith than a barber.

"Down, Lass!" said he to his canine companion, as he rose, and wiping a pair of brawny hands upon his apron, said curtly to me in a rough and deep voice, "Shave?"

I must say I felt some misgivings, but having already seated myself in the operating chair there was no alternative but to submit, inasmuch as the professor had almost garrotted me with a towel.

"Hot or cold?" he inquired.

"Hot, please," I replied meekly.

"Right oh," he answered. "Away we go."

As far as I was personally concerned, I wished most fervently and ardently I had never come, more especially

when he dashed on my face an almost boiling concoction of soap and water, as if he were scalding a pig.

"For Heaven's sake," I exclaimed, "what are you doing? It's too hot!"

"Why didn't you say so before?" responded the barber, as if I ought to have anticipated the torture.

"It's A 1 now," he added, encouragingly, pouring out all the hot water and refilling the mug with cold.

"That's to your fancy, isn't it?" the artist remarked, as he put the cold lather on my throat. I felt as if I was taking a plunge after a Turkish bath.

"Now, which way will you have it?" queried the professor, brandishing a formidable razor in one hand and seizing my nose with the other.

"Not close," I grunted, thinking of home.

"That's all right; but what style?" he questioned.

"Style—any," I replied, as if it were all the same to me.

"Well," continued my friend, speaking quickly. "You can have it the English, the Roosian, the Proosian, or the Portugee. I know 'em all to my finger ends. Say the word."

"English," I answered, but not enthusiastically.

"All serene!" My accomplished friend poised his right hand, as if he were about to do an acrobatic feat, then, pouncing upon me, drew the razor across my cheek. My Godfather! it was as bad as having a tooth out. I uttered an exclamation, squirmed, and quickly drew my head away.

"What," ejaculated the man, "you don't like that style? Try another—how will you have it?" I felt inclined to say with chloroform, but didn't dare; instead of which, half-rising from my seat, said excusingly and consolingly, "I'll call again to-morrow."

"Nonsense!" heartily and reassuringly rejoined my tormentor, as he pulled me back in the chair. "Not before you've tried the Portugee." With that, as quick as a flash, his blade was on my other cheek, and I did not move for fear of being cut. But the Portugee was worse than the English, and after one rasping stroke I

sprang up thoroughly alarmed, and exclaimed angrily, "I'll have no more of it."

"Try the Roosian," invitingly suggested the professor.

"No, thankee, not to-day. I've an appointment," I replied, making a movement towards a basin to remove the lather from my face. I never got there, for the man stood threateningly in front of me, with the razor, like Aaron's rod, in his hand. I despairingly glanced round; but got no consolation from the pictures on the wall, that of Charles the First possessing for me only a mournful interest, quite in keeping with my present position.

"What nonsense is this?" I asked, plucking up courage.

"It's this: you don't leave until you've given me a chance. You want to ruin my business. Come, try the Proosian mode." The very thought of such an operation made me shiver and shake like a pawnbroker's sign on a windy day. I did not know what to do, until Providence sent a coolie woman into the shop with some fruit like a ray of sunshine. Sweeny Todd turned to see who it was, when quickly I darted into the street, half lathered, without hat or coat, and the cursed brown demon of a dog running, sniffing, and barking at my heels. I was stopped by a Boer policeman, and together we returned to the tonsorial artist's shop.

Said the barber to the zarp, as I wiped my face, and got my hat, "I shaved him in two separate styles—English and Portugee—and because he's young and tender, the foolish fellow wanted to rush into the street and ruin me. And he's the first customer I've had here." I had indeed found something.

About this time an American introduced a kind of cradle (a wooden box placed upon rockers and manipulated by a handle) for dealing with the huge heaps of débris which were lying all round the mines, and Alf Abrahams, to whom the machines were introduced, was plucky enough to buy twelve. These he let out to unsuccessful diggers and poor Boers free of charge on condition he had the first refusal of their finds. The

débris in the initial instance having been handled carelessly and unskilfully now gave good results, and at times yielded more than the virgin claims which were very expensive to work. But, between you and me, I had my doubts, as the Scotchmen say, whether all the spotless gems supposed to have been found in these ingenious cradles came there as naturally and guiltlessly (sometimes) as the innocent human habitants of those recognised nursery receptacles of the same name.

Nearly everyone has a hobby. Some men like fishing and females, others gardening and gee-gees, cricket and cookery, football and flirting, boozing and boxing, or atmology and actresses. All of which is nothing to do with the fact that away down in Du Toit's Pan lived an individual named George Kilgour, manager of the Bulfontein Mining Company. He was an awful swell in his way, a gentleman to his finger tips. Now, Mr. Kilgour had one herculean hobby—atmospherics; he was indeed a flatulent enthusiast, and only lived for wind and water. His house was full of atmological appliances; compasses galore, thermometers, miniature windmills, an atmometer, a rain gauge, a wind gauge, and a wind pump. If he met a friend he would not ask "How's your health?" but "How's your wind?"; nor would he say, "to take fresh air," but "to take fresh wind." No sooner of a morning was he out of bed than, after glancing at his instruments, he would, in pyjamas, step outside, and with telescopes, glasses, etc., examine the clouds as if he had friends up there, and was anxious as to their welfare. Then he would flit back to his room for further examination, feeling as certain of his atmospherical researches as a pink pimpernel or windcopipe—those two flowery prophets of the weather. But all the time this flatulence-loving fellow was looking in the wind's eye, the merry optics of three mischievous neighbouring companions were fixed in anticipatory enjoyment on the victim of their interesting calculations. So, one dark night, while Kilgour was at his club, the trio of congenial conspirators carried out their fell design. Having easily effected an entrance into the house, they calmly and deliberately commenced their tricks.

One interfered with the compasses and deposited sand in the wind pump, another introduced water in the rain gauge, and, mounting to the wind gauge, indicated a hurricane, and the merry three concluded their midnight labours by lighting a match and putting it on the atmometer. The next morning Kilgour was out early with a puzzled look on his face as he hopped to and fro consulting the instruments, which implied one thing while the atmosphere denoted another. Deeply concerned, he passed his hand over a contracted brow to the huge glee and enjoyment of his three young friends next door, who soon, unseen by him, with their fingers to their noses, scampered off to business, leaving the bewildered Kilgour waxing profane and intensely introspective, with a telescope glued to his left eye, and embarrassingly examining with great determination the four cardinal points of the heavens.

God made bonny men when He created good Irishmen, and it is sad to think that there are so few of this genial breed in Ireland, and so many in America. On the other hand, it is to be confessed that when He made them bad, He made them very bad. Let me say, I love an Irishman with his open hospitable nature, happy wit, and unbelievable bravery which has astounded the world, and altered its history. Who can but admire them in remembering as with the bitterness and blight of Cromwell on them they held their lives as nought under Sarsfield. Who cannot, whilst perhaps bewailing their choice, applaud those gallant Paddies charging with Clare and Dillon at Fontenoy, and shattering the British host. Who, again, can ever tire of hearing of the dauntless Connaught Rangers in the Peninsula War, where for nothing a day they fought for the country which at that time certainly oppressed them, and took to Hell or Heaven on a moment's notice their regimental numbers. Read of them at Waterloo, sustaining hour after hour the onslaught of the veterans of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena, and then smashing them up. To come to later campaigns—the Boer War—what could be finer than the dash at Pieter's Hill of the heroic two hundred sons of the Emerald Isle, who raced their way to glory—

and forgetfulness. Let it be admitted that England owes a lot to the Irish, the Jews, and the Fleet—bravery, money, power.

Rather later than this period there came to the Diamond Fields the present Lord Rossmore on a visit to his brother, the Hon. Peter Westenra, and another fraternal member of this family resident in Du Toit's Pan, whose Christian name I forget. These last two I knew very well, especially Peter, whom I met afterwards in London. I will make bold to say that three handsomer, gayer-hearted, more generous chaps never came out of Ireland to show the Colonies the stuff Green Erin breeds. Of the trio Lord Rossmore took the palm for looks and manners, and was better than a lord—he was a very fine fellow. Tall, with a lithe, graceful figure, he seemed just the kind of man to make a hole in a woman's heart, and to be staunch and true to his friends. The sunniest of optimists, he was the very embodiment of fun and high spirits, the essence of which lived and sparkled in his merry eyes. I must, however, confess my first conversation with him somewhat disappointed me. He was staying at Alexandersfontein, the name of a farm situated a few miles from Kimberley, and on which was erected a hotel kept by Mrs. Bisset, her daughter, Maggie, and her sons. With him was the redoubtable Captain Hinton, who, like Tom Moore, dearly loved a lord. Well, his lordship had expressed a wish to purchase a diamond, and Hinton had asked me if I would buy one for his friend. Attracted by the appearance of Rossmore, I gladly undertook the commission, and one morning bought for twenty pounds a fine four carat glassy stone, and, mounting my pony, rode to Alexandersfontein. When I drew bridle there, the two men were walking about a cabbage garden, and Hinton introduced me to his lordship in that offhand manner peculiar to some of the "milingtary." Now, I had made up my mind not to make a shilling profit on my purchase, and after some introductory remarks, I showed Lord Rossmore the stone, which he handled, as amateurs will, gingerly as if it were a hot coal.

"What do you want for it?" he enquired.

"Twenty pounds, your lordship," I answered.

A hopeless puzzled expression came over his frank and open face as he gazed enquiringly at the invincible martinet of Madeira.

"Oh," put in the "Capting," feeling bound, in exchange for a nobleman's friendship, to do something anti-Semitic in honour of his regiment and the aristocracy in particular. "Oh, Cohen, I suppose that means fourteen or fifteen pounds. I know," he sagely added, bobbing his black-haired head.

"Yes," echoed Rossmore, looking as if he'd now quite mastered the intricacies of the diamond trade. "That's it, fourteen or fifteen."

I turned red, rather abruptly took my diamond from the Irish nobleman, and, jumping on my pony, said as I rode away:

"Thank you. Your lordship couldn't buy it for double now. Good day." (I may mention that on my road back I sold the stone in Du Toit's Pan for thirty pounds.)

You see, it was this way the gallant "Captain" thought that he would show Lord Rossmore that he knew how to treat Hebrews, who were only fit, as the legend goes, to borrow money from.

There is no doubt that Lord Rossmore enjoyed himself hugely during his diamondiferous sojourn, and I do not know any visitor who ever became quite so general a favourite. Surely the novelist, Charles Lever, must have had such a figure in his mind's eye when he sketched some of his rollicking Irishmen. One fine night, or rather morning, about two o'clock, his lordship and a couple of friends thought a drive from Alexandersfontein into Du Toit's Pan under the starry canopy a good idea, so they inspanned horses to Rossmore's cape cart, and away the three jolly souls went, helter-skelter over ruts, boulders, and the devil knows what. On arriving at "The Pan" they drove up to an hotel and found it closed, but what is a closed hotel to the descendants of the men who defended Drogheda? So his lordship broke a window, and the trio, clambering into the wine bar, regaled themselves with a bottle of champagne and

drank toasts to the glory of Ireland. After finishing the "fizz" Rossmore left a note on the counter saying he had taken it and enjoyed it very much. (I believe that the proprietor has that note to this day, and treasures it.) Once more in the open, at the imminent risk of their necks, they drove madly back to Alexandersfontein at a pace that Pretty Polly would have envied. Arriving safely, the driver managed to send the shafts of the cart into one of the canvas houses which were used as bedrooms and located around the principal building. Near there they outspanned, caught a plump fowl, roasted it, and feeling thirsty broke into the canteen belonging to the hotel and took another bottle of champagne. Then the dear fellows went to bed and dreamt of home and beauty. At the usual matutinal hour Miss Margaret Bisset, fresh and beautiful as the glorious morn itself, tripped gaily to her household duties. On going into the yard, however, a look of dismay overspread her pretty features, as she stood transfixed with horror at the scene in front, for there before her lay the dead ensanguined bodies of all the cocks and hens belonging to the happy homestead. It was like a birdy battle of Blenheim. They reclined in all positions, dignified and undignified, some with their scaly legs cocked rigidly in the air, some with no heads, and some with no tails. At once she knocked timidly at the bedroom occupied by one of the best-known and wildest spirits of the early morning. He came out in his pyjamas, and the fair young lady, lowering her eyes like a nun at the sight of a statue, exclaimed:

"My goodness! Mr. So-and-So, see what you've done! It's a shame!" Mr. So-and-So passed his hand wearily across has aching forehead, blinked, wondered what he hadn't done, and tried to remember.

"I really don't know what you mean, Miss—until I've had a whisky and soda," he replied, apologetically, and then accused the heat.

"Well, you'd better come and see!" she answered, and added, "Ma will be cross, and no mistake." The accused stepped outside, and when he saw the sanguinary field, quite anticipated that Ma would be cross.

"But I didn't do it?" he queried despairingly.

"I don't know, I'm sure," answered Miss Bisset curtly, as she skipped away.

So-and-So, hoping it was all a dream, hied himself to Rossmore's room and awakened that nobleman, who at once sat bolt up in bed.

"Rossmore," exclaimed So-and-So, fearfully, "they're all dead—killed!"

"Who?" questioned his lordship, yawning.

"Why the cocks and hens!"

A ray of intelligence came over the handsome Irishman's face, followed by a look of ineffable satisfaction as he ejaculated:

"I killed 'em."

"But, Rossmore, there'll be a devil of a row."

"Can't be more than there was last night," responded his lordship, gravely shaking his head, as if doubting such a possibility.

"I don't understand," responded So-and-So.

"Well, you see, it's this way," slowly explained the peer, caressing his broad chest. "When I went to bed last night, or rather at sunrise, I had scarcely shut my tired eyes when a shrill-voiced rooster began to crow as if the world was at an end. Now that isn't proper when a fellow wants to sleep, is it? Be fair. I said to the thing," continued his lordship, as if this explanation made him a martyr, "I said to the thing, 'Shut up!' but, of course," put in the *debonnair* Celt, opening his eyes wide as if astonished at the bird's temerity, "of course, he wouldn't. I warned him time after time, but all I got was, 'Cock-a-doodle-do!' " he added mournfully. "Now, where was I? that's what I want to know. I couldn't allow him to keep on insulting me, so got out of bed, took down my gun, and saying, 'take that, you ——!' shot him inside out, and," concluded Erin's son decisively, "curse the fool."

"But that's only one!" interrupted Rossmore's visitor.

"Ah!" replied his lordship eagerly, as if he'd made a point at cribbage. "Now we're coming to it. I had hardly got to bed again when an avenging rooster did

'Cock-a-doodle-do!' worse than his brother, and as loud as Patti sings, so I served him the same way. After that the whole brood got up a confounded 'Cock-a-doodle-do!' conspiracy against me, so I cleared the entire bally lot out. And that's all," concluded Lord Rossmore, languidly, as, unconcernedly he pulled the bed-clothes over his head and the angels guarded his sleep.

Naturally, when Mrs. Bisset ascertained the dire calamity which had overtaken her sacred poultry yard, she made a great ado, for few people like to see their cocks and hens relentlessly murdered in the silent hours. In vain Lord Rossmore explained, with most charming naïveté, that his exploit was the outcome of pure courtesy and chivalry, following the fashion of his country. The dame remained unconsolable and uncharitable, and really got very angry when a wag remarked it was the Lord's will. At length peace was made, the merry sportsman paying the full price for the fallen fowls, and after giving compensation for the many bullet holes in the canvas houses, his lordship lit a cigar, put his hands in his pockets, and avowed a fixed, unalterable, and unchangeable determination to take the dead birds round Du Toit's Pan on his pony and sell them. However, after some discussion with concerned companions, he suddenly changed his mind, and said he'd have a funeral and a burial, but ultimately presented his bag of game to the hostess, who accepted them as a feathered peace offering of the most substantial kind. But Rossmore, his friends, and the other innocent boarders had not yet heard the last of the slain birds, and though retribution came on the guilty one, as is the way of the world in this life, the innocent suffered, too, for it is sad to relate that for weeks afterwards nothing was seen on the hotel tables at breakfast, tiffen, or dinner, but poultry. They had roast fowls, boiled fowls, stewed fowls, curried fowls, minced fowls, devilled fowls, and grilled fowls. Hot fowls, cold fowls, and parboiled fowls. Some of the boarders averring that poultry did not harmonise with their palates, preferred to live on the smell of the cooking, but as total abstainers as far as the flesh was

concerned. Others scampered off to Du Toit's Pan, and a few of the most timid fled to the hills.

The night before Lord Rossmore and his brothers left the Diamond Fields, they and their friends had a choice, select, and glorious spree. Life looked young and beautiful to them, as to the music of sparkling wine their hearty laughter added a triumphant chorus. Ah, these fleeting moments of happiness which in after years leave behind them only the bitter regret that they can never come again. "No more, no more, Oh, never more on me the freshness of the heart can fall like dew." Nevertheless, these warm, dead summers are grimly pleasant to remember in the cold winter of our lives. It was indeed a merry party, and it must be related, in strict accordance with fact, that in the wild fun which followed this jovial meeting, that Captain Paddy Rolleston—a splendid fellow—accidentally hit the Honourable Peter Westenra in the eye with a stone. At the end of the jollification the conveyance arrived which was to take the Rossmores to Cape Town, and the Boer driver of the coach, who was duly impressed with the importance of the Hon. Peter Westenra, wishing to show he knew how to address such an august personage as a peer's brother, asked Peter deferentially, with a great show of anxious concern, "How's your *honourable* eye this morning?"

CHAPTER VII

A Mail Cart Robbery—A Kimberley Magistrate—The Special Court—Macneumann—Sport—Coursing—"Extraordinary Charge"—Paddy's Proposal.

ONE of the earliest robberies planned was perpetrated on the mail-cart which left Kimberley weekly for Cape Town, carrying huge parcels of diamonds for shipment to England. The first outspan station after leaving the Fields was at the Modder River Hotel (a place of entertainment for man and beast, kept by a Mrs. Barry), where the conveyance stopped to change cattle. The horses, to reach it, had to be driven across the river, and it appears that whilst the stream was at low water ropes were laid in such a manner that the team would be tripped up in crossing it. This is what happened, and during the confusion caused by the falling and struggling animals, the diamonds, worth many thousands of pounds, were stolen. Later on the husband of the landlady was sentenced to seven years' hard labour.

I remember that after Scholtz, the Kimberley magistrate, had committed suicide, and his successor had gone to Australia with somebody's wife, there was appointed —why, and heaven knows by whom—a sapient and learned Solomon called McKenna. He had been a sergeant or inspector of police, and his claim to the magistracy was the substantial fact that he had gone to Australia and brought back Lyons—not the roaring kings of the forest, but an old fellow much over sixty, who had committed some trivial offence against the Diamond Act. McKenna was an exceedingly ignorant man, and when at first he sat on the bench wriggled about as if hot bricks were underneath him, so uncomfortable was the judicial saddle. As days went by, how-

ever, his "washup" got more accustomed to the loftiness of his exalted position, but at all times a Latin quotation upset Shallow's equilibrium.

"*Salus populi suprema est lex,*" perhaps a mischievous practitioner would orate when defending a client, and then old Mac would lean wisely forward, with hand to ear, as if determined by all means that are holy not to lose a word of a quotation which was worse than double Dutch to him. "*Quod erat demonstrandum,*" if forcibly declaimed, would make the magisterial magnate hurriedly agree with the learned limb of the law, which was very good policy, considering he couldn't deny what he knew nothing about. The first word, "quod" (by Ginger!) he understood, pricking up his red ears as if he were a terrier, and somebody had shouted "rats." All the same, the utterance of the distressful quotation probably meant a month's extra "quod" for the unlucky prisoner. McKenna admitted having an inborn antipathy to the descendants of Mordecai, and his judicial soul was fully convinced, past redemption, that every Jew, if he wasn't Jack Sheppard, ought to be. Occasionally, this erudite authority would shock the legal firmament with a meteoric flight of genius, quite startling in its brilliancy and effect. Understand, he was determined that if his tormentors gave him nasty Latin, he would give them new-born law. And he did. There resided in Kimberley, Mr. Thomas Lowinsky, at present a partner in the firm of Hirsch Bros., stockbrokers, Throgmorton Street. At the time of which I am writing, Lowinsky had a jeweller's shop in the Main Street, and as well as being one of the handsomest men in Kimberley, was universally liked and esteemed by all who came in contact with him. Well, to further his jewellery business, Thomas got up a public lottery of some kind in his store, and when the news was brought to the saintly and scholarly McKenna, he, ever watchful over the morals of the mobility, put on his considering cap and dived deep in the recesses of the criminal code. So much so, that in the fulness of time the harmless Lowinsky was called upon to appear before Mac's dread presence. When the day of the trial

arrived, armed with some musty law books, McKenna took his seat on the bench with a look of triumph on his rubicund face, which plainly said "socks." In giving judgment, McKenna, assuming the earnestness of a Carson, the solemnity of a Mathews, the wisdom of a Gill, launched his thunderbolt. Great Scott! he had been reading in some old Roman-Dutch law books, left by Noah to his grandmother at the time of the flood, that lotteries were illegal. The legal luminary, in summing up, said something like this: "Van Rixen, Vol. II., likewise De Ruyter and Van Tromp. Hey diddle, diddle, diddle; fol de rol de riddle. Likewise cucumbers. The sentence of the court is that you are fined forty shillings or *twenty-five lashes*." Oh, Lawks!

It will readily be believed that although statuesque as to the appearance of his head, McKenna was no high-flyer at either grammar or syntax. When he was first addressed on the bench as "your washup," it is recorded with historical accuracy that he tried to appear quite unconcerned and as if he had been christened in that name. Then a reaction came over his dull visage, and he glanced quickly fore and aft to see if anybody was laughing. One man, however, dropped a book, and Mac, at once seizing the opportunity of showing the bar in particular and the world in general that he understood all legal procedure, looked sternly and severely at the delinquent, and fiercely exclaimed:

"Order in Coort!" as he rapped the desk with his pipe stem. After that Mac gazed around, as if to say "What do you think of that? and why don't you applaud so that I might have an opportunity of authoritatively exclaiming, 'If there is any disturbance in the coort I shall have it cleared! This is not a theater'?" Heroic and quite up-to-date. I do not think this august magistrate ever got used to the seat which he adorned only from a physical point of view, his one fixed idea being, through no fault of his own, that every human being, black, white, or coffee-coloured, who stepped into the dock was a first-class criminal. If ever he chose to be facetious, which was rare, he would look wickedly at the policeman who did not cheer

his attempt at humour with the prompt payment of a laugh. On taking his place of a morning, profoundly solemn and stately, he would say to the zarp on duty:

"Bring in them biys, the lot" (boys). In a few minutes four or five half-naked, trembling niggers were pushed into the dock, Mac eyeing them with his hypnotic stare as if they all had done him some personal and unforgivable injury, or as if the mantle of Judge Jeffreys had fallen on his shoulders, and he felt the soul of that much-lamented judge burning within a swelling breast. Then probably, he would exclaim, after hearing the charge, "Drunk. Certainly. I fine the lot forty shillings or seven days."

"But, your washup," humbly interrupted one conscientious bobby, "one of them is charged with sheep stealing!" Old Mac gasped at this indecent interruption of the sacred law's Instrument, and fixing the zarp with his stern left optic, thought a minute, and then ejaculated: "Is he? It doesn't matter. Take him away, re-charge him, and bring him before me to-morrow!"

Dr. Patrick Hardman Graham (peace to his ashes) was a splendid Irishman, who, after carrying all before him at Trinity College, came from Dublin to Kimberley for the purpose of practising as a barrister, which he did for many years. Unfortunately, for an advocate (though sound as a bell in law), he had a bad delivery, and stuttered and stammered in speaking, but for all that, as an exponent of repartee, he was *facile princeps*, and few of the *beaux esprits* cared to cross swords with the brilliant, genial, devil-may-care, whole-hearted doctor. He was exceedingly popular with everybody, and I rejoice to say one of my greatest friends. In addition to practising at the High Court he became editor of the "Diamond Field," a Kimberley newspaper, on which journal I later on worked with him for a considerable time. I have to thank the departed gentleman for many things. Of an evening he and I would sit on the verandah of Mrs. Jardine's Queen's Hotel smoking, drinking, and chatting until the early

morn. One night, on reaching his domicile, the worthy lawyer found it turned almost inside out, one of his native servants having got drunk, run amuck, smashed the furniture, and finished up by assaulting the other menials. The man becoming uncontrollable, there was nothing for Graham to do but to send to the adjacent police station for assistance, and in a short time the destroyer of the doctor's domestic chattels was in durance vile. On the way to make his charge Graham chanced to meet the impeccant and important McKenna going on one of his nightly magisterial marches. Naturally, the barrister told him of the bother, at which, as is only right and proper, old Mac gasped and swelled with intense indignation that such a dire offence should be committed so close to the law courts, and so near his August Presence. The next morning the prisoner was brought before the beak, who looked like a prophetic owl, and as wise as if he'd swallowed Shakespeare. "Are you guilty or not guilty?" severely queried McKenna in a despotic tone, as if daring the poor wretch to say he wasn't. "If you please, sir——" whimpered the quaking culprit. "Not another word," thundered the magnificent McKenna. "I heard all about it last night. Two months' hard labour."

Another case occurred, when a white man had been trapped into selling two niggers a bottle of liquor. The detectives had disguised themselves and beheld the deal, but one of them was uncertain which of the natives was the purchaser. To the high and mighty Mac this was pure treason, and he glowered at the deponent with the glare of an angry vulture.

"Me man," he said, angrily, beating the arm of his chair with his fat, coarse hand, "what do you mean by that? I never could forget a face if I hadn't seen it for twenty years. Next witness, please!" he cried, dismissing the careless constable with contumely. There and then stepped into the box an Irish policeman in plain clothes, and as full of brogue as of wit. McKenna bent forward and regarded him as an auctioneer might look at some article to appraise its value. "And who are you?" queried this astounding beak. "Ah, shure, you

ought to know, for bedad I was in the police force for many years wid you."

It will hardly be credited that when a special court of three judges was instituted to try I.D.B. cases the sagacious McKenna was selected as one of them. Now, considering that this court had the power to pass sentences of ten years or more, it seems a gross and flagrant mistake that so unsuitable a person should have been chosen for such an important and responsible position. It is, or it was, a well-known fact that never in this court has merciful Mac been known to give a favourable vote for a prisoner. When the other two judges' verdict was "guilty" he would snap out like lightning, "I agree," but if, on the other hand, his colleagues voted "not guilty," a mournful look at once visited Mac's face, and, shaking his head, like Lord Burleigh, he would splutter, "I'm sorry I can't agree." But, was he?

Up to this time, strange to say, there was hardly a personality of prominence showing on the financial horizon. Wernher had scarcely left Mége, in whose employment he had been as clerk. This was before he entered Porges's service, where he and Beit were engaged in a like capacity. Previous to emigrating to South Africa Sir Julius Wernher, I understand, had been schoolmaster (or in some other genteel capacity) at a college in Germany, where the boys were taught everything except how to make diamonds—a Lemoine's services would have been too expensive. It is pleasant to mention that Sir Julius in Kimberley was highly respected and distinguished for his integrity, modesty, and urbanity. Silent and self-contained, he interfered in nobody's business but his own. The same must be said of the late Mr. Beit—a nicer man one never met. Sigismund Neumann, before he joined Martin Lillienfeld, was also a clerk in Kimberley to Litkie—a very agreeable person—who, as well as being a diamond buyer, had an interest in a large jewellery business. As there is a lot of watch-winding in every jeweller's store, as well as pins, rings, chains, etc., it is possible this slight experience became useful in the future in winding up corporations, ringing new companies in, and old

companies out, like the new year, pinning the public to African Farms, or chaining them to Cloverfields. It is no wonder, posing among his treasury of propositions, Sigismund stands out pre-eminently as Knight Central of going concerns.

At all events, there is no doubt that Neumann, from his first appearance on the Diamond Fields' stage, was a huge success, and as a diamond buyer was considerably applauded and appreciated. When he made his introductory bow in the character of a company promoter, he did so before a crowded and enthusiastic audience, which predicted great things of him—his Wolhuter at one time was manifestly a "fust" class article, but now does not stand so high. It should be nursed back to financial fecundity by gentle handling. Modderfontein is, however, his star part; his Treasury, though nicely and promisingly named, was distinctly disappointing. As a Knight Central he was stately and sublime, but expensively depressing, whilst he almost went one worse in African Farms, which only grew what you couldn't eat. It is difficult to describe Cloverfields, there being a doubt whether this play is farce or drama; but on its first performance a long queue of people, with pockets ponderous with pounds, waited in Throgmorton Street until the early doors were opened, and the oof bird commenced to sing. I cannot, to be honest, say it was a real success, though sundry critics declared the creation petrified all the performers who had anything to do with it, and stated some interested persons at this initial performance were so affected by the pathos of the tragedy that they cried for their money back, and then cried again because they didn't get it. Others formed a deputation, which was welcomed with affability, but ultimately told to go to Bokhara in three separate languages. The Bavarian for Bokhara was fairly intelligible, the English of same faintly so; yet, when the "chiel," desirous of giving them a little Scotch, attempted it in Gaelic, the effort was an utter failure. He got as far as "Gang ye awa' to——" then stumbled, and substituted another word somewhat phonetically like it; but painfully different in meaning.

However, taking one thing with another, Mr. Neumann has nothing to complain about. Rich, respected, and popular, he boasts, or boasted, an estate in the land of Bruce, which he bought from Farquhar, and where, adored by the ghillies for his generosity and genealogy, he is known as "The Mac Neumann," though he does not wear a kilt for fear of the wind. This Caledonian demesne is situated about a mile from Balmoral, and when a certain August Personage of glorious memory dwelt at a particular castle, MacNeumann made a fresh road to shorten the distance between the two estates. At that time Neumann's greatest and most laudable ambition was to get the Royalty to visit his domain, and, after much intrigue and plodding perseverance, succeeded, for on one auspicious occasion the August Personage condescended to take a cup of tea with the highly-honoured proprietor. It is whispered that during the few minutes the Sovereign stayed there the Majesty remarked to the perturbed host:

"Sie sind ein Baier." ("You are a Bavarian.") Neumann comes from Munich.

To which the flustered Mac, thinking of his shares, and mixing up buyer and Baier, replied:

"Not at these prices, Your Majesty."

Up to about 1877 game was plentiful near Kimberley. As a matter of fact there were often herds of buck to be seen between the former place and Du Toit's Pan, consequently some very good sport was to be had free gratis and for nothing. Springbok, blesbok, steinbok abounded, and there was also excellent bird shooting. Coran, a sort of turkey buzzard, partridge, plover, pau, which last, in flocks of hundreds, each morning hovered over the pans (huge ponds) to drink the waters. I have known a man, by letting off both barrels, bring down thirty at a time, so numerous were these birds. There hares abounded, too; but in the whole of South Africa there wasn't a single rabbit, as we know them in England, except the indigenous rock species, a dark brown specimen, with long hind legs. I must mention, however, that on Robbin Island, near Cape Town, where lepers and lunatics are lodged, the governor of this

Paradise had private shooting grounds, and had imported some of the right sort of rodents for his especial diversion. There were also ostriches about, but the penalty for shooting these long-necked johnnies was five pounds. Apropos, too, there was a substantial fine inflicted on the destroyer of the useful secretary bird. This feathered fellow's special function on earth is to kill snakes. The bird, swooping upon the serpent and seizing it by the neck, would fly a good distance up, then drop the reptile, quickly coming down to repeat the operation again and again until the snake gave up the ghost. A bit hard on the last-named, you must confess, to be taken heavenwards, only to descend more rapidly.

In Kimberley in the brilliant days there were some fair horses and a considerable amount of racing went on; but the principal sport was coursing with greyhounds after buck—mostly steinbok. I went out half-a-dozen times, but the veldt was very unsafe, and one morning my pony put his foot in a merecat hole, broke his leg, and nearly broke my neck, so I never went out again. If the ground was dry it was odds on the buck, if wet and slippery, odds on the dogs. It was usual for the members to meet at 3 a.m., and return about 9 in the morning to escape the extreme heat, a well-filled bag always rewarding these Nimrods, who were the cheeriest, the jolliest, the kindest chaps that nature ever fashioned. How well I remember them, Sneddon, Campbell, Wiley, Dr. Otto, Coltman, Gray, etc.

I had already commenced to write for the newspapers, contributing to the "Du Toit's Pan Herald," my example being followed by a few of the *jeunesse dorée* of this golden period. One day I was walking down the main street in Kimberley with Benjamin Hart, when this immortal imparted to me the sinister intelligence that he was engaged on some literary work of prodigious promise. I asked him what it was.

"Sonnets," he said.

"What kind?" I enquired.

"Oh," he replied lightly, "something after Shake-

speare, but I find he has been before me in some of my ideas."

Benny Hart was not a bad fellow at bottom, but he tried to "put on side" directly he acquired a pony, a banking account, and a pair of gaiters. This trinity of the world's goods quite upset Ben's equilibrium, and all of a sudden he fancied himself immensely. At one time his father kept a fruit shop in Queen's Street, facing what is now Miss Ashwell's theatre, so when Hart prospered on the Diamond Fields he felt he was the plum of the family. His pony was a natty but rough-coated little thing. Friends and acquaintances advised the noble owner to have it clipped, but Benny scouted the idea, so one night these mischievous pals entered the stable, sheared the steed, painted him with phosphorus, and let him loose. When Benny the same night saw the quadruped wandering about thus illuminated, he did not recognise his pony, but thought the very devil was abroad, and straightway, like a good Hebrew, said prayers, and hid behind the door.

A few days afterwards, in one of the local newspapers, appeared the following:

"EXTRAORDINARY CHARGE.

"Four diamond merchants, one dentist, one respectable digger, one pharmaceutical chemist accused of horse stealing. Our reporter interviews the Clerk of the Peace.

"WHAT JOHN LARKIN FRY SAID.

"Was it really a lark? Chemical compound utilized. A valuable horse injured. Is Davison a Brahmin?

"Sworn information was lodged with the acting Clerk of the Peace, John L. Fry, Esquire, J.P., last night, in which one Benjamin Hart, the well-known diamond merchant of Kimberley and Du Toit's Pan, accused the following gentlemen, who are of respectable standing in the sister township, of the serious crime of horse-stealing: Anthony Davison, chemist; David Moses, dentist; J. Lewis, digger; A. Cohen, diamond merchant; H. N. Campbell, diamond merchant; Arthur

Wellesley Davis, diamond merchant; M. Marcus, diamond merchant.

"Our reporter has seen the acting Clerk of the Peace, who will prosecute when the business of the criminal session, which commences to-day, has terminated.

"John Fry says the accusation is one of great gravity. We cannot but think that no criminality was intended, and the whole matter must have been the outcome of a practical joke carried too far.

"The horse, which is a valuable one, was found this morning covered with an abominable chemical compound."

Anthony Davison, a great chum of Loewenthal's, was a chemist who owned in Stockdale Street a drug store, a small annexe of which Dr. Jameson had turned into a surgery. Of course, Rhodes's friend hadn't aped Napoleon then, or tried to conquer the Transvaal with five hundred warriors, but he was recognised as the best doctor who ever practised in South Africa. With the fair sex, although not particular about complexion, he was undeniably most popular, and it is conceded that he shone more as a squire of dames than a Bonaparte of battalions.

Dave Moses, who used to act in the Kimberley theatres under the name of Sims, was somehow implicated in the Blacklock case, and was a very decent fellow.

Joe Lewis is the good old Joe we all know and like, and I can hardly fancy him in the character of a horse stealer. He has done some foolish things in his day, such as buying Langlaagte Royals from a ring of rogues, and selling options to wiser men than himself; but I cannot see him horse stealing.

Arthur Wellesley Davis, nicknamed "Hoppy," was currently credited with being related to Wellington because he chanced to have been born in Duke Street, Liverpool, and had a wounded appearance. I shudder to think what might have happened to Nelson's memory if "Hoppy" had opened his eyes in Trafalgar Square or Hamilton Terrace.

Mr. Adolphus Cohen, also known as Dolly by a few highly favoured individuals, who greatly appreciate the privilege, is no other than the world-famous aristocratic Aaronic sportsman who owned and ran such horses as Green Lawn and Master Willie, and whose victorious colours, red, pink, and olive, were the admiration of all trainers and jockeys, and the glory of the British Turf. Adolphus poses as a gentleman of whom the House of Cohen is confessedly proud, a feeling which, *sans doute,* is robustly reciprocated by the dainty Dolly, but not, I hasten to relate, by all the members of the distinguished family, as his own royal blooded brother, Geoffrey, surrendered his ancient surname, bequeathed to his holy keeping by the high priests of Israel, and took to himself the philosophical one of Herbert, after a keen struggle in his own mind with that of purple Plantagenet. Mr. Adolphus Cohen, who always possessed as mighty an opinion of himself as Lebaudy, the Emperor of the Sahara, was, to his horror, christened Lollypops, and by that name was known to the sportive youths on the Diamond Fields. Hoppy was his *fidus Achates,* and the two friends looked very much down—that is when their stiff collars allowed them—on the rest of vulgar humanity, and wondered why they were created. I must not forget, horeover, that stiff neck was a family complaint of the Davis's (when they had any money), and as this dreadful disease is catching, it is reported that Lollypops "caught it bad" from Arthur. It is consoling, however, to learn that since the evil times have set in the stiff complaint has almost disappeared, and is hardly known to-day in the delightful D. family. Hoppy has lost it altogether, and as for Montague Montmorency Davis (Hond's shopman, whom I have described), he has at present a head as pliable and accommodating as that of an ostrich. But Dolly, I am sorry to allege, has got the complaint yet, and so seriously that it is with pain I add he couldn't even nod casually to Hoppy the other day. The following is not a bad tale *re* Adolphus. When Lollypops first went out to Africa he determined to show the other passengers what a superior being there was on the ship, donned a

suit of blue, azure as the skies, and paraded the deck with a proud and 'aughty mien, to the inexpressible delight of the ladies, and the envy of the men. They called him Little Boy Blue.

> "Oh, Little Boy Blue, oh, Little Boy Blue,
> There's nothing on earth as charming as you."

But doggerel or no doggerel, our Mr. Cohen from Judea was very satisfied with himself, and the sensation he had created, until a jealous white-faced heathen bursting with malice strode over to the latest cerulean curio, and with Dean Swift like impudence put the following conundrum to the Shadow of the Sky.

"What is the difference between a boy with a blue suit and a bally fool?"

Lollypops, thinking that the honour of the Land of Rabbis was in his hands, looked his questioner straight in the face as if he regarded him as a kind of Mr. Johnson belonging to a Christy Minstrel troupe, and drawled out: "Do you want me to tell you the difference between me and you?" Bravo, Israel! I have always believed there was a lot of wit and humour in the House of Cohen, and since I heard this tale I am sure of it.

Ike Sonnenberg one day, at a canteen in Kimberley, found a Dutchman who had the gambling instinct strong as mustard implanted in his bosom. During the consumption of a few "tots" the philosophical Ike crept as quickly into the fascinated Boer's heart, as the liquor did to his head. Finally, Sonnenberg consented, as a sign of his regard for all Dutchmen, and in particular for the present party, to introduce a game of "Nap," a pastime which the Boer, in all innocence, asseverated he had only played once or twice in his life. A short time after the game had commenced, and when there was a goodly stake upon the table, the delighted Dutchman triumphantly cried "Nap," his countenance the while beaming with ethereal smiles. Ike never moved a muscle of his face; but after glancing at his cards grunted "Napper," threw them down, and pocketed the stakes. The Boer had to be silently satisfied with

the gambler's gospel, but looked as if he'd got lockjaw.

If ever there lived a typical Irishman of the humbler classes, squat, lively, pug-nosed, quarrelsome, fighting, ignorant, Paddy Murtough was he. He kept a kind of public and boarding house combined, named the Cavan Hotel, which was the resort of every Hibernian of his own degree for miles around. And, sure enough, he was a great man among them—a pathriot—an unimpeachable and not-to-be-contradicted authority on the law in all its bearings, on sport or "politicks," on the a-r-r-m-y, the navy, particularly on the poliss, whom he looked on as his natural enemies. Withal I remember being at the Cavan Hotel, when politics and England were being discussed, and feeling quite startled at the unanimity and regularity with which wicked England at short intervals was sent to perdition without hope of return. On this particular evening a great big fat German joined in the conversation and, thinking to curry favour with the Irishmen, abused the English in no measured terms, quite out-Heroding Herod in his bitterness. The Paddies stood it patiently for a short time, and then to the talkative Teuton's utter and complete surprise, a couple of them "rounded," larruped him until he wriggled like an eel, and in a short time the gasping German was grovelling outside in the gutter. It is this way—England and Ireland are like husband and wife, and the wife, which is Ireland, naturally likes to have all the say, and, of course, most of the nagging. But like many another good wife, she does not like to see her privileges abused by voluble foreigners—there must be no denouncers of John Bull but herself.

Pat Murtough, having heard there was to be a meeting for the purpose of establishing a library in Kimberley, attended the same so that Ould Ireland should be worthily represented by one of her *literati*. Now, Pat knew as much about books as a dog does about dictionaries, but being on the spot and under the watchful eyes of his admiring countrymen, was determined to distinguish himself, and, seizing an opportunity, rose

solemnly and proposed that the men about to be elected on the committee should be "lithery men." This caused considerable risibility, and one doubter as to the erudite Murtough's profundity got up, creating some excitement among Pat's followers, and asked him if he knew the attributes of a literary man.

"Av' coorse I do," replied Pat with cool assurance. "A litherary man is a man who knows how to behave himself."

The same evening, on hearing that there was going to be a total eclipse of the sun on a certain day, Pat again got on his feet and anxiously inquired if the people of Du Toit's Pan could see it, as he had friends there.

Frank Fillis, the circus proprietor and daring equestrian, was well known throughout the whole of South Africa as one of the kindest and cheeriest of living mortals. During one of his visits to Kimberley he had ordered his collection of wild beasts to be located in a certain part of the town, while the circus proper was being erected in another, and Frank was engaged in superintending the latter when a stalwart Connaught man came up to him and asked for work. To Fillis's reply that he had no employment to offer, the Irishman told such a pitiable story of his condition that the good-hearted Frank gave him a letter to the white servant in charge of his menagerie, instructing him to find Paddy something to do. The caretaker on reading the note immediately gave the man a mop, a bucket, soap, and a thin iron bar, used for cleaning large cages, and put him to that employment. Of course, cages containing wild beasts are invariably cleaned from outside. Among Fillis's collection were several fine lions, tigers, bears, etc., but the fiercest animals of the lot were four newly acquired hyenas in whose cage the circus lion-tamer would never have dared to put a foot. Immediately on giving the Irishman his orders, the caretaker went to dinner. About half-an-hour after he had left Fillis himself entered, and stood rooted to the ground with astonishment as he saw his newly engaged dependent inside the hyenas' cage, calmly scrubbing

it, with the four beasts snarling near him. For a minute Fillis did not speak, so startled was he until the Irishman suddenly groped for something and apparently missed it. Angrily frowning, he jumped up and commenced to beat the nearest hyena with the iron bar. Then Fillis, all anxiety, sprang forward, and vehemently ordered him out of the cage. Slowly and unwillingly the Connaught gent. obeyed, and, when he was at last safe, Fillis drew a long breath of relief.

"My friend," said Fillis; "you have never been so near death before. No tamer in the world would have ventured into that cage; and to add to that you beat one of the animals."

"And why wouldn't I?" responded Paddy, "and why wouldn't I? May be you don't know *the baste ate my soap*."

CHAPTER VIII

A Game of Bluff—A Bargain if you like—An Office Removal—The Butcher Bewitched—A "Vicar"—The Fire Brigade—Gambling Hells—Captain Louis Goldschmidt.

ONE afternoon, at the Theatre Royal, Kimberley, those two very good friends, Mr. Joseph Levy and Mr. Zeb Goodman, sat down to a little game of bluff. Both these gentlemen were habitual card players, and there was some rivalry between them. However, on the afternoon in question, the Fates went dead against Joe Levy, for he lost seven hundred and fifty pounds to his opponent. Promising to pay Goodman the next evening, Joe, with a face as long as his nose, betook himself for advice and consolation to his guide, philosopher, and chum, Mr. Barney Barnato, who, after hearing all the circumstances, and deeply diagnosing the case, gave it as his decided opinion, both from a friendly and professional point of view, that Joe had been "done." He didn't say this exact word, but his more forcible one meant the same thing. Joe agreed with the master mind, but observed, in the spirit of a true sportsman, that whether he had been "done" or not he owed the money, and would have to pay next evening. "Can't you rumble anything, Barney?" asked Joe, as in agitation he moved his false teeth to and fro.

Barney, who was never at a loss for an idea, unfolded his plan to Joe "Juggins," as he satirically called Levy, who, in turn, got so lost in admiration at the talents of the gifted Barney, that his face denoted sensations of pleasure almost amounting to ecstasy. Ascertaining that Goodman was still at the Theatre Royal, Barney and Joe called at a little tobacconist shop facing this Temple of Thespis, where they purchased a duplicate

pack of cards (squeezers they were) of exactly the same colour and pattern as those that had been used by Levy and Goodman during the afternoon. Armed with these, and nothing more, Joe and Barney sauntered into the Theatre Royal. Joe asked Goodman to have a drink, and in the course of conversation offered to give him a cheque at once for seven-fifty if he would gamble for an hour just to give him his revenge. Zeb consented, the cheque was passed, and the two commenced playing, using the same cards as they had in the afternoon. Barney, in the meanwhile, sat beside Joe, ostensibly watching the game in a casual manner; but had "readied" the duplicate pack, which he kept in his hand, carelessly resting on his knee, and covered by a handkerchief. The game went on with varying luck until Barney, seizing his opportunity, furtively passed Joe some cards. From these Levy dealt Goodman four aces and himself a sequence flush. The wagering, of course, grew apace, until there was fifteen hundred pounds on the table.

Joe Levy "called" Zeb. "Four——," said the eager and elated Goodman; but he never got beyond that word, for Joe interrupted him by shouting, "Sequence flush," throwing down his cards, and grabbing the money from out of the reach of Goodman, who, suspecting something wrong, was also making an attack on the shekels. Mr. Joseph Levy went home a happy man that night, Goodman a wiser one, and Barney earned for himself a niche of fame in the hearts of the gamblers of the Glittering City, which time has not eradicated. It was a famous victory.

About this time the entire Kimberley mine was offered to Mr. Thomas Lynch for four hundred and fifty thousand pounds. He travelled to England with an option in his pocket to negotiate the business; but it hung fire owing to adverse rumours and reef troubles. I remember that regularly twice a month it was reported on unimpeachable authority that the mine had given out, and that the bottom had been struck. Now, most of the Polish sausage merchants who had invaded Kimberley were hardly remarkable as eminent geologists,

except from a "stony" point of view. And when the blue ground was reached they turned their eyes upwards and, by the aid of choice Yiddish, cursed the kindred colour in the vaults of heaven. Such language must have created quite a stir among the feminine Jewish angels up aloft. However, the diggers struggled on for six months, when Lynch returned to the Diamond Fields an unsuccessful man as far as his mission was concerned. A year or so afterwards he again went to London on a similar errand, but the result was the same. But, by Heavens, John Bull paid something for this mine afterwards, didn't he? Think if there had been no Diamond Fields, there would have been, in a sense, no Rhodes, no Beit, no Barnato, no Sir Julius Wernher, no Lemoine, and no war. Again, too, there would have been no Joel Brothers.

It was rather a warm crowd that each night assembled at the "Fox and Hounds," kept by Haybittel. They were the most mischievous pack of gentry ever seen in any country, clime, or continent. Alert, active, and splendidly audacious, I pitied anyone who offered himself as a target for their pranks, and not a night passed that they did not startle the town with their games. Amongst the many diamond dealers who thrived in Du Toit's Pan, was the genial George Manning, representative of a Port Elizabeth firm, a red-faced, highly esteemed member of the community, but occasionally, when his family was away, inclined to have a spree "on his own." Outside Venables' Store there were huge stacks of planks of wood exposed for sale, and one evening, when George had been enjoying himself, the boys carried the lot across the road, and piled them high up in front, at the back, and at the sides of his office. In the morning, when Manning awoke in his darkened room, he thought the world was upside down, and on attempting to open the door, found himself a prisoner. As a last resource he cut through the canvas sides, but being still a captive, roared himself hoarse, until gallantly relieved by half the town, led by Venables' employees, who came to claim their own. These were openly accused by the outraged George of having per-

petrated the joke, he having been privately and confidentially so informed by the real delinquents. Once again, too, when George Manning was on his rounds, having a booze here and there, the opportunity was not lost on the conspiring cabal, who after twelve o'clock at night bodily removed his office to the opposite side of the street. Poor George Manning in due course came reeling down the street very much the worse for wear, infinitely delighting his persecutors who were in ambush across the road. When he came to the spot where his bureau ought to be, he paused, lurched forward, hiccoughed, turned up the whites of his observant though bewildered eyes, and in a confused dazed manner clasped his hands round his head and stood irresolutely swaying to and fro. Advancing a few stumbling steps, he vainly groped the empty air as if his sight had deceived him, and was determined to put trust in the sense of touch. Slowly and sadly he shook his head at his failure to find anything, and pulling out a handkerchief mopped his perspiring brow. Suddenly making up his mind to a drastic and desperate remedy, he tottered in the direction of the Fox and Hounds. Let it be noted that Manning, in his cups, had a rooted disinclination for Du Toitspanians to see him thus, and, grievously in liquor as he was, he would have given anything rather than have to go to the Fox and Hounds on this particular evening. Consequently as he entered the bar he tried to put up a smile, which was strangled at its birth.

Mr. Haybittel greeted him heartily. "Good evening, Mr. Manning, you come late."

Manning turned his tired eyes on mine host and murmured thickly: "I thought it was early. I really did. Everything's wrong to-night."

"What will you take?" queried the boniface diplomatically ignoring the last remark.

"Take? Me?" spluttered the diamond buyer, waving his hand as if shocked at the suggestion. "I haven't had anything—for—a—week"; then he added: "That's not what I've come for, I only want to ask you a question."

"Certainly, anything," replied the bar-keeper.

"Well?" questioned George unsteadily, but impressively, "isn't—my—office—on—the—opposite—side—of —the road?"

"Of course it is. It's there now," rejoined Haybittel decisively.

"No," said Manning mournfully, screwing his mouth and wagging his finger.

"Don't be silly," put in the other.

"I'll bet my head to a pumpkin it isn't," replied the puzzled Manning.

"Come along, I'll soon show you," cried the publican, and quickly Haybittel led the stumbling George to his office, and there, sure enough, to Manning's wonderment and amazement, was the structure in its proper place. Of course, his tormentors had carried it back. Poor Manning stood staring at it for a minute and then hiccoughed, the while moving his head to and fro. "Haybittel—I—believe—that that—office of mine—has been on—the—spree. It looks—very drunk—now—and shaky. For—fear—he breaks out again—I'll get inside —and watch him."

Although Ikey Sonnenberg considered himself an expert in the English and American languages, he spoke both with a pronounced foreign accent, which slight blemish did not prevent him from being on the strictest terms of friendship and intimacy with the highest to the lowest, and "thick" with every man on the Fields—even with the man in the moon. A goodly number of readers of these lines will remember the late genial Joe Posno—he with the handsome face and curly hair, and the cheeriest of smiles. Well, Joseph and a friend of mine named Jarvis—I spoke to him recently—went for a week-end to Klipdrift, a pretty little place near Kimberley. Arriving at Sanger's Hotel, they were not ill pleased to see the great, gaunt, ugly figure of the redoubtable Ike lounging on the verandah, with his tall white hat surmounting his quizzical face as proudly and conspicuously as if it had been the helmet of Navarre. Well, the visitors had hardly got through their first drink when bright-hearted Ike imparted

the astounding and important information to the two latest arrivals that at the hotel that very evening there was a raffle to be contested for a pair of fiery untamed steeds, and his fixed and rock-like determination to "have dem 'osses." The trio promptly tossed for three tickets, and Posno, being let in, he and Jarvis soon after left the hostelry to visit the club, for small as Klipdrift was, it boasted one, leaving the manipulation of their chances in the hands of the masterful and undefeated Ike, who, as they left, quietly, but confidentially, exclaimed, "Leave it to me," and reiterated, "I'll have dem 'osses." And sure enough a couple of hours later Joe and his friends were called out of the club by the victorious Ike, who communicated the intelligence that he'd "got dem 'osses." They learnt that when the raffle was thrown for (with dice) a neighbouring benign butcher was lucky enough to cast a high number, which the resourceful Sonnenberg at once bought. The meat purveyor's coup won the animals, which Ikey promptly sold for thirty pounds profit. That was the news he brought, and after disclosing same to his partners promptly tossed Posno for his ten pounds, which he won, and for fear that Jarvis might be jealous, repeated the same operation on him, with exactly the same result, and then slouched back to the hotel, his white topper looking whiter than ever in the shining moonlight. In due course Posno and Jarvis returned to Sanger's Inn, where, on entering, they found Ike busily engaged in playing cards with the benevolent and bewitched butcher. Ike was sitting at the table with his chalk-coloured historical hat gaily cocked on the back of his quaint head, and sucking sweetly at a prodigious pipe, which he only removed from his mouth now and again to ejaculate in his guttural gamut, "I'm getting very drunk," which statement, each time it was repeated, impelled the beefsteak man—in imitation of the great sportsman—to quaff deeply of the most famous Scottish wines. Jarvis, however, sought his feathery pillow, leaving Posno in the gambling room; but about four or five in the morning Jarvis was awakened by Joe, and begged to come below to see the fun. On reaching the

verandah of the hotel there was the blessed beguiled butcher dead drunk, without any headgear, hanging with great desperation, and in utter misery, on to one of the posts of the verandah, while standing near, as cool and fresh as a cucumber, was the sober, imperturbable Ike. It appears the man who got "dem 'osses" had won from the bountiful butcher all the money he had paid the latter for his chance, also every pound he had in his pockets, and to crown all, the sick and sorry slaughterer had signed and handed over a bill payable at sight for sixteen pounds to the successful and smiling Sonnenberg.

"My friend," advised Ike, closing one eye as he lighted his pipe, "if you take my advice, you'll go home while you're sober, for I tell you I feel myself getting drunk. I'll see you about the sixteen pounds later on." The wretched butcher blinked worse than any owl at the sun struggling through the clouds as he reeled into the road, and staggering up the streets started home, hiccoughing as he lugubriously wagged his uncovered head:

"If Ikey's not—the—devil—he's got the cloven hoof."

That same afternoon Ike visited his victim, and after a long discussion agreed to take the money he had won out in meat, same to be forwarded at stated and specified intervals to his house in Du Toit's Pan. An hour later the gentle Ike's tall, ungainly figure could be seen leading a little child in each hand, and followed by another, entering the one and only sweetstuff shop to give his new found friends a treat. The meat, I beg to say, was honourably sent, but the butcher, no doubt, desiring, while paying his debt, to have a little of his own back, forwarded Ike a leg of pork in one of the succulent consignments. But the butcher breathed hard again when he got it returned with a note which ran thus: "I want to be fed, not converted." It must be recorded that some months afterwards this same meat man removed to Kimberley, and took a shop adjacent to Sonnenberg's office, and amongst his best customers was the ever grateful Ike, who had a rooted objection to be addressed by any other appellation. One day

Sonnenberg was sitting outside his sanctum when the eminent butcher, seeing him there, and thinking that his meat account had been too long outstanding, sent a lately engaged boy with a polite request that it should be settled. To his astonishment the emissary returned with the startling intelligence that Mr. Sonnenberg was "out." Said the slaughterer to his messenger, "You fool; there's Mr. Sonnenberg sitting at his door; go back."

The boy obeyed, and quavered to the recumbent debtor. "If you please, sir, my boss says you *are* Mr. Sonnenberg."

"Oh!" replied Ikey. "*Mr.* Sonnenberg. I thought you wanted my father."

During these sublunary events, there came to Kimberley a man from England called "Tommy Wilkie," who was known as the "Brighton Baker," and the first individual to introduce on the Diamond Fields that elegant game yclept the three-card trick, to the ecstasy of the elect, and the great wonderment of the unsophisticated Dutchmen who took to the pastime fully assured of its fortune-making elements. It was amusing to see the eager manner in which they rushed to back their opinions and their utter mystification and discomfiture when they discovered they were wrong. But to the last the Boers were enthusiastic "three-carders," and Wilkie and his cronies must have made a small fortune in their time. A couple of the lamented "Baker's" rivals I often see in the City, where these Petticoat Lane parvenus are remarkable for their neat attire and their aping of the ways of English gentlemen both in speech and demeanour. This masquerade abruptly changes when they catch sight of any whilom acquaintance who knew them when they threw the "tats," "rigged the broads," were "stalls" for men like Wilkie, and found time, between a little "hanky panky" with diamonds, to shout the odds on the racecourse. They are now two splendid ruffians of Throgmorton Street. One of these gentry is held in special aversion by those who know his life history, for he is as ungrateful as he is cunning and hypocritical, and is called among a choice few "Ben the

Biter," or the "Man with Hair on his Teeth." "The Brighton Baker" died in Kimberley a few years after his arrival, and was buried in a cemetery near the prison. His epitaph, to be seen on his grave stone, is as follows:

"Here lies a man who pitched the broads,
Who ofttimes got as drunk as fifty lords.
From Dutchmen he got many a score.
Die carte gewinn, und die twee ye veloor."*

There is no more loathsome vice than hypocrisy, and when it is practised under the guise of religion, then its development is of a particularly repellent growth. Clerics of all kinds and denominations were held in special reverence on the Fields, and in this relation I cannot help remarking that the more religion thrives the more crime there appears to keep it company. Spain, Portugal, and Italy are standing examples of this theory. The reign of the Liar and the Thief is, and always will be, adorned by prime ministers of quite exceptional devoutness, whose flocks, superstitious to a degree, imagine that drastic fastings, frequent meaningless prayers, and religious disbursements are quite infallible and consolatory antidotes to any heavenly anger incurred by their interpretation of *meum* and *tuum*. It followed then, that when the German Reverend Albu was appointed *chasan* (Hebrew Minister) to the Jewish Synagogue in Kimberley, the *jeunesse ornée* from the banks of the Jordan, and innumerable strong-smelling patriots from Posen, gave the little ugly, big-spectacled cleric quite an enthusiastic reception, and he, reciprocating their regards in his turn, proceeded to put on a flow of prayer, spasmodic and incoherent at times withal, but when almsgiving enjoyed an aftermath fluent as the dear old Thames, that must have appeared almost in the light of a life-boat to those of his flock who were not quite certain of angels' wings. All went merry as wedding bells for a time, until the more respectable of his congregation discovered that their shepherd, apart from his dislike to baths, was extremely averse to the decen-

*This card wins, and these two lose.

cies of life, and distinctly a man of nasty ideas. But all the same, this *condottiere* clergyman continued fasting, praying, and exhorting them to do everything that he didn't, and especially to "part up" to the shool in general, and to himself in particular, all the "gelt" they could lay their hands on without any regard as to the way they got it. Shekels are shekels, say what you will, but his solicitations becoming sensationally importunate, it suddenly dawned on his devoted drove of followers that under this fasting saint's tutelage they were paying too much for a seat in heaven. And the Hebrews revolted, at which, of course, Albu kicked and grunted in reply like a mule in a meadow. And so relations, as diplomatists say, became strained, and the pastor, who didn't believe in Pears' Soap or a tooth brush, threatened to close the Golden Gates, at which the gentlemen from Poland, like the American on viewing the Boer position at Colenso, wanted to know if there wasn't "another way round." Things were at this parlous state when, on one historical occasion, there was a concert given at the Theatre Royal in aid of a deserving Jewish institution. The house was packed from pit to dome with the élite of Kimberley society. Barristers, doctors, officials, "captings," diamond buyers (all more or less on the square) were there with their wives, or, failing them, somebody else's, most of the gentlemen being *en grand tenue,* showing a marvellous extent of white shirt, and the ladies a generous display of snowy bosom faultless and pure as their own morals. It is true that in the past some of the latter were not quite unacquainted with the Argyll Rooms, but as they had married delightfully after being divinely divorced at divers periods, they had become, through matters of state, blushingly modest and alarmingly virginal and sedate. "Hoppy" was at the piano, which he thumped as if he was boxing Burns, and after Dr. Matthews had sung "Let me like a soldier fall" (without which no concert in these ardent days was considered complete), the thrice Reverend Albu, armed with a formidable fiddle and a pair of spectacles that flashed electric currents, appeared on the stage. He is entitled

to be described as a really sound musician—a genius of melody. Well, the old humbug advanced to the footlights, glared, glinted, and blew his spongy nose with a debauched red handkerchief, as if he were sounding the end of our great feast. Slowly and gravely, with much professional precision, he landed his violin on his left shoulder, and played remarkably well a difficult number resplendent with crescendos, quavers, and grimaces. Then he stopped to blow his nose again, and waited for applause. It is sad to chronicle that at this particular moment some of the chosen of his flock, remembering the shekels, and knowing more about "sphieling" than Schubert, commenced to hiss, at which the grave and reverend pastor paused, and glowering angrily at the aristocratic assemblage, visited his nose again with thunderous effect. This was too much. We had come to hear Schubert, not sneezing, and the hisses redoubling, the sacred Albu, with eyes flashing like those of a wild cat, after a moment's decision, deliberately turned his back to the immaculate audience, lifted up the coat-tails of his highly respectable black dress-coat, and applauded himself on that portion of his body which ought to have been well smacked earlier in life. The artistic Albu then retired amidst much din and confusion. Of course, this Yiddisher Stiggins got the "sack" from the Jewish presbytery for this conduct, but the holy man got his revenge. He took a single-roomed office in Endell Street, where he ate, drank, and slept, shaking his elbow all the time, and regularly on a Saturday, as his whilom flock wended their way to "shool," he would stand at his habitation's door, kissing his fingers to them, unkempt, dirty and unshaven, smoking a filthy old pipe, and puffing like a steamboat. It is asserted, too, that on a certain eventful Yom Kippur morning he was seen vigorously cutting into a ham, and exclaiming with gusto as he did so, "I'll show you how to keep Yom Kippur," which, it must be confessed, was a decidedly humorous and original way of preaching the Gospel. This interesting individual, I may add, was the uncle of Leopold and George Albu, the "famous financiers," whose group of shares is advertised every

Saturday on the back page of that merry little paper, the "Rialto."

In due course a fire brigade was formed to fight any fearsome flames that might suddenly make red the horizon. The organisation of same was said to be perfect for these primitive times, and the hydrants used of quite exceptional make and utility. It is, nevertheless, necessary to relate that the initial appearance of the corps in any public capacity was marked by a deplorable misconception as to the real and proper duties of a fire brigade. For on its first attendance on an obliging conflagration, although the gallant members, with remarkable promptitude and alertness, advanced to the rescue of property and goods, it is disappointing to narrate that when one of its superior officers was called for at a critical moment, the Fire King, with a couple of his subordinates, was found busily engaged breaking into a jeweller's shop six doors lower down from the flaming building. When asked to explain his position, he stammered that he was "on the watch."

To which his addresser cynically replied: "Which watch, the gold hunter?"

At this period gambling hells abounded in Kimberley from the semi-private luxuriously fitted-up houses to the squalid, loathsome huts in which Malays, Cape boys, Chinamen quarrelled and killed each other over a greasy queen of clubs or a flamboyant knave of hearts. Governor Southey did good work in putting down with a strong hand these iniquities which threatened the whole prosperity of the town. In the enactments initiated he was much assisted by Cecil John Rhodes—then about twenty years old—who happened to be the guest of the Governor's secretary, John Blades Currie, and who made his maiden essay in public affairs, contributing useful and special information and advice, which indicated in a marked degree the versatility of the future Empire-builder. Suicides were painfully frequent through losses at these thieving resorts, and when one night a Captain H—— shot himself—under unusually distressing circumstances—the citizens were unanimous in their determination to suppress an evil flourishing like an

upas tree amongst them. There is a story, well authenticated, of a popular and highly-educated digger who, entering a Kimberley hell one night with a fat bundle of notes, substantial balance at his bank, rich claim he could call his own, came out as the cocks were crowing with not a rap in the world except five pounds given him by the prosperous proprietor. Money, bank balance, claim, all had vanished, and the sporting digger was seen for months after attending a water cart for a bare existence. But about myself.

As time went on fortune did not desert Barney and me, and we made money faster than ever, and worked harder. But I would invariably finish up the evenings by visiting the greatest and most popular gambling hell in the four camps, which was situated in Stockdale Street, and presided over by two brothers named Ashwell, and a subordinate called Ricketts—whom I met afterwards in Basutoland as a private in the C.M.R. The brace of proprietors made at least fifty thousand pounds out of their venture, which did not seem to do them much good, as after the place was closed by order of the authorities, one of them went to East Africa, and the other brother was ultimately seen driving a cab in the streets of London. "Ashwells" was a spacious room in the upper storey of a large wooden hotel, kept by Dodds, a decent chap, whom we will meet later on. The games principally played were faro, roulette, *rouge et noir,* also *trente-et-quarante,* and liquor and cigars were given free *ad libitum.* Of course, I didn't win, and my losings made me an eager pursuer after vanished gold. I became acquainted, too, with some of the *habitués* of the place, particularly with a tall, brawny Irishman named Peters, who told me he was a river digger at Waldeck's Plant, some distance from Kimberley, and his description of his home, horses, mistress, claims, etc., rivalled Claude Melnotte's castles in the air. He subsequently invited me to ride down in his company on a visit to the estate, casually observing, too, that I should bring plenty of money, as he knew of two or three good "parcels" of diamonds, whose fortunate owners were gasping to sell them at almost any

price to any diamond buyer introduced by the influential, wealthy, and highly popular Mr. P. At all events, when we cantered out of Kimberley one afternoon at about five o'clock I had five hundred pounds in notes in my pocket, as well as a serviceable little pistol. Everything went well until we had passed the "Half-Way House," at Klipdrift, a very good hostelry, kept by Mr. Sanger and his remarkably pretty wife. When we left the hotel, feeling better for a substantial meal, it was almost dark, and the roads were very bad. As we rode on, in unpleasant silence, I began to have misgivings, especially as it had commenced to rain, and my uneasiness considerably increased when Peters, putting spurs to his horse, dashed forward at a mad gallop, and disappeared in the darkness. For a mile or so I went cautiously ahead, and then, through a sudden flash of lightning, perceived the runaway, mounted on his horse, standing, or, rather, hiding, under a tree. I pulled up, and drew my revolver.

"Who are you?" I shouted.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he replied, coming forward. "I was waiting for you."

"Well, you might have been shot by mistake," I said, showing him my revolver.

He laughed disagreeably, and walked his horse on. I followed, feeling exceedingly miserable. It may be asked why I did not return. Well, I could not have found my way back in the dark, was a very bad rider, too, and my new chum could always have shadowed me if he had liked it. Soon we reached a place, as I found afterwards, located some miles past Waldeck's Plant. It was midnight, and not a soul or a tent did I see until after cantering for some time we came to a lonely spot between two mounds or banks, in the middle of which was fixed a medium-sized ordinary bell tent, and behind it a much smaller one.

"Here we are," said Peters laconically.

"But this is not your place?" I blurted out.

"One of them," he replied. "The other's too far off to reach to-night."

I gasped, but there was nothing to be done. After a

lot of shouting, an ugly young Griqua woman came out of the back habitation, and entering the second tent, a home-made tallow candle soon spluttered, and dimly lit up the uninviting, rain-sodden abode, and its contents. There was a truckle bed at one side, and a small table in the middle of the tent, as well as a couple of chairs and a box. Peters asked me to sit down, and produced a bottle of Cape brandy, flavoured with some aromatic leaves. I would have given anything to have had a "tot," wet through and cold as I was, but didn't, though I ate a little for form's sake, and watched Peters as he grew quite jolly and communicative over his liquor, which he well-nigh finished. Yet there was a look about him that was not pleasant. With apologies he offered me his bed, or a share of the same. I thanked him, but refused, and lay on a skin on the ground, Peters, half drunk, wishing me good-night, and blowing out the candle. Directly it was dark, I sat up, got the revolver out of the satchel, where my notes were, and decided to remain thus wideawake till daylight. Half an hour passed, and Peters pretended to snore. I quietly crept from my sleeping place to what I considered a safer position—under the small table, where, at all events, my head was protected by it, and the darkness, for I had taken the box of matches from the table. Peters abruptly stopped snoring, and softly called my name, to which I only answered by breathing deeply, and, after a few minutes, crept back nearly to my original resting-place. I heard the man moving about, and suddenly bunching four or five matches together, struck them. The light revealed my companion sitting on his truckle bed, with a huge knob kerrie in his hand.

"Hallo!" said I carelessly, but with a beating heart, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing," he replied, blinking, and then laughingly added, "Had nightmare—through that," pointing to the empty bottle.

"Oh," said I. "Good-night," and then crept under the table again. For half-an-hour I remained quiet, until unexpectedly I heard the empty brandy bottle drop

heavily in the place where I was supposed to be sleeping. I couldn't stand it any longer, so taking out a clasp knife, ripped up the side of the tent, and popped out into the open. At daylight I found my pony and returned to the tent; Peters was standing outside the entrance. He said nothing, but I asked for my saddle, and after some difficulty the Griqua girl brought it and my coat, and I saddled up fifty yards from the tent. When mounted I rode up and told the gentleman what I thought, and that the whole of the camp (Kimberley) should know of my experiences. He offered no excuse or denials. I rode off, and never set eyes on the man again, nor was he afterwards seen on the Fields.

Few people resided in Kimberley in these strenuous times without knowing sprightly Johnnie Watkins, who was as distinctive as Sonnenberg, Loewenthal, or the acrid, repellent Robinson. Poor Johnnie Watkins! slightly-built, with a sandy moustache and freckled face, he hailed from the North of England, where he had distinguished himself as a sporting publican, which profession he pursued in Kimberley in conjunction with that of a licensed diamond buyer. Good-hearted John was a terrible man with his h's. He would in a most persistent manner put them in the wrong places and with quaint and egregious conceit complain of the men who came to "'is 'ouse and couldn't speak Henglish." But that didn't matter; whatever h's he dropped could be picked up with much profit by the tourists from Petticoat Lane if they only knew their value and application. As a judge of pugilism, racing, and running, he had in his own opinion no living equal, though he acknowledged Loewenthal as a dangerous rival; but I am constrained to think that this particular vanity had only a visionary foundation. I met him for the first time when kopje walloping, and afterwards of an evening Barney and I used to go down to his canteen and sip hot port wine and talk of past, present, and future sporting events. Watkins, although at times inclined to get splendidly drunk, was a clean living man, and his wife, she with the strong Yorkshire accent, a bonny lady and

model wife to poor, perverse Johnnie, whose only enemy was the flowing bowl. Still, J.W. was an institution in himself, and had but one rival—his own pony, the handsomest bit of horseflesh ever seen, and the pride of the town. It was a beautiful little animal of reddish gold chestnut colour, and of a symmetry built on perfect lines. Johnny and his spouse, who had no sons or daughters, loved this pony as if it were a child, and the pet wandered and whinnied about their house and bar at its own sweet will. He let me ride it once when he was drunk, and never forgave me the act. It was a fortunate moment when, for three pounds, the publican purchased the animal from Veitche's Pound. Because of its detention there, the pony had been branded in plain and indelible letters with the pinfold mark V.P. on its quarters. Well, one day the little steed was standing tied up outside the "Red Light" hostelry when two alien Jews, called in Kimberley Peruvians, came sauntering down the street, which now is haunted by the footsteps of the many departed.

"I say, Jacob, by yours and by mine," exclaimed one sloucher admiringly to the other, "vat a vonderful-looking pony! Grand, ain't he! I vonder who belongs to it?"

The second of the loiterers—evidently Sherlock Holmes's predecessor—looked the pony well over, and said pityingly to his companion:

"Vat ignorance!" Then pointing to the branded letters on the animal's side, added, "You know who owns it now, stoopid?"

"No, and for my part——" put in the other.

"Vell, you are a schmuck (fool). Can't you see the mark V.P. (Veitche's Pound)? Stands for Vatkins's pony."

Louis Goldschmidt's personality must have been a bit of a puzzle to the physiognomists. He was a Scotch Israelite, but as a matter of fact looked a typical brawny Highlander. Tall and massively grown, with handsome florid face, rugged and red-haired, one would imagine he was as strong as Samson and as brave as Bayard. In his powerful nut-cracker jaws one could

almost discern an invincible determination, while the brightness of eyes and expansiveness of forehead suggested intelligence of the rarest kind. On seeing this leonine-faced Scotchman in his knickerbocker suit and Glengarrie cap, one would think he was an epitomé of all the manly sporting graces. But he was not. To put it mildly, Mr. Louis Goldschmidt was "a hass." All round he appeared athletic; he was just the contrary. He looked strong; he was weak. Instead of being intelligent he was incredibly stupid; and of courage there was not a particle in his composition. He assumed the air of a lady-killer without ever having found a divinity. Full of conceit, that failing was quite hidden under the glamour of his rough, undaunted face and habitual taciturnity. Yet he was not a bad fellow, for he did nobody any harm, was scrupulously honest, and spoke ill of neither man nor woman. How Loewenthal ever went into partnership with him as diamond dealers has always been a matter of wonderment to me, for they were the antithesis of each other. The one courageous, resourceful, and clever, the other—nothing. To get to the little episode I am about to narrate, it must be explained that at one period of their existence it dawned on the elders of the Christian people of Kimberley that the fortunes and fame of the town required for its defence (against what or whom was never apparent) an "army," so they forthwith with pleasurable promptitude embodied a volunteer force of a couple of dozen of the weediest, bow-legged heroes ever seen outside a casual union. The talented Loewenthal at once, with that remarkable patriotism which still glows in his aged and storm-swept bosom, persuaded his deceiving partner to join the gallant defenders of nothing in particular. This of course the massive and martial Goldschmidt meekly did, and in due course became a full-fledged captain. Hey, mon! it was a sight for the ladies, black and white, to watch the gallant "division" with the red and soldierly officer at its head tugging his warlike moustache, march proudly and fiercely down the Main Street with the air of men who would take Sebastopol—or anything else they could lay their hands on. Now it came to pass in

this ungodly city of promise and disappointment that when Colonel Lanyon was appointed administrator, the sapient town scoundrels—in office by the grace of gabbling and old Geneva—decided in solemn conclave that he should be received with the magnificence he deserved. So the Imperial Guard was mobilised at considerable expense and amid much excitement, and headed by its renowned and celebrated captain, it stepped it out proudly to the tune of "Partant pour la Syrie," which was a musical lie, as all the world knew they were only going so far as the station. Having with great daring and precision arrived there, the baker's dozen, at the command of their gruff and herculean officer, put themselves in so-called military array to the satisfaction of their puissant leader and the great delight of three naked negroes and a chocolate lady who was dressed as economically as Eve. In due time somebody squeaked upon an asthmatical bugle, and then the great Lanyon appeared, upon which, without a moment's delay, our heroic captain thundered, sharp as a rifle crack, the word of command, and the baker's dozen responded with much noise and activity. The newly-appointed administrator approached the assembled troops, and, pausing in front of Goldschmidt, returned their salute in orthodox fashion, at the same time glancing at the captain. Now, the honour and responsibility of the whole thing was too much for Goldschmidt, who became exceedingly confused and disturbed, dropped his keen and shining sword on the ground, and enthusiastically seizing the astonished Lanyon's hand, shook it heartily with both of his, exclaiming with gusto, "How do you do, sir? I'm very glad to see you!"

In the fulness of time it came to pass that trouble with the natives assumed serious proportions, and the gallant volunteers, to the great consternation of the captain, were ordered to the front. Now, fighting of any sort or kind was the last thing in the world Goldschmidt expected when he chose to become a warrior, therefore at this sensational turn of events the calm chieftain, who, Loewenthal affirmed, would have been so cool in battle that he might have shivered, becoming

suddenly and mysteriously ill, a sea voyage was deemed of paramount importance, and the captain, after taking an affecting farewell of his legion—as did the great Emperor at Fontainebleau—incontinently fled to Cape Town on the way to white-cliffed England. From the shores of this foggy land he followed with soldierly and intense interest the warlike operations of his Colonial comrades. No doubt he was completely secure from the sharp assegais and nasty bullets of savage tribes, but that is not to say he was free of the terrible Loewenthal, who, though oceans separated the two ill-assorted partners, kept his keen eyes on the Jewish Napoleon, of whose tactics and strategy in retreat he was a great and fervid admirer. It must have been some consolation to Goldschmidt for losing participation in the glories of the campaign to read one morning in a great London daily the following testimonial, addressed from the seat of war, and which ran something like this:

"Captain Louis Goldschmidt begs to write to the proprietors of ——'s Fruit Salt and to assure them that since the commencement of operations in Griqualand West, where he is leading his company, he has used no other laxative than ——'s Fruit Salt, and from which he has, he desires to say, much benefited." The treacherous Loewenthal.

CHAPTER IX

Illicit Diamond Buying—The Fouché of the Fields—Fagans with Fur Coats—The Famous Mr. Fox—Judah and Babylon—Detectives—A Brobdingnagian Diamond—The London Hotel—The Red Light.

I DO not think any writer has yet told the history of I.D.B. in all its native truth. Of course, under certain conditions, many could have done so with infinitely more literary ability than I possess; but at the same time they might simply have written from hearsay evidence, club chatter, and prejudice. All their sympathies would naturally have been with the loudly proclaimed robbed, forgetting, or probably not knowing, that a large percentage of these same innocents had themselves ennobled the profession of Illicit Diamond Buying, until becoming sufficiently rich, they turned honest, not because they were inclined that way, but because they desired to protect their property against a thieving and undesirable community of which they themselves had been highly distinguished and successful associates. If I liked I could write some names that would startle, but not shock, you, for the matter is an unspoken truth from Petticoat Lane to Maida Vale, the two first stations before reaching Park Lane, that home of luxury whither so many S.A. millionaires came to work off their impiety, and which it must be confessed has become more Petticoaty than Parky. But it does not do to topple down established reputations.

The illicit diamond ordinarily went through three stages. First it was stolen by the raw and naked kaffir (who was not infrequently paid with small gilt medals made in imitation of the British sovereign sterling, and inscribed with the words "Gone to Hanover"), and sold

to the well-dressed tout, generally a Cape Boy (native of St. Helena), who in turn passed it on to the eager debased white man, often an ignorant Polish Jew, unable to read or write, who would sometimes be duped with Bank of Leather or Engraving notes, and often with "snide" diamonds. He in his turn disposed of it with the greatest facility to one of the licensed diamond dealers who had such keen scents for bargains.

Diamond licenses in Kimberley were readily procurable, diamonds easily bought, and nobody bowed more obsequiously than the important buyer as a notorious I.D.B. entered his office. Let it be understood this respectable merchant was quite within his rights to deal with Fagan's son; but all the same, he knew perfectly well that the goods he was buying were stolen. He did not care about that as long as they were cheap and he was safe; the buyer and seller were both the same thing, but at different ends of the stick. And as the patronising customer would be leaving the office the highly delighted buyer would murmur a humble hope that Mr. Grigstein would do him the honour of giving him another chance, as he was always so pleased to see him. Morally, they were both thieves, with the difference that one took a risk and the other didn't. Some of the big diamond buyers, too, bought the stuff—at considerably under its value—without booking it, thereby chancing five or six years' imprisonment; but it was a mountain to a house against a conviction. They would make the weights in their books tally by taking out the "bort" (a cheap kind of carbon), worth about three shillings a carat, and substituting the purchased good stones for it. A simple *modus operandi,* and almost impossible to detect. Besides, these men were hardly suspected, in many cases being clubgoers, shoolgoers, and churchgoers, and naturally loudest in their denunciations of the fallen ones, whom they themselves had encouraged and lured to destruction.

There was a special corps of detectives employed in the trapping of the illicit diamond buyers, the directors of which were thoroughly well known and highly appreciated in some quarters as forming a useful institution.

This protective force consisted of a chief, about twenty-five natives, nine white men, and several others engaged in scouring the country and on foreign service. They were quite independent of the police, of which Percy was chief. Major Maxwell, I may mention, was inspector of prisons, and a better hearted man one would not want to know.

Take them, the detectives, as a general body, they were a fairly honest set of officials, and did their arduous duties with quite commendable zeal and impartiality. At their head presided a person called Fry, a morose, unfair man, who never said a good word for anybody, or did a kindly deed. Marked with the small-pox, he was a rather tall individual, with a throat like a turkey gobbler's and the heart of a heathen. Disappointed in his own walk of life, he entered on his congenial duties with a savagery and fervour quite incompatible with justice, and was one of those men who would ruin families without a scruple. He loved to make himself hated and feared, and was all that, and practically by every living soul—man or woman on the "Fields." Justice is justice, and law is law all the world over, but I have seen this prodigy laugh hilariously and glow with pride as some wretched soul, who had succumbed to the popular and prevailing temptation, was dragged, amidst the tears and lamentations of his or her relatives, to undergo years of torture. *Væ Victis.*

I have not, and never had, any sympathy with the practice of I.D.B., and to defend it would be impossible; it was a crime. But really, if you come to look the matter squarely in the face, not such a serious one as first appears. Many of the claimholders, I repeat, commenced their diamond field life as professors of the same art, and when, after robbing the Dutchmen of their ground and diamonds, they themselves became mine-holders, then they discovered, to their intense horror and indignation, the heinousness of a crime which they had practised themselves so successfully. More than that, as I hope for Salvation, certain of these chevaliers up to the last, whilst hunting their competitors, did not hesitate to buy stolen goods if they could only trust the

seller. It was so easy for them to account for numerous diamonds by the richness of their claims; what they bought illicitly they professed to have found legitimately. I heard one particularly unscrupulous big pot shamelessly exclaim: "And why shouldn't I buy them? Perhaps they come out of my own claims." And yet these persons, with the pilfered gems rattling in their pockets, on hearing of some starving outcast's downfall would turn up the whites of their hypocritical eyes and ejaculate: "Serve the scoundrel right."

Continuing the subject of I.D.B., let me say at once it was the custom of the country. Nobody was ashamed of it, nobody was blamed for it until the fallen one got "time," and then the rats—rat-like—would turn and devour his body. Scores of men—I see some in Austin Friars—too cowardly to risk their own skins in buying outright illicitly, would assiduously court the custom of those who were notoriously engaged in the traffic and solicit their patronage. How could poor devils who had nothing resist being drawn into this whirlpool of vice? I have lunched at a restaurant—the London Hotel, kept by Harry Barnato, or Madame Delalée's French Café, or the Red Light—and seen the diamonds change ownership without the least effort at concealment. Who cared, who bothered? A chap perhaps doing badly, but having a buying licence, would suddenly, whilst sitting at table, have pushed into his hand by his next door neighbour a diamond with the murmured information, "It's yours for fifty." Human nature is human weakness since Adam courted Eve. He would look at it—a cat can look at a king—and see at once probably thirty pounds to be had for the asking with about a five hundred to one chance of being caught. "All right," he might answer, "meet me at four at the London Hotel, and I'll pay you." These temptations were always staring one in the face, and so—well, I've known women part with their virtue for a sixth of this monetary consideration, and I confess if I could choose I would rather be an I.D.B. for thirty pounds profit than a Phryne for a fiver.

Amongst others, the four most active members of the

detective force were Fox, Izdebski, Chadwick, and Charley Wilson, and then there was a certain Collins, who was half a policeman and half a detective. The first-named (at one time a low-down cobbler in a poor part of the Dry Diggings) was the best known of the company, simply because he advertised and pushed himself forward at every opportunity. Fox was in himself an ignorant, bandy-legged, carrotty-moustached Irishman, with greenish yellow eyes, malign, askance, coarse in speech, brutal in manner, and having the reputation of being honest in his methods, as far as money was concerned—but he would have annihilated half God's works to have had the prisons full. He was credited with possessing considerable personal courage during the performance of his duties. His right hand man was a wily native detective, called Woolsack, whose cleverness was rewarded by the illustrious Fox getting all the credit for the work done. It must have been an awful livelihood, this lying in wait outside a house for hours, watching for an opportunity to launch the trapper—black or white—like a torpedo at a ship. No angler, when he felt a bite at the end of his line, ever experienced the exultation that Fox enjoyed when the signal was given that a bird was netted. And then the sudden rush, the arrest of the doomed wretches—man and wife often—who were dragged from their home in charge of the triumphant Fox and his subordinates, leaving their unprotected children howling in an empty house.

It sometimes happened the trapper, if a European, would be a bosom friend of the *mauvais sujet* he was about to ruin. In such cases it was not unfrequent that he had been trapped himself beforehand by the detectives, and the price of his liberty was the betrayal of his friend. This was a bad method, surely? The detectives got anywhere, in cupboards, on roofs, under beds—and sometimes in them, too, when the husband had been made safe. Often they did not arrest a delinquent at once, as that would be making it impossible to use the same valuable and trusted trap again, so it was their practice at times to utilise the latest

acquired tool for a week, and bag a round dozen or so before the "gaff" was blown. The arrests usually took place simultaneously at night, and next morning, when the news was bruited about the town, men would exclaim, with astonishment, "Fancy So and So being a trap"; but they forgot his conduct saved him his liberty. At Harry Barnato's hostelry, the "London," and other hotels, the news would create vast consternation, just like a heavy fall in wool does at an Exchange, and if a "tec." happened to look in, then the distinguished visitors would be as startled as singing birds caged by a cat. (I omitted to mention that our friend 'Arry had become landlord of this far-famed hotel, of which you know nothing at present; but when I come to describe it your curiosity will be satisfied.)

In the Red Light, too, a celebrated resting-place of the boys, there would be suppressed excitement and an ominous silence as the customers huddled in a corner. On these mornings "gonivas" were not so plentiful, and loud and deep were the wailings in Judah, likewise in Babylon. And my goodness, too, it was funny to see the police strut through the thoroughfares as if they'd won the battle of Salamanca. One tiny Yid would come nervously down the street, pale with excitement, and meet a co-religionist in the same state.

"What a *shermazzle* (trouble), ain't it, Israel?" said the first, solemnly waving his hand to and fro, with fingers picturesquely twirling.

"Jacob," replied the other convincingly, "It's unhonest—it ain't English law. My enemies shall suffer what I feel."

"I just see the momzer Fox round the corner," responded the man with the rotary digits.

"Which way, Jacob?" hurriedly asked the other, staring like a codfish.

"That way, chocham (wise man)," replied Israel, pointing.

"By the Holy One, blessed be He, then I'll go the other," quoth the former, as he trotted off as fast as his little legs would carry him.

All these detectives were very friendly with their

anticipatory victims, and they would drink, and call each other by their Christian names. Oh, shades of Jonathan Wild, Blueskin, and Jack Sheppard! In the evenings "the boys" would probably have the handcuffs clapped on them by their morning pals with a boastful "Copt you at last, Bob," ringing in their ears. Occasionally a detective, having a favourite chum in this special line of speculation, might send him a warning, like somebody did to Lord Monteagle in Guy Fawkes's days, and save him; but only for the nonce, for the other *espions de la police* would twig it, and put the communicative officer out in the cold next time. Some of the detectives were bribed, others bought illicitly themselves, and a few were regular bandits "on their own."

I remember a certain *belle dame* who knew Fox not wisely, but too warmly. I, too, was on winking terms with her, and can truly say she liked me indifferently well, to the intense disgust of Mr. Fox. This fact, nevertheless, did not prevent her buying diamonds like a great many other ladies *à la mode*, who, instead of finding honesty the best policy, discovered just the contrary—*ergo*, they enjoy carriages and fine houses to-day in London and its environs, and are studded back and front with glittering gems, quite emblematic of their erstwhile profession—these diamond duchesses who could hide a diamond where no man could find it without getting sunburnt. However, one fine day, a dealer who wasn't particular to a shade, was buying from her in a room separated from the front one by a thin partition. The Diamond Dame, while bargaining, happened to be called away by one of her servants, and the "diamant" kooper, getting impatient, walked into the adjacent chamber, carrying the scales full of gems in his hands. I fancy he rather regretted his excursion into this sacred abode of kiss and promise, for there sure enough was the grim and frowsy Fox intently studying the ceiling. The buyer turned pale as death, stammered, upset the diamonds, and muttered something incoherently. Fox looked at him, frowned, and said, "Oh, never mind me." 'Tis set down that no

canary ever hopped out of a cage quicker than did this man from the matron's maisonette, and then took flight like a homing pigeon. But he never got over the meeting, the shock gave him heart disease, and he died a few months later to the great relief of his widow (who married a millionaire, and is now alive and kicking). When the late J. R. Couper (the pugilist who fought Bendoff) was writing his novel, entitled "Mixed Humanity," I helped him a little, and I told him this incident, which he worked up in the book.

You can well imagine, then, that in this Land of Diamonds, notwithstanding heaps of religions of all sorts and kinds, there was very little morality, though the birth-rate was eminently satisfactory to everybody. The ladies were often naturally delightful and audaciously frisky, a state of things which learned doctors and pathologists at once put down to the heat, and as the heat has been unable, for obvious reasons, to reply in its own defence, it is held responsible as much for the development of indiscretions as the formation of diamonds. Bad enough indeed it is to induce friend to betray friend, but cases have been known where the trappers have got hold of some accursed wench who did not hesitate to ensnare the man whose head rested on her bosom and whose bread she ate. Information flowed from all sources—enemy, friend, woman, rival. Undoubtedly I. D. B. became the chief industry of Kimberley, an exhilarating game, taken all round, excitable, profitable, and not so very risky, unless the adventurer went about with his wits in his pockets—then, of course, he would be landed like trout on a bank.

But to return to the detectives. A totally different kind of man was Izdebski to Fox, who, although his name is a foreign one, was an Englishman, born somewhere north of this forcible isle. A highly efficient, respectable official, he did his duties with humanity, without prejudice or ostentation. Strictly fair, the magistrates recognised the value of an untainted testimony, which consequently carried considerable weight. It is odd that so quiet and kind-hearted a character

should ever have chosen the profession he did, but it was not a bad thing for justice that he became a detective, and so put a curb on the ferocity of some of his colleagues. Chadwick, a heavily-bearded individual, was also a meritorious officer of strict impartiality, whilst Charley Wilson—who arrested me in Ladysmith during the Zulu War (of which you will hear further)—I must admit was a decent man, dispensing his services in a reasonable and proper manner, as far as his intelligence allowed him. The remainder of them, Mackintosh, Human, etc., I knew nothing about, so we'll take it for granted they were saints.

Once upon a time in Kimberley there dwelt a sport-loving publican with whom I got on terms of friendship, and used to visit. He did not appear to live happily with his wife—a much younger partner—of whom he was very jealous, and she at different times told me of the disputes with her hubby. As far as I knew she was a perfectly honest woman, but the husband seemed to take umbrage at her conversations. I quitted calling on them, with all the more reason, too, as he had informed some mutual acquaintances of his quite unfounded suspicions concerning me and his spouse. One morning a Kaffir brought a note from—dub him Johnson—inviting me to come to his hotel on some particular business he had in hand. As I had not called at his place for nearly two months, and was perfectly innocent of any interference with his domestic hearth, I immediately jumped on my pony and trotted off. Serving in his wine saloon, he greeted me effusively, said how pleased he was to see me, stood a bottle, and, in fact, appeared quite "jollick." After a little time I asked him what the particular business was he wanted to see me about, at which he laughed and beckoned me into a room behind the bar, an unpapered apartment with walls of dull red clay, but cool and clean. When I got inside he shut the door, pulled a snuff box from his pocket, opened same and handed it to me. I looked, and, sure enough, it contained diamonds. Let me mention that never had I suspected Johnson of dealing illicitly, directly or indirectly, nor had he ever spoken

to me on the subject; besides, he had a splendid business, and seemed quite contented with it.

"What's this, Johnson?" I said.

"Oh, nothing," he replied winking. "Buy them of me. Seventy pounds."

I could see by looking in the box they were worth a hundred, but proffered him the receptacle back saying, "Now, Johnson, you know perfectly well I can't buy diamonds of you."

He ignored my remark, but a look of disappointment came over his face as he answered quickly, "Here, take them for sixty."

"I tell you, Johnson, I don't go in for the business," I responded again.

He waived me off as he said crossly, "They're yours for fifty."

All at once a suspicion flashed across my mind he was trying to trap me through jealousy of his wife. By San Carlo, experiencing a cold perspiration in the region of my back, I sprang forward and forced the pregnant box into his hand.

"No, I tell you," I exclaimed wrathfully, "I only buy diamonds in my office."

He looked at me full of resentment, surprise smouldering in his eyes, but, recovering himself, added deliberately as he coldly regarded me, "you'll buy diamonds from me."

"You can bet your life I won't."

"By heaven, you will," he exclaimed, as if certain of his way.

"By ——, I won't," I cried determinedly making a step towards the door.

"Stop a minute," said he with a smirk. "See it out."

There was a common wooden ladder leaning against one of the red walls. He planted it against another part of the room, in a minute had clambered up, and was searching in a corniced hole with his right hand. Certainly I wanted to get home to tea, you can wager, but somehow stood fascinated and watched him. In a moment he was down, and the ferruginous fellow clasped in my hand something as he uttered an exultant

exclamation, an elated glint lighting up his steely Scotch eyes.

"I told you," said he, "you would buy of me."

Looking at what he had given me, by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to say nothing of the Pope, I felt as in a dream. It lay nestling in my paw like a baby to its mother's bosom—an off-coloured diamond bigger than a duck's egg—probably 800 or 900 carats. I fancy it is before me now, and remember a large corner broken off. I had never seen so large a precious stone, and, of course, knew it couldn't be a trap.

"There," cried Johnson boastfully. "Who was right—you're a customer, eh?"

I only gasped, "What does it weigh?"

"Weigh?" laughingly retorted the hotel keeper. "How do I know?" With that he produced a fairly large pair of scales and put all the weights in one side, I adding mine to them. But it was all to no purpose, the diamond pulled them down as Hackenschmidt did Madrali. In the meantime I had regained my self-possession, and, although sorelv tempted, had made up my mind not to buy, so turned round to him diffidently and said, "Johnson, I won't buy it."

"You won't what?" he exclaimed, darting amazed and angry glances at me.

"I won't buy it," I repeated, lighting a cigarette.

"Why?" asked he, looking as if he could kill me.

"Well, in the first place," I added excusingly, "I don't know what it weighs."

He paused as if he was balancing me up, and said thickly, "You see, I want you to buy it because I won't trust anybody else. These—nodding his head at the snuff-box, and pointing to the big diamond—are my first ventures."

"I don't care; I won't buy it," I replied determinedly.

"You are not frightened of me?" he queried.

"Not a bit in the world—now," I put in, and then falling back on my old excuse, muttered, "I don't know what it weighs."

"See here, Cohen," replied Johnson, looking squarely and honestly in my face. "See here, if you won't trust

me, I'll trust you. Take it home, weigh it, and tell me what you'll give in the morning. You know what that means." I did, and the man's utter and complete faith took away my breath. It meant that if I took his diamond, and chose to be dishonest, that I could have kept it and he dared not have said a word. It meant that I could not have been trapped, for no money had passed. I admit that no human being before or since had so inadvertently complimented me, and felt—is not human nature curious?—a thrill of pleasure. But with many a pang I handed the stone back and refused to have anything to do with it. "You can go to hell!" he shouted, glowering like a wild beast. I didn't go there, but went to the London Hotel, kept by 'Arry Barnato, which was nearly the same thing. Ah! for all that, it sometimes requires a lot of courage to be honest.

The London Hotel as I conjure it up in my mind's eye makes a sordid picture. This famous hostelry, which boasted as boniface Mr. 'Arry Barnato, was located in Stockdale Street, and established by the now well-known philanthropic millionaire to afford board and entertainment to man and beast (beasts especially) at moderate prices and on strictly cash principles. The last *sine quâ non* was ably superintended by our Mr. 'Arry with commendable vigour and magical activity when he could tear himself from the liquor bar or the musty odours of the eating room—ycelpt the grand "salong"—where under the watchful eye of the Wizard you could eat as much as you liked if your appetite was not too alarming. This Utopia was the favourite abiding place of all the pleasant emigrants from Petticoat Lane and the fair but unfortunate land of Poland. The nature of the trades or professions of most of the *habitués* of this Jewish diamondiferous *Alma Mater* was buried in an obscurity which was a limerick to everybody except the police officials, who were quite unjustly and arrogantly inquisitive. It was "most delightfully situated"—as an advertisement would say. Weils ran a soda-water manufactory next door, the Queen's Hotel was across the road, Dr. Jameson had his office opposite, quite ready and willing, if called

upon, to lend his medical efforts when required; and as three sanguinary rounds outside the gentle inn was a matter of every day occurrence—in some of which 'Arry highly distinguished himself—it showed at once the acumen of the erstwhile Colonial Premier in selecting his pitch. I once saw 'Arry Barnato fight Jack Dallamore—a storekeeper—over a disputed account, and certainly Jack got the worst of it, for 'Arry's agility in the fistic art as acquired at the King of Prussia Arms, Petticoat Lane, testified to great experience in liquidating disputes with fists, and such schooling stood him in good stead among the *beaux esprits* of his place of entertainment. Naturally, all this happened a long time ago, and people were not so well educated as they are to-day, and so if some of the "London" customers at breakfast aped *le beau monde* by reading the local newspapers upside down, you cannot blame them for assuming a virtue they did not possess. Many had never been inside a hotel until they visited Tom Tiddler's ground.

It is incorrect and inexcusable to say that because a man eats with a knife, picks his teeth with a fork, mistakes a serviette for his handkerchief, and does not know how to manipulate his cheese, that for this forsaken wretch there is no hope of attaining the Carlton. That is wrong, and history has proved the contrary. The betting men also contributed their useful patronage to the "London," and also a corps of chevaliers whose occupations were as mysterious as Lemoine's. I remember a brace of highly scientific gents taking two bedrooms, where they busied themselves for three whole days in grinding bricks into dust, which dust with splendid Semitic audacity they sold by the hundredweight, as a specific against scab in sheep to the leading firms of the town, taking in payment bills at long dates which they disposed of—without recourse—to the different banks, and then scooted. One of these connoisseurs owns a public-house in London to-day. At intervals, too, those learned professors who went about the country amongst the Boer farmers vaccinating children with condensed milk, would make the Barnatos' bee-

hive their headquarters and narrate their tricks to a delighted circle of admirers. I am only telling these insignificant facts so that the British Public may know the sort of individuals who in after years foisted on them their worthless scrip, which was useless sheep-dip and vaccine, though in a different form. Believe me, the English people were greater fools than the Boers, though they laugh at the latter.

It is a fact that a few clerks in the Government service once took up their residence at this famous tavern, but when their weekly payments became irregular they ran like rabbits with the indefatigable 'Arry hot on their heels. I can see him now, with a sheaf of summonses in his hand as thick as motes in a London sunbeam, waiting round the law courts, tracking his prey. All this reminds me that there was a well-known and highly reputable I.D.B. called Rosenthal, a Polish Jew, who was making quite a heap of money at his calling, and it was the habit of "the boys" to lay in wait for him and relieve him of the superfluous cash, for this prime "goniva" buyer (*Anglicé*—I.D.B.) was a great gambler. One night they "got it up for him," as the saying is, in the bar at the London Hotel, and an interested crowd took him to a billiard room, winning quite a considerable amount from the sporting foreigner. Apropos, I remember a man called M—— was playing him billiards, —the rest of the gang snarling like wolves around a lamb as Barney Barnato entered. The latter at once became quite interested on hearing the amount that Rosenthal had lost.

"Go on," whispered Barnato to M——. "Let me play him. I'll double him up in no time." M—— consented, for Barney was always a masterful man. Well, B.B., guarded by his observant brother, cleared this Polish mug completely out, but, I grieve to say, neglected to divide the booty with the indignant and expostulating introducers, which operation, even if desired by the accomplished winner, would probably have been difficult, for the "Seggnor," ever careful of the firm's interests, was wont on most occasions when Barney scored a win "to go over" his acquiescent

brother and annex the shekels "to take care of" in the ordinary or family way. Many a time have I seen this keen and alert 'Arry peer anxiously through an hotel window while Barney played, and, when the game was over, pounce like a worm-speering sparrow on his clever brother and go home triumphant and blessed with the spoils and glories of the night. And Barney was always left without a penny, which didn't matter much as he never spent anything.

The Red Light in the Main Street was something in the nature of a rival to the "London" establishment, although the first-named was not an hotel at all. It was simply a large bar, to which was attached a commodious billiard saloon, and here, smoking like chimneys, congregated all day, lounging, drinking, and gambling, the very élite of the Prevailing Industry. I have read somewhere that the Colonies, according to Horace Walpole, were made a dumping ground for all sorts; this might have been true in his lifetime, but is certainly not so to-day. At the same time, I am writing of things that happened thirty odd years ago, and since then many boots have been worn out. But putting that aside, the company you could meet in the "Red Light" at all hours, but especially about midday, would make you open your eyes, and close your pockets. It was crowded with living creatures, mostly human. They came from all climes and cities, as hot as cayenne, or as cold as ice cream. From Newgate, Hellgate, Cripplegate, and Billingsgate, to say nothing of Duke's Place and the Lane. And from more aristocratic quarters, too. There stands a parrot peer (on the wrong side of the blanket), garrulous, of the trembling hand and glassy eyes, smoking a pipe, waiting for tardy remittances from "home," and not disdaining in the meanwhile to accept the honours of the bar from the red-scarved, poppy-headed Hebrew, he with the white leper's face, aggressive hooligan curls upon his criminal forehead, and cursed bump of Judas on his head. Flashily dressed, with an enormous watch-chain and important diamond ring, he speaks costerlike, with offensive familiarity to the fallen aristocrat, wondering

all the time to himself how he ever arrived at such an altitude. But, my friend with the red tie is a gentleman of means, who, a coward from heel of foot to nape of neck, never risks his own skin, but supplies runners (natives) with the money to buy for him from the raw niggers working in the mines. It was done in this way, before the compounds were in vogue. The Kaffirs who worked on the claims during their day's labour, would, on espying a diamond, throw it with a spadeful of earth behind them, then come down in the night, secure the stone, and sell it to a runner, who would pass it to the evil-looking individual (or one of his kidney) I have described. When not engaged in these exciting practices, he lived at Christiana—across the river in the Transvaal—where, immune from English law, he pursued his traffic. He was one of those thieves who disdained to thieve himself. A different kind of individual near him is Nobody's son, the vicious-miened, one-armed half-breed, credited with half a dozen murders, who looks defiantly at you with his cold, grey, merciless eyes, and flashes his white teeth, strong as an otter's fangs. No coward is he, desperate ruffian, who would die like a hero facing any odds, with his broad back to the wall. Some good English blood no doubt runs in his veins, for which his mother never asked a church blessing.

Again, too, standing near, as the story goes, is a royal rogue from Russia, with deep scars, received in Siberia, marked upon his cheeks, who regards with an unloving half-enviable glance, a frowsy-looking Pole, in jack boots, who is standing "fizz," and whispering Yiddish to his guests, while the champagne corks go off like file firing. He has evidently had a good time, for he flashes a huge bundle of notes, and openly exchanges some of them over the bar for a hundred pounds in gold, for which favour he allows the proprietor one per cent. The use for which he intends the coin is obvious, but as the sale of specie is a staple industry of the establishment, the transaction attracts not even a passing remark. Sadly leaning against the counter, regarding hungrily the cash, is a thin, genteel,

well-bred looking man, with a fair drooping moustache, and tired, disappointed, dissipated face. He appears to know few people. In the long ago, he lived in England, with heaps of friends and money, had been to college, lodged at Claridge's, but falling a prey to the ladies, had been convicted of some offence, and in due course was shipped to Africa to try his luck. Ah! there were lots of such men out there in my time—good chums, too—but Fortune's outcasts, with conquered hearts, as far as their chances of competing successfully with the horde of wry-faced sons of Fagan who had dishonesty bred and born in them. Around that bar, too, you could see detectives mingling and drinking with the fish they hoped to catch (except when overnight there had been sensational I.D.B. arrests), broken-down grandiose captains, jewelled gamblers, stinking of scent, liquor-loving lawyers, cocking drunken eyes from under their hats, Irish "pathriots" of most combative and fiery inclinations, a few flabby actors, unwashed and unabashed, with last night's triumphs plastered on their puckered faces and lingering on their tongues, newspaper reporters, down at heel and hungry for a "wet," ready and willing to read their tremendous pars. on the last I.D.B. case. Unemployed nondescripts, qualified, between the puff-puff of their cadged cheroots, to bark at all thieves, likewise to partake of liquor and tobacco at their expense in any quantities or parcels. They were all forbidding and repellent, from a cross-eyed Greek to a Jack of Malaga, from a Pimlico pug to a human rogue-eyed pole-cat from Poland, enthusiastically prepared, at a moment's notice, to squeeze any poor cow's udders until she bled to death. There they stand, stubborn Swedes, sallow Sicilians, swarthy Spaniards, and Square Heads from Silesia, with flap ears and creaking top-boots, Crusaders every one of them against the Saracens—the Boers. Such were the generally exotic members of La Legion Noire—the modern, the mediæval, the antique, laughing gaily, drinking merrily, smiling serenely, but all the time with the shadow of the breakwater haunting them and phantoms of prison warders grinning over their shoulders,

reminding them of the worm in the rose, or the broad arrow that is to be on their backs.

A certain well-to-do man married to a domesticated handsome wife came down to dinner one evening. The lady was engaged in cooking a succulent repast, and during the culinary operations a Cape boy knocked at the kitchen back-door, was admitted by the wife and sold a forty-carat diamond to the merchant. It was a trap. A detective immediately rushed in to arrest the buyer, searched the house, but no diamond could be found. The good wife had placed it in the stuffing of a goose she was basting, and there was no conviction; so whenever this lady, who is as meek as a mouse, meets a goose she kisses her fingers to it, and whenever she sees a detective she thinks of the goose. On the other hand, I knew a poor chap who had hitherto never bought a diamond in his life, but being one day under the influence of liquor, a rascally black American cook (trapped himself) absolutely forced a splint for 7 or 8 shillings on him. He got convicted. I remember another fellow, a companion of mine, who was positively guiltless of even thinking of purchasing a stone, but they imprisoned him. Many of the trappings, arrests, and convictions were the outcome of spleen and spite, and a pretty wife was a dangerous bait, too, especially if she happened to like someone else. *Ergo,* wise men were chary of taking any wives to themselves, except those who belonged to their dearest friends—and in that they were most obliging.

CHAPTER X

A Trio of Thieves—The Brilliant Mr. Benjamin—Some Villains of the Veldt—A Successful Swindle—Cockney Liz—Mr. Fox makes a call.

THERE were two Americans called Walter Leroy and Hicks, who, being much wanted in the Land of Stars and Stripes, decided to shelter themselves under the ægis of the Union Jack, and so soon found their way to Kimberley, where they were received most politely by a dozen carefully selected, distinguishd desperadoes of the place. As these gentlemen were not the sort of sportsmen to let the grass grow under their feet, they speedily, with the help of a man called Moyle, and several others of the same kidney, hatched a plot, which, if it had succeeded, would have made them comfortable "for years and years," as Lauder sings. I have already explained that the passenger cart, which also carried diamonds, left Kimberley weekly for Cape Town, and news coming to the ears of the argus-eyed Americans and their gang that on a certain week there was to be a particularly valuable shipment of diamonds *en route* in the coach, they decided, after due deliberation, to hold it up. All being arranged, four or five of the highway robbers rode out and ambushed themselves near the Modder River in waiting for their prey. In the meanwhile, one of the bandits who had backed out of the plot, and had consequently been left behind, gave information, out of sheer vexation of spirit, to the police, and then, cur like, becoming frightened of the consequences of his treason, hied himself to one Portuguese Bob, and told what he had done. With reproachful words and withering scorn levelled at the double traitor, Portuguese Bob jumped on an old racehorse, and spared

neither whip nor spur until he reached the spot where he knew the robbers were awaiting the arrival of the mail cart. He found them all fierce and determined, anxiously watching for the coach to appear, and while Portuguese Bob was imparting the unwelcome news the resonant tootle-tootle of the bugle was heard in the distance, heralding the approach of the mails. The gang had only time to disappear as the conveyance passed, carrying diamonds sure enough, but also, by the four Georges, fifteen stalwart policemen, armed to the teeth, guarding them.

Illicit diamond buying went on everywhere. Many a time at prayers in the shool I have seen a pious and fervent worshipper get the tip, and hurriedly forsake his exhortations ostensibly to wash his hands, and return smilingly to devotional duties with a merry glint in his eye, and a goniva in his mouth—which happy event, by means of an esoterical wink, he transmitted to his partner, who forthwith celebrated the blessed occasion by increased and louder orisons and sundry tremendous thumpings on the left breast. It was all magnificent, but hardly prayer. The other congregationalists quite realised what had happened, and between their prayers, which were fervent supplications to Heaven to be all reunited in Jerusalem next year (wild horses could not have dragged one of them to that unsavoury, though highly historical, place), would murmur, with agitated eyebrows, to each other, "Jacob's got a motza puddin'," and wonder about its colour and its size.

On one memorable Yom Kippur, as the worshippers were leaving the shool after a hard day's work fasting, praying, shaking themselves, and taking off their boots, a couple of detectives appeared among the hungry, hurrying, outside throng. By the Toe of the Chief Papist, you never saw such an ado. Gentlemen of marked abdominal prominence, and ladies with burly little Marys, became lively as kittens, glazed eyes quickened, pale cheeks grew cherry ripe, hearts cantered, loquacious youths forgot their wit and hunger for a moment, then remembered they had left something

behind, turned back, and from safe vantage peered through the shool doors. Joking, short-sighted Mr. Shummer Browsky, who was remarkable for becoming a father every nine months, and a bankrupt every twelve, was engaged talking with some solicitude to his buxom wife, who was all bosom and bleatings. "Aaron," said the stout lady, prime with maternity, faintly closing her black eyes, and gathering her mouth. "By your mother's life, in another minute I should have fainted dead orff." "Poor angel," replied Aaron feelingly, at which his spouse gammoned her optics again, and clutched at her breast. "In all events," he continued, speaking loudly, so that all should hear, and be jealous, "you've got three plates of fried. Is it not so?"

"Yes, love."

"Two of stoowed—ain't it?" he continued triumphantly.

"Yes, my pet, tank Gord."

"As well as a couple of fowls, a tongue, and olives."

She nodded.

"Ray, you're my angel treasure."

At this minute the husband saw the detectives. Browsky turned pale, whispered something to his delightful Ray, whose bosom got greater and grander, and the pair, with immense loss of dignity, threw themselves among the scuttling crowd with much precipitation. It is told that when the happy couple got home Aaron drank all the kosher rum at one gulp, after hurriedly burying something in the back yard, and the ravishing Ray, after a thick brandy and soda, exclaimed: "Aaron, my blessed, I never 'ad such a turn. I 'ope as 'ow our fifth won't be born a 'copper.' Imbeshreer (unbeshrewn)."

"Don't be meshuggah (mad), Ray," advised her greasy brother, who was waiting to be fed. This brother, who had a parboiled nose and watery eyes, was regarded by the family as somewhat of a philosopher. "Vat narrishkeit (foolishness), my gal. Vy, do you think if you see a howl you'll have a howl?" "Rather! Vat a wonder! Several, in any case," remarked the

L

facetious Browsky. However, the detectives at the shool arrested their man, who, vainly pleading a strong appetite and weak stomach, was nevertheless compelled to break his fast far from kin, sweet home, and fried fish.

I don't know whether the traffic went on in the different churches or chapels, having never been inside one; but, bless my soul, reader, if you think all the Fagans came from the sweet waters of the joyous Jordan, you never made such a mistake in your life.

A favourite and safe place for I.D.B.'s to harbour diamonds of suspicious origin was their mouths. If there chanced to be a decent quantity, then all they had to do was to be discreetly silent, but if only comparatively a small lot, they could be carried with no inconvenience between the gums and cheeks, and nobody would be the wiser. In the Black Legion, there flourished a youthful I.D.B. of quite considerable renown, who, for cunningness and dexterity in the line he had chosen, was hard to beat. He posed as fashionable a robber as Sixteen String Jack, and patronised all the best restaurants and ladies. Well, one afternoon, after lunching at a leading hotel, he retired to enjoy his usual siesta, which, however, was disturbed by the entrance of a customer who had something to sell. After bargaining, the deal went through, the nap prematurely abandoned, and Mr. Benjamin sauntered through the hotel entrance to take his rivack (*Anglicé*—to sell the swag). He looked sedate and proud, quite haughtily silent, this otherwise vulgar, voluble fellow, walking with slow and measured steps down the front avenue of the hotel. The waiters nodded to him familiarly as he passed, and the black pouting wenches, with their white teeth, cried, "zing," pointed, then whispered to each other, and even blushed through their dusky complexion. But Mr. Benjamin was treading on ethereal clouds, and no wonder, for had he not a small fortune in his mouth, and a big dinner in his stomach? Yet I have read in the book of the world that when things look brightest is the time to beware, and that life is like April—welcome sunshine, unexpected shower. And

so it came to pass that as my rogue-eyed friend was half through the garden walk, its gate suddenly opened, and two of the best known detectives advanced towards him up the path. A meeting appeared inevitable, and poor Mr. Benjamin looked like a fish with a hook in his gills. Nevertheless he was full of resource, so not daring to face the music, turned off the way, and with his back to the detectives, pretended to be profoundly studying an odorous eucalyptus tree. Brilliant B.'s visage moulded a study. His jaundiced eyes were nearly bursting from their sockets, and his face was the colour of a besmeared rainbow as he swayed to and fro like one sea-sick, and no wonder, for he was swallowing the diamonds. This accomplished, he leaned against a paling, and, relieved, looked slyly round. In the meanwhile the officers had entered the hotel on other business bent, and then Mr. Benjamin, comfortable in mind, but feeling just the contrary in the abdominal region after his sisyphean efforts, got tremendously alarmed, and hurried off to Tony Davison, to whom, with great trepidation, he confided the news that he had swallowed a foreign substance—he wouldn't say what. Davison gave this Knight of the Plains something that had the desired effect, and let him rest in his room, but when the pharmaceutical practitioner saw the result of his endeavours, he, in his turn, got most tremendously funky, and said:

"Now, get out of this, Benjamin, get out of it, and don't let Lynch see you; if he does he'll want to take you home to England and float you into a company. By the Lord, you *are* a Diamond Mine."

Strange to say, among the band of illicits which grew bigger day by day, there were, notwithstanding their occupation, some decent fellows engaged in the traffic. They had come to the Land of Dust with no business training, and no aptitude for trade—many of them only with turbulent sorrows and sad regrets. Thrown on their own resources, they would first wander about like lost sheep, then foregather with the gamblers, and slowly, but surely, sink lower down, until they got on terms of intimacy with the gem pirates. An invitation,

perhaps, to stay a few days with the buyers might settle the business, and henceforth without a pang—*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*—they would pursue their way until disaster came. It will be quite understood that to live such a life entailed continuous worry, and the incessant strain consequent on it in the majority of cases led the hunted ones to dissipation and drink. Then they were doomed, for no I.D.B. could be a drunkard at large long; it was like running in leaden shoes. A few of these men apart from their reprehensible vocation seemed incapable of doing a base action, and were generous to the needy and faithful to the fallen. There thrived many Dick Turpins, Jerry Abershaws, and Jonathan Wilds among them, and an occasional Robin Hood, too, who had turned ruffian against the laws because, fleeced by the gamblers, the demon of luxury gnawed at his heart. It was the ferret-faced foreigners, who lived on the smell of an oil rag, who generally triumphed, but the warriors from Whitechapel had nothing to complain very bitterly about. *On dit* that crooked ways cannot lead to great things, but I have known them lead to exceedingly comfortable mansions in the neighbourhood of Mayfair, to say nothing of other cosy nooks in the region of Brighton. Hundreds went into the traffic from sheer want. Other scoundrels with substantial bank accounts and good businesses permitted their wives and mistresses to do the dirty work for them, and to be strictly impartial, I affirm that taking them all round a more villainous crew never escaped out of Hell when the devil wasn't looking. *Experto crede.* And Hell must have been guarded very badly, for they poured into the town in ever-increasing numbers.

It was the lucent Vaal River that divided Griqualand West from the Transvaal townlet of charming Christiana, which, when I first visited it, was little more than a hamlet. As, however, the illicit diamond business developed and advanced by leaps and bounds under the intelligent leadership of sharp and accomplished alien adventurers, determined, without fear, to make money by any and every means, and with as much reproach as you like, Christiana gradually attained official import-

ance of a highly sinister nature. It was this way: The village, being in the Transvaal, was, it follows, not subject to British laws, and thus, the heads of the I.D.B. combination scenting that, established quite a coterie of diamondiferous gents, who were quite prepared to buy anything at a price in their special line which was offered. (From Christiana, of course, it was easy to ship any quantity of diamonds to England).

Soon a thriving trade sprang up in the sleepy hollow, and the I.D.B.'s would laugh scornfully at the detectives on the opposite, or British, side of the river, who were powerless to prevent the commerce. Of course, the men who brought the diamonds from Kimberley took a certain risk, as the different roads leading to Christiana were patrolled by the police, and the banks of the Vaal guarded by detectives. It was a runner's *metier* to get safely through the cordon, and this difficulty surmounted, he would be received with open arms by the intrepid illicits on the other side of the stream.

There were other ways of getting gems over this diminutive Styx. Dogs were enlisted in the traffic, and used as carriers. Often the poor animals were first kept without food until they were on the verge of starvation, and then given lumps of meat encasing diamonds, which they bolted. Safely arrived at Christiana the faithful dumb friends of man were immediately rewarded for their services by having their stomachs ripped up, and the embedded glittering baubles taken out. Kaffirs were employed at night as runners; horses, too, were utilised, being fed with balls of meal containing diamonds, and driven across the river under the very noses of the police, where in the course of nature the gems were recovered. The tails of oxen did not escape the attention of the ingenious illicits, and carrier pigeons were requisitioned to "fly through the air with the greatest of ease," laden with the brigands' booty. Hollowed heels enclosing diamonds sealed down with wax were also expedients employed with decided and profitable success. Free Town—in the Orange Free State, a short distance from Du Toit's Pan—was later on the scene of similar operations, and for the conducting

of which two of the principal malefactors, named Scottie Smith (a notorious horse stealer) and Arthur Leigh, were subsequently sentenced to twenty-five lashes and four years' imprisonment by Chief Justice Reitz, whose part in the late Boer War will be remembered.

One of the heads of the untiring Christiana gang was, or is, a member of a club not a thousand miles from Shaftesbury Avenue, where I have often seen him putting on languid airs and graces of the latest fashion. Really, to look at him, you wouldn't imagine that he is a thief to his finger-tips, and that every pound he possesses was got by sordid stealing, and sometimes by indirect murder. He is an illicit by nature, a nasty object, was reared a robber as he sucked his mother's milk, and the instinct remains with him to this day, as failing Christiana gonivas he now fouls as a pastime other men's nests. And he is a director of a company, too. Oh, my dear British public, if you had only known as well as I did the gang of thieves who formed companies and sold you shares, I am sure you would be tickled to death at your own folly. Nearly every dirty Darmstadt draper, every humbug from hustling Hamburg, every convict from Christiana, every thief from Kimberley, every robber from the Randt, formed "companies"—and you bought the paper.

But I am wandering away from Cheery Christiana. In Kimberley there resided certain German diamond dealers, who had appointed agents to act for them in this salubrious suburb. Amongst these louts were Big Mick, Scottie Smith, and Walter Mays, ex-detective. One fine day the Kimberley branch of this singular organisation sent a runner, named Fritz, to Christiana laden with a valuable cargo of diamonds valued at about ten thousand pounds. The firm notified the interesting trio I have mentioned, and then these three audacious villains determined to do the double on their masters, and rob the richly laden messenger for their own special good and benefit. Fritz, full of hope and diamonds, travelled by devious roads in a Cape cart towards Christiana, and when, no doubt, reckoning up in his mind's eye the profits of his jolting journey, was

suddenly, in a lonely place, set upon by the desperadoes. They fired at him first, and it was a pair of Argosy braces that saved his life. The brigands, stopping short of murder, then sandbagged the unfortunate Fritz, whom they left unconscious and half dead after robbing him of the swag. Fritz recovered; but the funniest thing about the tragedy is that the Kimberley firm, compelled to keep their mouths closed, accepted the situation with a Quaker's fortitude, and bought the stolen diamonds back from the robbers "at a great reduction in price," as they say on sale days at Peter Robinson's.

The Queen's Hotel was kept by Mrs. Jardine, a Scotch lady, and was immeasurably the premier hotel in Kimberley; consequently the best people, that is to say, the successful people, "patronised" the place. On a certain merry afternoon a tall, exceedingly good-looking man, with an aggressive-looking moustache and beard, took up his residence at this establishment. He was a well-known character in London a few years ago, and almost up to the week of his death was a regular *habitué* of the Criterion. Possessing a decidedly cheerful disposition, he overflowed with geniality and *bonhomie*, therefore in a few days he (we'll call him B.) became a general favourite, and was on speaking terms with all the boarders, except a quiet, reserved individual, who had registered at the hotel the same afternoon as that on which the genial one had appeared. These two men took no notice of each other; it appeared as if a mutual dislike had sprung up. One of the resident patrons of this hostelry was the manager of the Natal Bank, and as regularly as clockwork each evening he would dine, and after a reasonable interval, play a game of billiards. It was not long before B. became quite a favourite with the Bank Manager, who, attracted by his strong personality and witty badinage, singled him out in a mild way as his guide, philosopher, and friend. Thus it came to pass one unusually sultry evening that B. and his new-found friend, after enjoying a good dinner, were standing at the bar, soothing themselves with a couple of glasses of curacoa and brandy.

"I don't know what to do to-night," remarked B., glancing outside. "Looks as if we're about to have a thunderstorm."

"Well, I'm going to have a game of billiards," responded the other.

"I'll play you a hundred up for two of the best?" laughingly replied the engaging B., pointing to Mrs. Jardine's best half-crown Havanas.

"Right you are," cordially agreed the Bank Manager, and the two hastened towards the billiard room, Mr. B. playfully jostling his companion on the way. When the brace of cueists reached the saloon, they found nobody but the marker and the silent, reserved man I have mentioned.

"My friend," exclaimed B., genially taking off his coat, "I'm just in the humour to beat you. By jove, isn't it hot to-night, though?"

"Terrible," replied the Bank Manager as he watched B. hanging his garment on the hat stand. "Ah, that's a good idea," he added, as, imitating the last named, he doffed his jacket, and placed it side by side with the one belonging to his friend.

The game commenced, and then, strange to say, the silent and reserved man became quite an attentive spectator, walking about the saloon and watching every stroke with intense interest. Presently, asking permission for the marker to fetch him a soda and whisky (a favour politely accorded by the accommodating B. with a "Certainly, Sir, certainly"), he gallantly volunteered during that official's absence to take his place, which he did with credit to himself and to the complete and entire satisfaction of the players. When the marker returned, it struck the silent and reserved one that he would have a cigar, and evidently not caring to give further trouble, considerately decided to get it himself. The couple of billiardists, as is the way, resolved to have another game, and then another, in the course of which the silent and reserved man returned, looking more silent and reserved than ever, as he slyly peeped into the room before entering. It was then that B. developed a quite astonishing thirst, and the marker was

once more dispatched for brandies and sodas. The last game finished, which the Bank Manager won, he retired fully satisfied to the verandah to smoke his weed, whilst B. elected to have a stroll, al fresco, before putting his innocent head on a snowy pillow. One hour after the billiard party had broken up, and when the Bank Manager was sleeping the sleep of the innocent and just, two men, in a low part of Kimberley, could have been seen alone in the back room of a disreputable hotel dividing between themselves twelve thousand pounds in notes and gold. These individuals were B. and the taciturn coon, and the money was the proceeds of a robbery at the Natal Bank, effected that night with remarkable ingenuity and success by the Silent One. It goes without saying that he was an accomplice of B.'s, who, beforehand, made sure his victim had the keys in his coat pocket when he jostled him, that the former stole them from the manager's pocket when the marker went the first time for liquor, then, admitting himself to the bank premises, coolly took all he could lay his hands on, and calmly going back to the billiard room, deliberately replaced the golden keys that had opened Ali Baba's cave in the pocket from which he had so cleverly abstracted them. Next morning, naturally, there was a great ado at the Natal Bank, but the real thieves were not suspected for some days.

I have mentioned elsewhere in these memoirs the name of Rosenthal. This gentleman from the banks of the Vistula, as before stated, did a roaring trade in illicits, though the "boys" got the bulk of his earnings, amongst whom he was known contemptuously as the "Mug." (He ultimately died in a mad-house). But to return to our *deux amis*, the Genial One and the Silent One. In those days banking was conducted on very loose principles, at one time not even the numbers of bank notes being taken, so that our two heroes felt comparatively safe; yet, for all that, they took no risks, and evolved a scheme whereby they could get rid of their stolen property, and at the same time sleep soundly. So they approached Mr. Rosenthal, and to this eminent merchant's great satisfaction, bought from him seven or

eight thousand pounds' worth of diamonds, paying, of course, with the filched Natal notes. It must be explained that Rosenthal had not the slightest suspicion that they were stolen, and it was only deep cunning that prompted the two thieves to deal with him, reckoning that if by some accident the notes were traced, the "Mug" would not dare to open his mouth. But all the same, feeling uneasy, they, taking with them their parcel of diamonds, quite unexpectedly jumped into the passenger coach, and started with the swag for the Transvaal, leaving Rosenthal full of cash and conceit. Unfortunately for the "Mug," however, some of the notes that he received from the robbers had only the day before the burglary come up from Natal, and had been quite recently printed. Of these new issues the bank had the numbers, in consequence of which dire misfortune the police laid their hands on the roguish Rosenthal, to his great and deep regret, and likewise to that of the boys who used to batten on him.

Gone were the glories of fleecing a mug,
When the Pole, Rosenthal, found himself in the "jug."

Contrary to the anticipations of the two gentlemen, now well over the border, the "Mug," without the least hesitation, confessed everything (and with additions, to prove that he was as innocent as a new born babe), which is not surprising, for I have never yet met a real low down Polack who wouldn't sell his own mother for a mark—*argent comptant*.

Ad interim, the two successful swindlers were on their way to Pretoria, and truth compels me to chronicle that while on the coach they were guilty of a particularly repellent and cowardly act. There was a young chap M. (I was his chum for twenty years afterwards), a passenger in the same conveyance, whom they knew slightly. B. exerted all his wit and manifold graces to cultivate the traveller's confidence, in which object he was aided by the beautiful bouquet of his brandy flask, and the aromatic attractions of costly Havanas. So it came to pass that, in a moment of seeming carelessness and abstraction, whilst they were outspanning, he exclaimed

to his fellow-voyager, as he pulled out of his pocket a brown-paper parcel: "Here, So-and-So, mind these samples of cigars for me, my pockets are so full."

The Silent One's face gave life to a cruel smile, and he heaved a suppressed sigh of relief as the latest discovered dupe agreed to carry the innocent-looking packet. But it contained the stolen diamonds, and it would have gone hard with M. if he had been searched, for I am certain that those merciless marauders would have denied all knowledge of them. This last act was a sneaking and cowardly business, despicable in the extreme.

Years after I was in a well-known West End restaurant with this very man whom the clever two had used as a catspaw, when B. came in with another South African. They used to run in pairs, and have since gone howling to the devil. B. planted himself at the counter next to my companion, to whom he nodded, and gave the usual greeting. My poor friend, who was very weak and nervous, and who knew of the dastardly act that in the past had been practised on him, turned pale as death at the sight of the redoubtable ruffian; but the latter, fixing his bright glittering brown eyes on his trembling victim, exclaimed in a half, but menacing whisper:

"Now, M., not a word, but bung three quid in my trousers' pocket." I'm sorry to say he did as he was told, for he went in deadly fear of this man, whom everybody knew in Kimberley. But all the same, this little incident proved that B. had prospered none too well since he eased the Natal Bank.

There is something lower than a hangman—his cad: there is something more dishonest than a thief—a hypocrite: something more untruthful than a liar—a mining expert; and even something lower than an I.D.B.—those who battened on him. Many men and youths at this time resided in Kimberley who were shipped to South Africa for their countries' good, and who never by any chance did a single day's work, or contemplated such an awful prospect. These gentry spent their time in cadging, loafing, thieving, and gambling. It did not suit them to take part in the Pre-

vailing Industry, as that would be risking their precious selves, the only object in this world for which they had the slightest consideration; so instead they were always contriving plans and making schemes whereby they could get the maximum of profit with the minimum of risk. As the illicit traffic increased, sometimes the most ignorant foreigners (Poles mostly) would forsake their legitimate occupations to enter a business of which they had heard so much, and of which they knew absolutely nothing. Diamonds to them were simply something they reckoned they could buy cheap and sell dearer. So the good-for-nothings I have mentioned would watch until a likely victim was descried on the horizon, and then they laid their plans accordingly. First they sent a trusted trained Kaffir in their employ to make the acquaintance of the new diamond buyer, who arranged promptly a business appointment for the night between the simple black and the caged white. This was religiously kept, of course, the poor, innocent nigger, almost like butter in the hands of the cunning Cracow cove, selling the latter a diamond for forty or fifty pounds, and departing grinning with gold to the great glee and satisfaction of the frowsy foreigner, who saw himself flying on Fortune's wings to comfort and affluence. You can judge of the latter's disappointment when, on trying to sell his diamond next day, he discovered it was not a blossom of celestial fire from the bowels of the mines, but a crystal artfully manufactured in Birmingham to represent the real thing, and to be used for the purpose I have described by the group of gentlemen who were the sole importers of this class of merchandise. So you see there were diamond makers long before Sir Julius Wernher discovered the one and only Lemoine. Apropos of this, I knew of a most reputable firm who shipped, "by mistake," through a bank, a large parcel of diamonds to London, drawing, of course, a considerable sum on the "consignment." But when the parcel was ultimately opened in London, the directors began to sing and dance without music. And no wonder for the diamonds had turned to crystals.

Once upon a time there lived at a farm a few miles

from Kimberley a certain Charlie Pattison, who in that salubrious district had established a canteen, and likewise taken to himself as helpmeet and barmaid, a dashing lady with a frolicsome air, who was known by the name of Cockney Liz. Now, near to the *locale* of Mr. Pattison's palace and Cockney Liz's bower there was some ground called Salt Peter Pan, which the former had acquired for business purposes, and which with praiseworthy promptitude he proceeded to exploit for his own and humanity's sake. As Fortune invariably favours the audacious (especially if they happen to be in the promoting line), it quite easily follows that when it became bruited about that Mr. Pattison had "struck it rich" on his ground, and was finding diamonds quite encouragingly, it was marvellous how quickly it was discovered what a very fine fellow Charlie P. was, and how very irresistible were the good cheer of his canteen and the charms of Cockney Liz. The tavern keeper no doubt feeling it would be exceedingly selfish to have all the good things in his claims to himself, *instanter*, with that noble generosity which has always distinguished South African mine-owners, formed a small company for the exploitation of his Golconda, and forthwith commenced to put his house in order. Mr. Pattison, too, got quite energetic, and if visitors sometimes fought shy of his hotel and his Hebe, it was the landlord's playful way to drive into Kimberley and return with a brace of capitalists bent on having dinner, a joke with lively Cockney Liz, and, best of all, a full, free, and open view of the wash-up on the mine. It is needless to remark that the results of these testing operations were highly encouraging—half a dozen diamonds at each aqueous "pan out," and also, perhaps superfluous to record, that the visitors, full of dinner, drink, and delusions, invariably bought a small parcel of shares from the persevering and philanthropic Charlie. One day it came to pass that Mr. Pattison had brought a particularly likely customer in the person of the burly-stomached, vine-faced Mr. Grigstein, and after the pleasures of the table and polite conversation had been enjoyed, the hotel proprietor and his visitor

departed for the wash-up, which, as heretofore, was splendidly successful. Returning to the hotel, the elated host and gushing guest encountered Cockney Liz, preening herself like a peacock in the bar. The lady was slightly elated, and welcomed them effusively.

"Hallo, Charlie!" she enquired of Pattison. "How did you get on?"

"Get on, my girl," enthusiastically replied her lord. "Splendidly. Look here," he continued, opening his hand and showing some diamonds. "Seven little beauties," he concluded triumphantly.

"Seven! Why, you took away eight with you. Did you lose the other one?"

It is solemnly asseverated that the sudden change that came over Mr. Grigstein's face would have made a study in emotions. He gasped, panted, threw up the whites of his eyes, and looking as if he had taken a black draught, never ceased gurgling and blowing until he threw himself exhausted into the arms of his lawful spouse, Rebecca, exclaiming: "Becky, Becky, undo my collar, and put some oh de Colony (eau de Cologne) on my forehead. By my father's soul I've just escaped from something worse than death. A momzir of a goy as near as damn it done me out of a year's work." I cast no reflections on Mr. Pattison, but simply tell the tale, and remark that if diamonds were planted in his ground to deceive others, his was not the only case—unless he was pioneer of the movement, which I very much doubt.

I have mentioned the seeming friendship and great familiarity which existed between the suspects and the detectives. It was one summer's evening at a friend's private house in Du Toit's Pan Road. His means were ample, and as well as being a licensed diamond dealer, he was a good-hearted, chatty fellow, full of himself and brimming over with hospitality, mutton, and old port. There happened to be another visitor at the house when I arrived—a young American who had had some friction with the authorities, and was consequently highly timorous of anything appertaining to diamond dealing. Issy, the licensed diamond dealer, dying to show off all he'd

got, commenced to brag how friendly he was with the detectives, and how fond they were of him, and how it was always Issy and Charley, and Issy and Pat between them, and how even on that very morning they had had some merry rounds of golden wine. We were all there standing at the window fronting the road as Issy in an excess of boastfulness put his hand in his trousers' pocket and pulled therefrom a very large diamond, about a hundred carats, which he showed to me. It goes without saying I was at perfect liberty to buy it if I desired, as we were licensed; the third man wasn't. "Ah, that's the kind of goods to get hold of," he exclaimed in a triumphant manner as he handed it for inspection. As I didn't want to buy, and the other chap was curious, I passed it on to him. At that moment I heard the garden latch click, and glancing up saw Fox, looking like the devil, in riding breeches, and Chadwick, coming up the front garden footway towards the entrance. The American turned ghastly pale, threw the stone under the sofa, and fled into the back yard, where he was nearly worried to death by the house dog as he climbed over the palings. Issy didn't look comfortable listening to the noise of the rat-tat-tat at the door, and as the servant was hurrying to answer the summons, he disappeared into his bedroom. In a few minutes I heard a door open, anon voices in the chamber, the sobs of a good and charming woman I knew well crying bitterly, and then I departed. After walking some little way, feeling sad enough, I turned round, and was in time to see Issy between the two detectives like Eugene Aram on his way to the station. However, he got off right enough—there was only some irregularity in his registry, but nothing against him. This will serve to prove that a diamond buyer's life was not always a happy one.

To show you how little people engaged in the traffic regarded it as a sinful occupation, I will relate an anecdote which at this moment occurs to me. A man I had known for some years as *bon garcon*—I thought him kind, charitable, and bright-natured—and who was at first a very respectable and opulent member of society, such as it was in this Gehenna, fell gradually from his

high estate until he became an almost recognised illicit. I had not seen or spoken to him for some time; in fact, he had swum out of my ken. One evening, to my surprise, I got a note informing me where he was living, also that he was very ill, and would like to see me. I at once proceeded to his house, and, arriving there, found the poor chap in an alarming condition. He looked quite lonely and lost, as fever-eyed he lay in an untidy bed and cheerless, neglected room, with no companion but a strong-smelling nigger, a consumptive candle, and a half-filled bottle of his curse and consolation—a pint of champagne—it was his greatest enemy, and he loved it. Plainly the evening shadows were beginning to meet across his path, so I talked to the shipwrecked one as much as I could, and learnt he wanted me to write a letter home to his parents, which, with difficulty, I did, as he was at times incoherent. From the unhappy fellow I understood he had lost, spent, or gambled all his money, that he knew he was doomed, and quite resigned to his fate.

"Ah," said this creature of the abyss. "It is better so. I have nothing to live or hope for. This is all I've got left," he continued, rattling something in a little box. "That's a diamond," he half smiled in answer to my look of interrogation. "Diamonds killed me, and now this fellow's going to pay my funeral expenses." It was all rather weird, and I expressed my sorrow.

"Don't do that," replied he. "I want no sorrow, speeches, or sermons—I have no friend but death—and death sheds no tears. I have no regrets, and have not been a bad man."

I remarked that that must be so if he had no regrets, as most men have many. With the ghost of a laugh on his wan, unshaved face he replied quaintly and quickly:

"Yes, I forgot, I have one—*one*."

"And that is?" I questioned, thinking after all that remorse was troubling him.

"Why, instead of buying a quart pot full of diamonds in my life I didn't buy two." He died the next night—and who can say he went to Hades—perhaps he kept better company.

Ike Sonnenberg was in the habit of making periodical visits to Pretoria for the expressed and avowed purpose of drawing a faro bank, or indulging the respectable citizens, or, for the matter of that, the disreputable ones of that celebrated capital, in a lurid game of poker. He was a master of the art, and consequently invariably returned to Johannesburg successful and satisfied. Notwithstanding his renown as a gambler, he never in these days experienced any difficulty in procuring customers most willing and anxious to play with him. His quaint sayings, and absolute imperturbability, whether losing or winning, made him a universal favourite.

One day, picking up his cards, which he had momentarily put down, he gazed interrogatively at his gambling opponent.

"Bet you a tenner!" exclaimed the latter, glancing at his hand.

"So would I you," droned Ike, with no sign of irritation, as he pointed his thumb backwards towards a man who was leaning over his chair, "and twenty on top of it, if there wasn't a tall waster looking over my shoulder and reading my cards." However, on this occasion Ike was phenomenally lucky, for he cleaned out all the well-known sports of the Dutch capital, and returned to Johannesburg with his golden harvest. While he was slouching down the Main Street, proud as Punch, and blithe as a bird, a chum accosted him thus:

"Hallo, Ike! How are the boys getting on in Pretoria?"

"Wa-al," replied Ike, in that peculiar nasal drawl of his, "I'm glad to say they're all on their feet again."

"Ah," rejoined the other heartily and lustily, as if he was giving something away, "I'm very glad to hear *that.*"

"Yes," returned Ike, after sucking at his unlighted pipe, and searching for a match, "They've got to walk now, for since I was there they've all had to sell their buggies."

CHAPTER XI.

The Blacklock Case—O rare Tom Lynch—De Profundis—Two Diamond Venuses—The Little White House by the Shool—Dissolution with Barney—Barney plays 'Possum.

At Syferfontein Colliery, Lawley's Station, Transvaal, there resides to-day a most potent, grave, and reverend signor in the person of Mr. Leopold Loewenthal, whose name, deeds, and prowess are inseparably connected with the early days of the Diamond Fields. As I have said in a previous paragraph, everybody knew "Vatkins's" pony, and everybody knew Loewenthal's little terrier, Fox, likewise his handsome mare, Galatea, a direct descendant of the famous Blair Athol. Earth would not lie easily on me when I depart to Paradise if I omitted in these memoirs to write some few words to the memory of Fox. Fox was the most wonderful dog that was ever bred, and could do anything but speak. He absolutely knew every man, woman, and child in Kimberley, and they, of course, knew him. He had his visiting days, and he had his dislikes, though he was never known to bite anybody. But by the Toe of the Prophet he fought all the dogs, little, middle-sized, or big in the town, and as for the cats, there were none left in the street where Fox lived. He was of a religious turn of mind, too, for he would never pass the synagogue without putting himself in an attitude of prayer, and looking beseechingly at sinful Loewenthal, who would then blush for his transgressions. As for Galatea—oh, sweet and radiant Galatea—I do declare there never was a more lovely creature foaled. Of a light chestnut colour, she looked a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and it is no wonder her master almost

worshipped her. Yes, there were three things—and only three things—that Loewenthal loved in this world, his dog, his horse, and himself.

But to get on. Down in Du Toit's Pan thrived a certain coloured American named Wood, who kept a small hotel there. Well, one day, a poor, weary, half-dead-looking black horse, from the Orange Free State, was offered him for sale, and, being in a speculative humour, Washington's countryman purchased the animal for a couple of sovereigns. He fed it up, and put it out to grass, and in the course of a few months the once sickly steed developed into quite a handsome and healthy horse—destined to leave its mark for all time in the annals of South African racing. Its name was Blacklock. As a sprinter he was very fast, but best at a long distance, and I have seen him win a three and a half mile race pulling up. He beat the well-known Taffy, and, as far as I know, was never defeated. Wood sold him at a great profit, and the gee-gee then passed into the hands of a Mr. Cross, who was Landrost (magistrate) of Bloemhof, who also owned the above-mentioned Taffy. (Of Mr. Cross I shall have something to say in a future paragraph). Now, Mr. Thomas Lynch, who was J. B. Robinson's bosom friend until they quarrelled, was the squarest, the best, and most honourable sportsman in Africa—an Irishman of the right sort, a fearless, high-minded gentleman. I forget for the moment whether he bought or leased Blacklock from Cross. I know that one fine day the horse was in Kimberley and Lynch backed him for a thousand guineas to beat Galatea over a mile, weight for age. Loewenthal and his friends easily found their thousand guineas. The "Scotch" sportsman amongst the Jewish fraternity was looked on as the Grand Rabbi of Racing, the Buddah of Boxing, and God of Gambling. The match created a tremendous amount of excitement in Kimberley at the time, and one of the heaviest backers of Galatea was a versatile dentist named Ernest Moses, who boasted three lively avocations, viz., pulling out teeth, buying diamonds, and stirring up your "innards" with a most vitriolic pen. In fact, his goose quill was

mightier than his forceps. He was a gent of blood and tears, and withal as mild a mannered man as ever made sweet remarks with unparalleled bitterness. Poor chap, he is dead now; but in his time was one of the best known Kimberley citizens. (Last time I saw him was at Bloemfontein, on my return from the Basuto War, where he was practising his profession). However, all went merry as wedding bells, and everybody was enjoying the delightful anticipation of seeing a magnificent struggle, when an accident occurred. It seems that the day before the race, while Galatea was having her racing plates put on, the blundering blacksmith ran a nail into the quick. This was only known by the owner in the afternoon, when the mare had become dead lame. The backers, of course, were awfully upset, and all kinds of ridiculous suggestions were made.

On the urgent demand of the bewildered Ernest Moses a cabinet meeting was held, at which presided the wicked Loewenthal, the two cousins Moses (Dave was the other). and Joe Levy, to say nothing of the terrier, Fox, who had one ear up and one eye shut as he saluted Joe Levy's plaid trousers with his hind leg. It was arranged and carried unanimously (with the exception of Fox, who barked warningly) that Ernest Moses should seek the society of Mr. Frederick Abrahams, who was training Blacklock. This, on the face of it, seemed a very good move, as Ernest and Abrahams were the closest of friends. To Frederick then hied Mr. Ernest Moses, and, trusting him, told of his dire straits. Frederick Abrahams, with a tear in one eye, and a glint in the other, at once, and with the greatest heartiness, expressed his unalterable determination to save Loewenthal and Co.'s guineas at the expense of betraying his employer, Lynch. So it happened, that it was solemnly agreed between the two that Fred Abrahams, assisted by one of Loewenthal's crowd, should, that very evening, give the horse an extremely strong ball, and that Abrahams, in the morning, was to call on Lynch, bring him to see the state of the animal, and then offer in his turn to go to Ernest Moses (Loewenthal's bosom friend) and get him to persuade the latter to postpone the match for

a month. Thus stood the matter, when the apparently successful Ernest Moses, returning to his confederates, was laurel crowned, as was Disraeli when he entered London victorious from Berlin. And they held high festivities, too. Dave Moses offered to recite the "Purging of the Nag" extemporaneously, which treat was refused; Ernest Moses declared he'd pull Joe Levy's teeth out for nothing, which was very kind of him, considering Joe hadn't got any; but when Loewenthal proposed to play them all cards they stampeded in a dreadful hurry, followed by the faithful Fox, who evidently thought they had stolen all that had belonged to his master—including his character—which last would have been a difficult feat. Fred Abrahams had been in the Natal Constabulary, and they do say once a policeman always a policeman; but be that as it may, it is an undisputed fact that no sooner had the sporting dentist left his presence than Mr. Abrahams, taking strides as if he were off to Pekin, sought out Lynch, and told him the whole tale from Alpha to Omega. Tom Lynch accordingly formed his plans, and so it came to pass that Abrahams was instructed that very evening to take one of the opposing conspirators to the stable where Blacklock was standing for the express purpose of giving him a dose. A scion of the House of Moses, with a purge ball, willingly accompanied the ex-Natal policeman, who confidently entered the stable, which, of course, had been long ere this completely surrounded by a trusty crew of Lynchites. At the propitious moment there was a rush, headed by a man named Kawood, for the stable, and the two intruders were seized and accused of trying to nobble the racer.

Frederick Abrahams' companion, in abject fear and funk, swore he was no relation whatsoever to Lucretia Borgia, and the first-named, with grimaces of grief, in his pretended confession, declared he had been deputed to poison the horse by Loewenthal, the two Moses, and Joe Levy. Where Loewenthal was all the time is not set down. Some people say in the stable, but I am inclined to think he was calmly seated on a debris heap a little way off smoking his pipe, and telling the secrets of his

soul to Fox—the only living thing that ever understood him. However, the race did not come off, and Loewenthal paid his thousand guineas. I have been intimately acquainted with Loewenthal for thirty-five years, and have never known him give anything away. He is distinctly a taker. At the same time, he was scrupulously exact in paying his debts of honour, and was a courageous, independent man. I can't clearly make up my mind what to say of Fred Abrahams. I knew him well, and a nicer fellow it was hard to find. He was the acknowledged champion of Natal, and in the very early days, as I have mentioned, used to spar in a booth on the Market Square, Kimberley, with the scientific potman, 'Arry Barnato. Of course, after this Blacklock business, there was an extremely bitter feeling between him and Loewenthal, and this enmity culminated in a fight between the two outside Haliburton's bar. The ostensible *casus belli* was a pretty barmaid called Mrs. Hart. I saw the fight; Barney Barnato seconded Loewenthal, and although Fred Abrahams was the Pride of Natal, old Black Joe knocked him out in the second round in fifteen seconds.

Tom Lynch was a gambler to his finger-tips. Writing of him reminds me that one evening, being out and about, I happened to meet my sleepy pal, Lew Woolf. The poor old dear, with his soft felt hat cocked on the back of his head, looked very wide awake indeed, which was not to be wondered at, as he had only just got up. He had his top boots on, too, and, really and truly, I almost fancied as they creaked they spoke and welcomed me. On the prowl went Woolf and I, glad to see each other again, and talk about old times, for young Rip Van Winkle was fond of me. He was a good chap enough, but his life was made up of three pastimes, sleeping, gambling, and fighting. I can truly affirm that I have fought him in my life at least ten times, but we were always the best of pals next morning, and did not know what it was "not to speak." Well, on this auspicious evening, we strolled into Haliburton's bar to make eyes at Mrs. Hart (that gorgeous pea-hen over whom Loewenthal and Abrahams shed blood), and

moisten our lips with a glass or two of wine. At the bar stood Lynch, and after chatting with him over the events of the day, he and Woolf, at first in a small way, commenced to play hazards. As the stakes got larger, I went halves with my former partner, who, bless his heart, was displaying quite amazing industry as he threw the dice with a grace and enjoyment which seemed to invite success. It was at dawn of day that the game ceased, and Lynch left off owing us twelve hundred pounds. About ten o'clock the same morning we visited his office and received a cheque for that amount. I had never before won so large a sum, and on my way to the bank to cash it I, in my excitement, tore the cheque in two, and the bank refused to honour it. I hurried back to Lynch, who smilingly, and with the greatest good humour, gave me another one.

Writing about Lynch reminds me of another gambling transaction in which he was concerned. It appears that a few months after Woolf had won a glorious six hundred pounds for each of us Lynch was lured to the highly respectable and very delectable London Hotel, the proprietor of which was, as you have read, the exquisitely cultivated and popular 'Arry Barnato. Once inside this precious hostelry, of course, he was invited to a little game of hanky-panky, and on that night, in the course of a bout with dice, lost to Mr. Godfrey Davis his premises, known as Lynch's Buildings, the most commanding in Kimberley, and worth about twelve or thirteen thousand pounds. Godfrey Davis, who always appeared to me to be a decent fellow, was formerly proprietor of a gambling club in Regent Street, London, which in those far-off days was attended, amongst others, by such men as Saul Beyfus, Sam Lewis, Gus Jacobs, Engel, and my father, George Cohen. By some means or another, a party of seemingly respectable Americans had been admitted as members, and when they took the bank always won with clock-like precision. Of course, suspicions were aroused, and a watch kept on the players, but with no results, until my pater one evening conceived the idea of counting the cards, and then the cat was out of the bag. There should have been

fifty-two cards; there were about eighty of the best—and the club put up its shutters.

Once there travelled to South Africa two voyagers, who were perfectly unacquainted with each other, but who, on board the outgoing steamer, became the closest friends. I must tell you that they were both bound for the Diamond Fields to seek fame and fortune. Arriving at Cape Town they occupied the same room in the hotel patronised, and on the eve of their departure for the Land of Diamonds they, as is quite proper and in the order of things, indulged in a royal spree, and the pair came home considerably the worse for wear. I am sorry to have to relate that when one of these new-found chums awoke the next morning, he found, to his great consternation and astonishment, that his companion had vanished, and had taken with him all the drowsy one's cash and belongings. The consequence of this disaster was that the despoiled one, who had been cobbled so neatly, was left without means of travel or livelihood. But he was a game and lively man, so he put his back to the wall, and although knowing little about the business, somehow got into the barbering line. A year went by, and the coiffeur had progressed quietly and slowly in his profession. About that period the robber, who had also prospered exceedingly well in Kimberley as an illicit, arrived in Cape Town with fifteen thousand pounds' worth of diamonds on his person. He had booked himself a berth on board a liner bound for England, and all seemed roseate on his horizon. But, unfortunately for him, just before the ship started, he needed a few handkerchiefs for his personal use during the voyage, and once more visited the streets of Cape Town to buy them. Feeling that a shave and a hair cut would do him no harm, he wandered into a barber's shop, and when he had carelessly thrown himself into the chair, and had been well lathered, looked up, and found to his horror, that the operator with the razor in hand was the man he had so shamefully plundered a year ago. The recognition was mutual. Immediately the indignant tonsorial artist collared his latest customer, and sent for the police. The thief was given in charge,

his luggage was searched on the ship, the fifteen thousand pounds' worth of diamonds were found, he got five years' well deserved punishment on the breakwater, and the barber, being amply compensated, shaved no more.

There was a great stir in Kimberley one summer's day when information reached the hungry police that a large diamond had been stolen from one of the claims, and was floating about among the I.D.B.'s. Fox got red as a beetroot, active as a cat, and his enthusiasm being contagious, spread to the subordinate detectives, who also became hot on the trail. But all this assiduity and energy were of no avail, and the anxiety of the officials increased tenfold when it was rumoured that a well-known citizen, not entirely unconnected with the hotel business, and a close acquaintance of Barney Barnato's, had been deputed on a certain evening to smuggle the precious gem to Cape Town for shipment to England, and consign it to an eminent beak-nosed firm of diamond buyers in Hatton Garden, who all through the piece were the real Fagans of the Diamond Fields, but who carried on this nefarious business at a hundred per shent. profit, and no risk. *Eh bien*, when the auspicious date of departure arrived the Kimberley station was packed with detectives and their spies, and cheek by jowl, with them, all the different clans of the most distinguished corps of I.D.B., sneering, brutal, obscene hooligans, with their horrible Yiddisher jargon of profanities, commanded by their most illustrious officers, many of whom have since received well-deserved recognition from the State, whilst others have gone to Park Lane. Some of them, indeed, to their extreme joy, have been presented at Court, and others, to their intense sorrow, have had the same privilege extended to them, but the courts happened to be different, and the pleasures unequal. But, bless my soul, how I am wandering away from that sweet station, and the sinful sorrows that it sheltered. The detectives were running hither and thither, the boys laughing and chaffing them, and sometimes eyeing them angrily in retort. It looked as if there were to be wigs on the green, and the many gentlemen with names historic or pseudonymic

were grinning with delight and devilry. At last the innocent object of the law's suspicions arrived, all unconscious of the interest he inspired. The police had a hasty consultation, and decided not to search him, and in consequence, when the engine puffed on its way to Cape Town, he was the recipient of quite uproarious applause and cheers, which the hero smilingly mistook for popularity. However, the salient fact remains that as the train moved out of the station a well-known financier, now in London, a sly and subtle fellow (then one of the most audacious of the Kimberley "boys"), opened his mouth—and though almost in the midst of the detectives—lo and behold he half exposed to the view of his admiring chums the missing diamond the detectives were seeking.

A certain gentleman, who shall be nameless, having prospered exceedingly well, conceived in a moment of inspiration the idea of sending his wife and lady friend on a visit to England—a trip which the worthy husband opined would be beneficial to his spouse's health, and not less so to his own pocket. With these worthy objects in view, he proceeded to buy "on the wrong side of the blanket" as many diamonds of purest ray serene as he could put his hands on. Having thus industriously collected a fine parcel, he entrusted it to the wife of his bosom, who straightaway secreted them in different parts of her clothing. After passages for Mrs. M—— and a lady companion had been booked on a homeward bound steamer, the two fair voyagers and the hopeful husband took up their residence at a popular hotel, with the landlord and landlady of which they were on the closest terms of friendship. It will not be denied that women will talk. I have only known one who couldn't, and she died for the lack of it. There are many kinds of lady talkers, there is the scandalous chatterer, who treats friends and foes alike and murders reputations with a sneer on her thin and cruel lips; the society *causeuse*, suffragist, and shrew from birth, who holds forth on cards, races, dog-breeding, and the "thickest" and nastiest divorce that's spinning along; then, oh my word, there is the literary lady, who writes

books which nobody ever reads, and in each has her portrait as a frontispiece; to say nothing of the art madame, who professes to paint anything but her face. Yet the most objectionable of all the types is the prattler who, endeavouring to show off, will jabber of nothing but herself, her possessions, and her anticipations. This vulgar ostentation is one of the worst faults of Hebrews, and has helped hugely to sustain the prejudice which is undeniably entertained towards us. I know what I am talking about when I say vulgar Semitic parade is not only the result of cultivated conceit, but is also the direct outcome of an unhealthy desire to excite envy in others. If I am not too discursive I will illustrate my meaning by relating a little circumstance. Some years ago my wife and I were supping at the Prince's Restaurant with a small party of ladies and gentlemen whom we had invited. My old acquaintance, Joe Lewis, was one of the guests. We had all settled down comfortably to enjoy ourselves, and endeavouring to appear as if we did not know we were the objects of disparaging remarks, for one of the sparkling married ladies present was plastered back and front with stationary and pendulous diamonds of uncertain origin, whilst her scintillating head was like Kimberley in eruption. The large candelabrum, happening to be in front of her, the husband, without the least sense of shame, called for the head waiter, who was wearing something like a dog's collar, and said loudly enough, "Here, have these lights taken away, nobody can see my wife's diamonds behind them."

But I am neglecting the lithe-limbed dames at the hotel Kimberley. Well, the spouse of the diamond buyer became more and more friendly with the hotel proprietress, and chatted of the glorious times in front of her in London, Paris, and the "Continong." Likewise she pictured in glowing colours the dresses and jewels she intended buying, until, and no wonder, the poor landlady became quite envious, and wondered why her husband could not be a goniva buyer, too, and own the earth. However, the day before they were timed to leave Kimberley for Cape Town, the two visi-

tors and the jealous hostess were sitting in the ladies' private dining room, after the evening meal, discussing events, and examining the gems which the diamond buyer's delightful wife was proudly and boastfully displaying. They were spread on the table cloth, and represented crime, pleasure, misery. You never know your luck in this world, so it is not surprising that just as the three fair mesdames were gloating over what looked like angels' tears, but brought back memories of dead men's lives, the door was suddenly flung open, and in strode two well-known detectives, followed by a most forbidding female searcher. With wonderful presence of mind the landlady, as if clearing away after a meal, whisked up the table cloth on which were the diamonds, and walked unconcernedly out of the room with them. The detectives having stated their mission, modestly retired while the searcher did her work. It was in this instance brutally performed. Not one shred was left on these "suspects." Everything was torn off the terrified creatures, who, however, bitterly complained when the virago of a searcher commenced to pull down their elaborately-dressed hair. "Come, come," she said leeringly, as she tousled the women's luxuriant locks, "I've pulled down better ladies' hair than yours." Thus they stood, in the garb of Eve, with delicious curls mournfully swinging across their shoulders, as if sympathising with doleful black eyes and sorrowful, though pretty pert, and carmine mouths. A sight indeed for the painter, the poet, or the sculptor, and also for some big-nosed, red-lipped goniva buyers who used to cloud the horizon whenever these showy ladies went trippingly out. The goat-eyed searcher had searched and searched in vain, but all she found was hair—and oh, what 'air! When the discomfited wardress and the disappointed detectives left, the trembling creatures drew a deep sigh of relief, and soon afterwards sent for the landlady to thank her for saving them and the diamonds. In due course the dexterous *maîtresse d'hôtel*, to the surprise, horror, and indignation of her two friends, denied all knowledge of the diamonds, averring that all she took away in the table cloth

were some crumbs of bread, which were very small crumbs of comfort to the despoiled despoilers. The distress of Mr. M—— can better be imagined than described, and you may well believe me that in after-years, when speaking of the affair to his intimates, he was wont to declare that if he knew the Latin for it, he would adopt as his family motto the following phrase: "Put not your trust in goyum or landladies!"

At the bottom of Currey Street flourished the Jewish Synagogue, an establishment which, considering the wickedness of the times, was exceedingly well patronised by nearly every Semitic saint or sinner resident for miles round. Near this sacred edifice stood a low, white-plastered building, and one never-to-be-forgotten day, a trusty scout came bounding into our office with the startling and interesting intelligence that two birds had arrived from Cape Town, and had taken up their residence, of all places in this world, in the little White House so near the large black shool. Now, although the information on hand was that these birds could sing, talk, peck, also that their feathers were gaudy and yellow, it behoves me not for one moment to allow my patient readers to imagine that the new comers were throstles, parrots, blackbirds, peacocks, or canaries. To be brief, the birds I refer to were ladies. As a matter of fact, you know everything in the world is first, second or third-class, the rest doesn't count, and these were third-class. That is far from saying they were not quite ravishingly first-class for the Diamond Fields, but no matter. The pleasing news had quite a disturbing effect upon Barney, who always dearly loved the ladies, and he at once made up his mind to call upon the fair creatures that very evening, and generously invited me to accompany him. Always eager to see what is going on, I willingly agreed, and about eight o'clock on a starlight night we started on our interesting expedition. As I passed the Synagogue, in my mind's eye, methought I could see clearly defined on its front façade the sacred words, "Thou shalt increase and multiply—money," so I made up my mind to pay as little as I could for the pleasure of attending the young ladies' séance.

Arriving at the house, Barney knocked as if the place belonged to him, and the door was opened by a *petite* brown girl of about eighteen, who made eyes at me that would have "knocked out" a pugilist, whilst another, whiter and less coquettish, was looking over her shoulder. Neither of them appeared to be afraid of staring a man in the face, and although they were modestly attired in white dresses, fluttering with ribbons, somehow they looked as if they had eaten of the forbidden fruit by the bushel. These girls did not blind me with beauty, although one had a deliciously turned-up nose, and the plumper of the two rosy lips that were born pouting. However, we entered the house, which boasted two rooms, in each of which a solitary candle burned. I had hardly been in the place a couple of minutes before Barney was in deep conversation with the new arrivals, and on hearing the words, "Five pounds," muttered, I reckoned it time to trot. But Barney hopped into the other apartment, and I had time to see him show the damsel a five pound note, when the candle went out. I wandered into the fresh air, and in a few minutes Barney joined me.

"Run, run," said he, as if we were the French on the Heights of Abraham, and had General Wolfe after us.

"What will I run for?" I returned rather crossly.

"Never mind, run!" he repeated.

"What a fool!" I rejoined, "you were to give that girl a five pound note."

"Go on," said he, "I showed her a five pound note, but had a piece of paper in the other hand, and when the candle went out I gave her that instead." At this startling intelligence I turned my head, and oh, my godfather, talk about the Indian Mutiny if you like, but there was an ado in that little White House near the shool. Lights were popping up and down, the girls were screaming, niggers were halloing, and then, to tell the truth, I commenced to run as fast as Charley's Aunt.

Down in Du Toit's Pan there resided at one time a foreigner, with a most unpleasant, squeaking pipe, and a fat, obtrusive tummy. The corpulent alien was

the happy proprietor of not only a shop where you bought and sold anything (principally anything), but boasted the relationship of an extremely valuable brother, who was superintending the working of some claims belonging to a certain firm, who were lucky enough to discover that their property must have fallen ripe from heaven into their hands. One poor fellow who dreamt of flowers, but got nothing but cabbages, sold what was to him a barren claim at cats'-meat price, and gasped with astonishment at the unheard-of riches it produced directly it passed into the hands of the lineal descendants of the princely house of Judah. "By heavens," said this tall and freckled man, as he opened his gooseberry eyes in sheer amazement. "By heavens, if I thought I could have found like that I would have turned Jew a hundred times over, even if they'd cut my head off." It is true these particular claims to which I refer became seemingly as prolific as rabbits, and one fine day gave birth apparently to a bouncing diamond of goodly proportions, and to the connoisseurs of this particular mine, of splendid, if puzzling, colour. Now, the chap with the tun tummy, when he was informed by his sapient brother of this remarkable "find," at once, in the purest Polish diction, ordered him immediately to demand his "whack," a preposterous request, which, when made, at once put the perturbed and polite claim-holders into a state of considerable agitation, and resulted in the applicant getting a punch on the nose, which in these interesting days was regarded somewhat in the light of a receipt stamp. This, of course, constituted instantly, and for all time, a *casus belli* between the champions of Poland and the pugilistic claim-holders. Some months after, when trade was very bad, a quite opportune fire broke out in the obese man's establishment, and although he swore by everything he held sacred (no great things, I assure you) that he was only insured "one-third of his loss," the law officials unkindly refused to believe him, and Poland's patriot was sent to prison for seven years. I do not know whether he was guilty or not of making a Joan of Arc of his shop, but I do know this, that some of the wit-

nesses who testified against him were rather irresponsible. Apropos of this incident, I met the unfortunate man in Throgmorton Street, just after the Boer War, and he showed me a gold cigar case, genuinely initialled with name and coronet, which the Duke of Norfolk had given him. It appears that the Duke stayed for some days at his farm during the campaign, and had thus reciprocated some slight attentions on the part of my stout friend.

I was now, as times went, passing rich, and supremely happy, too. I lived on the fat of the land, kept horses, ponies, and other things quite as useful (certainly more ornamental and expensive), though they didn't go in carts or carry a saddle. Barnato had a lot more money than I, consequent on his bookmaking transactions, racing, and card playing. His bright particular chums in these performances were the wily Loewenthal and Joe Levy (this last as good a chap as ever breathed), and in their society spent all the time he could, which no doubt proved more congenial than mine. I could easily see he was drifting from me, a state of things which quite suited, as our office was continually haunted by certain relatives of his who were particularly obnoxious. His brother 'Arry, too, was casting covetous eyes at the brains of the family, and so one day our dissolution came about as simply and naturally as our partnership. I had complained in bitter and abusive terms about his inattention to business; he heard me out quietly, never even eyeing me angrily, but answered calmly:

"You do as you like in the business; have full control of all our funds, and we are doing well. What more do you want?"

"Your whole time is spent gambling morning, noon, and night. When you get out of bed you're not fit for business," I replied.

He told me it paid him or he wouldn't do it; that he had offered to let me go halves with him, and I had refused.

"Well," I rejoined, "that's all very true; but I'm not going to stand it any longer. Besides, your brother Harry needs you with him."

"So," said Barney, taking off his spectacles and wiping them, as if he wanted to have a good look at me, "you wish to have a settle up?"

"I do."

"All right, governor," he responded, using his favourite word. "It's no use being pardners if you don't want to," and then, in his quick way, added: "But who's to have the orfice?"

"The one who pays most for it," I said.

"I'll give a hundred pounds," he answered, after considering.

"And I a hundred and twenty-five."

"It's yours," said he, and continued: "and it's very cheap at that; but I couldn't set in an orfice all day long."

I brought out the stock of diamonds, which were our joint property, and he bought what he wanted, I what I wanted. The books were produced, but he would not examine them, saying, in his brutally simple way: "No, I won't look over any accounts, for I'd know little about them if I did. If you wanted to rob me you've had plenty of time to do it. We've trusted each other. Give me what you reckon is my due." Without any more ado or writings he took his money, we shook hands, and the firm of Cohen and Barnato was dissolved. I watched his receding figure as he walked down the road (on his way to go through the world like a cannon ball), feeling half sorry to lose him, but a dissolution was inevitable, and it was best to have it over. Although it can be stated without a shadow of doubt that Barney got all the money of his friends and relations in his generation, I must say that no man ever had a more hard-working, honest, and trustful partner than I had in him. With all his faults he was the only man in his family worth a thought. To the end of his days he had an affection for me; certainly not for any charm of character I possess, for in that I am, and always have been, woefully deficient; but because he recognised that it was I who made the first money for him, which was the seed of his future millions. It may sound a sterile paradox, but I affirm that Barney liked me better than

any man, and would have done anything for me in the world—bar give me sixpence.

As Mr. Harry Barnato had a few weeks of his valuable time to spare before definitely going into business with his brother Barney, my late partner, not wishing to waste golden moments, formed a nondescript kind of association with a Mr. P——, so that he could gather the fruits and profits of the diamond trade, and yet have ample leisure for gambling, racing, and enjoying the society of his friends. This P. was a vulgar Petticoat Laner of the never-to-be-mistaken type. Black, greasy, and sallow, his forbidding aspect was the very reflection of his soul, a celestial commodity I doubt very much if he possessed, and, if he did, question if Heaven would care to own it, or the devil to take it in pawn. Barney would often come and see me, and we were in the habit of going out o' nights. He didn't tell me much about his affairs, but I could see he was not at all at his ease, and he regretted our separation. Evidently the newly-fledged firm was not flying on eagle's wings. But B. B. was at all times a bad man to beat, and to get over him one would have to rise very early in the morning, and if you tried that you would find that "Pug" had not gone to bed at all. The following veracious story that I am about to set forth will show the attentive reader what I mean. In dealing in diamonds it was highly probable for even an unimportant firm of merchants to purchase in the course of a single day as many as forty or fifty small parcels of "goods," and as the buyer always took good care—one of the canons of the "bizness"—that the scales inclined in his favour, to put it mildly, it stands to reason that when the day's purchases were lumped together and weighed that the aggregate gravity of the diamonds would be much in excess of the total return given by adding up the different items as set down in the registry. With praiseworthy promptitude, let it be confessed, Mr. Barney Barnato would attend late each afternoon at the office of his temporary partner, and after weighing the diamonds and comparing the result with the entries in the registry, would perhaps find one carat over-plus instead of at least four or

five. Barney, however, said never a word, but pulled his little moustache to and fro, and took a deep draught of thought, for my friend was a monkey to think when he took the job on. Now, Mr. B., as everybody knows who was acquainted with him, was an exceedingly heavy slumberer, and one who once in bed and asleep seldom awoke till the morning. His partner, who shared the same office, knew of this peculiarity, and, as will be seen, with Petticoat-lane-like diplomacy, took profitable advantage of it. However, Mr. Barnato, after painful cogitations, had made up his mind to sleep with one eye open, like a wakeful Argus, and snore deeply for several nights if needful. It was distressing, but necessary, and he did it on sundry occasions, so far without results. But it came to pass during one of these midnight vigils, when Barnato was apparently cuddling Morpheus, Mr. P., from his cot, suddenly cried out to him:

"Barney! Barney! Didn't yer 'ear somebody outside? I think it's buglers."

Mr. Barnato snored most terribly in response, no doubt to the great satisfaction of his distinguished colleague, who, after calling again, and waiting awhile, got stealthily out of bed, at which proceeding the restful Barney snored worse than ever. Like a guilty soul, the crafty P. crept towards a corner of the mud-floored room, and stooping down, unearthed a little bag that was hidden in the ground, which, after inspecting and adding something to its contents, he returned to its place, and then sneaked back to his virtuous couch. The seraphic smile, so infantile in its innocence and sweetness, that illumined the simple face of the beauteous B., and puckered up his lips, might have turned Greuze's head could he have seen it. Early the next morning Barney, bright and radiant, sprang out of bed, and cheerily greeting his partner, proceeded to dress. When breakfast time arrived Mr. P. visited an adjacent boarding-house to partake of his matutinal meal, leaving Barney to receive any customers who might have the misfortune to call. No sooner was P.'s figure out of sight than Barney darted to the corner of the room which had been visited during the night, and abstracted

therefrom a tiny black bag, which contained a quantity of diminutive diamonds, worth about one hundred and fifty pounds. These represented the excess weight derived from small parcels which had been stolen from the firm's purchases by Mr. P., and, of course, intended for his own profit and enjoyment. Almost every man confronted with such a situation would have accused the sneaking thief at the first opportunity. Not so Barney. After weighing the diamonds he once more deposited them in their hiding place, and when Mr. P. returned from breakfast that peccant individual was received by his associate with a smiling amiability that would have disarmed a Greek. For three weeks Mr. Barnato daily examined the wee bag of brilliants, and noted with satisfaction its increased weight and value. Two days before his precious partnership had to terminate (as per agreement), to permit Barney to join his impatient brother 'Arry, Mr. Barnato, having procured an order for admittance to the theatre, with unexampled generosity presented same to his retiring partner, who hurried off, "perchance to hear and see a little song or dance." In his absence Barney visited the diamondiferous corner for the last time, for, with a chuckle, he put the little fat bag in a flannel pocket which he wore next his skin, and after a mouthful of prayer slept the sleep of the just. The following morning Barnato and P. settled up, to their mutual satisfaction; but when Barney returned from his breakfast he found his late colleague in a most distressed frame of mind. With a contracted brow, and troubled, shifty, downcast eyes, he moved about the room like an uneasy spirit, the while the astute Barney regarded him with a smile he did his best to smother.

"What's the matter, P.?" asked the sympathising Barney, assuming a great show of interest. "Ain't you well?"

"Ask me another?" snarled P., regarding Barnato evilly and suspiciously. "Me 'ead's bad. You can see that, becorse my eyes is watery."

"They are," agreed Barney. "They shine like diamonds."

At the word diamonds P. looked like a downcast demon, and his nostrils quivered.

"I thought you might have lost something," remarked Barney innocently.

"Me? No; thank Gord, I ain't. What do you think me?" quavered the other, turning his back to hide his discomfiture.

"I'm glad of that," replied his teasing and imperturbable friend. "'Eadache's nothing. Go to the corner——"

The mention of corner was too much, and P. suffered severely. He seemed ready to burst.

"Go to the corner," continued Barney slowly, and added: "See the chemist."

From force of habit the thieving P. walked restlessly around, looking on the ground as if seeking the vanished diamonds.

"You're sure you ain't lost nothing?" again put in B.B. anxiously.

"No," savagely snapped the other. "You make mock at me. Have you *found* something?"

"Nothing that ain't mine," Barney retorted aggressively, and added: "If you want to cure that 'eadache of yours get an ounce of mustard and put it in a little bag—a little bag, and put——"

"A black year on you. May you choke!" shouted the infuriated thief.

"Ta-ta, old boy," laughed Barney as he took his leave, a victor to his finger-tips.

Needless to say, Mr. P. never saw the diamonds again, or asked after them, which last would have been difficult, for in the future Barney and his short-lived partner never spoke as they passed by.

Oddly enough, one of the most favoured and cultivated *locales* of the I.D.B. trade was inside the Kimberley gaol, where the white convicts did a thriving commerce with the niggers, who were daily incarcerated there. It was not usual for natives to smuggle diamonds in the jail by carrying them in their pockets, I do assure you, and as the authorities were quite aware of this, suspected Ethiopians went in abject dread of

the very strong and abundant supply of jalap which was always on hand. The white prisoners were allowed once a month, and sometimes oftener, to see their friends and relations, and on these social occasions the visitors would entrust the imprisoned ones with fifty or sixty pounds in gold, which they, in turn, would employ inside "the jug" by buying diamonds from their black clients. Next month the highly accommodating and versatile caller would repeat his visit, take away the stolen property, deposit more coin, and depart to sell for the mutual benefit and profit of the inside and outside partners the spoils of the jail. This went on *ad libitum* until the release of the inside partner, or the conviction of the outside one.

In connection with this custom there was a white convict who had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, and was accordingly visited monthly with quite assiduous punctuality by the sympathetic and energetic partner he had left outside. This latter gentleman was a particularly audacious and resourceful chevalier, who, in the good old days, would have made history either as a dashing highwayman with a scarlet, gold-laced coat, or as a squalid old clothes' dealer with a frowsy bag. He had the politeness of Claude Duval, the daring of Charles Peace, and the duplicity of Jonathan Wild. With these attributes, is it any wonder that to-day he is a London financier? Well, this man of many parts becoming "suspect," the prison officials made up their minds to nab him, and to this end kept a strict watch in secreted places whenever the faithful merchant friend was in the precincts of the prison. One day he drove up to the jail in a Cape cart, and after seeing the distinguished inmate, and receiving the swag, had just time to seat himself in his conveyance, and set it in motion, when he perceived the detectives in full pursuit. Our bold receiver had, however, taken the precaution to wrap the diamonds in tinfoil paper, so that seeing the police after him, he dropped the parcel over the cart, and being on a very sandy road, the packet sunk in its convenient and yielding bosom. Nevertheless, he was arrested, brought to trial, but as no diamonds were discovered,

he got off by the skin of his teeth, and a very fine set of teeth he has, too. However, to prove again to you, without a shadow of doubt that honesty is the best policy, I have to add that Fortune smiled on my hero, and afterwards in Johannesburg he became a rich, but never a respected, man. As he flourished in life, I regret to say he put on quite aristocratic airs, and when his convict partner, who, in the abstract, was a good fellow, came out of gaol, the fortunate gent refused even to look at him. Now, that is playing false, and that is the thing that ages the heart. The man who does this will always have a pigeon-hole in his brain he will never dare to open. I am not displeased to add that the imprisoned one prospered after his release, and *longo intervallo*, when he arrived in Johannesburg, ran a pony on an outside racecourse, at which sporting meeting his whilom prison visitor was the grinning and resplendent judge. The ex-convict's pony won, but the base arbitrator gave the race to the second animal, to the great indignation of the spectators. But the cheated owner was a man of spirit, and before a crowd of sympathising people shouted, in ironical tones, to the distinguished Yiddisher sportsman: "You are a fine judge. I think you'd make a better criminal. You know you ought to be where I've come from." And so say all of us.

CHAPTER XII

Prize Fights and Boxing—A Gentlemen's Evening—A Galloping Colonel—Kings of Diamonds—A Baby Rebellion—Alfred Aylward.

STRANGE to say, there was a great paucity of good pugilists in Kimberley during its three or four years of prosperity, and this was all the more puzzling as the community was in general a most sporting one. As to the combative feeling of the population, I can hardly remember a day or night that did not bring forth a lively scramble. There was engaged in mining a crowd of fine-built young fellows from Natal, big enough and strong enough for anything, who had the reputation of being "good men," but with the exception of bar-room squabbles or a rough up in the road, they were quite content to bask in the sun of their reputations. When, indeed, they did have a serious set-to, the result was invariably disappointing. I unhesitatingly affirm that in these very early times Barney Barnato was the best sparrer in Kimberley, and I recollect Mr. J. B. Robinson, in a moment of mental aberration, backing one of these so-called "good men" to box Barney, for J. B. R. never liked Jews; he did not find them Boers. This "champion," whose name was Benningfield, was over six feet in height, big, brown, and strong, with a face like Harry Orme's, and a fist bigger than his heart. The contest took place next to Mrs. Pound's hotel, in the Main Street, and I never saw such an exhibition as the big man made. He appeared, indeed, tremendous, as, looking as savage as Joe Goss, he did nothing to speak of but stamp with his feet on the ground, and wag his head like my Lord Burleigh—not sagely, but cockily.

There was once a good man "from Natal,
Who could box and could stamp *nonpareil.*
Said Robinson, J. B.,
"That's not hitting, Barney,"
Cried B. B., "And I'm hanged if he shall."

To make a long story short, Barney was "all over him," in boxing parlance, and Robinson—great soldier that he was—retreated strategically to the rear with his *protégé* in confusion. This was the last time Robinson was ever seen at a boxing-match. He retired to prayers and politics, and it is said, not without solid foundation of fact, that he neither enriched the former nor adorned the latter. Other men with reputations were Fred Abrams, Loewenthal, and 'Arry Barnato. The first was too clumsy, Low was getting on in years, and the Golden Potman was merely a gutter scrambler. Later on better men came. The playful Willie Ross, who was manager of the Oriental Banking Corporation, now M.L.A., was a fine little sparrer, and would rather give you a tap on the nose than an overdraft—(you'd get hurt either way)—and so was a chap called Johnson, whose avocation I forget. However, all this time there lived in or near the Malay Camp a pugilist who had a most terrific reputation among his off-coloured brethren; his name was Joe Coverwell, a formidable gentleman, indeed, to look at. He weighed, if an ounce, twenty stone, was much over six feet, young, and had an unbeaten record. Joe was not at all a dark man, his complexion being the colour of unroasted coffee beans, and, strange to say, he had in speaking a voice as gentle and mellifluous as that of Lady Clara Vere de Vere, although as regards the latter I am not speaking from personal acquaintance. Therefore it can be well imagined that when a Yorkshireman, lately arrived from "Home," called Denton, challenged Mr. Joe to a battle royal, the news created great interest, and more so when it was announced that the match had been arranged, and would take place in the near future. Denton was a likely looking fellow, of military bearing, but not anything near the weight or size of his opponent. In due course the

scrap took place in the Free State, as fist fighting for a stake was prohibited in Kimberley, and after a protracted combat, lasting some sixty or seventy rounds, Denton was beaten. Joe Coverwell fought very fairly and good-temperedly throughout, and I call to mind that every time he knocked the Englishman down he patted him on the back as he was rising to continue the contest. The fight took place in an enclosure, and the entrance fee was two pounds. After the battle, poor Denton, in a parlous condition, was put to bed in an adjacent store, where I saw him, dejected, battered, and alone. One must not fail; success is virtue.

What struck me more about this contest than the fighters or the fighting was the splendid courage of our old friend, "Capting" Hinton, who, magnificently arrayed like a Sicilian brigand on a fête day, suddenly discovered, to his great horror, that Denton was, or had been, a deserter from Her Majesty's military forces. Hoity-toity! the patriotism of this warrior was wonderful. He opened his eyes after the manner of Salvini, tapped his breast like Mounet-Sully, and exclaimed heatedly that under the awful circumstances he would neither hold the bottle nor the watch, which was not very terrible, considering he hadn't been asked.

After this defeat of the Englishman Denton, there was no end of triumphal crowing and jeering on the part of the Malays and other dusky gentry. As for Joe Coverwell, it must be admitted that although he boasted a great deal, and strutted as the observed of all observers through the town, he was hardly ever impudent or quarrelsome. It was different with the black admirers who followed him wherever he went, proud to be in company with the coloured man who had knocked spots out of the white soldier. The intrusive insolence of these Malays was greatly resented, and there were many rows in consequence, which, of course, created much bad blood. In relation to these quarrels, I do not forget that between Du Toit's Pan and Kimberley there had been erected a building which was used as a dancing saloon, and thither would hasten every night a multitude of chocolate belles accompanied by their beaux. Let

me add, in parenthesis, that some of these half-caste ladies were really handsome, and as for the Coolie women, I have never seen more regular features than they possessed. The wooden structural dancing room I refer to was, as a matter of fact, the Argyll Rooms of the Fields; but as the coloured "pussons" were always in the majority, the white people who were inclined to try their luck among the dark-skinned beauties had to do so with some caution, as their strong-smelling cavaliers were exceedingly jealous and saucy. One night a man named Gibbs came to the terpsichorean room accompanied by a few choice sports. To be brief. Gibbs carried off a dusky beauty, and was promptly followed by some men of colour, who proceeded to protest in the strongest possible manner against the nocturnal elopement. The Malays, becoming more violent, Gibbs pulled out his revolver, and shot three of his assailants —fatally, I believe; but I cannot remember. What became of the black virgin is buried in oblivion, but the records of the police court show that resolute Mr. Gibbs was tried, and got a very light sentence. In fact, for a transient period he was regarded as a kind of hero. It chanced, when this racial feeling was much embittered, that I happened to visit Du Toit's Pan, and whilst there was introduced to a new arrival. He was an exceedingly well-built young chap, intelligent and gentlemanly, but withal he had the orthodox fighter's mug—prominent cheek bones, small eyes, and determined jaw. The man was J. R. Couper. I liked him at once, and up to my last days in Johannesburg he and I were always on the very best of terms; he was a good fellow in every sense of the word, courageous, honest, truthful, and noble-minded. Poor Jimmy, I don't believe he ever had an enemy, and it is sad to think he should have had such an unhappy end. Couper was fairly well educated, had come from a good family, and at one time had held a commission in H.M. Navy. I forget how he had drifted into boxing, though he told me at our first meeting; but it was apparent to all and sundry that Couper had made up his mind to fight Coverwell for the championship. At first sight the match appeared ridi-

culous, as Couper looked a child compared to the former, and when it was made and ratified the big coloured man and his coterie simply laughed the affair to scorn. I remember Coverwell, surrounded by his admiring friends, expressing, in his dulcet tones, his firm opinion that he could beat four Coupers, two behind his back and two in front of him. Before the battle it was usual for this small coloured band of pugilists to parade the town as proudly and grandly as if they were already conquerors, and owned the mines. The idea of defeat never occurred to these dark-skinned warriors, so much so, that Coverwell sold or pledged all he possessed—wells, water-carts, horses, etc.—to find money to back himself, and, indeed, the betting was all in favour of the burly half-breed. As might be expected, the contest created extraordinary interest, and on the morning of the meeting the ring was surrounded by an immense crowd, which contained all that was good or bad from the four camps.

Coverwell, in his corner, was full of confidence, and Couper, in superb condition, looked a perfect little Hercules, as, after losing the toss for position, he, with the sun in his eyes, came bounding up to his gigantic opponent for the first round. After fiddling around Master Joe for a short time, the latter aimed two or three blows at Couper, which struck the air most accurately. Quick as a flash, then the little man sprang forward, and, hitting Coverwell in the right peeper, knocked him down clean as a whistle. It was a most tremendous blow, at once closing that optic, and I shall never forget the look of amazement and concern expressed on Coverwell's face as he slowly faced gallant Jimmy for the second round. Triumph and victory sparkled in Couper's eyes as he eagerly advanced to meet his antagonist. Some good foot work, a feint, and then he slammed the big 'un in the other organ of vision, and felled him like a log. It was all over. Coverwell was quite blind.

In my young and tender days on the Fields I knew a cheery individual, who had been a great toff in Europe, and was reputed to have been a very gay dog in its prin-

cipal capitals. He was a well-spoken and well-dressed chap, with the conversation of a travelled man, and the *bonhomie* and generosity of a sporting character. When he first arrived in Kimberley he kept decent company, but by degrees, as his means shrunk, drifted into the gambling rooms, and thence to the Great Temptation. I must mention that it was quite a custom for the I.D.B. fraternity to keep black, brown, or straw-coloured mistresses, and these last were very useful, for not only would they look, in quite a praiseworthy manner, after their household duties, but in many cases would tend their lazy lords and mercenary masters with a faithfulness and affection that was extraordinary—when one comes to consider that all their reward for the present was their bread and butter, and in the near future the streets. No white man ever took a black woman out; she was a beast of burden. But more remains to be said of these poor dusky martyrs. Six times out of ten they were employed by their masters to buy diamonds from the Kaffirs, their "keepers" discreetly drinking in some hotel while the "ladies" were conducting the necessary operations. Of course, the men took all the profits, the other overwhelmed creatures never asking or expecting a shilling.

But to return to our dashing fellow. He had not long joined the ranks of the illicits when his flourishing appearance denoted the fact his straitened circumstances had disappeared, and that he was well on the way to prosperity—or gaol. Booted, spurred, and mounted on a good bit of horseflesh, he was to be seen daily galloping from canteen to canteen; at night he graced the theatre or the gambling rooms, and at all times spent money lavishly and wastefully. He had no ostensible means of existence, and as he never worked, his occupation was obvious, but it was known that he lived some little distance from the heart of the town with a young, good-looking, coloured woman named Peggy, who had the reputation of being quite a decent character, and she was the mother of his child. It chanced that one day our dashing hero got very ill, and as the illness was a protracted one, and continued to increase in severity,

the sick man's funds commenced to give out. At death's door he lay for a considerable period, all the time receiving the best care, nourishment, and medical advice. When he was well on his way to recovery his mistress surprised him one day by giving him hundreds of carats of diamonds, which represented the profits she had made during her lord's illness, and whom she had kept in clover during that period, and mended his shirts with love in every stitch. On fully recovering health and strength, the cowardly hound sneaked off to Europe with the swag, and left his faithful benefactress and child to starve for ought he cared. Poor, plucky, little Peggy with the spaniel eyes, you were dishonest, but all the same your story makes me think how good this bad world sometimes is. I am glad to add that the "dashing fellow" was made in Germany. What befel him I do not know, but the son of the dusky Magdalen eventually enlisted in the British Army, and went to India.

A smoking concert at the Red Light (then rented by Charley Hughes and Bill Holdsworth) was a thing to be remembered. A black and white poster would announce the important fact to an expectant world thus:

CONCERT TO-NIGHT.

Chawles.

Here, then, in the evening, would congregate, amongst others, all that was primest of revolting ruffianism, adorned with red ties and heavy gold chains, though this is not to say there were not decent chaps there, too. Take the crowd round, however, it formed as vile a crew as ever turned pirates, and got drunk and quarrelsome over the juice of the juniper. Loathsome and horrible they were with their obscene wit, clothed in that never-to-be-forgotten Yiddisher Petticoatian jargon, garnished with "Gor bly me's" and "Gor perish me's" galore. But £ s. d. covers a multitude of sins, and in this famous establishment these Bacchanal blackguards did very much as they chose as long as their "mozel (luck) was in." The talent was, as a rule, decidedly alarming,

although occasionally a broken-down actor or a conceited amateur of some ability would give a good show. As a rule, however, a loud-voiced, blatant gentleman from Whitechapel elbowed his way to the piano's side, and bellowed, "Slap, bang, here we are again" (a fact which was painfully apparent), or assured his greasy, reeking friends, and the general perspiring company, his whole-hearted belief in his own immortality as he roared forth, "You'll remember me," a terrible prophecy, considering it was sure to be fulfilled. Then a capmaker's cad from Wentworth Street (this a prize, thoroughbred rogue) solemnly informed everybody present, in husky tones, that he was "Champagne Charlie," and retired amidst thunders of applause after having, by means of his fog-horn voice, transmitted to his pals a full and veracious history of his wearing apparel in a vocal effort which he entitled, "When these *'ole* clothes were *noo.*"

"Perish me blind, he's a vonder, ain't he, Abe," remarked one of his cronies. "He draws tears."

"He do, he do; long life to him," replied the other, who added: "But that's nothing; you should see him draw a faro bank."

Lowenberg, the evil-browed professional card player, would then obligingly whistle, and as an encore swear most profanely, to be followed in due course by Braham, the carpenter (brother of the tenor of that name, who came out to Kimberley with the famous Harvey, Leslie, Doherty troupe of Christy Minstrels), whose one and only song was entitled "The Cornet à Piston." Mr. Lew Woolf might perhaps come next with his famous recitation, "The Dream of Eugene Aram" (he would have a suggestion of sleep even in his amusements), and be told by an unsympathetic crowd to go and do something awful to himself. A turn of great popularity was Barney Barnato's grand aria which describes Dick Turpin's ride to York, the shooting of the gallant Tom King, and untimely death of the first-named hero. Mr. Barnato's voice was hardly a gift worthy of Apollo, but it was loud, and he made up in earnestness what he lacked in melody. Now, in one part of this song, the

exact words of which I forget, there are a few lines which go something like this:

"All night he rode through
Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire,
All through a jolly band of gipsies, oh."

It may be fearlessly stated that the only geography the Barnatos ever knew was confined to the localities of the different streets in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, therefore it will easily be believed that when Barney came to the names of the counties he used to hesitate, and then get over the difficulty, varying the gibberish as the mood suited him, thus:

"All night he rode through
Stumpamshire, Brancranshire, and Mustershire,
All through a jolly band of gipsies, oh."

Notwithstanding these geographical inaccuracies, the song was always received with tumultuous applause by the critical East End *dilettanti* present, who were his principal admirers. A picturesque writer in one of the Kimberley newspapers, in describing the Red Light's one and only pianist, says of him: "An animated skeleton presiding at the piano rattled his bones over the ivories, bringing out metallic sounds from the Broadwood." The following wretched twaddle was the principal verse of the favourite song among "the boys" at their smoking concerts:

"I'm shortly about to retire,
Then to Flo, of course, I'll be wed.
I shall do the thing fine, buy shares in the mine,
Or else float a company instead.
I'll, of course, have a carriage and pair,
And later I shall not despair,
In the Council I'll get, and if you wait a bit,
No doubt you'll see me made Mayor."

A highly respectable diamond buyer, who resided in Kimberley some years, where he prospered exceedingly, played a part in a certain strange episode.

It appears that before coming to the "Fields" he had been much befriended by a flourishing merchant of Cape Town; in fact, it was mainly to the latter's influence—material as well as moral—that the diamond dealer owed his enviable position.

I must explain, too, that their friendship in the South African seaport was of a purely commercial character, and though socially they saw little of each other, the merchant was ever a friend in times of stress. And, to be sure, as he was a decent and high-minded man, the diamond dealer never forgot the kindness of his benefactor. He had not heard from the latter for three or four years, therefore he was surprised one morning to receive a letter from his old friend. After a few commonplaces, his correspondent informed Mr. A. that it was now in the latter's power to serve him. The letter went on to say that the writer had had much trouble with his nineteen-year-old son, who only some twenty months ago returned to Cape Town from England, after completing his education there. In that Colonial City, however, the young man became extravagant, got into bad company of both sexes, gambled, and, finding himself in debt to the tune of over three hundred pounds, had, after his father refused to continue to assist him, decamped from the town, leaving his mother in such a disconsolate condition that her life at present was in jeopardy.

The merchant from Cape Town wrote that he had good grounds for believing that his profligate son had gone to Kimberley, and asked Mr. A. to be kind enough, if he had any influence with the detectives, to instruct them to keep a good look-out for the erring youngster. Mr. A. was enjoined in the event of the recovery of the roving wastrel to give him—should he refuse to return without it—the sum of four hundred pounds as a guarantee that his debts in Cape Town would be paid, and to draw on the correspondent for same. The missive concluded with a hope that as a personal favour Mr. A. would do all he could in the matter, and that no doubt the enclosed photo of the missing youth, and the description of his person for-

warded, would materially assist him in his search. Delighted to have the opportunity of doing his friend a good turn, Mr. A., fluttering like a lady's fan, at once engaged a detective in whose sublime sagacity he had the fullest confidence, only surpassed by that of the police agent, who believed himself to be a second Desmarets. For two or three days the search was unavailing, so you can imagine the exuberant joy of Mr. A. when one golden afternoon he was informed by the jubilant detective that he felt certain he had run his prey to earth. In the evening Mr. A., accompanied by his agent, proceeded to a boarding-house in the West End of the town, and after some difficulty procured an *entrée* to the presence of the suspected party. This last denied emphatically over and over again that he was the individual wanted, and continued to do so even after his photograph had been shown him, and the description verified. His face though was enough, it was the polished door-plate of his identity. Mr. A., however, played a good card, as he thought, when he apprised the indignant youth that obstinacy would inevitably lead to his being given into custody at the suit of his defrauded creditors. This statement had a startling effect on the youth, and when to the threat was added the instructions from his progenitor concerning the four hundred pounds, the recalcitrant runaway confessed himself his father's son, and agreed to return to the parental roof. The diamond merchant was in a happy state of excitement when he took his friend's boy to his house, and fêted and treated him in quite a princely manner, and was very loth to part with his guest, when, in a few days, he went off, wrapt in sunshine, on his way to Cape Town, carrying valuable gifts and a peace of mind rendered doubly secure by the possession of the promised four hundred sovereigns. Mr. A. felt he had served his benefactor like a loyal and true friend, and experienced all the joy and satisfaction of that *rara avis*--a grateful man. His joy and satisfaction, however, were rather diminished when, in course of a day or two, he discovered he had been robbed of a valuable parcel of diamonds, and later on was informed

that he had been made the dupe of a swindler, who somehow had procured the envelope and note-paper of the Cape Town merchant's firm, and cleverly contrived to forge his handwriting. After this the cool brigand thought out his little plot, which he carried through triumphantly to its successful issue. It was a certain ready-money bookie who, in a speech at Brighton, once declared: "Honesty is the best policy; but, thank Heaven, I can do without it." My friend the masquerading spendthrift would no doubt have heartily applauded this sentiment could he have heard it.

About the turn of the year I am dwelling on a volunteer cavalry force was organised, which I joined; it was called the Diamond Field Horse, and J. B. Robinson was appointed Colonel. Why he (who had neither lungs nor manners) was elected I have not the faintest idea, unless it was he boasted a military trumpet nose, and the troopers thought there was a chance of his buying them something—a consummation which never came to pass. The "kernel" never, to my knowledge, gave the corps (or anybody else) a red cent, only salutes and words of command; but he certainly tried to look like a commander. I remember once a man the present Baronet had known for some years, meeting him in the streets of Kimberley, and saying: "Mr. Robinson, I am very 'hard up,' will you lend me a fiver?" At this audacious and terrifying proposal the present Park Lane Philanthropist put his generous hand to his conveniently deaf ear, and replied: "Yes, certainly, I'll have a glass of beer with you." He was, without doubt, a man of words, but not of his word, though at the same time it is conceded that our ambitious Colonel was always willing to act the Samaritan if it cost him nothing.

The men of the corps did not believe in him as a soldier, though, as we used to manœuvre on the field of battle, our gallant Colonel exhibited stoical bravery amidst the noise of the blank cartridges. Sometimes he would pull out a telescope, and look anxiously around the horizon as if expecting an avenging Boer.

"What do you make that out in front of us?" he demanded sharply from an aide, gallantly pointing to nothing in particular on the boundary between earth and sky.

"Dust, I should think, sir," flung back the "horficer," saluting like a horse kicking.

"I make them sheep," the Colonel would reply, as if studying the enemy's line of battle.

A waggish warrior on my right, noticing the telescopic tactics, said to me enquiringly:

"What's the josser looking for so anxiously?"

"Oh," I replied slyly, "he's hoping for night or Blucher."

"For what?" queried the untutored Light Horseman. "For Blocker, did you say?"

"No, not Blocker," I corrected. "Blucher—he was a Prussian Dragoon."

"Go on," remarked my comrade, grinning and winking. "He may be wishing for night, but certainly for nothing that wears top boots and spurs."

That he is a good seller was, and always has been, admitted, and I doubt if the Orange Free Staters who knew him as a Boer winkler of most formidable and ingenious energy, will ever forget him, notwithstanding their intense desire to do so. Why military ardour should have impelled him to throw aside his highly respectable white top hat (quite a rival to Ikey Sonnenberg's head gear) and ministerial black frock coat, nobody ever knew. He had never seen the smoke of battle, or imbibed its spirit, unless the selling of a compound called Cape Smoke to the Dutchmen in the Free State had bred a basis. Or did the resplendent Robinson, this warrior of invincible aspect, have a crimson glow in the region of his amorous heart, and think that the fair sex would flutter and fall before the mighty conqueror of all the Boers he'd ever met, and with whom he had exchanged, not shots, but spice, tea, coffee, and sugar? By Snuff, those Boers took some ginger from him, but would insist on having it weighed. As if in the name of Allah a Johnnie with a white hat and a black coat would do a Boer out of half an ounce

of spice. One Dutchman tells a tale of having in these early days bought a barrel of coffee, and on taking it to his farm and opening same, found, strangely enough, a lot of pebbles at the bottom of the receptacle. He hurried back to the Boer winkler in a rage, and said:

"What do you mean? In your blessed barrel there are pebbles at the bottom, and coffee on the top."

It is set forth that the seller never raised that acrid voice of his, but croaked raven-like, but quietly:

"I sell it as received from Brazil."

"Perhaps you do; but it's very strange there are Orange Free State pebbles in it." Of course, I don't believe the Dutchman, nor will anybody else.

Soyez tranquille, Sir Joseph Benjamin Robinson, I think highly of you; so does Orangia, so does Kimberley, so does Johannesburg, so does London; but, Sir Joseph Benjamin Robinson, you think more highly of yourself than all of us put together. J. B. R. is indeed a man of many parts. A soldier who disdains to fight, a politician with no politics, an orator without speech, a financier *sans* spirit or tact, a music lover bereft of hearing, a philanthropist lacking charity, a man without friends, and a patriot without country. Notwithstanding all these disabilities, there are few things in the world that in his conceit this wealthy nobody thinks he does not know. Therefore the little anecdote I am about to put on paper will, I think, rather astonish my friend, Mr. Five Millions. Its resurrection will come as a surprise also to a certain very wealthy firm of financiers in the City, whose prosperity was built on three hereditary family superstitions, viz.: Religion, Spoliation, and 'Ole Clothes, for there is Faith in the first, Satisfaction in the second, and (when unfumigated) Life in the last. The Romance of Riches would indeed make an interesting volume, treating, as it might, of the early struggles, trials, and tribulations of the world's most successful gold getters. Moneylords like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Mount Stephen, Strathcona, etc., glory in the remembrance of their youthful days, and look back with pride to those wonderful times when, in the stormiest periods of their

strenuous lives, there was no such word as fail. Even that great multi-millionaire, Ticky Ehrlich, full of leather and prunello, only assured me the other day, with a stupendous sense of pride, that he commenced the world without a rag on his back. Does he think Dame Nature is a general outfitter that he should expect to be fully equipped *en grande tenue* before he was born? The good and charitable firm of Rothschild has had its romance also. Chroniclers set down that during the Napoleonic Wars a certain German Prince, having to fly on the approach of the victorious French, left his entire fortune in the hands of a Rothschild in Frankfort. After the first peace the royal fugitive returned and received back from the Jewish banker his fortune intact. During his absence, however, the latter had had the benefit of its use, and this was the nucleus of the Rothschilds' riches. Later on, too, is it not said that another Rothschild, after the battle of Waterloo was won, sent to England carrier pigeons with news of the great disaster which had befallen the British on that historic field? All fair, I grant you, as millionaires go, and remarkably instructive and entertaining. To the present Rothschilds, these kind and generous men who, without ostentation, help the needy and fallen, regardless of creed or country, I take off my hat, as do all Jews and Gentiles the whole world over.

But to return to our sheep and J. B. Robinson—the two are so inextricably mixed up, that the thought of the animal engenders the man. It will, perhaps, be remembered that in the middle 'seventies Mr. J. B. R. was a diamond merchant of great importance in Kimberley, and occupied a large white plastered office in the Main Street, from the doorway of which he leered at the girls, and scowled at the men. I have sold him in my lifetime many thousand pounds' worth of diamonds, and as I always kept my eyes upon the scales, he appeared to have an idea that I had ulterior designs on them. I hadn't—I was only, as "between man and man," seeing fair play. However, although I am sure my personality had no attractions for him, he always treated me fairly in business. But to my tale. At the

time of which I am writing, there existed a firm of diamond dealers who had commenced in the heart of the market to buy diamonds in a fairly large (or any other) way. They are now located not more than an hour's drive from Austin Friars, and are chiefly remarkable to-day for being nodded to every morning most obsequiously by the City police, as if these last were anticipating in the near future a more intimate acquaintanceship at a place near Brixton. Now, this firm in these far-back days was composed of very chick-a-leary coves, and it will be seen that the erstwhile wool winkler knocked up against a pair of Johnnies who were figuratively destined to knock the "stuffings" out of him. At this time the methods employed in buying and selling diamonds were most primitive in their simplicity. Let me explain. A dealer would purchase in the course of the day a couple of thousand carats of diamonds, sort them, and send them out in the little square paper parcels lined with tissue. These parcels were entrusted to the brokers, whose business it was to take them to the different dealers and offer same for sale. A bid would be made by the buyer, and the little tissued, paper-lined parcel placed in an ordinary envelope, which would be closed in the usual manner, and the face of it marked with a few strokes of a pen, together with the price offered. Undoubtedly, Mr. J. B. R. was a bold and rather careless diamond kooper, and often would make an offer for a large parcel of diamonds, close the envelope, *without weighing the diamonds*, and return same to the broker to permit him to submit the bid to his principal. *En rapport*, this free and easy way of doing business, coming wizard-like, to the ears of the highly distinguished diamond dealers I have mentioned, they, with that cleverness and ingenuity which we have all admired and suffered from, cunningly formulated their magical plans. When the adhesively closed envelope, with the offer, was brought to them, they would take it from the broker and retire to the back room of their office ostensibly to consider the proposed purchase, but really trickily to slit up the sides of the envelope and pour in three or four hundred

carats of inferior diamonds, worth thirty shillings per carat less, and artfully re-close it. This was not bad conjuring. Then the broker very often, in collusion with the plundering firm, would return to Mr. J. B. R., accept his bid most politely, and he, in his turn, would weigh the augmented diamonds, and hand over a cheque as fat as a sheared sheep. The operation concluded, the trio would repair to Woodward's bar and drink success to thieving. If it happened the broker was not in "the know," then one of the partners would stand casually outside Robinson's office and see himself whether he weighed the diamonds or not. If he didn't, all right; if he did, all right, too, for in the latter case then the rascals would take out of the parcel a couple of hundred carats of the best diamonds and replace them with inferior ones, weighing the same weight, so you see J. B. R. was done down all ends up. When these gentry read this paragraph they will say, "Mr. Robinson can kiss our feet"; but if they could only see the expression on Robinson's sour face they would at once change their minds, and not allow him to do so. These wholesale robberies went on for months undetected or unsuspected, and formed one of the principal foundations of the immense fortune these men acquired. It was—one must confess—a rapid method of getting rich—to buy gonivas and sell them thus. And now, gentle reader, I have shown you how some of the men you probably envy became Kings of Diamonds.

Mr. Richard Southey had been Colonial Secretary of the Cape of Good Hope before being appointed (as a reward for the part he had taken in the annexation of the Diamond Fields) Lieutenant Governor of Griqualand West. He appeared to me a placid, venerable old gentleman, with a smile for everybody, and especially for his young and dark-eyed pretty wife. Southey was popular enough at first, he and his secretary, John Blades Currie; but it was not long before the very men who had so enthusiastically run up and saluted the Union Jack a couple of years past began to show grave signs of disaffection and hostility to the Government. Many problems had arisen, such as the land grievances,

the Government contracts, the increase of I.D.B., the purchase of arms, etc., and were debated with fiery energy by the champions of both sides. Things did not improve, party feeling ran dangerously high, and the barometer of Southey's popularity showed it was falling as rapidly as the Vigilance Committee's was rising. A Diggers' Association, the leaders of which were Ling and Tucker, was constituted, and leagues were organised and armed and drilled. The abuse lavished on Southey and his partisans became more offensive and personal every day. But the Governor was a sturdy bit of stuff, and refused to receive a deputation unless it consisted of a reasonable number of representative men, who would, in a measure, be some kind of guarantee for the delegates' seemly speeches, decent demeanour, and demands. That the diggers had some justification for their complaints is unquestionable; but they certainly went the wrong way to get grievances redressed. To threaten and abuse a British Governor legally installed is hardly a sensible mode of coercion. As a matter of fact they were in a great degree incited to all their violent measures and speeches by a horde of reckless adventurers, Irish and foreign mostly, who, having nothing to lose themselves, sought to mend their fortunes by fishing in troubled waters. I do not deny there were many respectable members of the community who heartily sympathised with the diggers, and even James Anthony Froude, who was a *guest* at Government House at the time, had a conference with the leaders of the malcontents, and approved and encouraged their conduct. As may be imagined, affairs went from bad to worse, and the rebels, numbering seven or eight hundred, formed themselves into seven distinct battalions, with squadrons of cavalry, officered by Prussian and Irish-Fenian Army men, and were drilled openly in the Market Square. They were commanded by Ling and Tucker (members of the Mining Board), the Germans having as their leader von Schlickman, who was so soon to be shot in the Transvaal. Sometimes, when ordered to "right about face," they would, in a menacing and derisive manner, point their rifles at the Government

Offices. Events came to a head when Cowie—behind whose place Barney and Hinton fought—was accused of purchasing rifles without a permit. He was forthwith arrested and taken to the magistrates' court, which was *instanter* surrounded by his armed friends, who demanded his immediate release, failing which they threatened to attack.

The Governor, however, refused their request, and ordered them to lay down their arms. It was relied on by the rebels that in face of their threatening attitude no magistrate would have the temerity to sit on the bench; but John Gray, Esq., who presided at the police court in Du Toit's Pan, unhesitatingly accepted the post of honour, and bravely took his seat. The signal for the shooting to commence was to be the hoisting of a black flag on one of the heaps of débris surrounding the mine. After that it was the rebels' plan to open fire on the court-house and Government Offices, an action to be followed up by an assault on the prison, from which all convicts were to be liberated, and, possibly, become recruits to their ranks. They then proposed to join the Free State, or to haul down the British flag, and form a republic themselves. The black flag in due course was hoisted, and a couple of shots were fired (one by Schlickman, from which d'Arcy, the Kimberley magistrate, and brother of *the* d'Arcy, for saving whose life at Zlobane, Buller later on won his V.C., had a narrow escape); but at the last moment the hearts of the Rebels failed them, and on the Governor threatening to send to Cape Town for troops they ultimately submitted, and Cowie was released on bail, and afterwards was fined £50 or three months' imprisonment. His surety was Tucker, once a member of the Cape Legislative Council, who in the near future was to be made pay dearly for his partisan activity. In these strenuous days one of the gallant Englishmen who, apart from politics, did not forget his duty to his flag and government, was Dr. Josiah Wright Matthews (Vice-President of the Legislative Council of South Africa, and senior member for Kimberley in the Cape House of Assembly). This gentle and humane man of wonderful tact and urbanity

did much to soothe the inflamed relations between the opposing parties, and was one of those who helped to prevent bloodshed. At all events, his name will always be remembered in relation to South African politics as one of those honest Colonials who worked loyally for the country of his adoption, whilst never forgetting the glorious Empire whose interests he did all in his humble way to advance. Sir Joseph Benjamin Robinson indeed! Why not Sir Josiah Wright Matthews, this healer of suffering humanity, whom many a time I have seen in the dark and silent hours, and in pouring rain, tread his way to the outskirts of the camp without hope of fee or reward, except from the Eternal, who made him,

Now let me tell you about Alfred Aylward, alias Rivers, alias O'Brien, alias Nelson, an ex-Fenian Centre of much resource and villainy. I shall never forget on this memorable revolutionary occasion being in the Main Street, when suddenly I saw a man of Satanic bearing come galloping down it, waving a black flag in one hand, and shouting valorously as if he were leading a heroic charge of cavalry. By his side a huge General Boom sabre dangled—probably the sabre of his grandmother—which made a most tremendous rattle, and appeared to frighten a young horseman who followed in his wake like an unwilling dog pulled by his chain. This burlesque of Murat was a fair-sized man with luxuriant black curly hair and beard and moustache, which brought into prominence his thick sensual red lips and bright, though dissipated, bloodshot eyes. The Rouge et Noir on horseback was none other than the redoubtable Irish-Fenian, Alfred Aylward, a fellow of tremendous composition, and he was on his way to see hoisted the piratical emblem which might have brought murder and chaos to many. If that had happened, you may believe me, this vapouring renegade would have been miles away from the scene of slaughter or the black cap of the judge. However, arrived at the signalling post, the rebel ruffian threw himself recklessly from his steed, and after tugging his beard and stamping his foot, with absolute headstrong courage, ordered one Albany Paddon to hoist the banner, which that silly young man

did—and then the naughty infant rebel ran away to escape his deserts. It will be noticed Alfred the Little did not elevate the pennon himself, and it is recorded as a supreme fact that as the black flag was being hauled up he shouted to his divine circle of colleagues, "God save the Queen," and added, *sotto voce*, "damn her"—fair foe he never was; always false friend he proved himself to be.

This Alfred Aylward I knew well, which is not to say his society was exquisite. He first made his appearance on the South African political stage at a diggers' mass meeting, held in Kimberley, and was fresh from gaol. A coward from tip to toe, he had been sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour for intent to murder by shooting a defenceless citizen in cold blood, having gone home for his revolver, after some trifling dispute between them had been settled. He was also editor of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*—or *Observer*, I forget which—and I used to do the theatrical notices. Without being a classical scholar, he was in many respects a highly gifted man—a talented writer and fluent, vehement speaker, but withal in everyday life a garrulous character and bombastic braggart of the Falstaff type. When this beetle-browed bravo had a taste of the "cratur," which was very often—but not so often as he would have wished—he gloried in his imperfect past, which was chiefly made up, according to him, of blood and fire collisions with the murderous British Governments, in which, of course, he annihilated them. He was a good deal like Barnaby Rudge in his sanguinary conversations, and a great more like Dorando's speedy legs—when there was any fighting to be done. The hero posed as a mixture of Sarsfield and Dalgetty, but in his opinion very much to the disadvantage of those warriors. Speaking personally, I do not think he dared face anything that might pop off bar a champagne cork, and as for drawing—well, his opening of a bottle of whisky was only equalled by his celerity in dealing with the contents. When real danger threatened he was never seen (after the hoisting of the black flag he went into hiding), so when the crucial time of the little rebellion

had passed, and he entered Pound's Hotel as impudently as possible, he was jeered and laughed at by his colleagues. This mode of contempt he passed off by explaining, in his thick brogue, that "A gineral's, an or-r-ganiser's loife, is too valu-a-a-ble to be thr-own away. I wo-rrk in the da-rrk, mind ye, but as a pathriot looking in the whites of me inemies' oies I would give me loife ten times over, and a hunthred others of me frinds, for the sake of glorious liber-r-ty." Spaghetti!

When all was over and finished, the uprising put down, and there was nothing for soldiers to do, the Cape Town officials then bethought themselves that it was time to despatch British troops to the scene of the recent rebellion, and accordingly a force consisting of 250 infantry, 40 mounted men, and 25 Royal Artillerymen, with 2 guns, commenced a seven hundred miles march from Cape Town. Some of the agitating gas-bags, who boasted they had in their possession also two cannons, bragged freely of their intention of meeting the Britishers in battle array at Modder River, but the Royal troops only replied by humping their backs, and as they neared that stream the rebs' courage oozed, as usual, out at their finger-ends, and the soldiers were mercifully preserved. The little army was commanded by General Sir Arthur Cunyngham, and I well remember seeing the men march up Du Toit's Pan Road, tired and dusty, straining their eyes for the sight of the diamonds they expected no doubt to see in heaps. They were led right into the heart of the town, notwithstanding the gasconading Aylward and his crew, and in due time, after some manœuvring on the Market Square, were conducted in two successive bodies to the mine, at which they stared in wonderment. The next morning five of the loud-voiced rebels were arrested, an operation effected on them as easily as if they were goats. A bleat or two, and all was over. Of course, the fire-eating Aylward was, as usual, not visible, and from a Transvaal farmhouse, where he had secreted himself, sent a notice of his death to the newspapers. After he had played his ignoble part the blusterer hurried to the Transvaal President, Thomas Burgers, who gave him a captaincy in a band

of filibusters, who were subsequently chased like rabbits by a native tribe led by Johannes, a petty chief of the Bapedi tribe, and owning allegiance to the eminent Secocoeni. I met the traitor later on in Pietermaritzberg: he was editing the *Natal Witness* at the time, and I stayed at the same hotel with him—the Imperial. He was a blatant individual, who could talk a bird off a tree, and it was his habit on the hottest days to wear a black frock coat suit adorned with a topper or sombrero, in which guise he frequented the bar-rs and spouted poll-o-tics. However, he had one attribute of genius—a characteristic I have noticed in many millionaires—he never by any chance carried a coin in his pockets, consequently settled for all his drink with prophetic words and mighty denunciations, doled out confidentially to the victims of his patronage, who had, of course, on all occasions to pay the piper for the privilege of listening to his rhetorical rubbish. When the Boer War of 1881 broke out "Captain" Aylward was at Lydenburg, and witnessed the departure of the doomed Colonel Anstruther with a detachment of the 94th Regiment on his ill-fated march to the ambuscade at Bronker's Spruit. The last-named officer had left at the little Transvaal town only a few troops, under Lieutenant Long, to garrison the fort there. Aylward then did all in his power to induce the small force to surrender, even telling the men they would be hanged as murderers if they did not submit, and failing in this he joined the Boers, and helped to conduct their operations. The last seen of this bravo was in the same year, when riding about with a saddle cloth made out of the uniform of a slain British soldier, he turned up as legal adviser to the Boer forces at the negotiations after Majuba. There is no doubt that at that period Aylward, with rare effrontery and audacity, posing as representative of the *Daily Telegraph*, and as a doctor of exceptional ability, had taken advantage of the Boers' simplicity and ignorance, ingratiating himself in their good graces to advance his own interests, and feed the hatred he felt towards England. After the disastrous defeat and death of Colley, the British sent a small number of officers

(amongst whom was Cameron, the correspondent of the *Standard*) to wait on Joubert near O'Neill's Farm, and make arrangements for the burying of the dead. The Dutch General or his attendants could not get a word in edgeways, as Aylward did all the talk, refusing at first to deliver up Colley's corpse. In fact one would have taken this voluble doctor for the Commander-in-Chief. The brave Cameron, though in the midst of the Boers, feeling disgusted with the traitor's presumption, said to Joubert and his staff, "I raise my hat" (suiting the action to the word) "to you gentlemen, you are brave men fighting for your country, but to that renegade (pointing to Aylward) I wish to say nothing." The Irish hero blustered and threatened, and muttered about "the impertinence of the fellow," but it was apparent that Cameron's words had struck home. When peace was made the cowardly villain, who richly deserved hanging, made his way to America, where he died in his bed, a quite undeserved end. But to return to the British in Kimberley, where it is needless to say they had a rare good time, what with receptions, banquets, balls, etc. The main body of the troops were given an encampment at Klipdrift, and after staying there for six months, returned to the Colony, to be sent later on to Zululand, where most of them fell at Isandlwana, for the majority consisted of men of the renowned 24th Regiment, among others the dashing, light-hearted Lieut. Coghill, who perished while preserving the colours after the disaster. Thus for the second time in thirty years was this heroic regiment cut up, for it was almost annihilated at Chillianwallah in 1849. The Zulus, in describing the slaughter at Isandlwana, said of the 24th, "They all died in one place." The Diamond Fields Expedition cost twenty thousand pounds, but I doubt if it did a pennyworth of good. Soon after Southey was recalled, but Queen Victoria made him a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. Just a little anecdote, and then I have finished with the "great rebellion." During the time that the men of the 24th Regiment were in Kimberley two second lieutenants of the expeditionary force were the guests of a friend of

mine named Harry Campbell. One of them was named Dickson, and the other, who had greatly distinguished himself on the line of march (travelling 300 miles in six days) by providing horses, etc., advised Campbell one evening thus: "Never let your sons, if you have any, go into the Army. I've been in it for years, and I can't get any advancement." The name of the then speaker is the present Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Carrington. A few years afterwards I was in Basutoland, and saw him fall severely wounded at the battle of Tangesberg.

CHAPTER XIII

Spring-heeled Jack—A German Peruvian—A Poster—Diamond Fakers —Mr. Harry Tucker, M.L.A.—Emperor of Crooks—The Land of Diamonds.

MANY people who were in Kimberley at this date must call to mind sometimes the scare amongst the ladies (and others, for there *were* others) caused by the escapade and doings of an eccentric barrister named Hogg. He sported a glass eye among his other attractions, practised at the High Court, and could be briefly described as having one optic missing from his face, and one "g" too many to his name. For some weeks numerous fair denizens, married and single, or only half so both ways, of the Cratur City had nightly been almost frightened out of their wits, to say nothing of their nightdresses and back hair, by the nocturnal attentions of an enterprising visitor, who had developed a desperate mania for entering their bedrooms by opening the windows, and when safely landed in those interesting, and, at times, diverting apartments, invariably proceeded very cautiously and artfully to lift up the end of the clothes at the bottom of the bed, and tickle the soles of the fair ladies' feet with an assiduity worthy of a better cause. The females would awake, and, screaming, arouse their startled husbands, or their dearest friends. Often this midnight intruder would only softly titillate the damsels' tootsies, at which gentle and agreeable friction the tickled one would merely shift her position, invoke gentle Cupid, and dream of whiskered angels.

But when the pleasing diversion had been practised three or four times in the course of half an hour the fair one, naturally inquisitive, might sit up and encounter the ardent and firebrand stare of the terrible barrister, whose glass eye, in his saturnine face, shone like the

aurora borealis, and lit up a wild beast's row of teeth. With a shriek the lady would proclaim her fear and despair, and leave Mr. Hogg to spring out of the window as a harlequin does at pantomime time. It was afterwards discovered that this man-devil had springs affixed to his heels, hence his soubriquet. These outrages continued for some months, during which time the leg explorer sampled the daintiest feet in Kimberley. The identity of the assaulter was wrapt in mystery, and many innocent men were distrusted. Nightly small bands of alarmed and jealous citizens in different parts of the town were on the watch, but the offender remained undiscovered. At last suspicion fell on the well known black-haired limb of the law, and he was continuously followed, and in the dark hours caught almost in the act. However, as it was a delicate matter to investigate, and it would be difficult indeed to get ladies to testify as to having their feet tickled—(although the recreation is as old as Adam)—it was decided to hush the scandal up, and thus allow some golden-haired beauties with tainted understandings to look the whole world—and especially the Main Street—in the face without blushing. In conclusion, the reader will learn with some satisfaction that Mr. Hogg, the day after his detection, sought fresh fields and pastures new, and from the hour of his departure toe-tickling, as far as the Diamond Fields are concerned, became a lost art.

Short, stout, round-headed, fifty-year-old Neels was a pigmy brown Teuton with starting black eyes, who, before coming to Kimberley and blossoming into a diamond merchant, had spent many years in Peru. On the strength of having had a distant cousin concerned as second in a bloodless combat fought at Lima, poor little Neels came to regard himself as a ferocious duellist of the most formidable type, and at the least imaginary insult would darkly hint his grim determination and unquenchable ambition to have his provoker's blood. As a matter of fact, Neels was an excitable, good-natured, insignificant individual of ridiculous proportions, who was bursting with pompous, bombastic conceit, and thought he was

a corked volcano. He spoke a strange compound of broken English and German, and had a quaint habit in speaking of mixing up his phrases, putting the cart before the horse. For instance, he would not say, "How are you to-day," but "How are you to-morrow?" So vain was this minute and silly mortal, and so imbued with military ardour, that he had had erected at considerable expense a very tall flagstaff outside his office. When a huge pennon was seen proudly flying the whole town rejoiced, for then the great little Neels was announcing to a gratified world that he was prepared to buy diamonds as willingly as fight a duel. He would usually speak of himself in the first person, thus—"Mr. Neels will not be at home to-morrow," "Mr. Neels is not well to-day," or "Mr. Neels's flag will not fly to-morrow." Of course, he was the laughing-stock of the whole town, but the tiny personage was quite ignorant of this, and possessed to the end the same unshaken belief in his own importance and magnificence. Everybody in this world has certain antipathies, and Neels's pet aversion was a certain diamond broker named Bill Ellis. Whenever the little chap saw the redoubtable Bill come swinging up the street, his dark eyes would glitter and he became as perturbed as a cat at the sight of a dog. This Bill Ellis was an exceedingly decent fellow, tall, athletic, granite-faced, and the very last person in the world one would suspect of a predilection for practical joking. But William Ellis gave the noble Neels no rest by day or night. It happened Neels's bedroom was at the back of his office, and this sacred chamber was to Bill as attractive as a larder to a hungry puss. One day, watching his opportunity, he got into it, and securing a certain utensil, fastened it to the ropes of the flagstaff, and hauled it up as high as Haman. The article could be seen for miles around. Men laughed until they cried, boys threw stones at it, ladies blushed because they blushed, and Neels bursting with rage, glanced at his pistols and sword, his face grinning of war as he swore it should be wound for wound. He looked like to burst as he threw up his tiny hands wildly in the air, and with great and varied gesticula-

tions swore in polyglot phrases to be swiftly and terribly revenged either with poniard, stiletto, or dagger, small sword, battle axe, or deadly rapier. All day he talked —ah! ah!—of the tierce, thrust, parry, likewise of the Jarnac stroke, and called loudly for his unknown insulter. But he guessed who was the joker, and the next time the placid, serious Bill entered his office, the irate Neels glared at his *bête noir* and said: "You did it, Sir; you did it! Sir, it means blood, Sir; keep out of my way in future, Sir, and never show your office inside my face."

There never was a man who believed more in himself than pompous Neels of the nettley nature, who withal possessed many natural, gentlemanly instincts. He carried his little fat body with an assumption of dignity that was grotesque. Never by any chance was the far-famed duellist in his fiercest outbursts of anger tempted to utter an oath, and stories were poison in his ears, and on no consideration would he go within earshot of *raconteurs*. Apropos of this peculiarity there was a certain new arrival called Levvy, who, commencing business as a diamond buyer, had in vain courted the smiles and patronage of our hero. Fully convinced of Mr. Neels's importance, Levvy had approached him with a courtesy and a deference which were quite becoming. But it was all lost. His Majesty would not deal. Levvy, much depressed, sought the counsels of his friends, and was at once told that it was no wonder he had failed to attract, as what Mr. Neels particularly abhorred was politeness or cringing. He liked a broker to be familiar, and to swear, and to tell tales—especially about the girls. Oh, yes, particularly about the girls. He might pretend to be annoyed at first, but "that is only his way," the broker was enjoined, so he must persevere in the event of assumed expostulations. After a final rehearsal before his prompters, Mr. Levvy departed full of instructions and hope, determined to do or die. Arrived at Neels's office, he found the glorious flag was gaily flying, and Levvy entered with a light step. Neels was smoking a strong Havana with a grace all his own, and evidently

perfectly satisfied with himself, and the world in general. He greeted Levvy with an almost imperceptible nod, to which the latter answered by heartily exclaiming:

"Hallo, fatty, how's your best girl?" Neels certainly did not understand at first, but he cocked his left bright eye, and made a cherry-lipped *moue*, as he put down his cigar and said, an odd expression on his face:

"I beg my pardon, I did not understand myself. Do I know."

"Rot. How's the wench?" asked Levvy confidentially.

Neels started as if a bomb had exploded under him, his eyes seemed about to burst, and he spoke rapidly and incoherently as he stood up in his anger.

"You dare Mr. Neels say these things. Keep the wench to yourself. Liberty! Dees-trooction."

"Oh, don't kid me, you old lady-killer. Let's do some business," suggested Levvy, undoing his satchel. "I got drunk last night, and then got lost among the maidens, Neels."

The diamond merchant gasped, wiped the perspiration off his forehead, and, as if in a frenzy, ejaculated:

"Damnation. Sare, leave your presence. I kill you with my five fingers."

"Rotten eggs to you," laughed Levvy.

"To Mr. Neels. I change your eggs for pistol balls in you."

The diamond buyer, by this time ramping mad, was jumping about like a hot pea in a pan, as Levvy, launching his last torpedo, told a particularly warm anecdote, and finished up by inviting the little man to "come out to-night and get blind drunk and go behind the scenes." A sudden light came into Neels's inflamed and swollen face, obscuring the indignation dwelling there.

"I see it all, sare—you are mad—you are my hatter."

With that, adopting many attitudes to suit his fiery words, stamping his feet, and banging the furniture, the irate one disappeared into the back-room, from which he emerged in a few minutes, having a pistol in one hand, a sword in the other, and uttering the most sanguinary

threats. This was too much for Levvy, who incontinently fled, leaving the enraged and alarmed Neels on his verandah flourishing his weapons, and shouting, "Poliss, poliss, my house is in a madman. I am a lunatic in his office. I will charge him with a policeman. Poliss, poliss!" That afternoon the flag was hauled down.

The hour is memorable—and monstrous to the victims of the rapacious raid of the "Terrible Trio." It must be explained that sign-painting was a most lucrative and prosperous calling in the first years of Kimberley's existence, and some of these symbols were exceedingly expensive. This fact having struck the imagination of three enterprising young gentlemen, whom we will call Dick, Tom, and Harry, these gay sparks made up their minds to enjoy a midnight's excursion. Accordingly, each adventurer arming himself with a huge pot of brown paint and a useful brush, the trio wended their way to the West End of Kimberley, and forthwith painted out the lettering of every signboard, large or small, they could see in the vicinity. Well, the damage done was considerably over three hundred pounds, and when the peaceful shop-keepers awoke the next morning and discovered what had happened during the night, there was a great ado, and indeed a reward of two hundred pounds was offered for the apprehension and conviction of the culprits, which, however, proved abortive. Fully to enjoy the fruits of their pranks, the perpetrators rode about the West End to condole with the sufferers. An Irishman who kept a boarding house was particularly incensed, and untruthfully bragged to one of the tricksters that he had caught the villains in their audacious act, that he knew they were painters, and had destroyed the boards to get additional work. Asked if he had struck them in the *mêlée*, he replied, "No, in the nose." Whilst he was talking to the very man who had destroyed his sign, a painter came along and solicited from the irate Hibernian the job of restoring it.

"Do you think I'm a lunatic?" roared Paddy to the astonished artist. "Get out of my house."

"Ah, you'll miss me," warningly asserted the craftsman.

"Bad luck to you; I'll see I don't miss anything else."

"Ah. Never mind," responded the painter. "You'll suffer from the loss of your signboard, I tell you. Do you think I don't know? I haven't lived in boarding houses for nothing all my life, have I?"

"I shouldn't be surprised," retorted Paddy; and the two were left rolling on the ground, as the midnight marauder galloped off. From there the sprightly trickster with merry face rode to a small grocer's shop, kept by a man called Potter, whose handsome six-foot sign he had painted out the previous night. Poor Potter was standing outside his little store very disconsolate and drunk through the misery he felt at the magnitude of his misfortune.

"How are you, Potter?" asked my festive friend heartily as he rode up to the sorrowing grocer.

"How am I?" answered the man of spice, wagging his head mournfully, and then cocking one of his dull blinking eyes in the direction of the ruined sign, he pointed to it and said solemnly: "There's M. A. Potter gone to Hell now."

In these early times Diamond Fielders, no matter their social position, were very independent, and all white men on an equality. You see, a fellow would be quite down on his luck one day, and by the help of a twist of a spade, or the stroke of a pick, be much in the ascendant next morning. Gamblers seldom put on "side" to each other, and in a general way inhabitants of the carbon towns were that and nothing more. The ill-dressed individuals, as a rule, were the better born and bred; gaily caparisoned gents. being invariably the scum of the population. In a Kimberley drinking saloon (the "Blue Posts," kept by Wilson, where Rhodes and Beit every morning took their mixture of champagne and stout. "Ah!" I have often heard Rhodes exclaim, as he quaffed his draught with gusto. "Ah, it makes a man of you!") I recollect once seeing a rather disconsolate digger standing moodily against the bar, looking as doleful as a shop with the shutters up, and evidently

very low in the purse. Soon there entered, gloriously arrayed, a great swell, recently arrived from England, and who thought no end of himself. He was, no doubt, a good-hearted fellow, for after eyeing the sad-faced miner he went up to him and said:

"Poor devil, have a liquor?"

The moody one said "All right," and had it.

"Poor devil, have another?" reiterated the British beau.

The digger again consented. This went on until the recent arrival had treated his new found friend to seven "tots." Yet the Englishman was game still, and for the eighth time rang out the same polite invitation:

"Poor devil, have another?"

But the refreshed miner, not wanting any more, and seeing his fortunes brighten through the fumes of liquor, turned to the startled swell, and indignantly ejaculated:

"Who the —— Hades are you calling poor devil?"

In Kimberley in the middle seventies a poster purporting to advertise a dramatic performance was invented and published by the resident wags. I have the bill, and take extracts from it, as most of the names therein have appeared in these recollections:

THEATRE ROYAL.

On Tuesday next will be produced the grand pantomime, entitled

OLD DAME DURDAN

And Her Son;

or Harlequin, the Enchanted Princess, the Magic Frog, and the Old Woman who Couldn't Sit Still.

Properties by that experienced costumier, Mons. B. Barnato. Band and music conducted by the celebrated conductor, A. W. Davis. The whole production under the management of Messrs. Lubliner and Neels.

CHARACTERS.

King Coffee Pot ....Nelly Maguire.
Prince Oke Pokee (his son and confidant)...............Herr H. Barnato.
Squire Durdan (the father of Jack)...............................Miss Lynch.
Jack (a gay young rascal up to mischief)......................Mother Low.
Ragamuffin (known as the Magic Frog who would a-wooing go)
Harry Walter.
Dame Durdan (a lone, lost creature)...........................Sam Neels.
Morna (the one with golden locks)..............................Dave Symons.
Abedeena (a fidgety, long-footed old woman).........Ikey Van Praagh.

CHARACTERS IN THE COMIC PART.

Clown by that funny	Sam Neels.
Harlequin	Nell Maguire.
Columbine	Joe Lubliner.
Pantaloon	Bill Clayton.
Sprites	The Clever Bros. Tallerman.
Policeman (specially engaged)	Alf Saarfeldt.

Scene I.: The Corner Hotel. Song first, "Husbands' Boat." Benny Hart with his funny laugh.

Scene II.: The Mining Board Office. The great equestrian scene, under the direction of the great Sam Neels. The Brothers Gompertz in their famous tricks and bare-back riding, introducing those celebrated mares, Lena and Hasty, specially engaged by Captain Louis Goldschmidt while on his tour.

Scene VI.: Song, "Jolly Dogs," Messrs. Padden, Lewis, and Marks, Fanny Davenport, and Mother McNab, etc.

Great men lived before Agamemnon—and Lemoine. Some months after I had dissolved with Barney I was sitting in my office when a man named Johnnie Rutherford, who was afterwards a great friend of Barnato's, entered, and throwing a slightly yellow-tinged diamond on my blotting pad, offered it for sale. It was of a strange, dull colour, such as I had never seen before; but I ultimately bought the rarity, and, as was the custom, threw it amongst others in a small bottle filled with acid. Rutherford became a frequent seller, and I suspected nothing for some time, as with the number of diamonds I purchased it was almost impossible to identify stones weighing from, say, seven to ten carats. I noticed, however, that the aggregate profits when I bought from him did not come up to expectations, and that he never sold me anything but single diamonds of a uniform dull yellow description—a colour I began rather late in the day to perceive was not the same after removal from the acid and cleaned with chamois leather. The next gem bought from him I did not put in "pickle," but examined minutely for some time, and found, firstly, that by passing a lead pencil over it you could make quite distinct marks, and further discovered that it almost imperceptibly resisted on its surface the scrape of a penknife, as if some fine foreign substance or skin had been deposited on its body. I placed the stone in acid by itself, and on taking same therefrom and rub-

bing with chamois leather, noticed that the dull, jaundiced, creamy tint had vanished, leaving in its place the common yellow colour, making the diamond worth at least thirty shillings per carat less than I had paid for it. Needless to remark, I bought no more elusive gems on which you could write love letters if you pleased.

A great many people had been victimised, and I soon discovered who at first conceived the brilliant idea; but the "fake" was so obvious (when it was found out) that the veriest tyro could not afterwards be deceived, and the practise was discontinued, and in a few months forgotten. But brilliant wits were at work, and as airships were not constructed to fly in a day, so the problem of taking the colour out of a diamond in such a manner as to defy detection—even for a short period—occupied the attention of a couple of gentlemen of high commercial and scientific principles, with what results the reader will soon know if he be so desirous. I may mention that my business had increased by leaps and bounds, and my daily purchases were worth very often thousands of pounds. Of course, I made money; but at a certain period could not help admitting that the profits were once more disappointing. I felt positive I had not bought any "faked" diamonds, as I was very careful; besides which, a child,—once shown—could have distinguished between the coated stones I had been duped with and the unadulterated articles. It was a puzzle. I couldn't make it out, strive as I might; but knew I was being done somehow, so kept my eye on two or three brokers, and followed them, but with no results. At last, in a moment of inspiration, I decided to watch three diggers (customers of mine), whom I suspected I knew not of what. Patiently I chased them a dozen times, but observed nothing to give me any clue, and was thinking of giving up the mystery—if any—and letting things take their way, when, on a certain afternoon, whilst on the prowl, I saw one of the miners in whom I was interested enter Johnny Watkins's office. There was little in that; diggers all day long were in the habit of strolling to diamond dealers' places, if not always to sell, at least to chat. I was on the point of

walking away when I descried a second of the suspected men leave the same establishment. This set me thinking, so I hurried after my mining friend, and, catching him up, gave the gentleman ordinary greetings. He seemed all right until invited to have a drink; then he changed colour, smoothed his moustache and stammered his refusal somewhat incoherently. Now, a refusal to take a liquor on a hot, dusty day in Kimberley was in occurrences something of a rarity, and so I thought on leaving my abstemious client. I was just turning the corner in an abstracted manner, when lo, as I looked up, I saw something that so astonished me that if Nelson's statue had jumped off its column and hit me in the eye I could not have been more amazed, for, by the Mass, if I did not behold the third digger emerging from Watkins's bureau. My suspicions now fully aroused, I accosted my dearly beloved customer with an assumption of amiability and cordiality that nearly took away his breath. It certainly did not give him a thirst, for when I invited him to have a cool, sparkling, invigorating, refreshing brandy and soda—his favourite beverage—he muttered something I could not catch, even though I'd been a cricketer, and shaking his dusty head as if he were a strict teetotaler, toddled off, leaving your humble servant in a most perplexed state of mind. I now indeed smelt a rat, and to wash the cobwebs from my brain indulged in a shandygaff of goodly size and flavour. Refreshed, and having decided what to do, I hastened away, and walked alertly into Watkins's establishment. The dapper little man was puffing a cigar, and circling the smoke.

"Hallo, Johnnie!" said I, "Are you buying?"

"I ham," replied the disciple of Bacon decisively, as if the question were superfluous, and insinuated a doubt as to the magnitude of his operations. "'Ave you hanything on you?" I showed him a parcel of "mixed stuff."

"Won't suit me," he exclaimed, quickly closing up the diamond paper after glancing at the contents. "I want hoff-coloured stones—heither hordinary or hoctahedron," he added.

"Well, I haven't any on me," I rejoined, and put in: "Perhaps you have something to suit me."

"Hundoubtedly," cheerily agreed the nimble John, passing into the other half of the office, which was divided from the front part by a wooden partition. Now, I had smelt on first entering the domicile a faint odour, not at all objectionable, but unique in its quality. I was thinking deeply as Watkins re-appeared and threw on the table a large off-coloured stone. My heart freshened up like a bird in spring, and beat faster on recognising the gem as an old friend, which had been offered for sale to me by the first of the three diggers I had been watching. I didn't buy it, alleging it was too big.

"What a peculiar smell there is here, Johnnie," I remarked casually, preparing to depart this house of mystery.

"Smell! Smell!" he ejaculated, sniffing vigorously and inquisitively, as if surprised at the suggestion, and was determined to explore Ambrosia. "It hain't happarent to me," he concluded, hinting that it might possibly come from the adjacent canteen. Before leaving I was reminded not to forget to bring him some "hoffs" if I should buy any. In the sequel, he got more "hoffs" from me in the future than did his bank account good. I was now fairly on the trail, and as I reckoned I had lost five or six hundred pounds somehow or other, was determined to see the matter through, but did not quite know how to adapt my sails to the wind. However, two brokers, whose honesty I mistrusted doubly now, I watched on many occasions visit Loewenthal's office, and to that highly prosperous and respectable establishment I hied in quest of some more information. I was here received by the polite and sagacious proprietor with the usual Scotch hospitality—nothing to drink, and less to smoke, only a dissertation as long as a Free Kirk sermon—and upon my word, I had hardly entered the hallowed sanctum when my olfactory senses were regaled with the same delightful fragrance that had tickled them at Johnnie's commercial laboratory across the road. Figuratively I grasped the odour by the hand as an

ancient acquaintance, and departed with a Sherlock Holmes's thought maturing in my busy brain.

It is all very well to make up your mind to do a thing if you only can see your way clear, and I did not by any means. But remembering that everything comes to the man who knows how to wait, I resigned myself to patience. As you don't, as a rule, catch flies with vinegar, I became quite a sweet thing in manners to Watkins and Loewenthal, the three diggers, and the two brokers. You can believe me when I tell you I managed to avoid being "stuck" again with their faked diamonds, and would never buy a large single stone at all unless it was first sealed in an envelope for an hour. It came to pass, however, that one fine morning I heard that Loewenthal had had a grievous quarrel with a relation whom he employed in his office as confidential clerk and handy man. Naturally it then became my bounden duty to cultivate the friendship of this gentleman, which I did with praiseworthy industry, and soon discovered he was pretty hard up, as he was an extravagant fellow, and spent or gambled all he earned. A few days before he sailed on a trip to England I broached the subject of the doctoring of the diamonds in quite a diplomatic and masterly way. The bird was shy at first, but under the influence of promises and port wine he agreed for the sum of fifty British sovereigns to show me the following day the whole box of tricks. Needless to say, I went home greatly elated, and fancied myself almost as clever as Machiavelli. The next morning was bright with sunshine and blue clouds, as expectant and curious I hopped into the domicile of my illustrious and useful friend. He appeared delighted to see me—and the fifty pounds, which I had to give him on trust, so you can gather from this that Sir Julius Wernher had some precedent for parting with his bundle to Lemoine. Having thus, with sweetness and bitterness intermixed, transferred the golden coin from my pocket to those belonging to the secret-holder, he in his turn proceeded to elucidate the mysteries of diamond faking, and to put me through my facings, as if he were Fagan, and I Oliver Twist. After an hour's tuition I could doctor a

diamond as well as a Watkins or a Loewenthal. Well, the way to fake a diamond is as follows: Get some salt, chloride of lime, powdered borax, and arsenic, a certain proportion of each of which mix together until the ingredients form a sort of paste. Into this paste put the diamond, and as the mixture is thick and adhesive there is no difficulty in enveloping the stone as it were in a substantial suit of dough. The next proceeding is to light an oil lamp, and lifting up the coated gem with a pair of pliers plunge it into the flame, and with the aid of a blowpipe feed the diamond with the blaze until it is heated to such a degree that the transparent carbon, paste and all, is at crimson heat, and glowing like a deep, red-golden orb of celestial fires. Then you cast this thing of beauty, but not a joy for ever—as the original colour returns in an hour or so—into a big-mouthed bottle of sulphuric ether. The ether bubbles for a moment, and when you rescue the gem from its seething abode you will find that two-thirds of its yellow tint has disappeared, and that the diamond is quite cold, and apparently much increased in value. To retain the colour it was the fashion next to put it in one's mouth, and then trot off to find a purchaser (this accounts for the diggers I had followed refusing to drink). I returned to my office with my fifty-guinea formula, and proceeded to practise the noble art of alchemy, with satisfaction and credit to myself. Now, as I have mentioned, I had lost between five and six hundred pounds through buying "dressed" diamonds, and decided to have a bit of my own back, so for two or three days put on one side all the stones I bought which appeared to suit my purpose. Remembering the odour haunting Watkins' and Loewenthal's establishment, I deemed it highly necessary to dodge that "give away," so, without letting anybody know, hired, for ten pounds a month, a small office which had been in the possession of a man called Beecroft, and was located next to Pruffer's Bar, some little distance from the heart of the diamond mart. Just after sunrise I took possession of same, and detaching one of the boards of the wooden flooring, hid the chemicals and

appliances under its covering. It was my habit every fine morning at six o'clock to go on the kopje and to the tents of the diggers, where I invariably made some purchases. Then I would slip into my "new-found-out," and proceed "to ready" for Messrs. Watkins and Loewenthal a few "bargains." The first time I "put it across" Johnnie I had bought a good-sized, off-coloured octahedron stone. I realised perfectly well that to last at this game and get my money back I had to be careful, so I always took very little yellow out of the stones, the colour of which was regulated by the degree of heat. On the morning of my first attempt I, young, innocent, and guileless youth, sauntered in a leisurely manner past Johnnie's office. He was standing in the doorway on the look-out for a customer, and asked me, like the spider, to walk into his parlour, so I, as polite to him as the French guards were to the British at Fontenoy, assented, and tossed my "doctored" twenty-carat octahedron in front of his scales. It was, I knew, the very thing to suit the alert gent., and, jumping at the gem like a crow at a walnut, he bought it, I making thirty-three pounds profit, and thus drawing first blood.

The next morning but one I visited Mr. Loewenthal, for fear he might be jealous. Glasgow's grand old man snatched me up as an eagle would some lone lamb, and bore me to his cave, where I "slipped" a gem of purest ray serene, which he seemed as pleased to buy as I to sell, and thus Artful Low tumbled into the soup. I didn't, of course, call on the professors every morning, but varied my polite attentions by putting diggers and brokers on to them with my carefully prepared wares. It was real fun, too, when *their* agents used to offer me the same diamonds I had sold them through *mine*, perhaps the day before. But what a change was in these gems then. Oh, my brethren, they were as nearly white as their senders' sinful souls. This little business went on for three or four months, and I swear that I have never sold a doctored diamond in my life to anybody except Watkins and Loewenthal, principally the former. At the end of that period I had retrieved my losses and gained some laurels. I then discon-

tinued the pastime, gave up Beecroft's place, and nobody in the world, until now, ever knew I had a second office in Kimberley, or cooked a diamond; certainly not Watkins or Loewenthal, who only got paid in their own coin. The process, I may mention, was invented by the chemist, Anthony Davidson. I have not stated the proportion of the ingredients used, as some of my readers might possibly want to approach Sir Julius Wernher with the idea. Now, that is a pleasure I intend for myself, and on my bended knees crave the distinguished honour of faking a diamond before his Eminency. I am not Lemoine. I do not profess to make diamonds, only to improve them, and exact not sixty thousand pounds—fourpence halfpenny is my price, and I am donkey enough to agree to allow Oates in the room, too, and promise faithfully not to eat him.

I now come to a certain incident in my life which I have never ceased to regret, and which was the indirect cause of much misery to me later on. In the course of my wanderings on the kopje I drifted into an acquaintance with Mr. Harry Tucker, who was M.L.A. for Kimberley, as well as being a claim-holder and digger in the mine. He became a customer, and I bought many diamonds from him, to our mutual satisfaction. To continue my story, I one day showed him a small parcel, he, sporting no mask, bought it, I giving him credit, and, of course, entering the sale in my book as the law required. Unfortunately, by some means, the authorities—with whom he was waging a civic war *à outrance*—discovered he had purchased diamonds when he only held a license entitling him to sell them—his buying license having expired. I may mention, *en passant,* that politics ran exceedingly high in Kimberley, and that every party combatted each other with a rancour and pertinacity quite abnormal, so that when it became known that Mr. Harry Tucker had committed an offence against the Diamond Law—even though a technical one—his political enemies pounced down on him, and he was at once arrested. Much to my grief, I was summoned, as a witness, and had to go *bon gré, mal*

gré. I did all that was possible to help him, but the trial was a foregone conclusion, and, to my intense sorrow, good-hearted, honourable Harry Tucker was sent to prison for nine months. I rejoice to be able to state that he realised that it was no fault of mine, and in a long letter to a local newspaper, written from gaol, wrote of me in fair and generous terms. The affair created a great sensation at the time both in Africa and England, and "Punch" or "Judy" had a par. referring to it headed, "Hoist with his own petard." It might have been a just sentence in the strict letter of the law, but the transgression, as a matter of fact, was a purely technical offence. From the evidence it appeared that Tucker, "finding" badly, got temporarily short of cash for his week's expenses, and bought these diamonds from me on credit to tide over his difficulties. I always found him most straightforward, and there is no doubt he fell a victim to politics, which are no good to poor people.

Many a man accused of offences was in these days convicted in the Kimberley Club long before his trial, a fair proportion of the "dude" members of which were snobs and wastrels of the most objectionable description, who, failing the ability to get the shekels themselves, put on "side" to those who had succeeded, honoured these last by borrowing all they could, never repaid them, and showed their gratitude by lavishing, as a kind of interest, all the abuse they could on their benefactors behind their backs. I have seen ferocious Fox, the detective, in quite an unnecessary manner, and only to "show off," drag a handcuffed individual past the club's verandah, to the extreme delight and applause of the lazy bounders lounging there, who often would behold in the prisoner the victim of their last "tappings." It is unbelievable, too, that the gentry who acclaimed these barbarous acts (on sometimes innocent men) of the brutal, bandy-legged, flower-faced Fox, were themselves engaged in the same unlawful trade as that for which the sufferer was hauled up by the official red ruffian before them. There was one member of this club, a Russian nobleman, called Count Flatow, who was ex-

ceedingly down on the villainous I.D.B.'s, and on every occasion when a severe sentence was recorded, would celebrate the event in great jubilation. Nevertheless, to the Count's unbounded disgust and indignation, the fractious Fox, with sagacious cunning, bowled him out, and caught him like a rat in a trap. It was hardly fair of Fox, considering the Count was one of his most ardent admirers, to thus nobble his nobleship. He was in due course brought before Magistrate Truter, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, and being a Freemason, belonged to the same lodge. But the censorious Count was full of resource and audacity, for on being placed in the dock he, as a bloom of hope, tipped the tyrannical Truter a Masonic sign, which mark of respect that gentleman, with most sublime ingratitude, acknowledged by promptly sending the astonished aristocrat to the breakwater at Cape Town for seven years. There, arrayed in a beautiful costume, in company of Kaffirs—his former customers—he did a little manual work for the first time in his life, to the intense satisfaction and glee of many of his white fellow-convicts, whose downfall he had welcomed in cheering glasses of choice champagne at the diamondiferous club. *Mais tout de même*, you can take it from one who knows, I have met a greater galaxy of South African rogues in Park Lane and other fashionable London squares than ever I saw on the Cape Town breakwater, for I protest that I have known some good fellows sent to that infernal den of groans, and when I have passed and seen them as tortured felons working there, I never did so without having a tear in my heart, and I hadn't the pluck to throw them a thumb of tobacco. But, reader, there's not such a great difference between Park Lane and the breakwater. If you only knew, the same methods lead to either place; and only a bit of bad luck when you take the wrong turning, so it's a toss up whether you're a "lag" or a magnate.

About this time, a slightly built man, with well-cut features, and keen, bright eyes that flashed like a Tartar's, could have been seen walking about Kimberley. His principal occupation appeared to be minding

his own business, for he apparently mixed with few people, and made no friends. He can best be described as "looking round," and "looking round" he was indeed, as the Government soon found out to its cost. A silent, gentlemanly figure, always in deep thought, and one who might have passed as a student of geology, or a doctor in search of a practice. Nobody knew his vocation, or guessed his ambitions, and nobody cared; but the seemingly harmless visitor was an eagle soaring on high, and waiting for an opportunity to pounce on some alluring prey. Gold and diamonds are the baits which have always attracted thieves as flowers do bees, and this reserved, self-contained individual was a personality of prodigious power and resource, and, to be plain, the most audacious and daring crook that this terrestrial sphere has produced during the last twenty-five years. He went by the name of Harry Raymond, but was, in reality, the famous Adam Worth, of whom, since the period of which I am writing, the world has heard much, and lost more. It is superfluous to say that if Worth had chosen to put his undoubted talents to honest enterprises, and gone in for diamond buying, or company promoting, he might have become a baronet, adorned Park Lane, and astonished the world by gracefully giving nothing valuable away to charities with abounding generosity. But he didn't do that, this King of Swindlers, he hated hypocrisy, so let the thief in his soul enjoy his proclivities at the expense of the wealthy or of rich corporation manipulators, who could afford periodical bleedings. Certainly an improper and immoral calling I most heartily agree, but nearly a harmless one, when compared with the methods of thieving South African diamond and gold company promoters, who threw their nets and caught in them, to their great glee, the widow, the orphan, and shoals of the world's unfortunates. There are thousands of once bright English homes to-day where laughter is no longer heard, fires flame not, meat roasts not, so that—so that—what? Ah, well, so that Melba and Caruso should tickle the ears of legalised plunderers whose artistic tastes are amply rewarded by seeing their names and photographs in the

newspapers. Photographs, indeed!—as if they were not sufficiently well-known to the police—nobody else is interested in the brutal features of golden potmen, cheating Boer verneukers, and runaway German tailors. These last were sneak thieves as compared to the invincible robber I am writing about.

Worth was for many years a bank plunderer of indomitable courage in America, all his operations being on a large scale, and conducted with such masterly strategy and tactics as to defy the cleverest and most brainy detective there. The greatest of Worth's achievements in the United States was the robbing of the Boylston Bank, Boston, when he despoiled that institution of two hundred thousand pounds in cash and securities. Several of Worth's confederates were captured, but the chief, as usual, escaped to Europe's primrose path. He fled from New York, hotly chased by that well-known detective, Robert Pinkerton, who tracked him over the Continent and back to Liverpool, where Worth, in the very teeth of his pursuer, swindled a rich pawnbroker out of twenty thousand pounds, and skedaddled grinning like Mephistopheles at the plight of Uncle Sam's bewildered champion thief-catcher, who scratched his head, and "didn't know where he are." Away scouted the elusive and wily Worth from European city to city, with the perspiring and eager Pinkerton for ever on his heels, but Worth was never there when found, and led his pursuer a dance, the like of which the world probably has never seen. From Tangiers he flew like a bird winging from crag to crag to Tunis, Constantinople, Athens, and then through Asia Minor, followed by the indefatigable "guessing" Pinkerton, who, like the Dutch in war, was always running and catching nothing save the sounds of different languages. So it was all to no avail, for will o' the wisp Worth was here and there and everywhere, but never in the right place to suit panting Robert, who at last gave up the chase. It is well-known how the redoubtable robber later on stole the Gainsborough Duchess picture from Bond Street, for which work of art Agnew, a short time before, had paid ten thousand pounds. After the

robbery the famous canvas was for years stored in the West End of London, and it is an old story how ultimately Worth negotiated for its return, receiving a bonus of two thousand pounds for his endeavours; but it is not yet history the part that this crafty individual took in South African affairs, and which I propose to narrate.

Fiction boasts no more improbable tale, and it speaks volumes for the wit and wisdom of wicked Worth that, notwithstanding his career of crime, he outwitted the world's detectives combined, and died in his bed a lusty old sporting gentleman, and let us hope, for the sake of charity and morals, repentant and remorseful. Most men deep down in their hearts admire a human being, masculine or feminine, no matter his or her profession—robber or reverend—who is superlatively good at any game. If that be not so, how is it that for years and years Dick Turpin's ride to York has not failed to fill circuses with delighted throngs? Who does not acclaim the great Marlborough, that corrupt and marvellous knave, who, on the fields of Ramillies and Blenheim did exactly what the Mile End Guardians did in Whitechapel. *He*, a genius, got a palace Woodstock way at the nation's expense; *they*, noodles, a prison Wormwood Scrubbs way—ditto, but with different diet. Oh, the puzzling and bitterness of it. The Churchills—with the exception of the debased Greedy Duke, who did the work Prince Eugene could have accomplished—were never any good to England. Take them round they are a disappointing brood, turn-coats and office-seekers who would sacrifice anything Imperial to their own interests, and set a house on fire to boil an egg if they thought it might save them fuel—or give them fame.

That old buck, King Victor Emmanuel—Re Galantuomo—was in more senses than one the father of his people, yet he was adored by them, and good-naturedly returned the compliment by loving intensely all the ladies of Italy who were open to proposals. Youthful and bullet-headed Jack Sheppard made London crazy in his day, and who in all broad England does not regard the name of Nell Gwynne. The "good and virtuous Josephine," as her nephew, Napoleon III., in a

proclamation to the grinning Parisians after his coronation, dubbed her, had many amorous ups and downs in her time; nevertheless, her memory is enshrined in the hearts of the French people, who liked her more than any queen in their history. Dour and hard old martinet Wellington would order a soldier to be hanged without blinking, but we reverence him; Cochrane, the daring Dundonald, did a Stock Exchange job worthy of Barney Barnato, yet we all the same extol him. The noble Nelson loved a lady with great gusto, without going through a church or the divorce court, and we idolise him. Henry the Eighth painfully, monotonously murdered and married, and we call him Bluff King Hal. The naughty and expensive Lola Montez, the Demi-mondaine Queen, before she drove a King of Bavaria mad, had put all Paris in the same state, and led the fashions there to the hurrahs and bravos of the mob, to say nothing of *la jeunesse dorée* and others, who were deeply interested in every inch of the frail one. Queen Elizabeth—well, she wasn't taking any—perhaps—so we worship her as the Virgin Queen, whose red hair was the oriflamme that routed the Armada.

But to return to the deeds of the "Emperor of the Underground World," the one and only Adam Worth. After this gentleman, professionally had surveyed the Diamond Fields, from Alexandersfontein to 'Arry Barnato's saintly hostelry, our Buonaparte of Brigands decided upon a plan of operations which, in its originality of conception, rivalled the famous campaign of 1814. In these days of long ago the first rail lines were only sixty or seventy miles in extent from the Cape Town terminus; consequently when the mail carts carried the regular shipment of diamonds to the customary stopping place, they were thence transferred to the trains en route for Table Bay for shipment to England. On discovering that an unusually large consignment of precious stones was to be forwarded on a certain day, Adam Worth, after a conference with his confederates, hurried to the Colonial Railway track and broke up the line for a considerable distance. So it followed, on the arrival of the post cart there, it was

delayed, and the mail steamer, having to sail at a specified time, started without the valuable parcels of diamonds. When in due course these last reached Cape Town they were deposited in the post office to await shipment by the next steamer. It was as Worth had planned it; quick as a flash this cool criminal of nerve and genius and his associates broke into the building, getting away with the whole swag, worth at least forty thousand pounds. Excalibur had done its work, and the *coup de grâce* had been well and truly delivered. There was, as might be expected, a great hue and cry, but the robbers were in the air as far as Great Adam and Company were concerned, for they had taken to their heels, and when you take to your heels you can't take too much. Weeks and months went by without a clue to the thieves, who, in the meanwhile, had flitted in first-class style to London with the glittering fruits of their crime, and took up their residence at an hotel in Arundel Street, Haymarket. Once in the world of Diddleton, Worth—in another name, of course (Joe Aaronson and Co.)—opened a diamond dealer's office in Holborn Viaduct, where he, in the most brazen manner, openly disposed of the proceeds of the robbery, getting full value for every stone, inasmuch as it is admitted in diamond dealers' circles that there never were merchants in that particular line of business who for hard bargaining and getting the last farthing could hold a candle to the eminent firm directed and guided by the masterful intellect of Adam Worth, Esquire. As Danton said: "L'audace, l'audace, toujours de l'audace!" Adam Worth, after disposing of the plunder, took a flat over Fortnum and Mason's, in Piccadilly, where he affected the character of a gentleman of leisure, keeping his carriage, a steam launch, "Sappho," up the river, and a yacht, the "Shamrock," in the Mediterranean. During this period of luxurious living he was a frequent visitor at the American bar of the Criterion, and regarded as a wealthy Colonial. Personality is everything, and though Adam Worth was a violent man when in drink, his distinctiveness and cleverness made him an object of admiration to Thief-

dom, of interest to the Public, and of wonderment to the Police. What a company promoter the world missed in him!—ah, the pity of it!—for Worth would have robbed all the others, and instead of England being cursed with a hundred "magnates," their vices and virtues—like Liebig's extract of meat—would have been concentrated in one remarkable individual, who, without doubt, in the fulness of time, might have boasted a harem of the choicest "Frontpage" Companies, and have either been made a baronet, or regaled at a Mansion House banquet *pour encourager les autres*.

Colonel Lanyon had not long been installed as Administrator when I wrote a four-act drama entitled "The Land of Diamonds," which was produced at the Theatre, Kimberley, a huge edifice of wood and corrugated iron, built by an American named Abel as an opposition house to the Theatre Royal, which was situate in the same street. On the first night of its presentation the building was crowded with an interested and expectant audience, and honoured by the patronage and presence of the Governor and his suite. Well, I was young and inexperienced, and as the play was my first essay as a dramatic author it only came as a surprise to me that the result was somewhat disappointing. It was performed as long as most pieces usually were in the Diamond Capital, and when its initial course was run I figuratively hugged it to my breast as a loving mother would her crippled child. For no matter how plain a child may be, it is never so to its parent. In speaking of this drama I may as well mention that when I later on came home I brought it with me, and it was produced in a revised form in London, where it enjoyed two successful runs—one at Sadler's Wells Theatre, under Mat Robson's management, and the other at Astley's. It was the means, I may incidentally remark, of introducing to the public Mrs. Bennet (wife of Joe Bennet, the billiardist), who subsequently became quite a sterling actress. In Kimberley the popular dramatist, Sutton Vane (ought to have been spelt "Vain"), played the leading part, and I well recall the fact that he made his entrance with his arm in a sling—a quite unneces-

sary innovation as far as I was personally concerned—and received from the audience an enthusiastic and sympathetic ovation, warranted by the belief that the heroic son of Thespis had hurt himself whilst working in the claims—a quite stupendous feat for any actor to have performed out of London. "Alone he did it." Barney Barnato played the Jewish part, Mike Jacobs, and right well he acted. Poor Phil Davis (uncle of the K.C., Sir Rufus Isaacs), afterwards killed in one of the local native wars, impersonated the light comedy rôle, Philip Stanfield. The heroine was enacted by Miss Cox, and I forget the other details, but I remember well that Colonel Lanyon called me into his box and kindly congratulated me on what I know was then only a successful failure.

CHAPTER XIV

Abodes of Bliss—Colonel Lanyon—Gunn of Gunn—A Claim in the Kimberley Mine.

As may be imagined, drinking places abounded in Kimberley; but as the inhabitants settled down, more luxurious convivial dens were opened, presided over by dainty ladies of divers nationalities, manners, modes, and morals. Round about the Main Street there were many canteens, all in a measure popular. Who, who lived in these ancient times, did not know quiet Wilson, of the Blue Posts, Jim Sweet, burly, pock-marked Jim Strong, Fred Abrams, Singleton, Eckford, and others who are now memories in my mind? But the bars most frequented by the budding youth and middle-aged *roués* with fat purses and paunches, were the drinking cosies, the destinies of which were ruled by those fairies of occasionally uncertain ages, who minded the tills and filled their pockets the same time as your glasses, whilst throwing in a smile and a flash of white teeth from behind lips moistened with heart-heating whisky.

Of such places of entertainment there were enough and to spare; I really cannot remember them definitely, though I sampled one and all religiously. Nearly facing the club was the restaurant run by Mrs. Delalee, a short, dark, French lady, who boasted a delicious small moustache under her nose, and a large husband under her thumb. He had no work to do, and wasn't fretting about it. Notwithstanding Madame's tricky, inviting hirsute adornment, it was unanimously conceded that her mutton was tender and exquisite. Her customers were of various qualities and types, the good, the bad,

the indifferent, the learned, the stupid, the ignorant. Polish gentlemen of problematical reputations, whose incomes came from the source of the Nile, and their education from Middlesex Street, would saunter in for the first time after a good day's work, and when asked by the polite and expectant blear-eyed waiter—probably a fallen University man—if they "preferred *table d'hôte* or *à la carte,*" might reply, "A little of both, please, and lots of gravy on each." Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Abrams, Mrs. Hart, Miss Munro also had bars in the principal thoroughfare, but the most fashionable, chic, and distinguished of these establishments was undoubtedly presided over by winsome Mrs. White, a pretty, voluptuous, little, brown-locked woman, who chirruped and hopped about like a sparrow, resembling that mischievous, but amorous, bird in more ways than one. Seeking the sunshine of her smile, and the blessings of the lady's brandy, the *haut ton* of the four mining centres would crowd her place every night, customers and admirers vying with each other as to whom should belong the honour of offering at her shrine the niceties and mysteries of the latest fashion in *politesse* as just imported from Europe by an elegant, with an eye-glass in his eye, and nothing in his pocket. Radiant and cheery blue as her robe, the dainty lady apparently reserved her smiles for the more influential of her gilt-edged customers. Always brightly and tastefully dressed, modestly bejewelled and delightfully perfumed, she looked like a flower which seemed to say in the language of fragrance to her ordinary patrons, "You may look, but you must not touch."

Towards the Garden of Eve then each night would meander ambitious Adams and peg-topped Serpents, to pay tribute to Bacchus and worship a real live Divinity. I remember the then Viscount Mandeville—the present Duke of Manchester's father—being a frequent patron, and a genial, hearty fellow he was, never, to use a vulgarism, putting on any airs; amongst the other hundreds of visitors I single out Lord Rossmore, his two brothers, the Westenras, Mr. Saunders ("a nobleman in disguise"), Carrington, good-looking Joe Posno,

Barry—the judge's brother—Cecil Rhodes, Digby Willoughby, "Capting" Hinton—who had his nose knocked into smithereens there by one Garrat Doyle—to say nothing of Gunn of Gunn, who made himself heard as if he were a battery. Nor must I forget the bluff and genial Dr. Otto, with his pleasant, rubicund face, bright enough in its good nature to mature, by looking at them, half-ripe peaches and grapes, and even human affections, that ever kind-tempered medico Matthews, who at the very least possible temptation would toss for "a couple," and, win or lose, smile blandly on you as one who had conferred a personal favour on him, the cantankerous, quarrelsome Murphy, M.D., who would hop in, resembling for all the world a "Here I am again" pantaloon, but unlike that merry personage, would throw a gloom over the company, and make mischief. Old Nick himself did not know what a baneful thing he had invented when he sent into the world spiteful Dr. Murphy, who, in his life, had been known to serve only two masters—Satan and Sir J. B. Robinson. The tall and handsome Donovan—shot afterwards in a petty skirmish with natives—the rollicking Paddy Rolleston, best of fine fellows, Tom Lynch, as good as gold, and scores of others needless to mention, who were mostly all ambitious to be knights of dames.

Through the smoke of time I see them, indistinct, it is true, now and again, but quite alive in my memory.

In writing of these night resorts I must not omit old Bill Shilling's bar next to the Lanyon Theatre, where, after a performance, a goodly number of night birds would monopolize the counters. Bill was a Heaven-made boniface, but the great attraction at his house was not the proprietor's personality, but the graces and attractions of his two charming daughters. "Tommy," the elder one, was an exceptionally pretty and graceful girl, and credited with having hit with Cupid's dart more manly hearts than any maiden ever born to blush and wink amongst an array of admirers. For it is a fact, vouchsafed by every *habitué* of Shilling's establishment, that "Tommy" was never known to serve a glass without indulging her bonny brown eyes with a

succession of winks, effective enough to electrify a bashful man or cause an amorous one to swoon with ecstacy. Again, there pops up in my mind's eye the vision of a diminutive coffee-shop, where a beautiful lady—a sweet genius—kindling with good humour, possessing superb black hair and eyebrows, rosy cheeks, slightly olived forehead, to say nothing of scarlet lips, served rare Tokay, choice Congou, delicious chocolate, and other things that melt in your mouth when you think of them. The picture of this dear little refreshment cosy is indelibly impressed on my yielding heart, inasmuch as I used, in company with a personage who afterwards became famous (or otherwise), to wander in the evening round the town, and encourage a small crowd to patronize this Palace of Sweet Scents. It was a rigid rule that the chap who was with me never spent anything, but all the same, it is a fact, that on these sultry nights my soul was thirsty for coffee—and affection.

Now, whilst I am on this topic, I cannot forget the handsome café kept by a retired prize-fighter, whose star of the evening was a gorgeous Venus, who, slender and pink, like Diana, lent additional significance to the luxurious divans which suggested thoughts even to the most innocent. Ah, these were brave days, but only to those ladies and gentlemen who were not too particular, and recognised that life was a combat, where you must fight if you would not be slain, and cheat to avoid being cheated. Most of the mesdames of the bars were here for Money or Chance, and as they could not work mines, they worked minds, and further perverted indifferent morals with an angelic serenity that befitted these syrens with rainbow wings. Aye, beauty is a holy thing, but you never know how holy until you touch wood and pay the piper. One could not altogether blame the samples of sweet womanhood who were here. If they had morals they might get no money, if they kept decent they would receive no diamonds, so they gadded to the gold through by-ways of dishonour, and at the finish, for all their endeavours, at times found themselves in—Mayfair, with a lover or husband, and sovereigns in torrents. Oh, yes; oh, yes; be honest

and virtuous, and the curtain descends to the music of wedding bells and the blush of the blue-eyed bride—on the stage and in novels. 'Twas not thus, I do assure you, in real life in Kimberley. Diamonds you could dig up and buy, but the lady with the blushes had not been discovered. Men sought for her, but she was never found, as far as I know. I advocate virtue probably because I have little myself, but all the same I call to mind one poor girl, fit to be a nosegay on any man's hearth, opening her establishment on lines of delicate decency, and distracting chastity. The innovation was not successful, lasted a butterfly's life, and the virtue of this good woman found its reward in dry bread and a garret, her breaking heart withering like a flower. So there you are!

In relation to bars I would be doing my readers an injustice if I did not jot down a little circumstance which appeared to me at the time almost pathetic. Old Mr. Tallerman—father of the deceased Phineas Tallerman, of the late firm of Tallerman and Mankiewicz, Warnford Court, London—was a typical London trader of German descent, who, as the pugs say in their advertisements to each other, "hearing of the success" of his three sons on the Diamond Fields, hastened thither "on his own." Arrived there, the speculative one conceived the idea of establishing a huge and magnificently appointed restaurant in the Main Street. He did the deed, and took as manager, of all men in the world, the racketty Ricketts (erstwhile croupier of Ashwell's gambling hell), and at this time dead broke. Now, of all the businesses in the world, the one which Tallerman entered into was the most unsuited to his temperament. He was a stout, bald-headed man of over sixty winters, sober, gruff, and morose, without the least idea of merriment in any shape or form. Ricketts—I met him as a trooper afterwards in Basutoland, where he died—was quite the contrary—a reckless, good-hearted, hard-drinking fellow. Well, in due time the restaurant was opened, and then, after a week's trial, practically closed, Ricketts taking his *congé*, and anything else that was knocking about. But Tallerman stuck to his huge palace of glass and

crimson fittings, and there, all day, through the closed and locked plate-glass doors you could see the old man sitting in splendid solitude, or walking about the Folly he had acquired for himself. Each night the same sight could be witnessed for months, and not a soul was ever seen in company with the unfortunate *restaurateur*. Ultimately the place was disposed of, and Tallerman lost every shilling he had put into it.

Just a minute, and I have done with eating and drinking places. By far the most profitable canteen in Kimberley was kept by Harry Woodward in the heart of the Diamond Market. Here every morning would assemble the diamond buyers, and indulge in their small bottles to an alarming degree. The undertaking was indeed a lucrative one, and Woodward made a fortune, which is all the more surprising, considering he was certainly not a popular man, although he tried to make himself so to the moneyed men; but he was an individual who laughed without merriment, and spoke without sincerity. His manageress, Mrs. Creagh, though not an exceptionally good-looking dame, was attractive, obliging, and pleasant, which qualities, added to that of being a clever business woman, no doubt accounted for much of the success of the concern. On one occasion Woodward had to appear in the court as defendant in a civil action, and he put forward the ever useful Mrs. Creagh as a witness. "Now, tell me, Mrs. Creagh," counsel asked, "what are you in Mr. Woodward's business? Are you an employée, or have you an interest in it?"

"An interest!" replied Madame decidedly, elevating her eyebrows in surprise, and then demurely and innocently added: "Certainly I have a share in the business, I am Mr. Woodward's sleeping partner."

After Southey resigned it was J. D. Barry, the Recorder, who held the reins of government pending the arrival of Colonel Lanyon, of whom nothing was known, except that he had the credit of having highly distinguished himself on Sir Garnet Wolseley's staff in Ashantee. In those days, Sir Garnet—dubbed England's only General then—was regarded as a sort of demi-god by the British people, who looked upon the

Red River hero as a kind of Buonaparte, and the brilliant young men who surrounded him, Sartorious, Greaves, Baker Russell, Colley, Wood, and Buller, as worthy to be compared with the Napoleonic Junot, Marmont, Berthier, Murat, Desaix, who followed the little Corsican to glory. Great things, consequently, were expected from Colonel Lanyon, who, it must at once be confessed, as Administrator of Griqualand West, was absolutely the wrong man in the wrong place. In appearance he was strangely tall, with black hair, bright, dark eyes, which matched his swarthy complexion, a martinet from inclination and training, and not at all adapted to be at the head of a community of restless diggers and free lances, who did not understand his right-about-face manner of doing business. Nobody could deny the Governor's honesty of purpose, and on the other hand, nobody could deny his painful want of tact, his prodigious obstinacy, and profound likes and dislikes. It was not long before there sprung up a strong anti-Lanyon party in Kimberley, and some exceedingly scathing articles were written about the Ashantee hero, which were hardly calculated to soothe his soldierly spirit.

The reader will probably remember (as I wrote about the subject in a previous paragraph) that Tucker had received nine months' imprisonment for buying a small parcel of diamonds from me without having a dealer's license. In this relation it was felt on all sides that Tucker had been punished with Draconian severity for what, after all, was a technical offence, and when accidentally it leaked out that his Excellency himself had also been indulging without the necessary permit, or the registration of same, then the fat was in the fire. Now, one of the facts that told strongly against Tucker at his trial was the positive manner in which the keeper of the records had sworn to the impracticability of the granting of a permit without its being entered in the book kept for that purpose. The editor of the "Independent," with much daring and public spirit, published certain comments and interrogations respecting the unpleasant position in which the Administrator might find himself

through his carelessness, and finished up his argument by seizing the opportunity of pointing out the gross impropriety of Tucker's conviction and sentence. Popular feeling ran high as Lanyon failed for some time in producing a license to purchase diamonds, and then public opinion dwindled to a derisive and unbelieving laugh when the Administrator suddenly found his permit. There never, of course, was any question of Lanyon having bought diamonds, except innocently, for his own personal adornment and pleasure, but I do think he omitted (thinking, perhaps, in his arbitrary way, that a Governor can do no wrong) to act up to the forms prescribed by law, and had thus put himself in a tight corner. The upshot of this quite Gilbertian episode was that the revengeful Lanyon prosecuted the fearless editor for criminal libel, and the offending scribe was committed for trial, six thousand pounds bail being demanded, and forthcoming, as a guarantee for his appearance. When the great day arrived, the scene outside the court reminded me, on a miniature scale, of a recent *cause célèbre*. Colonel Lanyon, with extreme bad taste, on *le jour de jugement*, occupied a room adjacent to the court, where, surrounded by his friends, some sycophants, and a brace or two of gaudy official planets, he partook of lamb and mint sauce whilst waiting for the verdict. But the wicked and disobedient jury would not see the case through his spectacles, and despite the super-human, and at times ridiculous, oratorical effort of the rotund, squeaky-voiced Sidney Shippard—the Attorney-General—who fought desperately for a conviction, as if he had pawned the result, the defendant, instead of leaving the dock a convict, was acclaimed, amidst much enthusiasm, the people's hero. Lanyon panned out a very moderate Administrator, and had no great ability as a soldier. As will be seen later on, he failed in the Transvaal as its Governor—where he was known to the Boers as Long John—even more disastrously than he did in Griqualand West, and he is remembered there only as a dignified, patriotic gentleman of honesty and integrity. I last saw him at an Easter Monday review of volunteers, in which

function he was officially engaged, and he died in New York from cancer, 1887.

It will be conceded that William Voight, the amazing shoemaker of Koepenick fame, was not only an impostor of consummate genius, but also a resourceful general of infinite audacity and daring. I do not seek to compare Gunn of Gunn with the German cobbler, but must remark that, although the world has produced only one Mr. Voight, it is very doubtful if the terrestrial sphere has known two Gunns of Gunn. But be that as it may, in my youthful days in Kimberley I met one of that dual name, and had my imagination fired by the narrative of the doughty deeds he had done, and those he aspired to achieve in the future, even though he threw away his life like a slipper. There was nothing by flood or field that Gunn of Gunn had not attempted; there was no sporting record he had not broken, no recent wars wherein he had not been conspicuous by his gallantry, no Royal or Imperial court he had not visited. According to his own account his income was fabulous (entirely so, according to mine), and when he spoke of his ancestors who fell at Waterloo he omitted to mention at which platform the accident occurred, and where he had been imbibing. To be just he was a handsome, soldierly-looking fellow, with a graceful bearing, and fair-moustached, comely face, a picture of frankness and intelligence. He sported the Iron Cross of Prussia, won—as he averred—through some glorious acts performed by him in famous battles on several occasions before royalty and a distinguished audience. He also had in his safe keeping a revered Victoria Cross gained by his own particular and favourite blood-curdling deeds of derring-do on the hills of "Injia."

Our hero looked the beau ideal of an Englishman, but he was a Scotchman, and spoke of Caledonia's castles with a familiarity and authority that set at naught the suspicions of a crafty few. (He did not mention the McNeumann's Celtic stronghold, for the simple reason that that German nobleman had not yet acquired it; nor did he profess to know the present Gaelic nobility, as the majority of them were then industriously engaged

as honest tailors or hosiers in Fürth or Frankfort-on-Main, in which cities only in these latter days all true Scotchmen are born—to run away, dishonour, and batten on old England.) There was no question, as befitted a descendant of the great Bruce, that he had been Scotia's proud and honoured guest in every historical and romantic demesne in wild and grand North Britain. All the Scotchmen said so, his friends said so, his creditors said so, the barmaids said so, and, more important still, Gunn of Gunn said so. But Gunn of Gunn was a *liar,* a talented professor of the most contemptible and least pardonable of vices. He was a mixture of Munchausen, De Rougement, and Mr. Voight, with a little of Cagliostro thrown in, just to flavour the *olla podrida.* Now it came to pass that just before Schlickman was killed in the Leydenburg district he asked a Mr. Perrot of Kimberley to recruit a score or so of men for him on the Diamond Fields. Perrot, not bothering, passed the job over to his boon companion, the fiery and intrepid Gunn of Gunn, who, burning with martial ardour, got together twenty-five fellows—the majority of whom were the sweepings of Kimberley gaol—and with this ragged band entered the Transvaal. Arrived at Pretoria, he introduced himself to Mr. Burgers, the then President of the Transvaal, as an officer out of employment, and had the supreme effrontery to affirm that he had distinguished himself on the select staff of His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War. This bait was successful, and the religious Burgers (he had been a clergyman in Cape Town before his nomination as Chief of the State) directed the Scottish warrior and his gallant army to proceed to Fort Burgers and do wonders. Once having caught the President's eye the audacity of Gunn of Gunn knew no bounds, and the people at Pretoria appraised him at his own estimate—a priceless valuation. In that capital he recruited nine more ne'er-do-weels, and then dressed them in a fashion of his own designing, which consisted of strange caps, yellow braided Hussar jackets, with knee breeches, and veldschoon boots.

After inaugurating this court costume, the adventurer, with great ceremony, christened his band "The Gunn Highlanders," and proceeded, as a kind of homage to the Thistle, to create two gallowglasses and a piper. Then his sublime impudence took a new turn, for while he entertained at the Edinburgh Hotel, and carried his wine like a gentleman of the Regency, his piper—a genuine Scotchman—with real bagpipes, strutted fiercely up and down, with dilated eyes and inflated cheeks, recounting musically the heroic deeds of his chief and clan. At last, with much rejoicing, which might be inversely regarded, the eye-flashing chieftain—as proud as Cameron of Lochiel—at the head of the "Gunn Highlanders," left for the front to bravely do (mostly do) or die. His men, however, failed to uphold the best traditions of Scottish regiments, and committed gross excesses on the road to glory--or gaol; and his banners spread were the Transvaal's dread. After picking up a couple of ragamuffins—one of whom was a deserter—the "grand army," to the consternation of the peaceful inhabitants, marched into Leydenburg. There the "General" claimed and obtained immense supplies. Receiving an order from Fort Burgers to move up he still tarried, fearing to meet the German officers, who would probably unmask him. The adjutant day after day urged him to leave the town, and at last the officials demanded to know on whose authority he led an armed band in the Transvaal. Gunn's only reply to that reasonable question was that the President had promised him the chief command, and he meant to have it. At last he was compelled to shift his troops to Kruger's Post, from which place he quickly returned with the ever musical piper, and re-commenced his vagaries, the joys of which far surpassed the dangers he had experienced. Fearing that the "Highlanders" at Kruger's Post might join the malcontents on the Gold Fields—who were agitating for British rule—the mounted men from Burgers' Fort encircled the mutineers, and they and their leaders were warned if they did not proceed to Steelport they would be treated as rebels. Frightened at this threat, and followed by a

large force to see they did not do away with the large amount of goods and arms requisitioned, they seemingly obeyed orders, but when clear of the town took up an independent position. But they were speedily surrounded, and a cannon loaded with grape run in on their right flank; then the Ragged Brigade showed the white flag. Gunn of Gunn and the deserter he had shielded were arrested and imprisoned. The main body of this singular force joined the Leydenburg volunteer corps, under the command of our old friend, the valiant Alfred Aylward, so you can rest assured that no bones were broken. "General" Gunn in due course returned to Pretoria, where he found many sympathisers and creditors, who soon discovered the manner of man he was. He even bamboozled Sir Arthur Cunyngham. Later, to his cost, that fine, good-hearted soldier, Colonel Weatherly, extended to the Scotch trickster not only his hospitality, but his patronage, and bestowed on him a commission in Weatherly's Rangers, which kindness he requited as might be expected. Poor Colonel Weatherly, worshipped by his men, was killed at Zlobane, Zululand. Holding his son to his breast (a boy of fourteen), he fought manfully until he fell pierced with many wounds. What ultimately became of the gentleman with the armorial name I never learnt, and so I have told you all I know of Gunn of Gunn, the gallant chief of Gunn's Highlanders, who are now a piece of history.

About the same time that Barney Barnato bought his first claim in the Kimberley Mine I purchased two from a digger named Ingram. It goes without saying that I had no intention of working them myself—that was out of the question—as I had my business to manage. Also, I had never done any manual labour, and the very idea of sweating in a dust-enveloped spot under a broiling sun, surrounded by evil-smelling natives, would have been enough to have sent a shiver down my back. Under such conditions I should have felt like a nigger in Iceland, so I engaged a man called Rogers—who kept a greengrocer's establishment on the Market Square, which he called the Cornucopia—to superintend

the working of the claims for me. I did not enquire how Mr. Rogers manipulated his greengrocery business, but remember that my diamondiferous acquisitions in his hands proved anything but a horn of plenty to me, for I most unhesitatingly affirm that during the whole time he managed my mining interests he brought nothing to my office except a small piece of bort worth about five shillings, which, no doubt, was a special act of generosity on his part. The expenses, too, of working the property were great, and rapidly and foolishly coming to the conclusion that I had acquired a white elephant, I breathed quite freely when I had disposed of it. Of course, I threw away a fortune, for if I only had had the sense to have stopped working the claims and husbanded them, in the near future I should have made a small independence.

I forget how Barnato fared with his first mining "spec," but I do not forget how he fared—a few years after—when he bought certain claims from a Polish Semite named Abraham Barnett. He paid for them, I think, something like ten thousand pounds, and the richness of these claims developed in his hands to a phenomenal degree, so much so as to excite much wonderment among the miners whose claims adjoined his, but on which Dame Fortune—a black-browed jade you cannot trust—had refused in the most puzzling manner to smile. On the contrary, she frowned incontinently, and so the poor diggers had none. Who can say, however, on the other hand—for the acts of Providence are inscrutable and bewildering—that the Queen of Fairies, bewitching, bright, and alluring, with a shimmering dress, a silver toque, and as beautiful and long-lived as Rider Haggard's "Ayesha"—who can say, I repeat, that this Ethereal Lady, with her all-powerful prophetic spirit did not foresee in the years to come the unparalleled beneficence of Barnato Bros? and so, waving a glittering wand over her lustrous hair, glistening like spiders' webs amidst the twinkling of the stars, summon her sylvan band of effulgent sisters, who, in the moonlight, riding on a beam, hastened to the weird and picturesque diamond house, and at her command

touched the claims with their resplendent rods, and so made them golden ground. But to come to realism. Barney Barnato ultimately floated these claims and others for a hundred thousand pounds, and they formed the stepping elliptical stones to his fortune. Abraham Barnett's lot was different—he shortly afterwards was sentenced to five years' hard labour.

CHAPTER XV

The Theatre Royal—On the Rampage—Tattersall's—Woolf Joel—Dr. Jim—The Opera—Journalists—Sam Height.

When I first planted my feet on this gaudy planet of diamondiferous ground, entertainments and scratch dramatic performances took place in a shabby iron corrugated hall which had been erected on the Market Square. It will be believed by those who have read these recollections that on my arrival on the Fields concerts or farces hardly interested one who for weeks was almost without bread, consequently the Market Square Hall and the sorry performers who were there occupy a decidedly shadowy nook in my brain. All the same I remember Harry Lemon—one of the principal of those Thespian brothers—as well as if I had seen him last week. His father was Mark Lemon, the whilom Editor of "Punch," and an actor whose impersonation of Falstaff I call to mind seeing in my boyish days. I knew his son intimately—a silent, melancholy, pallid-faced man, with sorrowful deep brown eyes, which looked despairingly on the busy world so unsuited to his temperament. He had no particular talent of any kind, and I couldn't tell you for the life of me what became of him. Seymour Dallas—a real good actor, with the features and bearing of a dragoon—also appeared before the paraffin footlights. Years after, he made his *début* in a London playhouse, but be that as it may, when the Theatre Royal came to be built in Kimberley he was a consistent performer there, and was as great a favourite off the stage as on it.

The others who graced the earlier hall I forget, which

is no small wonder considering I am writing these chronicles from memory, and have not in my possession books or newspapers bearing on the subject. However, when the Theatre Royal was erected it was felt by all classes that a great want had been supplied, and this dramatic first-born was received with open arms by its nurse the public. Here was a chance for the fair ladies of Kimberley to rustle their dresses, display their jewels, diffuse their scents, show their charms, and tantalisingly tickle the amorous proclivities of the dude, the digger, and the dealer. It was certainly no great thing as theatres go, a square corrugated iron-built structure, boasting no corridors or gallery, but a fairly good stage. A wine bar (to which the public were at all times admitted) ran the whole length of one side of the building, and the noise caused by the frequenters often mingled with the heroine's lamentations and the denunciations of the villain. As time went on the performances improved, and soon travelling companies from Britain made their appearance, one of the best of which was the Christy Minstrel Company brought out by Harvey, and consisting of Leslie (alto), Braham (tenor), Truro (bass), Turner ('cello), Cox (violinist), and Hughey Dougherty (bones)—the last-named being the best entertainer of his kind America has ever produced, and Lord, what a good fellow he was, and the fun I've had with him when the show was over and he was wont to be merry in his cups! It was, indeed, a splendid combination, and Harvey made a small fortune out of the venture. Then a rattling good English comedian, E. V. Sinclair, took the theatre, who in his turn was followed by Cox, Tom Paulton (brother to Harry Paulton), and others. Such stars as Anna Bishop, Madame Mendlessohn (for whom I wrote her opening song), Boothroyd Fairclough (Barney B. and I first engaged him at sixty pounds a week), G. W. Turner, etc., came along, so you see in time we became quite artistic.

Barney Barnato became a constant mummer at the theatre, and yes—oh, yes—believe me, Arthur Wellesley Davis, otherwise known as Hoppy, presided at the

piano there (as if he were wedded to it) each evening for years. From this place of vantage the Byronic prodigy, to the great delight of his magnificent brother Montie—he with the giant mind and important proboscis—vamped into the hearts of problematical virgins, and often, I am sorry to say, did a hop, skip, and jump into conjugal nests when the other theatrical birds weren't looking. It was a great sight to watch this musical genius on the harmonical job. He would enter, like Rubenstein, as if he had an army behind and an Empire in front of him, and as self-conscious as Paderewski. Glancing superciliously round at the audience, it was his habit to snigger a patronising smile which quite agitated the ladies and upset the men, who stroked their chins uneasily. As the curtain went up, reviewing the stockinged legs of the girls with impudent eyes worthy of Don Juan, he'd open his fish-like mouth in ecstacy and then we'd have divine "moosic" from a primitive apparatus, which no doubt polished up the morals of these prudes of Pélagie, inclined to love black-haired Melpomene and make amorous dalliance with merry Thalia, she of the fair face and sunshine smile.

Walking one afternoon down the Main Street, I stopped outside Alexander Levy's auctioneer store to speak to the proprietor. Whilst standing chatting to this ever-genial trader, two boys walked up and gave the morning's salutations to old Mr. Levy. The last-named introduced the new-comers as Isaac and Woolfie Joel. They were two neatly dressed, quiet-looking lads, subdued in manner, and respectful to their elders. As they said they were broking I invited them to call at my office; they did so, and Woolfie, the flower of the family, acted as my broker for many months, and a more hard-working, straightforward, honest chap I never met in these days of long ago. From that period I was intimate with him until the time of his lamented death, and although always a popular, handsome, well-mannered man, I cannot say in justice to myself, that the juvenile qualities which appealed to me in his *jeunesse* were quite so conspicuous when he blossomed

into full manhood. I doubt if any young fellow was better liked on the Diamond Fields than equable, amiable, Woolfie in his youth. Never, as he grew up, aggressive or "bouncing," he could if necessary take his own part, and strove hard to deserve the good impression he had created. In his youthful escapades, troubles, and love affairs—and they were many—he always sought my confidence, although he regarded Barney as a brother, who in his turn loved this nephew as if he had been his son. As regards Uncle 'Arry, he was, as far as Woolfie was concerned, a *quantité négligeable*. I think the severe illness he later on contracted changed in a great measure his character and disposition, an illness from which he would scarcely have recovered had it not been for the efforts of Dr. Jim, who was a heaven-born physician. However, it was a pleasure to do business with this bright-hearted boy. Once he went away for a short period, and I took on as an additional broker a man called T——, whose brother —lately deceased—occupied a prominent position as a stockbroker in Throgmorton Street. He was not a success, and I began to scratch my head. On a certain day I had entrusted him with two or three hundred carats of *melée*—small stones—to sell. In the afternoon he returned the diamonds, and as I was putting them in the scales they fell from my hands, and the blotting-pad was covered with the tiny gems. I was using a small tin shovel to collect them when, as true as the Talmud, I saw that my parcel of beautiful *melée*—value forty shillings per carat—had by some extraordinary agency been transformed into chips worth about an eighth of that sum. Of course, the broker had been indulging in a slight exchange. When Woolfie returned I received him with open arms, for in those days he was a youth to whom you could have trusted your life. T—— is now in China, and I hope he will read this paragraph to the Boxers there, and then write home and tell me what they think of him.

There was a class of men here who had imported into the country from the region of Whitechapel sundry oaths and curses which for originality of conception

and wickednesss would be hard to beat by the most lurid professors of sultry oratory. It seemed impossible for them to make an ordinary remark without embellishing it with epithets hot enough to burn an angel's wings. Indeed, these gifted gentry imagined that no sentence was acceptable without that elegant figure of speech, "Strike me blind," having a prominent place. At the gambling rooms, especially when hazard was being played, the language was enough to clog the dice. Now, there was one chap who, to judge by his repeated invitations to all things spiritual, had only one ruling ambition in life, and that was to be rendered sightless. One night he and a chosen half-dozen were tossing the dice, and, being unfortunate at the game, his invocations increased in proportion to his losses. After expressing in scorching phrases a fervent hope that he might never see the light if ever again he played hazard, and with the words "Strike me blind" trembling on his sacrilegious lips he put his head on his arms and sank into a half-drunken sleep at the table. The game continued for some time, and at length, when it was finished, one of the company proposed putting down the light as low as possible, and that a mock game of hazard be played in the dimness. This was done with great alacrity and pleasure, and soon in the darkened room the "spoof" commenced. Speaking in sepulchral tones their voices in the quiet blackness sounded weird and mystic enough. "*Seven's the main—a little four—take ten pounds to five—right—take it again—six—five—ten—bottoms dear dice—seven—damn it—pass the box.*" The sleeping man did not wake up at first, so one of the conspirators stealthily let fall a drop of cold water on his neck. This aroused him from his drunken stupor, and hearing the odds called in the dark, "*Seven's the main—nine—take fifteen to ten—*" the half-awakened gamester instinctively blurted out, "Strike me blind, I'll lay it!" No answer was forthcoming from the players who went on with their ghostlike game. "*Nine it is—seven's the main—five—seven and a half to five's a bet.*" Amidst the banging of the boxes and the rattle of the dice one could

hear the victim move restlessly, passing his hand feverishly over his eyes. At length the strain became too much for his besotted brain, and the poor fellow jumped up wildly shouting, "Heavens, have I gone mad? Have I gone mad? Am I alive, or dead, or dreaming?" Still the game went on, the bang, the bets, the rattle. "I know what it is," exclaimed the frightened gambler; "I know what it is. I've gone blind, I've gone blind, and I asked for it. I've been warned about that. What shall I do? Blind! blind!" Suddenly the light was turned up amidst gibing laughter, and the disconcerted gentleman was discovered in a dreadful state of fear and perspiration. But a few minutes after he had recovered himself he looked round at his taunting companions and said, "Strike me blind, that's a bally fine joke to play upon a bloke, ain't it?" Such is the force of habit.

Hardly a more popular notability resided on the Diamond Fields than clever, well-fashioned Dr. Jameson —especially with the ladies. No matter what happened to be the trouble with matron, maid, or widow, a visit from the dexterous Doctor would always set things right. He was the Popular Specific, and enjoyed himself accordingly. "My dear," Mrs. Splodger would say to her friend, Mrs. Marcus Belliotowsky, "You're not looking well." "I ain't indeed felt well since Abraham went to Cape Town," sighed the absent one's newly-wedded wife, fanning herself, and adding quickly, "I always feel as if I wanted something."

"Wanted something!" exclaimed the sapient Mrs. Splodger, distending her eyes with astonishment. "Wanted something—well, of course, my dear!" she put in with a grimacing smile, "considering you've only been married seven months!"

"It doesn't matter," replied the lady with the Polish name; "I feel as if I had the jim-jams."

"The jim-jams!" said Mrs. Splodger thoughtfully, as the first syllable suggested an idea to her. "Then call in Dr. Jameson," she concluded decisively.

There is not the slightest doubt that Dr. Jim was a great ladies' medico, and the depository of all their

little secrets and hopes, consequently the alert and scientific Esculapius was a figure of immense social and public importance in Kimberley, and no birth, marriage, or death was considered quite *comme il faut* that did not boast his patronage. Ladies who did not want children and those who did—especially those who did—flew to Dr. Jameson for advice and assistance, which he rendered with a perseverance which must have been quite pleasing to the husband who paid the coming Premier's bill with gratitude and punctuality. I knew a chap once who had been very successful in life, and whose only trouble was that his charming wife had not presented him with a tiny image of himself. He confided in me, and on my initiative consulted Dr. Jim, with the result that, hey, presto! before the year was out, and on the first of April, too, he became the proud pater of bouncing twins. The Doctor was, indeed, a life giver, but after a bit, tiring no doubt of that pleasant pastime, he one fine morning set out determined, for a change, to slay something, and unluckily tumbled into the scarcely amorous arms of the scowling, bearded Cronjé, who wanted to cut his knowing napper off. But Cronjé was not the first warrior to beat Dr. Jim, I do assure you, as the following anecdote will prove beyond dispute. In Currey Street there stood a highly flourishing draper's shop, kept by H—— and B——, which was at once the delight of the ladies and the nightmare of the men. This thoroughfare it was the medico's wont to traverse two or three times a day on his therapeutic missions. For this purpose he used a horse and trap, and daily could be seen sitting in the latter, holding close to his nose a small memorandum book, in which he was as deeply interested as if it were a Bible and was preparing for the After Life. It was, however, only an account scroll. One morning the Doctor, deeply engrossed in the details of this magic volume, had halted, enjoying the cheerful sunshine, in his pony chaise outside H—— and B——'s premises. The reading must indeed have been pleasant and profitable, for Rhodes's friend did not notice Mr. H—— of the firm come out of his shop. Seeing Dr. Jim the

draper started, and then with an angry expression on his face darted towards the gentle reader, snatched the whip and commenced to belabour the Doctor and his nag in equal proportions. This was hardly a dignified position for the far-famed healer, but the intelligent pony soon solved the problem by bolting to the office, where he landed the alarmed scientific gentleman, who looked like Johnnie Gilpin, in quite record time.

"But what was all this about?" asks the scanner of these lines.

> "Why, that I cannot tell," say I,
> "But 'twas a famous victory."

Once there came to Kimberley for the purpose of singing in grand opera a tenor, whose name I forget, his wife, a Signor Possi, and two ballet dancers. They were all Italians, which, as far as the men were concerned, you would know as soon as they opened their mouths, as they smelt abominably of garlic, and perfumed the air with its essence. Signor Possi was a most phlegmatic person, and therefore probably descended from a Roman senator. The two young dancers were exceedingly pretty, one a raven-haired brunette, whose mouth was full and red, and the other a beautiful blonde, plump and hearty as a partridge. It was no wonder the "boys" were after these divinities at once, and through the male members of the company it was an easy matter enough to get an introduction. (They had put up at Salmon's Hotel, Stockdale Street, owned by Mrs. Schuardt, whose exquisitely lovely niece later on married her son, well known as Shakey, and a renowned billiard player.) An introduction, however, is not everything, for when that was over the introduced and the new arrivals found themselves in rather an awkward predicament, as not one of the company could understand any tongue but their own, except a few words of French. So love-making was done by dumb show, which at all times is difficult, even to the most experienced of pantomimists--it is like smoking in the dark. Certainly the language of the eyes, especially over a glass of champagne, conveys magnetic messages

of quite decipherable meaning, but it is a courtship which is apt to have an irritating and quite unsatisfactory effect on the nervous organs of both sexes if they be amorously inclined.

The sun never shone more brightly than one fine day (the birds weren't singing and the flowers were not scenting the sweet (?) air—they did not behave themselves that way at all in Kimberley) when Joseph Levy and I took Signor Possi and the pair of ballerinas for a drive in a Cape cart (motor-cars not being just then quite available), and it is not too much to say that such an appealing and intoxicating confusion of perfumed skirts was never seen in Diamondland before. Now, Mr. Joseph Levy, although quite as plain a man as John Wilkes, was, as a rule, as successful in his love affairs as the profligate politician was notoriously reputed to be in his. During the outing the Lowland Lothario was hard pressed to make both ends meet, and looked unutterable things as he noticed the fair progress I was making with a few words of French. Possi sat from stern necessity as silent as a sphinx in the cart, content enough to let things take their course, accepting in the meanwhile, with great grace and alacrity, all the cigars and cigarettes which the unspeakable and ardent Joe passed to him in pure desperation as the best thing under the distressing circumstances he could do. Again levelling at the girls pantomime gestures and facial contortions which were dire failures from an æsthetic point of view, he all at once turned suddenly to me and anxiously inquired what was the French for love. I told him *amour*.

"Is it?" replied he, meditatively. "Here goes," and turning to the bewitching blonde blurted,

"Me ammer you."

"*Si?*" questioned the lady twisting a corner of her carmine lips.

"That's got it!" exclaimed Joe in great delight, and then facing me asked, "How do you say beautiful?"

"*Belle.*"

"Bell—a tinkler?" repeated Levy, incredulously, and again addressing the fair *Italienne, gracieuse, élégante,*

polie, and eating her with his eyes, boots and all, passionately protested.

"Me ammer you—bell."

"Si?" responded the Lily of Liguria, nodding her yellow head and putting a straw-coloured curl in its place.

"Now," queried the soul-strained Scot, "what's heart?"

"Cœur," said I.

"What?" he replied, snapping a suspicious eye at me. "Cur. No darned fear. I'm not such a fool as that."

"It is though."

"Me ammer you bell my cur," he essayed once more, putting his big hand on the place where his heart was not.

"Si?" repeated the blonde beauty, bewildering him with her eyes.

"Oh, curse it all! I wish I could speak French!" cried Joe, relapsing into moody silence after presenting Possi with a huge Havana. On passing the Craven Club, however, a happy thought seemed to be born in the mind of the Scotchman, for pointing to it he said to Possi, with a gesture denoting his proprietorship, "Mine." Possi saluted gravely and took snuff.

The Lanyon Theatre, Jardine's Hotel, the Standard Bank, and other important buildings he annexed, to the great awe and admiration of Possi, who nearly bowed his poor head off with a regularity which rivalled Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, and imparted to the ladies in their own language the important intelligence that a Crœsus was their host. In a moment whatever was of levity in their demeanour disappeared and gave place to a demureness suggestive of matrimony. As for me, I was left in the cold, so busy were the girls shyly cooing and pouting at the self-constituted millionaire. On arriving at the hotel Mr. Levy, to prove his riches, opened sundry bottles of champagne, which Signor Possi and the two signorinas imbibed with gusto and intelligence. During this convivial time one of the "boys" for fun extracted Possi's silver watch from his

waistcoat and transferred it to the owner's side pocket. The Signor's despair when he missed it was Wagnerian in its incoherency, and his volubility increased when informed in a friendly manner by one who could speak a little Italian that Joseph was the despoiler and was no millionaire. His indignation knew no bounds, and he spoke to Joe in choice Sicilian, who, not understanding a word he said, turned appealingly to the people and inquired what the basso was saying. He was told Possi was eloquently describing Levy's immense holdings. Suddenly the singer, discovering he possessed the watch, darted from the room wrathfully, leaving Joe in a state of dolorous dubiety. At all events, the trio in the future gave us a wide berth, and I doubt very much if Levy ever knew the real cause of his downfall.

R. W. Murray (he died only recently at a ripe old age) was one of the best known journalists in South Africa, though his literary ability was, I fancy, more the outcome of a natural gift than the result of a well-grounded education. Nevertheless, as an editor, he ruled the journalistic world in Kimberley, and his pen had undoubtedly mighty local influence. He can be described by no stretch of imagination as a perfect man, being fluent of acerbity, cantankerous, vindictive, intolerant, and loved his cups as well as Cassio—only more so. When I first appeared in the Dusty Town Murray combined the business of an auctioneer with that of a journalist, and it is said that the knock-downs that he administered daily with his hammer in the rostrum were as nothing compared to those he doled out with his pen when gracing the editorial chair. He boasted a strange history, and it was quite by accident he ever made his home in South Africa, as whilst on his way to Australia the ship he patronised was wrecked, and with other survivors he ultimately landed at Cape Town, in which port he drifted into journalism. From Table Bay he migrated to Grahamstown—the City of the Saints—and edited, with considerable ability, "The Great Eastern" newspaper there. Seeking more profitable fields, Murray hastened to Kimberley when he

heard of its prosperity, and became editor of the "Diamond News."

The following anecdote throws a faint light on the methods of Kimberley journalists before the eighties. Leopold Loewenthal had at a certain period a proprietary interest in the "Independent," the editor of which was at that time fighting a war of personalities and harshness with Murray's "Diamond News" that would have delighted the heart of the great Mr. Potts. Consequently the pens of the two rival scribes were apparently steeped in malignancy and animosity, to the great glee of the supporters of each newspaper. It came to pass at that moment, as things will, that the Irish editor of the "Independent" demanded to dictate his way of annihilating the terrible Murray, with the result that Loewenthal got him summarily dismissed. Behold then the "Independent" deprived of its champion. But Loewenthal was a man of wit, if not of learning, and without the least hesitation hied to the redoubtable Murray's sanctum, where he was received hilariously as a gentleman of importance by the champion of the pen and the hammer, who was as fit as a flea. The matter in view was soon settled in the easiest of modes, to the great satisfaction of both parties, and Mr. Murray, in a delicate, magnanimous manner agreed (for a consideration) to vilify himself and the "Diamond News" in the most venomous style in the columns of the "Independent," whilst defending his august person at the same time virulently in his own journal, and maliciously attacking the bitter and scurrilous article which he was to supply the opposition journal. So he wrote himself down as a Sinner in one newspaper, and a Saint in the other, and got paid as both. His right to either of these appellations was left to the discrimination of the deluded readers of those important journals, the "Independent" and "Diamond News," price only sixpence each, and the pair of them edited by a genius of the moon, who, when the better for a glass, would humorously describe the double *rôle* he so adroitly played.

No history of the Diamond Fields would be complete that did not contain a description of Sam Height. Sam

(yet living) is an American from the Southern States, a man of good Virginia blood, and as cheery a fellow as you might ever chance to shake by the hand; one who met your glance squarely and honestly. Handsome and exceedingly well-knit, his kindly nature shone in clear grey eyes, and generosity showed itself in every line and feature of his face. When he swore, rivalling the British in Flanders, curses did not sound like oaths, and when he laughed a whole soul seemed to be bursting with mirth. Free and easy going, I fear that when the tide of success turned he did not find a corresponding liberality at the hands of those whom he had befriended, and who by the practice of qualities quite the reverse of his own had risen—as far as wealth was concerned—over his head. In this world one expects injustice and ill-doing from enemies, but it is as a rule from ungrateful friends that they are doled out. Samuel kept the Carnarvon Hotel in Du Toit's Pan, and many a bottle have I cracked with him, and a more genial, open-hearted, hospitable boniface it would be impossible to find if you searched from Cape Town to the Zambesi. Height, of course, had his weaknesses, the principal of which was a lively imagination, which led him to magnify in a tremendous degree the most trivial circumstance or enterprise. In fact, this kindly man had cultivated the science of exaggeration to such an extent that he came to regard all his highly-coloured pictures as modest representations of the truth, and described claims that nobody else had ever seen, and Diamond Fields nobody else had ever imagined. He was, it must be noted, always charitable, giving with a free hand and wanting no advertisement. On one auspicious occasion the Rev. Darragh called on him to solicit a subscription. "Now, Mr. Height," the minister said, "here is a chance to arouse your charitable instincts. I have never asked you in vain, and this appeal is truly worthy of your attention."

"What's it all about, Mr. Darragh?" queried Samuel, dwelling lovingly on his American accent and squirting tobacco juice with an accuracy quite amazing into a spittoon a couple of yards off.

"It is money I am collecting to complete the building of our new church," returned the cleric, in warm and alluring tones.

"Church house, is it?" responded Sam. "Wal, I'll tell you, Reverend, what I'll do," he continued, "if my claims north of De Beers—they're the finest in the world I know—turn out ginger, I guess I'll build you —— well, the finest —— church you ever set your —— eyes on." The sunset came out clear and golden as Darragh blushed and shuddered, but all the same he glanced up in mute appeal to the Recording Angel to forgive the sinner who had slain the hope he had begotten.

CHAPTER XVI

All is not Gold that Glitters—New Rushes—Anthony Trollope—Times and Manners—Painting the Lilly—Black and White.

WHEN the richness of the Kimberley mine was an undisputed fact, and its influence was felt in every hole and corner throughout South Africa, thousands of eager ones left useful occupations to try their luck in Griqualand West, trekkers from the Transvaal, Dutchmen from the Free State, planters from Natal, Boer verneukers from Cape Town, and clerks from Port Elizabeth. Before the treasures of the Diamondopolis were discovered, the whole of South Africa was financially in a parlous state, the only lucrative pursuit being ostrich breeding, for the few who had the capital available to start it. In 1870 odd the price of a pair of ostriches was five hundred pounds, and feathers were selling at £30 to £40 per pound weight. The birds themselves were very prolific, each hen often laying fifty eggs in the season, whilst the cock, too, was quite a family man, and always assisted in the hatching, sitting longer than his feathered partner. However, this digression notwithstanding, there was a Dutchman who had a flourishing ostrich and agricultural farm, and who, on hearing of the fabulous fortunes being literally picked up in the roads of the Diamond Fields, determined to have a shot at the glittering targets. So he gave up his homestead, and, at an immense sacrifice, sold his birds, etc., and with the proceeds bought a fine span of oxen and a splendid tent waggon, in which he, accompanied by his wife and six children, proceeded to journey to Kimberley, which City of Sin was

reached after travelling through veldt, passing over mountains, and fording rivers for two long months.

Du Toit's Pan was the bright particular spot he fixed on, and at once acquired a claim, in which he worked like a slave morning, noon, and night, his family and himself the while living in the wagon. For weeks the Boer toiled, buoyed up by the hope that at any time a stroke of his pick might turn up a fortune, but, with the exception of a few small stones saved from the hands of his thieving Kaffirs, which hardly realised enough to provide mealie pap for his despoilers, he found nothing to repay his expenses or console him for the miserable manner in which he and his family were existing. He began sorely to regret the peaceful, unclouded life and simple home he had thrown away to seek his fortune in such strange surroundings—which were to him only a vale of tears. But solemnly, as if he were going to a Nachtmahl, this good and simple descendant of the Huguenots would at cockcrow betake himself to labour, and doggedly, from morn to eve, stab the unyielding ground with his pick. At last, when he had almost lost faith, one afternoon, as smiling as a sunny maiden's face, the earth surrendered up to him—as he thought—the object of his sincerest longings and prayers, for there at his feet lay a glistening substance, sparkling in the sun, inviting possession. With a heartful cry of joy he seized his star of hope, looked lovingly at it, and through its facets saw once more the happy home he was hungering for, the solid drab farmhouse with its surrounding verdant, full-leafed trees, and rainbow flowers blooming wild, the ripe and luscious red and golden fruit waiting to be gathered, to the prattle of little children and the clapping of chubby hands, the laughing ivory-teethed natives, the smiling cornfields, deep orange yellow in their maturity, whispering gracefully to the travelling wind, the lowing cattle, black and brown, and the white bleating sheep. Hastily hiding the precious find, as if he had stolen it, in one of his pockets, Cincinnatus hastened to his wagon and told the wife of his bosom of the great good fortune that had come to them. There was joy that evening in

their tented home, if there had been none before, and the sinking sun, as it went to rest, cast its ruddy radiance upon an expectant mirthful group. Telling no outsider of the splendid luck, he, in two or three days had sold his claim, and with his family was once more trekking to Port Elizabeth, a distance of many hundreds of miles. At the end of seven weeks he arrived in that town, and with his heart in his mouth and the glorious find tightly hand-clutched, made his way to a reputable merchant with whom he had dealt for years, and could trust. To him he imparted the secret of his journey, and proudly showed his treasure. Alas! his pride was short-lived, the gem was but a piece of crystal, not worth a bundle of forage. He staggered into the street, dazed and heartbroken, with the anguish in his eyes of a dying deer. Down his cheek slowly coursed a solitary tear, leaving in its wake a white watermark that looked as if it had seared the skin.

Whenever it was rumoured or asserted that diamonds had been discovered in a certain locality, then at once there would be a wild dash to the attractive spot. It was a strange sight to witness the motley crowd on their road to a new rush from Kimberley. Away they "scooted," all sorts and conditions of men, helter-skelter across the veldt, most of them on horses, ponies, and donkeys, also in conveyances of varied descriptions, gigs, traps, chaises, Cape carts, lorry carts, sanitary carts, butchers' carts, costers' carts, even water carts. Of course, many of the fortune-seekers were pedestrians, garbed in Crimean shirts and top boots, whose only worldly possessions were what they stood up in. Arrived on the chosen ground, claims would be pegged out for miles round, and on these sacred spots could be seen the proud owners, happy enough with their castles in the air as they patronised the itinerant vendors of liquors and solids, who would sell them a bottle of ginger-beer—perhaps something stronger—or dispose of their pegged claims, as many of these last were purchased by speculators on the ground. I have scrambled to many rushes, but have never been to one that has turned out successful. Glorious fun it was, however,

galloping over the boundless veldt with a lot of jolly fellows, the pure, cool, delightful air, as exhilarating as champagne, stimulating the freshness of a youthful heart, and the vast blue expanse of multi-coloured country, purple, brown, and gold, fronting you as illimitable in extent as the beautiful sky, looking for all the world like a garden of opals, pearls, and turquoises, or as the chances of fortune were to your mind in the new El Dorado. It makes my blood tingle to recall the excitement of these past days—the springtime of life, which only comes once, and flits so swiftly away into the Land of Ghosts and the World-of-Once-Upon-a-Time.

I remember on one occasion riding to a new rush which was regarded as a certainty by the critical community. It could not be denied that diamonds had been found, as they were shown by men whose words were unimpeachable, and who pointed out the exact places in which they were discovered. There never was such overwhelming proofs as to the existence of a new mine, and I felt assured the crowd had touched a good thing. More diamonds were found in the locality, and then confidence became a certainty. Some digging was commenced, and prospectors could be seen at work far and near, but what puzzled me was that although the precious stones were discovered on the surface of the ground none were found underneath it. Still, hope was unabated, and claim-holders dug until the sun had burnt faces and labour had horned hands. To be sure they might have been toiling there for another year had not the real cause of the richness of the mine leaked out. I have mentioned elsewhere that it was the custom to send weekly consignments of diamonds to Cape Town by the mail cart for shipment to England, and it happened that one of the guards of these primitive conveyances, becoming as curious as Blue Beard's wife, opened the package entrusted to his care, and was as astonished as was Selim when the treasures of Ali Baba's cave were disclosed to his view, and no wonder, for the parcel opened by the dishonest driver contained diamonds weighing 28lb. and

worth thirty to forty thousand pounds. You can imagine with what delight the Colonial Jehu dipped his despotic, ape-like hands into this bath of gems, and how, like Gaspard in "*Les Cloches de Corneville,*" he gloated over the riches. Like Gaspard, too, in his ecstacy he was also interrupted, not by bells, but by the blasts of a bugle from a mailcart coming in the opposite direction. In his hurry and alarm the driver, forgetting St. Anthony, did not trample temptation under foot, but took unto himself a good fat handful of diamonds, and commenced hurriedly to re-wrap up the precious parcel. While carrying out this operation the clumsy pilferer let fall some of its contents, with the consequence that many of the gems were strewn along the road, making the locality highly diamondiferous, a fact which was ably and skilfully demonstrated by the learned and scientific mining "experts" of Kimberley, who prophesied, from samples of the ground which they had examined, a long and healthy life for the new claims, which had been unconsciously watered by Danny the Driver whilst he was enriching himself though not making others poor. It takes all sorts of human beings to make a world, but I have shown how a single man can create a diamond mine—for a day. And thus one of the most famous new rushes came about.

The fame of the Diamond Fields having spread the world round, a few distinguished men commenced to favour Kimberley with their presence, amongst them Anthony Trollope, whom I met in the Diamond Market. The author of "Barchester Towers" visited sundry offices there, where he was shown large parcels of diamonds, at which he gaped in astonishment, and then through his spectacles glinted suspiciously round at the partners present as though he was hoping they had come by these riches honestly. Once was exhibited for his edification a huge collection of yellow stones, all larger than plovers' eggs. He almost gasped with astonishment, and ejaculated, "Bless my soul! Bless my soul! I could not have believed it." It goes without saying, Anthony Trollope was much congratulated

by all his acquaintances on the success of his books—especially by those gentlemen who had never heard of them. As a novelist most readers of stories admire Mr. Trollope, and the creator of the Proudies and Grantleys must always hold a respectable place in English literature; but as a man he struck me as being particularly brusque and gruff, and if he could write like an angel, he didn't talk like one. He appeared to have a somewhat coarse manner and a vehement roughness in his strongly expressed and contradictory opinions, which he uttered in a blustering fashion, enough to crush at once, and for ever, any opposition to his views. The distinguished author certainly did not court flattery, and became restless when it was ladled out to him; but, all the same, I would have pitied the man who had the temerity to criticise him.

"There he goes," cried larky little Drury of the "Independent," pointing Trollope out to a knot of listeners standing round as the eminent tale-teller, quite aware of the notice he was attracting, walked past through the Main Street sightseeing.

"Ah, he's a great man, I've heerd," hazarded Isinberg, the Polish jeweller, who could neither read nor write, and who consequently felt he was daring much in giving his opinion, and blinkingly looked so.

"Yes, he wrote, 'Dick Turpin' and the 'Ancient Mariner,'" remarked 'Arry Abrahams, who had been told so by Walker, a Du Toit's Pan barman, and was proud to air his learning.

"No, no," corrected the Kimberley journalist. "The 'Ancient Mariner' was written by Coleridge, one of the Lake poets—they were Lake brothers, almost."

"Lake brothers," put in fat-faced Simon Blumenthal, the barber, who had just joined the circle, and thought they were "talking shop." "Lake brothers?" questioned Simon, putting his hand to his ear and looking round at the audience with boastful confidence gleaming in his small, piggy eyes, as much as to say, "Now, I'll give you some commercial knowledge." "Where was their place?" severely cross-examined the erudite barber.

"They lived in Cumberland and Westmoreland," answered Drury.

"As a commercial I've been over every inch," triumphantly exclaimed Blumenthal, feeling he fully deserved prolonged applause.

"What line was they in, boots, cloth, shirts, or what?" he queried.

"Mr. Blumenthal, my friend," answered the newspaper writer, guessing fun, "these four men were each as well-known as Louis Quatorze."

"What name?"

"Louis Quatorze."

"What line was *he* in?" questioned Simon.

"The line of the Bourbons," replied the scribe.

"Bon-bons," cried the barber, elevating his eyebrows, and puckering his mouth. "The fancy trade, eh? Ven was it established?"

"About the time of Henri Quatre—head of the house."

"Who?" interrogated Blumenthal, protruding his noddle, the better to hear. "Who?"

"Henri Quatre."

"I never heerd of that 'ouse—Henry Catter—no such firm as I remember, neither retail nor wholesale. Perhaps," continued Simon, apologetically, "they was afore my time. Perhaps in the early sixties?"

"The early sixties," repeated the amused Drury. "Why, the house of Bourbon ceased to exist nearly a hundred years ago."

"A hundred years ago," echoed the barber, angrily extending, in the Hebrew fashion, the two palms of his hands, and raising his shoulders. "Shemor beni, then vat do you vant with me? For vy and for vherefore? Vat should I know of them, you *chazzar fresser?* Liberty! Live, live, die, die, for my part, and a fit on them." And away Mr. Blumenthal trotted, feeling yet in his own mind as wise and glorious as Solomon.

I copy the following from a Kimberley newspaper of the period, which shows that Mr. B. B. Bowley anticipated Mark Twain some thirty years ago as far as the latter's last witticism is concerned:

NOTICE.

This notice is for the future guidance of the person, or persons, who last night entered my office UNINVITED by means of breaking a window and carefully relieving me of three Ostrich Feathers and a little lot of diamonds (of hardly any value).

Hereafter it is my intention to leave the Key under the Verandah in order to save them the trouble and myself the expense of glass.

Gentlemen of the Profession please bear this in mind.

B. B. Bowley,

Puiel Road, Kimberley.

Even the hard-worked diggers were determined to have their little jokes, so when they registered their niggers they were in the habit of giving them the most fantastic and evil-sounding names. Indeed, the cognomens used became in time so lurid that the Government had to take steps to put a stop to the practice. The appended advertisement, I think, proves how necessary it was to legislate:

Government Notice.

Convict Station, Kimberley,
Dec. 19th, 1878.

The undermentioned convict, having made his escape, all persons are hereby required to use their utmost endeavours to apprehend and lodge him in safe custody.

ABSCONDED.

from Kimberley Station on the 16th December, 1878, Convict No. 69 Ballyfool—Shangaan—about from 20 to 25 years of age, 5 feet 6 inches in height. Marks nil. Was tried on 10th August, 1878, at Kimberley for the crime of contravening Section of proclamation 14, 10th August, 1872, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment with hard labour. The convict wore when he deserted prison clothing—all marked C.—Broad arrow No. 69. The usual reward for his apprehension.

Thos. Maxwell,
Inspector of Prisons and J.P.

It happened this same Ballyfool was brought before the learned McKenna on some charge. As he had been in custody before, and knew the ropes, he had no sooner been pitched into the dock when, anticipating the usual question as to name, he leaned forward, and staring McKenna straight in the face, exclaimed,

"Ballyfool."

McKenna straightened himself as if slightly electrocuted, and scratched his nose.

"What?" he queried, wagging his old head like a turkey gobbler, and wondering if he was dreaming.

"Ballyfool," replied the prisoner, unabashed.

The magistrate flung himself back in his chair, and glaring with dilated eyes and purple cheeks at the titterers in court, thundered, "I remand the bye on what he's char-r-ged wid, and sintence him to pay foive shillings widout the option of a foine." Sensation in court, which was severely suppressed by his "washup" and the barman from the "Green Bar" opposite, where McKenna was a consistent customer.

Even in these early days the Diamond Fields were already nearly Germanised. The Teuton hordes were swarming everywhere, doing worship when poor, swaggering when rich, and you could hear as much of their guttural lingo in the streets then as you can in unhappy Mincing Lane to-day, which last the Deutschers have completely annexed to their Fatherland. Solid good British names, which to me were like breezes from white-cliffed England, disappeared from the front of shops and offices, and were replaced by cognomens which, when uttered, reminded one of sauerkraut, sausage, and schweinfleisch, and belonged to a pack of greedy Germans. In the diamond trade, naturally, they were paramount, perspiring, and pestilent. *De facto,* they were everywhere except the place most of them ought to have been—chokey. Truth to tell, they were too slippery for that, but the inmates of the different jails represented the remains of their jackals' meal. As a rule, the Square Head is what his country is nationally. Selfish, stingy, envious, calculating, boastful, ungrateful, these adjectives stand alike for Germany and German.

Old Kurella was a German, and a cantankerous one at that. He was also a Kimberley diamond merchant, and quarrelling and grumbling were his specialities. For instance, a broker would come into his office, sit down without remark, open his parcels, and name his prices. At this Kurella would wax wrath, and grunt bullyingly: "What do you mean, sir? Here you come into my office and squat yourself in my chair without

having the politeness to ask me whether I'm buying or not." The apologetic broker the next day would take care to deferentially enquire, "Are you buying, Mr. Kurella?" "Sir," was the invariable reply of the acrid German, "I am always buying." It was impossible to catch him. I think he is alive to-day; some people grow old because those whom the gods love die young.

Good old honest Sandy Bain, the Scotch broker, one morning brought an absurd bid for a diamond from Kurella to a client, and to excuse the smallness of the price remarked that the offerer "did not smell of drink, neyther." It was the same Sandy Bain who was asked by the Kimberley Diamond Brokers' Association to discover whether Kurella was a Jew or not. Bain solemnly reported, "No, seeing is believing."

Barend Klisser hailed from Amsterdam. When he arrived at Kimberley it got bruited about in some way that he was one of the most expert and celebrated Amsterdam diamond cutters the Dutch capital had ever produced. He became a broker and did well. To do him justice, he never claimed to be a gem polisher; but it seemed to be an understood thing in the trade that he was. One eventful day there was an argument in an office as to how a certain ill-shaped diamond would turn out when cut and polished, and a deal of betting between the disputants on the subject took place. As Klisser happened to be passing at the time, he was called in to decide the matter. He funked the job, and perspired freely. At last he sheepishly handed back the stone and said nothing. The debaters guessed at once that something was wrong.

"Surely you are a cutter? asked one.

"Yes, I am," replied Klisser.

"A diamond cutter?" enquired another in a doubtful tone.

"No, a hair cutter," said poor Klisser, in a subdued, excusing tone.

In 1876, or thereabouts, there was a great fall in the price of diamonds, and things quickly became exceedingly bad in Kimberley.

Many of the dealers who had financially gone up like rockets came down like sticks, and men who were wealthy a month before the unwelcome times had set in were at their wits' ends to find the wherewithal to pay hotel bills. Their accounts at the banks consisted of overdrafts, so they had to close their offices, and consequently dealing in diamonds was out of the question as far as they were concerned. I knew one decent, though lavish and extravagant, fellow who, unable to pay a month's bill at Mrs. Jardine's, felt ashamed to enter the hostelry, fearing his monetary position would be revealed, for he was yet reputed to be a rich man, and still had three or four riding horses in his stable, which he fed on credit. He told me afterwards he became so hard up that on occasions he sent his Kaffir for a loaf of dry bread, which, with a glass of water, did duty each evening for dinner. A member of the club, he would proceed to it through the back streets, so as to evade his creditors. Personally, I was very hard hit, and after losing a considerable amount of money in speculation, outside of diamond buying, made up my mind to try my luck at the Gold Fields (Pilgrims' Rest and Mac-a-Mac), which were situated about five hundred miles north, and thirty-six miles beyond Leydenburg. I gave up the office near the kopje, where Barney Barnato and I had prospered, and suffered and indulged in a general spree on my own account, as a soldier sometimes does before starting on a campaign. During the course of this mad holiday I met my ancient friend, Lew Woolf, to whom I confided my golden intentions, and before you could say Jack Robinson, Weary Willie expressed his unalterable determination to come along too. I do not mind confessing it was a happy day for me when I left these wanton days and midnight revels for pastures new and fresh.

Barney Barnato at this time was living in a small wooden bedroom, erected in his brother's back yard, and which was as cheerless a habitation as one would care to see. I was always about a great deal with Barnato, and from what I saw, his life, through being starved of pleasure, was certainly not a happy one. He

had the greatest dread of the nagging 'Arry, who ruled him with a rod of iron, and with as bitter a tongue as any lemon-reared market shrew ever possessed. He could draw no money unless there was a family council, so he habitually spent his nights in the billiard rooms, gambling dens, or the exquisite London Hotel, his doings at which fashionable resorts he was bound, under severe penalties, to report to the saving and expectant Wizard. Apart from some trifling play acting and a little horse racing his pleasures were few. Sometimes on a Wednesday or Sunday afternoon there would be impromptu matches run off on the course between the rival steeds and ponies belonging to the sporting boys of the fraternity. One day Barney and another gentleman, whose name I have often mentioned in these notes, brought down to the track an eccentric-looking animal of strange colour and action. But, all the same, the horse was good enough to net a couple of hundred sovereigns for its owners, thus bulging their pockets and inflaming their opinions of their own cleverness. It was not until some time after that it leaked out that the animal was an old racer which they had purchased, and altered its appearance by ingeniously painting its coat in another tint. The name of the racer was Moresco.

Talking of amusements reminds me that one night Barney made up his mind to go to a ball, which was something to wonder at, as he had not the slightest idea of the science of circling on the light fantastic toe. At all events, arrayed *en grande tenue*—opera hat and all—he attended the terpsichorean festival, but with ignominious results, as after dragging one partner about, and badly upsetting another, the fair sex present regarded him as something to be religiously avoided, and fled at his approach. Finding that he was cold-shouldered, the disconsolate Barney withdrew from the giddy throng, and wandered over to the London Hotel. Some of his cronies were standing at the bar—gracefully presided over by his brother—and noisily acclaimed his sensational appearance and cut of his clothes. Crowding round, they plied him with questions, and one of the gentry, more industrious than the rest,

bonneted him. I remember he angrily threw off the black cape he was wearing and expressed a wish to commence hostilities forthwith. After peace had been restored, I walked with him to the Red Light, and on my way thither asked him how he had got on at the ball.

"To tell the truth," he replied, "the geysers wouldn't have nothing to do with me after I'd had a couple of goes with them."

"But you can't dance, Barney," I remarked.

"No," said he, quickly; "but I was learning it, wasn't I?"

"Yes, at their expense. You should go to a dancing school," I added.

"No fear," he answered decidedly. "In the future I intend to live without dancing."

I left him playing billiards, but at about midnight met him again outside the Theatre Royal, which building was adjacent to where he lived. He seemed to be greatly troubled and puzzled, and asked me to accompany him to his room. Into that solitary cheerless compartment I entered, and after he had lighted the one candle it boasted, he told me his tale. It appears he had been up to his antics, and had hurt himself. I could see he had broken a blood-vessel, for he was bleeding profusely, and advised him to get into bed, and offered to go for a doctor. The proposition quite startled him. "What, me get into that bed in this state!" he exclaimed. "Why, 'Enery would kill me if I soiled the sheets. I should never hear the last of it. Not me!" No argument could persuade him to risk the anger of the princely potman. At last a happy inspiration came and shone in his face.

"I know what I'll do," he cried. "I've got it. Joe Levy's playing cards across the road, and don't come home till morning, so I'll go to his house."

"But you haven't got the key," I reminded him.

"Perhaps. But there's the winder. Ain't it there?"

Joe Levy's house was at the bottom of Currey Street, and towards that historic dwelling of pleasant memories Barney and I wended our way. Arrived at our destination, we found that the entrances were secured, and

the doors locked; but nothing daunted, Barney forced open the front window, and soon we were in Levy's bedroom. Once there, Mr. Barnato divested himself of his clothes, and, regardless of what the owner might think of the proceedings, was in a trice tucked up in bed, with a gory towel round his head, and another by his side. After bringing a doctor, I went home. There was no happier mortal than good-hearted, good-tempered Joe Levy as he, in the early morning, walked whistling, as behoves a good winner, towards his crib in Currey Street. Entering the house he struck a light disclosing to his view an unrecognisable blood-stained object in his bed, and a room that resembled a slaughter-house. With a yell he made lightning tracks for outside, fully convinced that a tragedy had been enacted. Seeking assistance, he once more nervously and fearfully invaded the Chamber of Horrors, the moonlight disclosing to view Barney's figure, quaint of garb, in sitting posture, quite unabashed and placid. "Hallo, Joe," he said, his lips parted in a smile. "I guessed it were you. I thought I'd come and see you. Come along, there's lots of room for two."

It was no unusual thing for a band of Kaffirs to travel a thousand miles to get employed on the Diamond Fields. How these starving, naked creatures lived on the way, conquering rain, frost, and hunger, I cannot divine, nor does anybody know the small armies of them who left their wasted carcases on the road to fatten vultures, whilst their companions pressed on to do the same for the gentry who now live in affluence. It is, I am certain, highly meritorious for the British to set up a howl of indignation against the atrocities committed in the Congo, but they forget their own iniquities. A nigger's life in Kimberley was regarded as possessing about the same value as that of a tiresome fly's existence, and I have seen them die the cruellest of deaths without, as a rule, a hand to help them. I never liked niggers, few colonists do; but they had their uses, and the men who enriched themselves by their murder and torture are the charitable magnates, with souls of mud, who head well-advertised subscription lists, who attend

a place of worship to be seen, who order pictures of the Madonna or Moses type as a penance for the source of their ill-gotten wealth. The coloured man robbed, starved, and died for them, therefore it is not wonderful that nobody since the world began ever saw a black angel painted on canvas, or, for the matter of that, a white one with whiskers—perhaps barbers are cheap in the celestial regions. Up-to-date angels of real, artistic value—who love to be stared at and photographed—are mostly recruited from Piccadilly and Pie Lomad, and are those who breed socially a prime blend indeed, which does not, as a rule, trouble the registry office often—only the police occasionally. The Kaffirs on the Fields in due time, of course, became thieves—and why not? They were enticed from their simple life to revel in the glories of civilisation, and how could they sooner learn the rudiments of it than by imitating their white betters. To be sure, they could not aspire to Mayfair, but a rude hut on the banks of the Limpopo, and the possession of a gun, meant to them all the splendours of the Savoy, all the magnificence of the Carlton.

At times, when labour was scarce, some speculative spirit would leave the fair town of Kimberley and meet, say, a famished horde of two hundred attenuated wretches on their way to Eldorado or Death. He would engage the lot at ten shillings per week, and if when they arrived in the City of Promise there was a glut in the labour market, then those poor descendants of Ham were to be seen in the outskirts of Kimberley starving to death, or rotting like pumpkins on the veldt a few miles away. Many charitable persons would give them money to alleviate their wants, but in few cases would the coin thus given be spent in buying food. It would be carefully deposited in a little leather bag suspended round their necks as the first instalment towards buying a gun—the ambition of every native. One morning a miserable skeleton-like nigger was discovered outside a compound in a dying state. A kindly gentleman found he had had no food for four days, and gave him some wine to revive him—he could not eat. The nigger faintly said he had been offered five shillings a week to

work, but that was not sufficient to save on, as ten shillings was the usual price, and he had travelled far —beyond the setting sun, he said—and only for a gun. When it was pointed out to him that his obstinacy not to labour for less than the customary wage might cause his death, his reply was pathetically characteristic: "If he died he would not want a gun, and if he lived he would have one." His pertinacity, courage, and heroism showed him to have been a hero, but black heroes are scarce and not recognised. He expired on his way to the Niggers' Hospital, an outrageous place, and his soul went—I wonder where?

Everybody who could afford it in Kimberley kept a horse of some kind, but although the keeping of them was the custom of the country, the art of equestrianism was, in a great measure, with numerous of the new owners, in a parlous state. I owned a neat Basuto cob called Stars and Stripes, which had won many matches, and it was my habit when things were quiet to take him down to the racecourse and gallop a mile from the starting post to keep him fit. He was a splendid little fellow, quick at getting off, and possessing extraordinary wind and stamina. On a certain summer's afternoon I was riding towards the course, on the usual errand bent, when I espied in front of me near the grand stand a horseman mounted on a beautiful black pony. I knew the animal at once as having belonged to Zeb Goodman, and did not reach the cavalier until he was well on the track, and then, in him, to my surprise, I recognised Simon Blumenthal. He was a heavy man, with a red face, as smooth as an onion, small, sharp, restless eyes nestling under his low forehead, and was rolling about in the saddle, or bobbing up and down like a cork in troubled waters, while his trousers on both legs were drawn in a wrinkled manner to his knees, as the fresh, well-groomed pony shook his ungainly figure about. As I rode up to him my advent increased the animal's liveliness and Blumenthal's discomfiture.

"Where are you off to, Blumenthal?" I asked on reaching his side. He balanced himself unsteadily, and

looked earnestly at the two erect equine ears facing him.

"I take me out for a ride," he answered, with a sidelong glance.

"He's very fresh," I remarked.

"I should say so. Full blood, ain't he? Rather. Vat a vonder. Don't spheak so much vile I ride," he cried, as the pony caracoled and nearly had him off. "Torah Mousha," he added fervently. "Vat a little momzir. I bought him from Zeb Goodman."

"How much?"

"Don't spheak so much, I tell you, vile he wriggles. Whoa, you gonof," cried Simon to the pony as the animal threw up his head. "Chutzbadik, ain't he?"

"I should get off if I were you."

"Get off! Shemah Beni—that's vat I vant; the more I pull him the vorse is the shermazzle." And that was so. The quadruped was going faster, and Blumenthal's red face was perspiring terribly, as some melancholy doubts entered his mind.

"Go slowly," I advised, not coming nearer to the pony for fear of exciting him further.

"Go slowly!" he echoed. "Oombershreur, I ain't a race jockey. He's doing vat he likes; he knows I'm a greener. Vat a mosser motten," he ejaculated, as his mount became more fractious, and Simon held on to the saddle like grim death with both hands.

"Don't hold on there," I cried.

"Don't hold on there," he gasped. "Vere vill I hold on then, you narr. It's a metsiah to hold anyvere. I vish you vas here. Oh, oh, stop the goloch, I'm a tumbling, as I hope to say mincha." It was too late: his pony had come to the mile starting post, and, shying at a piece of paper, it set off at a mad gallop. Stars and Stripes followed suit, and I found it impossible to pull up, try as I might. After going a hundred yards I turned to look at my fellow equestrian, and do not think I have ever seen a droller or yet more pitiable sight. His horse was racing like mad, and poor Simon was stretched full-length on the pony's back, with his two hands tightly clasped round its neck. His vein-

swollen face was terrible to contemplate, as in his agony of fear he turned his beseeching and awe-stricken eyes in mute appeal towards me to help him out of the horrors of his position. I could do nothing, as it took me all my time to keep a seat, and so my pony ran the whole course, only stopping at the winning post. whence I at once looked back in the direction I had come, and saw in the distance Blumenthal's steed on the rise, galloping riderless towards Kimberley. I made my way as quickly as possible to where I might find the fallen sportsman, but my search at first was unavailing. Eventually I came across an inanimate figure lying on the ground, and really thought the man was dead. I dismounted, and called him by name several times, receiving no response, but at last, to my relief, he groaned loudly.

"Are you hurt, Blumenthal?" I repeated once or twice.

"I'm kilt—I'm kilt."

I tried to raise him, but he was too heavy, and moaned, "I'm kilt—that momzir—of a schwatzer of a horse! A fit on him and—you too. He did a guy veck through you. You are my molchamovess—oh—oh—don't—come to my funeral." A Cape cart soon hove in sight, and whimpering, lamenting, and cursing, the fallen one was got into it, driven to his house, and in a week or so was not much the worse for his mishap.

CHAPTER XVII

Inspector Percy—A Rescue—The Rocky Road—Lydenburg—Pretoria—Paul Kruger—Joubert—Pilgrim's Nest—The Gold Fields—Back to the Land.

INSPECTOR PERCY was the Chief of the Police, and a regular *beau sabreur* he appeared, as, tall and straight as an arrow, he walked down the street. It is said, with no exaggeration of a serious character, that Percy's glance was bound to kill in two shots, and as for his coal black peg-top hairy adornments, they blew in the air like a pirate's flag, though invitingly enough to tempt Cupid to make a trapeze of them. As a matter of fact, the Inspector was a quiet, gentlemanly man, of inoffensive manners and habits. William Ling, however (he who, with Tucker, fomented the baby rebellion), was at dead enmity with the representative of the law, and took every opportunity of showing his dislike. This Ling was a sturdy old Natalian, brave, independent, and disagreeably outspoken, but he had a kink in his brain, and that kink took the form of believing that everybody was engaged in buying illicit diamonds, and principally those that came out of his—William Ling's—claims. Otherwise he was as nice and grizzly a chap as ever planted coffee and drank it. (I may mention here that many years ago his son came over to England and won a sprint race in nearly record time.) His obduracy was remarkable, and I remember during the rebellion passing his house and seeing it jealously guarded by the armed bands who had accepted his ascendancy, for old Ling was, withal, a leader.

It came to pass, then, that after the diggers had vehemently protested against the prevalence of I.D.B.,

the decadence of the mining industry, the prosperity of the illicit traffic, and had held mass meetings at which the most bloodthirsty speeches were made by drunken illiterates who had nothing to do with either occupation, that public feeling became seriously agitated. Boiling oil, decapitation and strangulation, were the methods recommended as punishments for illicit dealers. Some of the literary coinage of the oratorical efforts made reminds me of the late Mr. Berry's endeavours (the hangman), who, in his first lecture on Executions at the Theatre Royal, Westminster, London, commenced his harangue by remarking, "In England criminals are put to death by the rope. In France by the *gelatine*." However, the situation in Kimberley became so acute that a commissioner—Crossman—was sent from England to investigate the questions at issue, and the sittings were held in the Theatre Royal, at which, amongst others, Percy and Ling attended, and looked at each other like cat and dog. In the course of the proceedings Ling's feelings got the better of him, and rising to his feet he pointed theatrically at Percy, and point blank accused him of being improperly connected with the illicit diamond buyers. The matter, naturally, created some sensation at the time. It can be compared to Mr. John Barker running into a chamber in which the police were holding a meeting and accusing Sir Edward Henry to his face of burglary. Inspector Percy, however, stood a trial and was honourably acquitted, as he ought to have been, there not being a particle of truth in the charge. Subsequently Percy took action against Ling, and was awarded five hundred pounds damages, which the unbending dour digger refused to pay, and so went to gaol for three months instead. So you see the Diamond Fields at its inception also had its martyrs.

About a week before I intended starting for the Gold Fields I fell a victim to a virulent fever, and thinking all would be well in a couple of days decided to lay up in a quiet hotel situated in the West End part of the town, where I rapidly got very much worse, and in a fortnight was terribly weak and almost unconscious. I

had no nurse, only a black attendant, who was not of much service, and as I was evidently in a serious condition, Dr. Cumming had me removed to the back of his surgery (a small, wooden house in the Main Street), where he acted the good Samaritan indeed, tending me night and day, and behaving more like a father than a physician. I sufferèd a great deal, and can never forget the solicitude and kindness of my merciful medico. When on the road to convalescence I used to lay awake o' nights waiting impatiently for his gentle presence, and on hearing his soothing footfall my heart would beat with pleasure and gratitude. For three weeks this humane gentleman sheltered and cared for me, and whenever I think of him it is with reverence and thankfulness. I suppose he has long since joined the majority; though I met him again at Maseru, during the Basuto War. Whilst ill I saw nobody but the doctor and old Moloney, who would occasionally visit his erstwhile tenant. Once during some Jewish holidays the gruff Irishman called, on which occasion two of my co-religionists, who occupied an office next door, were hard at work saying their prayers in vigorous and loud manner enough to have reached beyond the stars. On hearing the sacred intonations old Moloney asked, "What's all that row about?"

"Israelites saying their prayers," I answered.

"Holy Moses," he replied, "what a waste of time, nobody will understand them at all, at all!"

However, it didn't matter much, for I got better all the same, and one sunshiny afternoon took my first walk since my illness. I was very feeble and thin, but, like the 'bus-men who spend their holidays sitting next to a chum on a box-seat, I spent mine wandering on the kopje, supporting myself on a stick, and speaking to the different diggers, who at first scarcely recognised me. Walking over Mount Ararat preparatory to reaching the Main Street on my way home, I encountered a tall young Dutchman, with whom some months earlier I had a difference. Directly he saw my condition, he threw me down the side of the *débris* heap, a distance of some thirty feet, and followed on my track. Things were

looking black as the young Boer stooped down to put his hands on me. But at that moment I heard a Lancashire dialect, which sounded like sweet music, saying, "Damn you, you Dutchman, do you want to kill the lad?" After a brief struggle I had the satisfaction of seeing the Boer get a thorough pasting and do a strategic retreat in double quick time. My rescuer was Charles Blount, the "ne'er-do-well," of whom I wrote about in the opening pages of these memoirs.

It was with a light heart that I joyfully got one morning into a cumbersome mule waggon which was bound for Lydenburg, a little town that had sprung into importance because of its proximity to Pilgrims' Rest and Mac-a-mac, the newly-discovered Gold Fields, which were then being boomed in a most extraordinary manner by interested parties. The prospecting for gold in the Transvaal was certainly not at first encouraged by the Boers, as indeed in 1870 there was a law which decreed a penalty of five hundred pounds against anybody discovering one. And this in a time when the purchasing value in the South African Republic of five hundred pounds would be at least ten times greater than it is to-day. The fact was the Boers, with their innate commonsense, saw that if vast mineral wealth was disclosed in their territory their independence would be threatened by outsiders. So they preferred, instead of annexation and progress, the simple life—a life the monotony of which was only broken by attending Nachtmaal, tilling the fields, with a rifle in one hand and a plough in the other, and at times fighting the Kaffirs, and selling their existence dearly. That there was some good blood amongst the Transvaalers the owners of the names of Duplessis, De Villiers, Fouché, Dupré, Leroux, prove, whose ancestors, all sturdy Huguenots, left their native soil after the Revocation of Nantes rather than submit to tyranny and coercion.

The Transvaal in parts is a really fine country, but the awful dreariness of the lives of the Boer farmers in those early days was too wearisome for words. Dwelling in large burnt brick houses, where their fathers were born before them, their only pleasures were eating the

plainest food, drinking black coffee, and smoking Boer tobacco. When evening came home-made spluttering candles would be brought in, the whole family, the fat vrouws, the clammy-handed maidens, with their bad teeth (caused through eating sweets), the stalwart, silent sons, all sitting round the table for the evening meal, presided over at one end by the grimly-bearded sire, and at the other by the good wife, with a face as strong as Minerva's, as mute as a sphinx, and at times puckering brows that I wouldn't wish my worst enemy's mother-in-law to have. Prayers of stupendous length were said before and after meals, with a patriarchal nasal twang, and in which all present joined, whether they liked it or not. I didn't delight in the duty, but took a hand all the same; so did Lew Woolf, but with what amount of religious fervour, I know not. Orisons concluded, everybody relapsed into moody silence, the ladies looking, with averted eyes, at their fat, brown fingers clasped together, and the men smoking pipes, but never by any chance uttering a word. Then, after a time, we'd all say "good nacht," or something of the sort, shake hands all round, with a persistency worthy of the National Sporting Club, and go to sleep on a shake-down if we were lucky, or do the best we could outside. Often we'd stay at hotels, but these can be better imagined than described. The food was greasy mutton, mealies, and coffee, which you could "saccarize," if you were brave, with sugar, the principal ingredients of which were dead flies, the corpses of which were resting in eternal sweetness. But that was all nothing when you are young and well, and the journey, if rough and primitive, had its compensations, for you saw Nature, as it were, undraped and exuberant in her *joie de vivre*. The frowning, brown-tinged kopjes, the smaller ones resembling huge grey warts on the earth's surface, the purple green and yellow mountains rising to the stars, the flowing lucent rivulets and the foaming rivers racing to the sun, the endless plains covered with a scrubby bush, as variable in colour as the beauty of a blonde, the scowling rocky kloofs, darkly magnificent in their primitive grandeur, either

in the deep crimson sunset or the glittering morn, the countless herds of game, looking in the distance, like armies on the watch through the cheerful sunshine or the lowering clouds. All this is a wonderful memory in my mind.

After passing near the spot where Johannesburg stands to-day, in due course we reached Pretoria, about 250 miles from Kimberley, and for the first time I saw the Transvaal capital, destined in no distant future to occupy an important place in British history. It was called the City of Roses, a not inappropriate name when one considers the streams of blood it has caused to flow. A distressingly sleepy-looking town this home of flowers seemed, its dour inhabitants appearing dejected and poverty-stricken enough to make a man with money climb a fence. On the other hand, the place in itself was pretty and sun-blessed, and tempted a traveller to stay under its ceiling of sky of Spain, and on its green carpeted streets, through which blue sparkling rills ran musically and joyously to greet you; but the melancholy air of the ragged-elbowed residents, who carried in their aspects the outcome of the late disastrous native war with Johannes and Secocoeni, from which they had emerged with no credit to themselves, forbade it. Being a liberty-loving and peaceful people, worshipping God's gift to brave men (Freedom) with all their hearts, they had shown their delight in Justice by the grossest cruelties and oppressions, which they had practised with a uniform pertinacity and malignity at all times on the hapless natives, acts which they imagined were condoned by the building of churches and the utterance of never-ending prayers.

It was the custom of the Boers to grant to each of their sons on attaining the age of sixteen farms varying in extent from seven to twelve thousand acres, and to supply this ground, they, with charming naïveté, annexed whole districts belonging to the black men, and allotted the stolen lands as they chose. These wholesale thefts caused the Secocoeni war, the upshot of which was that the valorous Dutchmen, 2,900 strong, were driven to ignominious flight from that chief's strong-

hold, situated upon a triangular mountainous site in the Drakensberg Range. At the assault only forty of the Boer warriors exposed themselves, the rest, after the repulse, racing pell-mell to Pretoria. Altogether, in this little battle on the Republican side two Irishmen were killed, and six whites wounded. Burgers, the then President, for this display of heroism, fined the commandants and officers of one wing of the army five pounds each, which they promised to pay, but like sweet Kathleen Mavourneen debts, ran on "for years, and it may be for ever."

For some reason or other we were detained a couple of days at Pretoria, and during that time I caught my first glimpse of Paul Kruger, the soberly-dressed Puritanical personage with the fat, swarthy, rugged face and fighting eyes, but who possessed, notwithstanding his ingrained ignorance, religious superstition, and racial hatred, as brave a heart as *Cœur-de-Lion*, and an uncultivated intellect as supreme and commanding as Cromwell's. If Oom Paul had had an education he would have been one of the great ones of this earth, his tenacity, patience, grasp of difficult political problems, undying patriotism, all brilliantly showed that. This man of bronze was as untruthful as Machiavelli, unscrupulous as Bismarck, obstinate as a Bourbon, and as hypocritical as a Jesuit. But he was a unique personality, this hardy, independent son of a peasant, who, with all his faults, was worthy to be called the Wallace of his country. He read no book but the Bible, to which he clung with a childlike devotion, he knew no nation but his own, which he loved passionately, and believed, rightly or wrongly, to have been oppressed and persecuted for years by the English, whom he hated and distrusted. It is true he was once in their service, but that, I think, was to serve his political ends. Even in these early days Paul Kruger was a power amongst his fellows, who discerned the difference between him and the weak, unpatriotic Burgers—their Methodist President, who after, in a half-hearted manner, trying to circumvent Great Britain by raising money in Holland, Portugal, and France for the construction of the

Delagoa Bay Railway, was later on satisfied to accept from her a pension of five hundred pounds as his share of the annexation spoils. At the time I am writing of, Kruger was known amongst the Boers as the "Dopper Prince," and his exploits in Church or Field were loudly proclaimed by the simple folk, who, notwithstanding his *canaille* unattractiveness and gruff demeanour, had fallen under his domination. Kruger, too, as well as being a great hunter and born fighter, was a wonderful athlete, with the vigour of a lion and the fleetness of a stag. Once the Kaffir Chief Magato, boasting of the swiftness of his men, challenged Kruger to a running match, who accepted it, and stationed six of the former's selected braves at intervals, and beat the black half-dozen one after another. On another occasion a companion had fallen inside the wheel of a heavily freighted wagon, and was suffering intolerably. There being no screw-jack available, Kruger put his broad shoulders under a beam of wood, lifted the enormous bulk by sheer strength, and rescued his friend from an awful death. These, and a hundred other deeds of "derring do"—for seeing is believing, and believing is seeing—endeared Kruger to his countrymen, whose national hero he is to-day. I also saw in this Pious City Joubert, the Boer warrior, with the sparkling glance and untrimmed beard. He did not dream then of Majuba or Colenso, or even of earlier Bronker's Spruit, where the dying Anstruther chivalrously and earnestly in forgiveness shook hands with his conqueror.

Joubert was known all his life as "Slim Piet," and it has since been said that he could drive a bargain with the acumen of a Scotchman and the intelligence of an Israelite. Piet was far better informed than Oom Paul, more liberal and less fanatical, but never for one moment could he be compared with the uncouth genius who died for his country (and Dr. Leyds) in Holland. Pilgrim's Rest is about 235 miles from Pretoria, and forty from Lydenburg, which small town, after a rather rough journey, we arrived at full of hope, dirt, and peeling noses. The farther north we travelled the more conservative and superstitious we found the Boers. As

for money, that was very scarce; indeed, the current tokens appeared to be eggs, which were tendered in lieu of small change. The food was, however, better and cleaner, but the people themselves seemed intensely antagonistic, and I have often noticed the ponderous vrouws, those prototypes of Rubens's mountains of flesh, on many occasions wipe the chairs with their aprons after we had risen from them. Few Europeans lived amongst the Dutch, except occasional nondescripts who resided in the houses of the better class of Boers, and fulfilled the duties of tutors to the youngsters in exchange for bread and board. These men, almost as ignorant as their masters, would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound, and were, in many cases, runaway soldiers or sailors. I remember meeting a specimen of the type at a farmhouse near Lydenburg. He was an Irishman of a very low grade. In conversation with him I asked if many Calvinists or Presbyterians were in the district.

"No, shure," he replied, "I haven't come across them on our ground; but there's plenty of blesbok, springbok, and stump-eared pigs on the next farm." The Boers, when they questioned, always asked your nationality. I informed one I had spent my life in America—I didn't dare to say I was a Jew. "Yes," replied the old farmer, "I have a son who is a great traveller also, he has been to Harrismith and Winburg," and when told of the size of London, remarked, "It would require at least a hundred sheep killed each day to feed its burghers." Another graybeard, who had no idea that water separated South Africa from England, asserted authoritatively he knew exactly how many soldiers Great Britain possessed, as his cousin had counted them in Cape Town.

Lydenburg is a quiet little village, and the country it nestles in is fair and comely enough, though devoid of trees. Around it soar beautiful inviting bergs of diversified colour, fine mountains touching the skies, and distant eye-aching, lowering peaks stand gloomily on guard over the verdant meadows, the flowers of nature, the flowing streams and rivulets, these sweet

waters that sparkle on the grand expansive bosom of this large and fertile plain. Whilst at Lydenburg I saw the renegade Aylward, also a well-known character, Blue Skimmel, whose real name was Jack Sheppard, and who had been with Schlickman, and had stood his ground beside his chief when the German soldier was deserted and mortally wounded. After staying a short time at Lydenburg a start was made for Pilgrim's Rest in a ramshackle conveyance, which didn't count, as the road was so bad that we walked nearly all the way, and it was fully three days before, in the distance, appeared the white tents of the fortune seekers springing like mushrooms from the surface of the glittering golden ground in front of us.

Pilgrim's Rest, four thousand feet above the sea, stands between two rivers, the Crying and the Blyth, and the descent into the treasure valley was most precipitous and dangerous. When at last we reached the coveted spot, I felt disillusioned, and certain that the place was barren to prosperity. Fancy a few insignificant tents, small wooden and tin shanties spread along a ridge which sloped to a long gully, in which, the spell of gold on them, sundry brawny diggers, in the orthodox costume, adorned in grey-blue flannel shirts, laboured like niggers under the sweltering sun. They were working for all they were worth, and Lew Woolf started and whitened. The precious metal was found in pockets covered with gigantic rocks or boulders, the size of small houses, and which required days of labour to remove. Looking round the uninviting scene I saw two dirty canvas-framed habitations, on one of which was printed "Stent's Cathedral," but as I perceived a row of multi-coloured bottles inside on a shelf, my fears that it was a saintly shrine were at once dissipated. I entered, and at the back of a worm-eaten plank laid across two beer barrels, saw a greasy, flabby individual, in dirty shirt sleeves, tucked up to his muscles, who was thinking without brains, and whose nose proclaimed that the establishment had certainly one good customer.

"Proprietor?" I asked.

"Yes, I'm the joker—Mr. Stent. What do you want?"

"A cup of tea or coffee," I replied.

"Tea or corffee—cert'inly," the *restaurateur* said, looking at me pityingly, and casting a side-long glance at the bottled beer which was more expressive than words. He then handed over a mug of some horrible mixture, one gulp of which nearly poisoned me.

"If that's tea I'll have coffee; but if it's coffee I'll have tea. It's terrible."

"Terrible," quoth the surprised Mr. Stent, opening his eyes and mouth, and dipping his dirty fingers' ends in the liquid, and tasting it. "It's good enough for *me*."

"Well, I can't drink it. How much?"

"Shillin'."

"But that's not the price, surely?" I demurred.

"No," he answered quickly; "but you've frightened away two customers with your spluttering."

"Well, can I have a bath?"

"What, wiv water?" he enquired, scratching his ear, and pulling a wry face.

"Not with sawdust, Mr. Stent; but how long would a chop be if I ordered it?"

"Oh, about six inches. You don't expect a yard," was the reply. "I do the cookin', and you'd better wait for the table de dotty next tent, all serene and juicy," he added.

"Upon my honour," I exclaimed angrily, "I was told I would be decently served here."

"Well," said he slowly, "you can contradic' the rumour, and be damned to you, and then I won't close up shop."

That evening, at about seven, Woolf and I sat down to the "table de dotty" in the adjacent tent with a score or so of rough, unwashed, sweating diggers, all coatless, and, as a great favour, after the meal was over, were permitted to indulge in a "shake down" on the dining table, which was our bed the whole time we stayed at Pilgrim's Rest.

The life here was too rough for anything, so I began

to turn sheep's eyes towards the "Dry Diggings" I had left on the bright wings of Hope for these new pastures, of which I had heard so much. All the same, I commenced to make the acquaintances of the different members of the small community, and to look about. There was Macdonald, the Commissioner (or was it Macdonell? I forget), a tall, thin official; Lilly, the Police Inspector, with the raven beard, who kept a lustrous black inspiriting Hebe in a shanty built of willows, cane, and mud, which humble habitation had for me the keenest fascination, and was not quite unprofitable in results. Again, I met the well-known Yankee Dan, a typical American miner, who never let a lie pass his lips, for he talked so outrageously through his nose; and a host of others, whose personalities are buried now in the dim land of the dead past. Taking them altogether, they were not a bad lot. Fair, upstanding, honest men, struggling for fortune and drink against Nature's obstacles, dying in the usual way of disease and doctors, and taking, good or evil, luck with a serenity that was in itself a sermon. In a week or so we hired some claims, and I shall never forget the first time we set foot on them to work. Mr. Woolf walked gloriously to victory, lazily dragging a formidable-looking spade after him, in a Tooley Street style. Arrived at our treasure ground I threw off my coat, a worthy example, which was very slowly, but gallantly, followed by the hard-working, but suspicious, Lew. He raised a pick thrice, struck the ground with much determination, and then a look of indescribable reproach and horror came over his sallow face.

"Wait a minute," he remarked, as if he'd lost something, and laying down his tools, added, "I'll go and get my belt." My friend left the claims to procure that useful adornment, but I grieve to say I did not put eyes on him till four o'clock that afternoon, when I found him arguing spiritedly with a stalwart, swarthy, thick-set Frenchman, and this sums up all the mining work Mr. Woolf ever did on the Gold Fields, or for the matter of that, the writer of these lines either.

It would be of no interest to the reader to learn what

was the particular subject on which Mr. Woolf and the dark gentleman from the fair land of France had agreed to differ, and if it were it would be impossible for me to gratify his curiosity, as I never knew. I can only put on record that late at night there was a sound of revelry as the diggers, some of them carrying flaming torches, others playing a kind of ratan on pots, kettles, saucepans, and decrepit banjos, formed a ring, and the willing Woolf and gesticulating Gascon proceeded to make pugilistic toilettes. The light from half a dozen blazing flambeaux brightened up this moving scene like an Italian chiaroscuro, and brought into strong relief the rugged faces, obscure and glowering, of the strangely-attired gold seekers, who, interested and excited, gathered round to see the fight and ensure fair play. Lew Woolf, the daring old dear, sat silently on a Scotchman's knee, looking tenderly and hopefully at his clenched fist, and waiting for the call of time. The sturdy, full-throated Frenchman, blue-jawed and black-moustached, stood fretfully opposite, glaring his impatience for blows or blood, and, when all was ready, bounded, blowing like a seal, towards his much lighter opponent, who welcomed the Gaul exuberantly by rapping him vigorously on the nose, and then, in the kindest and most affectionate manner, enquiring "How he liked it?" For several rounds they fought, the Lazy One from London, when thrown, getting up with an alacrity seldom practised at his matutinal risings, thus earning the plaudits of the enthusiastic spectators. If Lew Woolf, however, suffered the bumpings, the other one received the fistic punishment with the pride of Lucifer, but at the finish tottered bleeding to the ground, a thoroughly well-beaten man, and looking like a huge magpie that had received a sanguinary visit from a butcher. I am glad to say my friend was not hurt, and with the halo of victory on his brow, celebrated his success generously at Stent's Cathedral, to the entire satisfaction of the proprietor, who, as he swallowed "Bass" at the winner's expense, remarked he was "glad to report progress in Pilgrim's Rest, and that things were looking up—as he was putting the beer down."

My chum was, I must recount, very, very busy at this celebration; as a matter of fact, I have never met in all my life a gentleman who was so industrious as plucky Lew Woolf—when there was no ordinary work to be done.

We stayed a month or so on the Gold Fields, and at the expiration of that time I had come to the conclusion that they were no good to me, and resolved to return to Kimberley, a resolution which was unanimously seconded by Mr. Woolf, who loved to move anywhere except out of bed. Accordingly, one fine morning we skipped into the same conveyance which had brought us to the Land of Gold, and with thanksgivings turned our backs on the unhallowed home of rocks and boulders, leaving the unearthing of the yellow metal to those toilers who were prepared to sacrifice every pleasure of life in seeking it. I do not believe I ever quitted a spot with greater gusto; therefore, after travelling ten or twelve miles from the camp, and discovering I had left behind with Stent a valuable diamond ring, given him to raffle, it was with a sore heart indeed that I determined to walk back to recover the jewel. It was a foolish thing to do, but I acted on the impulse of the moment, and it was not until I had tramped four or five miles that I realised my folly. Apart from the danger, unarmed as I was, of encountering criminal herds, broken-down desperate diggers, hungry loafers, or the disappointed scum of the poverty-stricken Gold Fields, I suddenly recollected that groups of lions hovered near and around these parts, and recalled in my fright the many tales I had been told.

I called to mind hearing of a Mr. Leathern of this district, who, sitting at his fire one night, heard some disturbance among his sheep and goats. Seeking the cause, whip in hand, he came across an indistinct form, and commenced lashing it to drive the strange visitor away. In a minute the lion, for a lion it was, sprang at him, and drawing the man's arm in his mouth, crunched it terribly, and the hardy sufferer had to ride in that terrible state thirty miles before he reached a station to have the useless limb amputated. I remem-

bered, too, that it is well known one can never distinguish wild beasts on the veldt, and that what sometimes looks in the distance like an ant-heap, is a lion, lioness, and cub, so immediately saw in the mind's eye a Leo in every pile of mud, and not being a Daniel, experienced mighty uncomfortableness. It is a fact that I have never seen in my life serious lions, save those in cages, or any kind of other lions, except those called—for what reason I know not—comiques, and which are to be viewed sometimes on the music-hall stage. Not feeling at all cheered at these thoughts, I commenced to run, so as to get over my misery as soon as possible. To add to my discomfiture it began to rain, and so, amidst the tune of thunder and lurid lightning flashes, I continued my headlong, footsore flight, as though competing in a Marathon Race. I had always disliked Pilgrim's Rest from the moment I had set foot in it, but never loved a spot better since I was registered than when, as the sun was going down, I, more dead than alive with fatigue and alarm, and drenched to the skin, struggled, spent and exhausted, into Stent's Cathedral, feeling I'd reached the Gate of Heaven. The ever-potent proprietor looked surprised at seeing me, and when told why I had returned, commenced vigorously to chew tobacco, and remarked satirically, as he thumped his leg with his hand, "If you'd run that way for a diamond ring, you'd win the Derby on a donkey for a jeweller's shop." However, he wasn't at all a bad fellow, for he lent me a couple of blankets, managed to get my clothes dried, and after swallowing a mess of mutton and a couple of glasses of strong grog, I once more slept upon his historic dining-table, and dreamt of a gayer future.

On awakening the next morning I felt a trifle sore and terribly hungry, so, as eating is a ruling passion, thought it my bounden duty to approach the sapient Mr. Stent, who kindly supplied me with chops and three eggs, which last evidently had been mothered by some deluded pullet in the dark ages. Not daring to tackle the Cathedral's black draught coffee, I soothed my soul and washed a meal down with some bottled

beer, an operation in which I was ably assisted by the landlord, to whom I remarked as I put the three "new laids" on one side: "Say, Governor, the eggs are a bit high, and no mistake."

"So they ought to be," responded the saintly Stent, "considering the hen's in heaven."

"I'd cry if I thought the cock wasn't," I answered.

"Don't; perhaps he is," replied Stent sagely.

After breakfast the host gave me my diamond ring, and I strolled about the camp, wondering if it would be possible to get away that day. I wandered all over the diggings, and in the course of my peregrinations came across a big-bodied man sitting on the ground sewing canvas, who asked me for a pipeful of tobacco. So it followed I was soon in cloudy conversation with my new acquaintance—a fine specimen of an English agricultural labourer, tall, stalwart, with an honest Anglo-Saxon face. From his erect figure, martial bearing, and the manner he dropped his arms, one could see he had recently been in the army. Its influence was still upon him, easily discernible by the way he stood and talked—always addressing me as "Sir"—quite a courteous rarity in this part of the mundane sphere. I learnt he was in charge of a tent waggon and oxen which were standing, in keeping of niggers, some distance off on the road to Lydenburg, and intended starting on his return journey to the last-named place in a few hours. Over sundry flagons of beer I struck a bargain (after enquiring as to the man's *bonâ-fides*), he agreeing to take me in his conveyance there for a fixed sum. In a few hours we walked out of Pilgrim's Rest, and after reaching the waggon and oxen, the latter were duly inspanned, and were soon on the move. I have seldom met with a more respectful, civil fellow than my conductor, and all went well until crossing the river Blythe—much swollen by heavy rains—when the waggon turned over, and I fell into the stream, being, of course, drenched to the skin. The heavy vehicle, with much trouble, was righted in an hour or so, and we proceeded on our way, the ex-soldier insisting that I should hang up my garments to dry

outside, as the sun was blazing like a furnace. I was very loth to comply, having a fair amount of money in gold and notes in my wet pockets, and did not think it advisable to display so much wealth. However, the transport driver was so persistent that I allowed him to drape the side of the waggon with my apparel, and there sat I inside as doleful as a dripstone, and as naked as when born, save for an empty sack thrown across my shoulders, waiting patiently, like a fallen Adam, for the sun to do its work, but keeping, all the same, an observant eye on the treasure-lined coat and trousers. In due time we arrived in Lydenburg, where I found my friend, Lew Woolf, wide awake, and intently engaged with a prospector in an exciting game of poker, the varying fortunes of which the players followed with keen and engrossing interest. I grieve to say my companion lost, and his opponent refusing to give him his revenge, whimsical Woolf complained in no uncertain tones.

"I wouldn't grumble that way, if I was you, old feller," advised the digger soothingly.

"Well, you can grumble any way you like," responded Woolf; "but this is my way—see."

Woolf and I stayed at Lydenburg a week, and having bought a few horses as a speculation, decided to ride back to Kimberley, a distance of some 500 miles, taking into consideration the deviations from the route we intended to take. We also engaged at this town to look after the horses, and to act as general servant, a big Irish Africander named Gamble. This fellow was a fair, curly-haired young man, about twenty-three years of age, muscular, broad-shouldered, and weighing between fourteen and fifteen stone. He appeared a decent, hard-working man, and pleased at the opportunity of getting to Kimberley. It was, of course, a pretty rough life, this riding, though pleasant enough in fine weather, but when it rained in torrents, making the roads like rivers, then it was very disagreeable. Being mounted, however, we were able to visit homesteads out of the track, and found the farmers more obliging than their fellows of the highway, who, in

many instances, had been badly served by the many unscrupulous adventurers who had tramped their way to the Gold Regions. From Lydenburg we rode to Middelburg, thence to Pretoria, Potchefstroom, through Klerksdorp, and on to Bloemhof. On our road we experienced the ordinary vicissitudes of South African travellers, enjoying at times the wild and sparsely inhabited country through which we passed, living at farmhouses and hotels, off-saddling on the veldt, and watching near the different pans of water we saw in the distance herds of blessbok, wildebeest, antelopes, springbok in thousands, the plains some days appearing alive with game.

Passing through Potchefstroom, or one of the other towns, I heard a story which proves that many of the up-to-date urban Boers at this period were not always devoid of humour, which, to say the least, took at times a rather grim form. Occasionally a well-to-do farmer might give a kind of reception or party, to which all his Dutch friends would be invited from adjacent and outlying homesteads, some of the summoned ones driving twenty or thirty miles to participate in the frolics and the feasting of cakes, condiments, fruits, etc., washed down with sweet, red, Cape wine and treacly coffee. It was an ancient, honoured custom for the worthy, voluptuous vrouws of these gay burghers to bring with them their infants. So that the jollities of the jaunt should not be interrupted by the wailings of the youngsters, they were sometimes placed, fully-dressed, in cots in a large room set apart for the purpose, while their parents enjoyed the festivities. Some Dutch Theodore Hooks, thinking this arrangement offered scope for the display of their genius, seized the opportunity of stealthily entering the sacred chamber, and changing the outer clothing of the babies, put the little innocents in each other's cot. All went merry as marriage bells whilst the happy produce of the past pealings were so misplaced. It was very early in the morning, long ere the break of day, before the carts, making the scene musical, were ready to take the loving couples to their simple homes, and amidst the coarse jokes of the men,

adieux of the women, inspanning of oxen, harnessing and saddling of horses, the hurried mothers rushed to the hallowed room to seek their offspring, each prolific vrouw picking up from the cot she had patronised what she considered was her babe. By all lights infants are much alike, therefore, in this case, it is not surprising that in partial darkness the clothes of the children hid their identity. At last all the well-filled vehicles were driven away, and it was not until the advent of the morn, the glorious sun rising, blushing at the scandal, revealed to the terrified and alarmed mothers the fact that they had not come into their own. The scene was indescribable, the ladies screaming, the men swearing, the babies crying, and the poor whipped horses straining in their leashes as pell-mell they careered back towards the House of Sorrow, which the alarmed Boers, to the great consternation of the proprietor, who thought the British had arrived, besieged as if it were Ladysmith. Such wailings, such anguished eyes, such arguments, such swappings, such cooings, such kissings were never seen on earth before, and 'tis sad to relate that it was always supposed and believed to this very day that two of the changelings were not the children of their presumed parents. But Boerland is not the only country where it is a wise child who knows his own father.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Descendant of Kings—Two Wise Gentlemen from Warsaw—The Polak's Paradise—Masks and Faces—A Double Event.

THE hostess of the hotel at Bloemhof was a comely, coloured lady, with crinkly, dark hair, and kiss-me-quick curls, who, supported by the legal functionary of the town—at one and the same time landrost of the district and proprietor of the "house of rest"—and surrounded by a group of brown boys (her brood), ranging in age from nine to sixteen years, greeted us as we rode up to the hostelry. In a short time we had engaged two bedrooms, ordered something to eat, and seen to the stabling of our horses. After partaking of the homely fare provided for us, Woolf and I sat on the stoep, and smoked to induce digestion and rest. It was here that I met O'Reilly, whose name is indissolubly connected with the discovery of diamonds in South Africa. At the period I saw him—a heavily-built man, with a shaved chin, ample side-whiskers, a hard, intelligent face, and keen, grey eyes—he was engaged in ostrich hunting. The first diamond was discovered about 1867, in Adamantia, and found its way to a house of a Griqualand-West Boer, named Jacobs, whose children played with it as a marble. Another Dutchman, Van Niekerk, being struck with its unusual appearance, offered to buy it for a trifle, but Mrs. Jacobs gave the stone to him. From Niekerk it came into the hands of the alert O'Reilly, who took it to Cape Town, where he was ridiculed for his pains and enterprise, and, disheartened, took the magic talisman back to Colesberg, whence it was afterwards sent to Dr. Atherstone, of Grahamstown, a geologist, who declared it a diamond.

It weighed twenty-one carats, and was purchased by Sir P. Wodehouse, the then Governor of the Colony, for a substantial sum.

Before leaving this subject, I must mention that Van Niekerk, encouraged by O'Reilly's good fortune, began to look about, and ultimately unearthed a Kaffir witch doctor, with whom he exchanged his small flock of sheep for a gem weighing eighty-three carats, which he sold for £11,200. The stone was christened the Star of South Africa. But to tell you about Bloemhof, this delightful Townlet of the Plains. Mr. Cross, the local Judge and Jury of the unattractive spot, was a gentleman I had met in Kimberley; he had been the fortunate owner of the celebrated racehorse, Blacklock, and I remember seeing one of his bronze sons (who was very much *en evidence* at the time of my visit) riding that famous animal to a runaway victory there. In appearance the Transvaal magistrate was a thick-set, goggle-eyed personage of forty, bricky-faced, with deep, sandy, scrubby moustaches and whiskers, the same coloured hirsute adornments protruding like small birds' nests from nostrils and ears, and giving character to his sharp, ferrety eyes. I had heard often from many people that his ancestor was King George the Third of England.

The rumour filled me with curiosity and wonderment at the time, but since then Sir Richard Phillips, in the "Monthly Magazine," and Dr. Doran, in another publication, tell a story which serves in a manner to corroborate the tale, which may be true or otherwise. They say in effect that about the year 1756 there lived at the corner of Market Street, St. James's Market, a Quaker linen draper, one Wheeler, who had a beautiful niece, named Hannah Lightfoot, known as the Fair Quakeress, from serving in his shop. The lady caught the eye of Prince George in his walks and rides from Leicester House to St. James's Palace, and soon returned the attentions of such a lover. She is said to have been privately married to the Prince in 1759, at Kew Chapel, by the Rev. Alexander Keith, with the Prince's brother, Duke of York, as witness, and that

from the union children were born, of whom a son, when very young, was sent to the Cape of Good Hope under the name of George Rex. It is, however, an undeniable fact that in 1830 there resided at the Knysna, in the Cape Colony, a Mr. George Rex, who was then about sixty years, bringing his birth to about the time of Hannah's marriage, and the very double in appearance of the British Monarch who lost us America. It must be noted, too, that Mr. Rex occupied a responsible situation in the Colonial Government, and was allotted a generous grant of land at the Knysna. It is also indisputable, as far as the Fair Quakeress is concerned, that the Royal Family, becoming alarmed, it was contrived to marry her to a young grocer—Axford, of Ludgate Hill. The Prince, notwithstanding, was inconsolable, and a fortnight after the marriage the lady was carried away in a Royal carriage, and where she was taken to and what became of her was never known. But be that as it may, I have no time to argue whether the florid Cross, Esq. (said to be descended from the above-named Mr. Rex), was the rightful King of England or not; all I know is he didn't shine regally as an hotel proprietor—perhaps his Royal Blood forbade it.

However, after partaking of dinner, with a Teutonic appetite, in the august presence of his Terrible Majesty, and a storekeeper called Newman, who kept a large, white Boer winkle at the end of the street, his Judicial Highness, over pipes and grogs, suggested a game of cards, a proposition which was enthusiastically welcomed by his chum, Newman, a little man, with a weak mouth and ripe bunions. I have never played cards in my life, never learnt; but the lacking of that fascinating accomplishment has never prevented me going halves with a man who could, and Woolf was a really good sport at the pastime they proposed—poker. Sitting round the deal table, lighted with a dim glimmer of uncertain longevity, the Sovereign, the Tradesman, and the Traveller commenced the game. At the back, peering from the kitchen, Madame, as dark as a prune, the youngsters clustering round her, was look-

ing at the strange (to her) scene, gasping, "Oh!" when Mr. Woolf scooped the pool, or emitting a relieving sigh, and whispering congratulatory asides to her offspring when his Britannic Majesty raked in the shekels as if the spirit of his forefathers was inspiring him, and he came to think that Lewis John Woolf was Charles James Fox.

At first, and for some time, fortune went very much against my partner, to the great gratification of his opponents. Whilst Mr. Cross was winning, everything in the garden was lovely, and his face, red and shiny, like a tomato on a fruit stall, reflected the satisfaction of his royal soul. The hours sped by, the lamp had been twice trimmed, and still the merry game was contested to the chorus of the frogs outside and the guttural challenges of the men inside. The luck then changed, and Mr. Woolf commenced to recoup his losses, and a little bit over. On went the frolic until the goddess of the morning began to be welcomed by the cocks, her coming heralded by the glinting beams which lightened up the windows and braved the tired lamp. It was about five o'clock that His Majesty Old-Stick-in-the-Mud found himself broke, a parlous condition I must also truthfully ascribe to the gentle Trader, who retired as a player, but remained a meditative spectator. King Lud, as obstinate as a red donkey, however, still courted *le jeu,* but on credit. After this unsatisfactory state of affairs had gone on for a spell, and he was owing a solid sum, I, as a partner, called a truce, and gave a time limit for the game, which, when it expired, found him a deeper debtor. Another time limit, and another was given, but the cards went against him. He glowered at me as if I was an executioner or George Washington, as I positively affirmed that the next ten minutes must be the last. My conscience! Then the magenta magistrate commenced to double up his bets as if he had the Bank of England behind him, and betting anything you please with no money down is, to me, the same thing as betting nothing at all. My friend Woolf would have weakly gone on had I not, at the expiration of the last limit,

stood up and declared the game at an end, at the same minute lifting our winnings from the table and pocketing them—about two hundred pounds. There was a beatific pause, broken suddenly by the strident voice of the worthy landrost, who threatened to bestow upon me the order of the thick ear if I did not allow the play to be resumed. It is true that I had never been much struck from the first with his supposed regal breeding, but on my refusal something of England's Royal strain asserted itself, for he went red, white, and blue, thus showing Britain's fearsome flag in his face. Bloemhof's Glory then, with lightning flashing from his eyes, got up most aggressively and moved towards me, so I said, "Check," and hurriedly made towards the half-open barn door, jumped into the road, the judicial one following me, and inviting me, under sundry pugilistic penalties, to resume the game. His threats, in themselves, did not alarm me, for I could have made the old bounce in a very short time as blind as his reputed progenitor, but having read in my early youth of the daring deeds of the Prince of Wales at Cressy—he with the feathers and the *Ich Dien*—I did not fancy a whole half-dozen Black Princes setting on me as if I were the King of Bohemia. In that clear, beautiful morning I can see myself now, using the eloquence of Burke, expostulating with the Guelph, at the same time safely backing towards Mr. Newman's white winkle, which ignorant people would call "doing a guy," but which is known amongst military authorities of high order as a strategic retreat. Arrived at the ungodly store, and pursued most vigorously by the judge, I tripped over the ploughshares exposed for sale, and dodged to the back of the forlorn establishment. Then it was that Mr. Cross, with a valour worthy of George II. at Dettingen, headed me back towards his hotel, and in a short time I found myself at the historic spot whence I had started.

"Now, will you gamble?" asked the magistrate, with his topaz eyes snapping at mine like coals.

"Not at present, my dear sir," I replied, in a manner which promised great things. "But to-night, if——"

He cut me short by shouting to one of his sons, "Jan, bring out Taffy."

As a matter of fact, I had always had a great respect for the redoubtable Taffy as a racehorse, and so, when I saw the jet-black steed led out to chase me, I gave up the contest as hopeless. So I went up to Cross and said:

"Now, here I am. What do you want?"

"Will you agree to play?" he asked, looking like the Devil begotten in his own likeness.

"No cards for me this morning," I replied.

"All right," he replied, and then cried to somebody, "Bring me a shambok." The instrument was brought, a heavy leather thong, and putting his hand on my coat he raised it aloft threateningly, and exclaimed, "Now, will you play?"

"Not on any consideration, and remember, if you strike, I am a British subject." He menaced me three times, but all I got was the lash of his tongue, a privilege only allowed to Royalty, and which is unanswerable. But our troubles were not yet over. I called Woolf, and together we wandered on the veldt to the back of the hotel—I believe there was a small stream there—where we reviewed the situation, and made up our minds to depart from the good city of Bloemhof. Returning to the hotel, I asked for the bill, and during the time it was being prepared visited the bedroom to pack up. Whilst there Gamble, our servant, entered, looking as if he had had a glass. Woolf, in going over his things, missed some trinkets, and though I forget the exact circumstances, there was no doubt they had disappeared. My companion questioned Gamble, and the latter, being heated, replied that he should do as he liked, and requested his employer to take an early journey to the Antipodes of the Polar regions. Now, Woolf was a fine-hearted, lazy, good-tempered man, who would quarrel with nobody without just cause—and then he didn't care. But when, after he had quietly observed that the other's language was hardly that used in polite circles by servant to master, and the former declared he would say what he liked to a ——

Jew, it was a bit too trying. Poor young Rip Van Winkle, I regret to say, did not have much regard for any religion, and very little for his own; but he was a well-bred chap, quite unlikely to take an insult from a menial, so looking Mr. Gamble up and down, he queried:

"What did you say?"

"I said you were a —— Jew."

"That will do," exclaimed the good and true one. "Out you come."

I did all in my power to dissuade him from facing so big a man, more especially as it was apparent the latter had been consorting with the magistracy. In a minute they were in front of the hotel, and it being breakfast time a crowd of Boers and shopkeepers quickly congregated to see the fight. I doubt if one ever before had taken place in that shady nook. With calm deliberation my plucky associate discarded his coat and hat, and stepped into the circle which was made by the worthy Justice and wondering, valiant Boers. Woolf, of course, had no friend but the writer there, and I admit to feeling mighty uncomfortable as he faced his burly opponent, surrounded, too, as he was, by enemies. The Dutchmen followed the fight with amazement, and one huge Boer played on a concertina during the contest, not, to be sure, with correct time and rhythm, but certainly with vigour and earnestness. Three long, hard-hitting rounds they fought, Woolf by no means getting the worst of them, but tiring, so that in the middle of the fourth he was knocked down. Except, perhaps, His Majesty, nobody present had any idea as to times and rules, so when my companion had got up, and I had put him on a discarded packing-case standing on the hotel stoep, he looked much the worse for wear, and puffed to death. I asked him how he felt, and he replied, "I'm done. He's too strong." Enquiring if after a few minutes' rest he would be able to continue, he answered he thought it possible, so then I volunteered to fight a round until his wind returned. I got into the ring, where (no doubt a great injustice to Gamble) I was received with acclamations by the

"sportsmen" present, and more particularly by the man with the concertina, who improvised a pæan in my praise. Some Fairy must have protected me, for as I stepped up I hit Gamble twice flush in the face, dodged him under the arms, and hit him again. For three minutes I fought him all right, I was young and strong, and knew a smattering of sparring; but when he commenced to press me I always got down most unfairly according to National Sporting Club Rules, but quite to my own satisfaction, and that of the burgher with the music. But I'd had enough, and didn't fancy the job at all, so went to Woolf and enquired anxiously if he was ready. He answered no word, but stepped into the ring, and in two rounds completely vanquished the Africander. In due time I got the hotel bill, and it is not too much to say that if Mr. Cross had not beaten us at cards, he certainly had a dire vengeance on our "vittels," for his bill was tremendous. Preparing to ride away from his house, the illustrious boniface came towards me as if to speak, and I bent towards him.

"Look 'ere, young feller," he snapped sharply, "are you married?"

"Not yet, your worship," I said ironically.

"Well, I'm sorry for that, because I'd have liked a pup of yours," he replied.

The writer must acknowledge that now and again we came across a few really decent Boers. Honest, straightforward, guileless folk, with good-nature and honesty writ large upon their rugged, open countenances. It is a marvel that any remained who had faith left in their characters, considering the barefaced manner in which they had been swindled, tricked, and robbed by the hordes of Polish and German Semites who for years had thrived on their simple (and at first) trustful dispositions. The "tockers," men who travelled in Cape carts laden with "snide" jewellery and merchandise from farm to farm were the curse of the country, and competed with audacious thieving adventurers, brazen of countenance and methods, who sold the farmers sand wrapped in gaudy coloured packets (to say nothing of viler condiments) as a specific for sheep scab, and vil-

lainous "doctors" who treated males or females suffering from the most virulent and delicate complaints with dough pills or vaccinated the youngsters with condensed milk, exacting for their services monstrous fees. In time to come, when Boers began to take notes from each other, is it surprising they herded together like a flock of sheep and regarded strangers as wool-stealing shepherds accompanied by cruel dogs? The Boer has always been robbed; it is no wonder, then, that although they trusted in the Deity, they kept their powder dry, and, in the near future, imitating their teachers, met trickery by trickery, mendacity by mendacity. Just a short story to illustrate how the Dutchmen at the time I was riding through the country were bamboozled. Two wise gentlemen from Warsaw, with big noses and small consciences, inspired by the salient fact of having in their own distressful country been permitted to extract teeth and cut corns, came to the praiseworthy conclusion that plausibly they were competent enough to extract money from the South African innocents, and cute enough to "cut their hooks" when the game was found out. So these two *heelers* established themselves as learned doctors near Klerksdorp, and being linguistic as to the Dutch language, speedily ingratiated themselves in the good graces of the Boers for miles round, who thoroughly believed in these curers of death. Their surgery consisted of two rooms, separated by a partition of green baize, which permitted conversations going on in the front apartment, furnished with rainbow bottles and strange instruments, to be heard in the back recess. A Boer, with a face like a Limburgher cheese, and evidently suffering pain, one day entered and asked if Dr. Sol Fenheim was in.

"No, Myneer," answered the erudite Dr. Mossy Mugthal, his quack partner. "He's on his rounds. What's the matter, Leroux?"

"*Baaije siek*" (very ill), complained the Boer. "I cannot eat, am sick of a morning, have pains in my legs, back, and head, and my eyes are closed when I awake, as well I fell off my horse on Tuesday, and my

vrouw was ill on Wednesday. She is expecting, and this is our fourth."

"I do not want to frighten you, Leroux, but this looks like a serious case," replied the quack, pursing up his lips and wagging his head dolefully at the miserable Boer. "See my learned friend to-morrow at three, but mind you don't stir out of your farm to-day on any consideration." He put in this to prevent some other healer getting hold of the simpleton.

At three next day the anxious Dutchman, up to time, meets the learned physician Fenheim, who, of course, secreted in the back room yesterday, had heard all the conversation, and greets his client with anxious looks glinting from behind blue spectacles.

"How are you, Leroux? Aren't you well?"

"No, doctor, I'm not," replied the Boer. "Has not Dr. Mugthal told you?"

"Indeed not," exclaimed the mendacious medico. "I have only just returned."

"Well, I'm very sick. I have got——" continued the farmer.

"Don't tell me," interrupted Fenheim, holding up his hands deprecatingly, as if bidding his visitor to trust in Science.

"I can see you are bad, now I come to look. I will examine you," he added, as he produced, to the alarm of the Batavian, a stethoscope as big as a bellows, which he clapped on his client's body near the place where an anxious heart was bumping up and down.

"Leroux, you cannot eat, and are sick of a morning," said the quack, sagely.

"That's so," agreed the farmer.

"Leroux, you have pains in your neck, back, and head."

"Ya!" affirmed the patient, gasping with astonishment at so much knowledge.

"Leroux, your eyes are closed when you are awake. You have had a fall, and—yes—I find your vrouw is ill."

"*Vrachter*" (true), exclaimed the astonished Boer.

"You are suffering," continued the skilled Escula-

pius, "from potassium on the parenchyma and sciatica on the sestetto."

"My father!" cried the frightened Dutchman, turning pale.

"Likewise, likewise," with cold emphasis on the repetition, the scientific one asserted, "You have parasitic paregoric on the mesogastric muscles."

"*Alamachtig!*" ejaculated poor Leroux, opening his mouth and eyes to their fullest extent, and wishing himself dead.

"To say nothing of a slight attack of sesquipedalian metabolian," concluded the merciless specialist, decidedly.

"Vot kost het myn?" (what does it cost me?), asked the trembling Boer, uneasily fixing up his attire.

"Well," replied Fenheim, compressing his thick red lips and turning up his eyes in deep study, as if determined not to charge a shilling too much, "the potassium on the parenchyma and sciatica on the sestetto is a pund and a half, the parasitic paregoric on the megogastric is another pund, and the sesquipedalian metabolian I can do, as you are a friend, for a fat sheep."

"Dank u goeden avond" (Thank you, good morning), said the deluded Boer, as after paying the score he rode away hopefully with three penny packets of Epsom Salts in his pocket, which he regarded as purchases of potent value.

I left his Britannic Majesty King Cross at Bloemhof with no regrets. Notwithstanding Mr. Gamble's misconduct, it must be mentioned as showing the free and easy mode of living in South Africa in these days, that we were very glad to forget all his transgressions and instal him in his old position as Master of the Horse. Indeed, I do not know how we could possibly have got on without him, it being no joke driving, tending, and feeding a dozen horses. As it turned out, we had not trotted more than three or four miles from Cross's City when a little wicked mare I was riding—I had never bestrode her before—bolted, and, with devilish ill-fortune, picked a piece of veldt which was bristling with boulders, and bucked me violently to the ground, cut-

ing my eyebrow and cheek open badly, and serving the estimable Gamble in the same racy way afterwards. A lovely morning, rich with the fragrance of the balmy air greeted us along the road as in a few days we cantered into Christiana, that Goniva City, on our way home, for thus, in a measure, I had got to regard Kimberley, such a golden spot on the eyeballs of a roving youth. Diamondopolis certainly appeared to my vision as a palace of luxury compared to the places we had visited. It was like returning to Maida Vale after living in the Mild End Road; like coming back to London after visiting obscure provincial towns in a wet season; like embracing the wife of your bosom after a frisky and disappointing week-end, and having had your watch stolen. We arrived in Kimberley (the blessed sun maturing smiles into broad grins), strong and well, but poorer (though wiser) than when we left, and meeting many of our old friends, had a glorious night, and learnt what had happened since our departure, who had prospered, who had fallen, and all the fun of the fair.

When I returned to Diamondland little change could be observed by the casual visitor, but those who looked beneath the surface of things would discover that a great deal of the rough-and-ready life of the earlier diggers had in a measure departed, and that their genial and happy-go-lucky faces were clouded in doubt and disappointment, a state of affairs not at all reflected in the oily, lop-eared visages of the swarms of Polish and Whitechapel gentry of the lowest class, who, with an audacity and energy unparalleled, elbowed their way to monetary success and position, pushing out of the road the crestfallen and unhappy Englishmen. They dominated the gambling-rooms, the racecourse, the diamond market, ate the most sumptuous dinners, occupied the best seats in the theatre, and were looked upon occasionally with favour by some of the followers of Pélagie, who cared more about money than modesty, action than acting. To be sure, they were never admitted to the society of those practising in the learned or scientific professions, nor, of course, were they received in Government circles, except on terms which were

decidedly dull and unpleasant. But they flourished, all the same, and every passenger car brought a miscellaneous assortment of frowsy brothers, greasy cousins, black-browed sisters, and fat aunts, numerous enough to plant an Empire in Zion.

A few hours after arriving in Kimberley I met my friend Barney Barnato, who was advancing in popularity and prosperity, and was as genial as ever. Hoppy Davis, too, in arch serene altitude, grinned his importance. The last-named celebrity was engaged, apart from his business, in diamond broking as a real live director to one of the mining companies in Bulfontein, around which the little man fussed and hobbled as if he owned the earth, creating a state of affairs very mortifying to the managers, as Hoppy understood as much about a mine as a mudlark. A new overseer being appointed who did not know the great Arthur Wellesley, the latter, proud as a peacock, presented himself to the probationary employé without disclosing his identity, but merely assuming the rôle of an important shareholder. He worried the poor fellow to an inordinate degree, and at last found fault with the latter's method of drying the blue ground. The manager, explaining his system, said something like this, "My gradient process is adapted to exhaust moisture and aqueous matter, and my deductions show that diastyles are diathermatous, and would be helped by silicics titanic and lime acids, which also have a good effect on indurated slaty clay." Arthur, in pure desperation, killed a prospecting and not over-particular fly which was pasturing joyously on his nose, and replied with a repellent stare, "Thank you. I knew it was something like that." Before departing, the mining expert director expressed a profound opinion that if the claims were worked properly there would be better dividends.

"Perhaps you're right," agreed the manager, anxious to get rid of his pompous visitor; but, having a ray of fancy, added excusingly, "My predecessors have always been hampered by a fellow called Hoppin' Davis."

"Hoppin' Davis!" echoed the seeming godson of the Duke of Wellington, blighting the overseer with a

look. "I'm Hoppin' Davis, and so you can hop *out* and I'll hop *in*—month's notice." More unemployed!

After we had disposed of the horses, which, by-the-by, did not realise a quarter of the purchase price and cost of feeding, I settled down once more to diamond buying, and erected a small house next door to the humble wooden one occupied by Barney Barnato, who had migrated from his brother's back yard. We consequently saw a great deal of each other by day and night. At this period he had developed quite a passion for acting. I, too, made my bow as a player, appearing with overwhelming success and distinction as a super in "Jessie Brown; or the Relief of Lucknow," and, on this particular occasion, refused, with great gallantry and considerable violence, to allow myself to be killed by Nana Sahib, thus causing much confusion on the stage, spoiling the tableau, and bringing down the curtain prematurely on Harry Braham's head. Nana Sahib was enacted by the late Colonel Digby Willoughby (afterwards in command of the Malagasy forces, and esteemed a great favourite of the then reigning Queen of Madagascar, Queen Ranavolona II.), the gifted amateur on this evening wearing a certain red waistcoat which was destined to become historical on Field and Stage. One day Barney Barnato came to me with the news that a tragedian, named Boothroyd Fairclough, had arrived in Kimberley that very afternoon. I remembered the name well, having seen it starred in London, when he was appearing at one of the principal West End theatres, but had, however, never seen him act. With little trouble we found he was staying at Mrs. Jardin's Queen's Hotel, and hurrying thither, encountered Fairclough lolling on the verandah, and attired in gorgeously new clothes, which were quite in keeping with the lately born shave which glistened on his shiny face like a coat of fresh varnish. His handsome, clean-cut features were crowned with a sombrero, and something in his bright, mobile smile and gleaming white teeth pronounced him every inch an actor. He seemed a charming and affable personage, but when we commenced to talk business he rather put on the

airs of a grand Signor, and referred us stiffly to his manager, Mr. Gray, who opportunely arrived on the scene. Gray was a dapper, sandy-moustached, little man, straight, sinewy, alert, and spry as a sparrow, who talked business with an alacrity and independence quite surprising and refreshing, and was not to be nonplussed by the most gigantic word in the dictionary. This is all the more startling, considering that months after, when we had all become very friendly, Gray told me the pair of them, footsore and tired, had that very morning walked into Kimberley. But be that as it may, it is a fact Barney and I engaged Fairclough at sixty pounds per week to recite at the Lanyon Theatre.

The artiste duly appeared, but recitations hardly appealed to Kimberleyites; they'd had enough of them in the sordid, raucous smoking concerts where every Milesian wanted to recite "Shamus O'Brien," every Scotchman "Scots wha' hae'," and every Posner Polack to roar "It vas in Trafalgar's Bay," which meant to him Duke's Plashe as far as his historical mind was concerned. Fairclough was a splendid reciter, and if we lost money by the venture, it was none of the elocutionist's fault, as he did his work loyally and well. The actor, however, was not allowed to remain long in idleness, for Tom Paulton (to whom I have already referred), who with Cox was one of the lessees of the Theatre Royal, arranged with the tragedian, on sharing terms, to appear in a round of Shakespearian plays—his performances in which created something like a furore in Diamondopolis. I have seen some great historians in my time—not your mealy-mouthed, curly-foreheaded, shirt-fronted, self-advertising actor-managers of to-day, who are like chorus girls in their affectation, and in vanity only surpassed by the inflated Bernard Shaw, whose plays are about as shallow and unsatisfying as are the whimsicalities of the strutting, overdressed actors who are the darlings of the ladies, and nothing more. These I do not count a jot when I recall Fairclough's superb efforts. An unsurpassable Othello, a glorious Iago, a magnificent Richard the Third, splendid as Hamlet and Macbeth, I have never

understood why he was not more famous. Amongst other distinguished artistes, I remember G. V. Brooke, Charles Dillon, Fechter, Barry Sullivan, Creswick, Phelps, Salvini, and, with the exception of the last two, I have known no finer tragedian than Fairclough, none with a more graceful bearing or more magic tongue. Never can I forget the crowd of gambling harpies who used to wait outside the Theatre Royal for him on the nights he received his share of the receipts, and oblige the talented actor with play of quite another kind than that indulged in inside the Thespian Temple. Their motto, if ever they had a motto, was "One good play deserves another." These sorry scamps seldom failed to hook the fish in the sparkling ripples of champagne fragrant with odours and golden with the sunlight of the fair land of France (perhaps). He was a good chap, this Fairclough, kind and open-hearted, and though I recognise his ability as a player of plays, his capacity as a player of cards was quite suited to the genius of the gamblers who were so anxious to return the civilities of the evening with him.

Although the public gambling hells had been closed by the authorities, that is not to say there was any diminution of the gaming spirit. On the contrary, as much, or more gambling took place night and day, and there were professional spheilers galore, who did nothing for a living except worship at the shrines of Faro and Hazard. As a matter of fact, everybody played, and some of the most enthusiastic punters were the highest officials of the Law and Police, and it was no unfrequent sight to see these functionaries deal a bank until the reprimanding, ruffled cocks began to crow for very shame of them. Sometimes, however, the authorities bestirred themselves in a soporific manner, and then a few raids would be made, and the delinquents taken to the station, where, if they had to wait too long for bail, they indulged the official on duty with a little game on their own.

It happened in the dawn of a year full of variations and scandals that a round dozen of sports congregated

one evening at the Craven Hotel (which was formerly the Kimberley Club) for the purpose of trying their luck at lively hazard or fascinating faro. Now, on this particular evening it came to pass that one of the most dashing of the *habitués* of this select little place of entertainment had been attending a fancy dress ball in the garb of a constable, a character he assumed perfectly, to the astonishment of the dancing ladies and consternation of the bowing men. Becoming tired of his masquerading, the merry clown wandered into the yard of the Craven Hotel, and whilst excitement was running high among the ardent gamesters, who were volleying laughter and strange oaths, he suddenly pushed open the back door leading to the card saloon, and, crying in an authoritative voice, "I arrest you all for gambling," advanced to the centre of the room, terribly alarming the occupants, who ran to and fro, under the table and sofas in their endeavours to find sanctuary and surcease of sorrow. Money troubles for the moment were forgotten, except by those who had got "stony," and in the scramble replenished their denuded pockets. The comedian had a bad quarter of an hour when he disclosed his identity, but after a time they all settled themselves down with renewed activity to the dice and cards. Then a most extraordinary *contretemps* took place, for shortly afterwards another constable, shuffling his feet disagreeably, forced the same door open, and announced his fateful mission. He was laughed to scorn, and not quite believed to be the real Simon Pure until the whole batch of gamblers, together with the man in police attire, were marched to the station and charged. At once their worst fears were realised, and they crossed the border between illusion and reality.

If ever human beings earned the right to live it was the poor savages who slaved from sunrise to sunset in the wonderful Kimberley mine. Thirst, hunger, and chastisement they were inured to; but their daily labours were of a kind to make an 'ole clo' man blush through his griminess. Naked, like beasts of the field, they toiled throughout the day in the scorching atmosphere, either obscured with odious blinding dust and disgust-

ing dirt, or pitiless rain, accompanied by death-dealing lightning or terrible claps of thunder. After summer storms it was most perilous to work in the claims near the reef, as avalanches of shale came down with a persistent and fatal regularity. I remember six niggers were one day working in a dangerous endroit, when an alarm was given, and hundreds of other Kaffirs betook themselves out of jeopardy. The half-dozen poor chaps I have mentioned became paralysed with fear, and hesitated to take a leap of thirty feet, which would have saved them from the tons of shale they saw slowly shifting to annihilate them. Bit by bit the loosened ground moved, and when the main body gave way it buried them alive. As these unfortunate black slaves were swept into eternity there was a terrible crash, as if the world had fallen, and then a dead silence, even more appalling, followed by a long, loud, prolonged wail from all the niggers in the mine, who thus, Banshee-like, said "Good-bye" to their fallen brethren.

It was about this time that I commenced to contribute a series of articles under the title "Gay Young Creatures," to the *Du Toit's Pan Herald*. They were mild character-sketches of some of the prominent (or otherwise) citizens of the Diamondiferous Arcadia, whose personalities were too precious to be lost for all time, so I took the trouble to enscrol them on the roll of fame. Let me see, I wrote a beautiful little monograph of Hoppy Davis, under the title of "Codlin Short," also a sketch of David Symons, of Mayer, of Tallerman, and a dozen other Mighty Ones. I am sorry to say these prototypes did not take my literary efforts in the spirit they were intended, and some of the subjects I had lifted from obscurity most ungratefully made things exceedingly uncomfortable for me. Young Mayer I bested, also Heath, the editor of the *Independent*, but it was impossible to do this in the case of Hoppy Davis, that Byronic gentleman of good manners and bad taste not being built by nature either to cross brooks (but they say he does when there's nobody looking) or ascend mountains. As to Dave Symons, a

really good fellow, I forgive him from the bottom of my heart the trouble he caused, for I know he was led to do what he did by the Doctor's son from Duke Street. This will be better understood when I state that the fact of writing these "Gay Young Creatures" articles developed into one of the most serious episodes in my career, costing me almost my life and thousands of pounds into the bargain. At all events, they were the initial cause of my going through a series of adventures which I now look back to with pride and pleasure, but which at the period I experienced them were terrible realities. I wouldn't miss telling them for a Christmas goose, though I feel a diffidence in writing about myself. I was neither a De Rougemont, Quixote, nor Munchausen, but just a foolish young man who had let his pen run away with his thoughts, and as a punishment fell across a blood relation of Shylock, who, with a vengeance, exacted an eye for an eye. Circumstances proved what a man can go through and suffer when impelled to do so. I am bound to tell the tale, and am sure I shall have no more interesting listeners than the sapient Hoppy Davis and his brother, the parboiled Montague of that ilk.

CHAPTER XIX

Acting—A Playbill—The Lion and the King—A Courtesan from Courland—How are the Mighty Fallen

WHEN the water was first put on from Klipdrift to Kimberley many of the residents started gardening, some of them even growing mealies. The amount of *aqua* which they used was prodigious, so much so that the company compelled the consumers to be checked by a meter which they fixed to the taps. A chap I knew, however, was one too many for the institution; he turned the water on at a drip, and as it percolated very slowly the instrument failed to register, so his tank was always full at no cost to himself, and he was consequently extremely liberal in a watery manner to all his friends and relations. I may mention it was the fashion, too, at this time for the fellows to keep baboons in their gardens, and at times these animals were perfectly horrible to look at. On one occasion a female baboon got loose, and took refuge in a Polish Semite's habitation. A laundress entering the place in the dusk was nearly frightened out of her wits, and, upsetting the linen on the ground, she ran screaming away, declaring that "the devil was in the Jew's house, and was eating all the washing."

After my initial performance as a super, which was a direct and absolute failure, I made great strides in the dramatic profession, a development which, as it did not cost the managers a single shilling, suited them very well. I do not honestly think that anybody was half as anxious to see me act as I was that they should do so, consequently it was my habit to buy tickets and give them to my admirers, thus ensuring a highly

appreciative and applauding audience. Ah, those happy days, full of fun and flirting, of excitement and enthusiasm, of youth and folly, and all the joys that belong to juvenility and exuberant health! Barney was "great" in character parts, such as Matthias in "The Bells," and "heavies," like McClosky, of "Octoroon" fame. In the first-named drama he showed much power though little grammar, and was wont, in descriptive mood, to remark, " 'Ow the dogs 'owl," a monstrous inexactitude, considering the animals were as absent as his h's. Barney's McClosky savoured much of the sardonic, of snarling sneers and fearful frowns, into each of which you could have dropped a sardine and said good-bye to it. My most successful part was Wah-no-tee (a beautiful character, originally played by Dion Boucicault, the clever author of the "Octoroon"), and it was my bounden duty, arrayed in feathers, moccasins, and brown paint, in each and every performance to have a terrible and sanguinary fight with the villainous McClosky, in which victorious encounters I covered myself with glory, laurels, and scratchy bruises, for Barney was a hard man to kill, and his brother Harry, with a complimentary ticket and a diamond stud was always in front, anxious for the honour of the distinguished family to be upheld, but, of course, at no expense to himself. The Zoe was invariably Miss Marian Cox, the charming daughter of the lessee Cox, who as well as being the proprietor of the Thespian Temple, was the capable conductor of the band, of which the most distinguished ornament was that gallant goblin, Hoppy Davis, whose heart and charms were on offer at an alarming sacrifice. Pretty Miss Cox, a sweet, winsome, and virtuous little lady, was the pride of the Kimberley stage, and respected and adored by everyone in the town. Not by any means an exceptionally good actress, she had a dainty *spirituelle* presence, which found its way to the heart of an audience, and her freshness, chasteness, and beauty likened her to a modest, white-gowned daisy nestling in a green field. Needless to say, everybody was in love with the gem, and I call to mind my friend Bobby Green (now

a hotel proprietor near Torquay) shedding boyish tears because he could not be the happy man. (I saw him the other day in the George Hotel, Strand, with a son as big as a guardsman, and could not help thinking how time passes, and how few of the old familiar faces of the period I write about are left). The lady subsequently married the late Mr. Charles Davis, a splendid fellow, who was uncle to Sir Rufus Isaacs, K.C.

I remember well an interesting occasion when "The Octoroon" was being played to a crowded house. Grim and big-toothed Cox was all smiles and jollity as in the orchestra he waved his bâton to and fro as proudly as if he were a Field Marshal. Hoppy strummed and moved up and down on his music stool like a cockerel courting a China hen, to the great admiration of those ladies present who were near enough to smell his gorgeous presence; Dan Defries trumped a husky noise now and again on his trombone, and then looked about as if to apologise; Montague Davis blew his nose loudly on a coroneted handkerchief to let the world know he was present; Lowinsky was there, as handsome as ever, to say nothing of that sweet morsel, little Alfred Abrahams, who was regarded by lovely Miss Lynch, Old Mother Low (very loving and fat), Fanny Davenport, and Nelly Maguire, as if they would like to eat him. These last four ladies, in terrible splendour, sat a few rows back from the "high society" in the front seats on the look out for Prince Florizels. The first-named had patronised rouge until her face resembled a poppy; another had evidently invested her savings in pomade, which she had heaped in a sickly mass on her back hair; Sweet Nell was "bosky," and the remaining one looked as if she had hopes in the very near future of being in the same blissful state. Many of the "high society" dames, as they came in, glanced scornfully another way, as if these horrid creatures were abominations to them, and the Argyll Rooms, Eagle, and Alhambra things of the past—which, indeed, they were to a considerable number of these leaders of fashion. Some of the men looked uncomfortable, especially if they had on their minds the consciousness of having

failed to forward certain promised presents to any of the four alluring Aspasias. But, take it all round, jollity reigned supreme; the audience applauded, laughed, and cried. Thus everything went well until the end of the third act, in which it will be remembered the slave maiden, Zoe, is put up to be sold by auction. Looking ravishingly attractive in a virginal dress as white as Carrara marble, Miss Cox was led to the rostrum to be sacrificed to the highest bidder. The excitement became intense as the auctioneer proceeded to dispose of the young lady, and the bidding waxed fast and furious between pitying planters, the sagacious Salem Scudder, and the heroic Dora Sunnyside, who did a kind of dive into the room and offered twenty thousand dollars for the slave, which was exceedingly liberal of her, considering she kept a very humble coffee house next door. But it was all to no avail, the dreadful McClosky topped all their bids, and tears glistened in every virgin's eye as the auctioneer, holding up his finger to accentuate the last offer, exclaimed,

"Gentlemen, there is twenty-four thousand dollars bid for the Octoroon girl, Zoe. Any advance on twenty-four thousand dollars? For the first—second—and third time," he impressively continued, holding his hammer like the sword of Damocles, and looking round invitingly.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars," thundered McClosky in retort.

There was then a Cistercian silence of a few seconds, only broken by the sobs of Mother Low, who seemed determined to show in public how good-hearted she was.

Suddenly, during this tense stillness, Russell, in the front row, with a voice as clear as that of the traveller in "Excelsior," stood up and cried, "Twenty-six thousand dollars."

All eyes were turned in the direction of the dress-suited bidder in the stalls. Cox, in cogitative mood, eyed him with his head on one side and eyes closed warningly, exactly as a bull would watch a red dog. Russell, however, who had dined well, returned the

savage looks with complacent smiles, until the astounded Cox shouted from his orchestral seat, "Shut up, Russell! What do you mean by making a row in my theatre?"

"That's all very well, Cox, old fellow," returned the benevolent Russell, screwing in his cheeks and regarding the conductor pityingly. "But what kind of a chap do you think I'd be to sit here and see your daughter knocked down for the sake of a paltry thousand dollars?"

LANYON THEATRE.

To night, Wednesday, September 18th, 1877.

MR. FIEDLER'S BENEFIT.

Notice.—First appearance of Mr. Diespecker.

PROGRAMME.—PART I.

Overture .... Volunteer Band
Solo Pianoforte .... Herr Emil Pulvermacher
Song ...."The Yeoman's Wedding" ....Mr. Lodwidge
Solo Trombone .... Mr. D. N. Defries
Song .... " 'Tis but a little Faded Flower" ... Mrs. Forrester
Song .... Mr. McCarthy
Grand March for Pianoforte ...
Messrs. Pulvermacher, F. James, and Fiedler
Interval of ten minutes.

PART II.

Selection, the Volunteer Band, with Cornet, Obligato by Mr. Saunders
Song .... "Nancy Lee" .... Mr. Russell
Ballad .... "Beloved Star" .... Mrs. Forrester
Duet .... "When Night Comes o'er the Plain" ...
Mrs. Forrester and Mr. Lodwidge
Song .... "Twenty Years Ago" .... Mr. Braham
Dramatic Selection ... "Othello" ... Messrs. Eschwege and B. Barnato
Interval of ten minutes.

PART III.

Valse .... The Volunteer Band
The Popular War Song .... Master ****
To conclude with
Tom Benson's Inimitable Drawing Room Entertainment, with the Pico Solo, Little Banjo, and Whimsicalities.
Galop .... The Volunteer Band

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

The above is a copy of innumerable play bills which were posted as per date on the walls of Kimberley, and

which, as is apparent, notified to the delighted and artistic world of Diamondopolis an approaching important harmonical event, likewise the advent in their midst of several new rising stars, possibly sweet voiced as Tetrazzini, vivacious as Marie Lloyd, and playful as Caruso. Diespecker or his brother, who is top dog on the programme, kept a ham and beef shop near the Theatre Royal. Now, it is a long step from ham and beef to Haydn and Beethoven, but when one's musical soul is deeply stirred shall there be any hesitation as between pigs' feet and Palestrini or sausages and Sullivan. So Mr. Diespecker clung to Apollo, and the pork pies were forgotten. Herr Emil Pulvermacher was the town's pianoforte teacher and tuner. Little Dan Defries fully believed he could tootle the trombone, but if a funereal pom-pom emitted every five seconds from a consumptive instrument he was playing was such, well, then, I agree. Mr. Russell (from whom I had a letter a few weeks ago) is the son (I think) of the famous Henry Russell, the tenor of "Cheers, Boys, Cheer" fame, and brother of the popular novelist who wrote "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," etc.; Mr. Braham was a musical carpenter, Charley Eschwege, a swarthy, black-moustached Israelite from the East End of London, who, it was mysteriously whispered, had once appeared as an actor on a "special occasion" at a Mile End Road theatre, to the great pride and unbounded pleasure of all his friends and relations in that salubrious quarter of grimy London. B. Barnato was, of course, *the* Barney who created an energetic and highly-coloured Iago, full of shrugs, jibes, and devilish smiles of terrible import. Master **** was no other than Mr. Jack Joel, who, for "the fust," and only, time, was taking a hand in a melodious *mélange*. Mr. Fiedler, the *bénéficiaire*, was a good fellow, who divided his time between music and morphia, and the intervals of ten minutes were periods of mercy vouchsafed by the Gods to enable us to recover from the agonies perpetrated on our souls by the ambitious Apollos of our Delphic temple. The night's entertainment is one which singles itself out from the many I have seen in the course of my varied experience.

As may be guessed, the theatre on this particular occasion was crowded by highly confident and curious acquaintances of the "stars," who were expected to evolve harmonious somersaults of unsurpassable brilliancy. Our old and valued friend, Hoppy, distinguished himself by playing an all-round incongruous mixture of musical gems.

In due course the turn of the popular war song arrived, and then, full of himself and patriotism, Jack Joel, Esquire, disguised as Master ****, most gallantly faced the footlights, and what with "ankores" and "hoorays," was accorded as mighty an accolade of applause as if he had been Sims Reeves. Mr. Dan Defries's instrument gave forth a little offensive pom-pom, and then Jack's eyes snapped at the noise as if to inquire if the salute was meant for him. When Mr. Fiedler, after anxiously glancing at the *débutant*, had played the introductory bars, Master Joel straightened himself up and commenced to render *le chanson de la guerre*. He sang "Now the Lion and the King," then stopped, and, bending his head towards the pianist, plaintively cried, "*Play up, Fiedler, go on.*" This was distinctly a bad beginning, and embarassing enough to any artiste, but the juvenile prodigy was made of sterner stuff, so, nothing daunted, he chortled in dulcet strains his undying political opinion that

> "Now, the Lion and the King,
> I think he's had his fling."

Israel's hope got flurried again, looked reprovingly at the accompanist, and reiterated, "*Why don't you play up, Fiedler?*" By this time the audience ungratefully commenced to titter, which quite upset the youthful vocalist, who forlornly wiped everything off the slate, and once more mounted the breach, summoning to his aid a much louder, though less musical, voice.

"'Now the Lion'—*play up, Fiedler*—'and the King' —*why don't you play up?*—'I think he's had'—*faster, Fiedler!*—'he's had his fling'—*I sha'n't sing at all—there!*" These were the last words he uttered as he ran off the stage. The reader will notice that the concluding

item on this veracious programme is "galop." The audience did.

When civilisation advances vice follows unerringly in its footsteps; therefore it is not surprising to record that as the primitive picturesqueness of Diamond Field life disappeared the morality of the general community did not improve. As a matter of fact, it got worse month by month, and during the stress of bad times it was appalling what money could do and what the curiosities of impecuniosity involved.

There was no grace left to the honest historian, and if I have to be suggestive in disagreeable details it is only because I desire to paint the times and manners as truthfully as possible. Crowds of gay ladies hurried to Avernus from Cape Town, attracted by the Golden Legend, and put themselves from spring to autumn audaciously at a fixed rate, in open and perfect rivalry with the more attractive European soiled doves, victims to abject poverty, who had arrived rather late in the day to be in time for the metallurgical fun of the fair. Consequently femininity was at a distinct discount, and White Cupid flapped its feathery wings in despair and made distressing failures with its once potent magic bow and arrow. To such a state did some of the ambrosial denizens of the Fields arrive at that it was a common occurrence to hear of women selling themselves to Kaffirs for a glittering gem or a gold coin. Then, again, the drinking habit asserted itself to a monstrous degree amongst the female population, with results not to be wondered or hinted at. But it was all, I suppose, in the nature of things. Suffering mortals died, wailing children were born to take their places, the indiscreet went under with a prayer or a curse, and the more fortunate, driving Juggernauts, crushed others to death in this lurid, sordid, villainous race for graves or guineas. No excuse was made for the fallen ones, men or women; the verdict of the world—the Kimberley world—was "You have failed, and so you are damned." The vile, unearthly microbes who succeeded, and were so soon to blossom into magnates, were those Whitechapel ghouls, who looked back with loathing and horror to their stuffy

toolshops, thieving Petticoat Lane pubs., and the filth and squalor of their London friends and relations, and were determined, *coûte qu'il coûte*, to be the salt of the earth. They marvelled how the glorious sun shone out and matured their ill-gotten fortunes while festering those belonging to their bewildered well-bred competitors. The latter could not understand how it came to pass that they were forced to approach the offices of such men cap in hand when, a couple of years past, they would not have allowed them in their back yards—while the ducks were about! Kimberley did not know, Cecil Rhodes did not know, what a set of harpies and villains were bred, who in the future were destined throughout England to rob the rich, sneer at the poor, and disgrace everything they ever were connected with.

But all that is in the matter of a digression, an unpardonable offence when not absolutely necessary. However, it will be understood that morality was in a parlous state, and so it occasioned no surprise when in the middle of the Main Street a cavalier from Poland, with a rat face and a soul scenting cash, opened a tobacconist's shop, which was presided over by a young and really beautiful girl, who had grace and seductiveness in her steps, cherry cheeks, black eyed starlight, glowing, lustrous hair, and who was always charming when humoured, and ready to bestow her affections on the whole male sex. It was no wonder in a week or two it was discovered by greasy Jews and toady Methodists that there never was or never could have been such odorous tobacco the world over as that dispensed by the Rose of Poland, such flavour, such aroma, and so satisfying. Consequently the shop throve, and the vulgar, fortuitous foreigner was seen night after night gambling with men who are at present supposed to be the glories of the land. It happened that one of the most sincere admirers of the fair tobacconist was a young fellow of alien descent but uncertain ancestry, and one day, unexpectedly visiting his splendid Rebecca, he heard, whilst taking one quick taste of her pouting lips, suspicious noises underneath a sofa, and looking for the cause, discovered it in the person of his

own father, who crawled out on hands and knees looking as unhappy as a trapped hare. Equal to the embarrassing occasion, the perspiring pater, flurried and excited, spluttered, "Now, Issy, I vas determined to catch you, and I have, so don't contradic'. It's no use," added the flippant one, waving his hands up and down like a fan.

The boy, much put about, replied, abashed, "I'm very sorry, father, but don't say a word to mother."

"If you promise not to come here again," responded the old sinner with alacrity. "It vould break her 'eart."

So the two walked home with satisfied noddings, the son pressing his father to tell him who had given him away. The latter, under promise of secrecy, and in a spirit of mischief and malevolence, told Issy that it was a certain family friend who had imparted the information.

The boy, I grieve to say, did not keep his word, but tackled the supposed spoilsport, who did not deny the soft impeachment, and the matter was apparently forgotten. But six weeks after the frail father, being confronted with a "full house" at the Theatre Royal, returned home and discovered his wife under decidedly compromising circumstances with his visiting friend. There was, of course, a pretty quarrel, with things going strong in favour of paterfamilias until the ravishing Rebecca's name was flung at him by the guilty couple, and then he collapsed. Let it be put down to the credit of that merry flame, the Rose of Poland, that if she was the cause of many divorces she at least prevented one a fact which must for ever enshrine her amongst the most eminent heroines of this illuminating period, and and so here's honour to father, son, and Holy Rebecca.

Long before a railway was constructed to Kimberley Paulton and Cox, the joint lessees of the Theatre Royal, announced a performance of a drama by Dion Boucicault entitled "After Dark." It will be remembered that the sensation scene in this play was a railroad track, with a steam-engine coming along at full speed, and just missing the hero, deposited on the lines. The advent of this miraculous stage item caused considerable commotion amongst the simple Boers, and they

came from all parts to witness the doings of the mechanical devil of whose unseen powers they had heard so much. Therefore it came about that a daringly inquisitive Boer had trekked two hundred miles, accompanied by his virtuous family, to see the up-to-date machine. Arrayed in his best corduroy suit, the vrow in her most striking finery, the Boer family sat open-mouthed waiting for a glimpse of the latest addition to civilisation. The story of this drama of love and hate, or, as Catherine de Medici would have said, "*Odiate e espettate*," was told by the talented players and illuminating black and brown canvases to the quite non-fulfilment of the traveller's dreams. The poor farmer was waiting for the engine he had come so far to see, and cared for nothing else. At length the scene wherein it was to make its appearance hove in sight, and the Dutchman, big-mouthed, waited in full anticipation. The hero was laid on the rails to be apparently cut to pieces for ten bob a night, and the ladies of the Boer family forgot their own sweetest wishes and homestead troubles in his misfortunes, and wept and hoped continuously. But the Boer father had travelled a couple of hundred miles to see a steam engine, not to hear a tale of passion, and he waited with a fixed gaze anxious and expectant. It was night on the stage, and the doomed man was waiting on the rails to be annihilated. All was dark, quiet, and magnificently sombre, until a whistle was heard advertising the approach of the flaming, flaring new invention. The Dutchman started, and with open eyes and ears erect, like a terrier, waited its appearance with proper concern and watchfulness; but a devil in the person of Joe Levy gave the anxious Boer a terrible cuff over the left ear at the psychological moment. The gaping Batavian, of course, turned quickly round, with his hand clapped to his auricular, and ejaculated, "*Alamachtig*," and just then the train passed, and so the poor Boer, for all his journey, saw nothing of it. May the graces forgive Joseph Levy, Esq.; but all the same, that inquisitive Boer never came to the Theatre Royal again.

Barney Barnato's worst enemies will agree that with

all his faults he never put on airs. In the heyday of his prosperity he was ever the same to poor or rich. In fact, he had a remarkable faculty for making friends without allowing the pastime to cost him anything. He would greet the grimiest and dirtiest miner in the town with his well-known "Hallo, Guv'nor! Come and have a drink!" Consequently—of course, long before they burnt him in effigy—he was tolerably popular with the crowd. The better classes held him in some suspicion, but his plebeian personality was such that even they, under the influence of champagne and his happy if coarse wit, would tolerate him, and naturally immediately his back was turned revile him to the chorus of sneers and shrugs. A wise man in his generation, he felt painfully his almost total lack of education, and took steps to repair it. A very respectable gentleman named Norrie, a retired tutor, took him in hand, and his improvement in the three R's after a couple of years' coaching was pleasantly apparent. His sublime audacity and whole-hearted belief in himself were unbounded and wonderful to contemplate. He surprised me one day by coming into my office and asking which of the two I thought was the greater man, Washington or Wellington. When I inquired why he wanted to know he replied that he had a few days ago been induced to join a debating society, and that on his first attendance the subject to be treated was Washington versus Wellington, and that he had made up his mind to "have a go."

But I pointed out to him that he would find it rather difficult to argue upon subjects he knew nothing about. "Oh, never you mind," he replied, "if you tell me something I'll know then, won't I? And I will pick up the rest by hearing the other blokes jaw!" I do not know how he got on, or which of the two great warriors he championed; but it is certain that the popularity of neither has decreased since Barney's great effort. However, Barnato now was a recognised rising man, and his influence was beginning to be felt in financial circles. There was more than a superabundance of distrust and suspicion, but he pretended to see no prejudice, and if

he did brushed it aside or hid it in his soul and waited. To increase the reputation he had with certain classes and to foster it in higher circles was now his aim, and to attain which he did everything in his power—except spending money. He loved to box, sing, or recite at every opportunity as long as he hadn't to go over his pockets, and being a fair amateur actor—of the ranting old Britannia style—played often for charitable performances. The ambitious one would take tickets, too, which were carefully disposed of to his friends and relations. Writing of charity reminds me that a year or so afterwards there was a concert given for the benefit of some church, and as a concert was "something above him" as a performer, he was asked to undertake, with others, the post of usher. This he did as to the manner born. Whilst engaged in his duties a digger customer, whom he had lost sight of for some time, entered the hall, and in a husky voice, evidently the effect of deep potations, requested to be shown to his chair. Barney seeing the state the man was in, desired to put him in a seat at the back of the hall notwithstanding that he had a ticket for a place in one of the front rows.

"All the seats are taken down to hell" (L), said the ungrammatical financier.

"You don't say so; then, go and fetch them," replied the irate miner, who had not recognised his erstwhile acquaintance.

"Well, you mustn't be cross with your old friend, Barnato," coaxed the conciliating B.B.

"Are you Barney Barnato?" and after looking at him: "Well I'm d——! so you are. But what are you doing here?"

"Oh, I'm usher."

The man's eyes opened in surprise.

"By the Lord! By the Lord, how have the mighty fallen!" the digger ejaculated, as shaking his head sadly he allowed himself to be deposited on a chair in row L.

CHAPTER XX

'Andsome 'Arry Abrahams—Phantom Stars—Barnato as Fagan—One Touch of Nature—Little Brownie.

DURING the first few years I spent on the Diamond Fields, little, lame, dark-haired 'Arry Abrahams, a good-hearted and respectable young man, was a prosperous diamond dealer in Du Toit's Pan, but, unfortunately, extremely ignorant scholastically. As the Fields grew apace, of course it meant the survival of the fittest, and naturally poor 'Arry Abrahams found himself decidedly behind in the race for wealth. When the very bad times came he strolled aimlessly about Kimberley following no occupation, until (how or why, I do not know) he got amongst some compositors. From that hour he haunted the newspaper offices, and in time, with sublime faith, came to regard himself as a full fledged journalist. He never received any pay or work of any kind from the Gentlemen of the Printing Press, nor was his information regarded, but, all the same, he pathetically wandered over the town armed with a small memorandum-book and stumpy pencil, fancying he was a most formidable chiel taking notes. If a horse fell down, out would come 'Arry's diminutive volume, and glancing with a look of importance round to see how much he was noticed, the incident with grave solemnity would be recorded in that fatal penny calendar. A quarrel, a fight, a discussion were all magnets to his magic crayon. Later on he used to visit the theatres, and quaintly, every few minutes, to his entire satisfaction, would jot down notes of Imperial importance, with perturbed brows and amazing alacrity.

It happened once, by dint of persuasion and perseverance, that the "literary man," as he called him-

self, induced Tom Paulton to give him a chance as an actor, and one afternoon, to his great delight, was informed that in three days he would be allowed to make his bow as the aristocratic Lord Plato in Buckstone's farce, "A Rough Diamond." Lord Plato, of all characters in the world! The thing promised is not always the thing we dream of, and poor Abrahams, with his pimply red face, lame leg, pronounced Semitic features, and Cockney accent, looked anything but a nobleman as he struggled abominably with the part during the performance. For three days he had been trying to learn from reporters how to pronounce "*A fronte præcipitum a tergo lupus*," which Plato had to deliver, and on "the night," when he came to the quotation, the ambitious artiste stopped, stammered, then, looking appealingly and miserably at the tittering audience and embarrassed actors, ejaculated desperately: "And as we say in the classics—terrekey, terrekar," limped hastily off the stage.

In course of time, what with intrigues and Cupids' darts, there developed a grave schism in the small theatrical world of Kimberley, and two sides as bitterly antagonistic as the Capulets and Montagues arose. I, with Barney Barnato, Sutton Vane, Cox, his daughter, migrated to the Lanyon Theatre across the road, leaving as our opposition show the Royal, with Tom Paulton, his wife (Miss Emmeline Montague), Dave Sims (a dentist), the last-named's brother, etc., and so it happened that the Mining Centre possessed two large theatres in full swing. By this silly procedure nobody did much good, as it was impossible that so small a town as Kimberley could support both shows. Mr. David Sims (née Moses) could draw teeth, not audiences. Tom Paulton (weighed down by innumerable woes, of which by far the worst was his obliging pianist, Hoppy Davis) could do nothing but display his unctuous humour and clever acting to half-empty benches. In fact, the theatrical golden days had passed for ever, and there was nothing left but impecuniosity and discontent, two potent facts which did not go to swell the treasuries on Saturday nights.

Poor Hoppy lived and loved, it is true, but never put his hands in his pockets; the consequences were the playhouses went to bits. Times were bad, and it did not matter twopenny worth of gin what they staged, the public did not respond, and the Thespians were dead out of luck. I had not been, for some trivial reasons, on good terms with Barney, and, indeed, had not spoken to him for a couple of months, when one afternoon, entering my house, I discovered my erstwhile partner in the bedroom, going over some stage props and costumes which I possessed. He did not seem at all put out by my appearance, but looked at me as if we were the best of friends in the world, and simply said:

"I'm going to play Iago in the third act of 'Othello,' and I thought I'd look through your togs. You don't mind?"

Of course I didn't, and was only too pleased to make it up with him, for, as this little anecdote shows, Barney was a man who, with all his faults, never bore malice or expected it in others. When the auspicious evening arrived on which he was to honour Mr. Shakespeare, Benjamin Hart, Esq., a then budding genius, of whom I have written in these reminiscences, sat in front. Benny (who once sold cabbages, and now spouted Crabbe), it must be explained, was also a would-be actor of intense ambition, between whom and Barney there existed a jealous feud, in consequence of which he was curiously concerned as to the audacity of Barnato appearing in such an important part. Now, Mr. Hart boasted a natural laugh as spontaneous as that possessed by the late Jolly John Nash, but twice as loud and resonant. Barney, in the blaze of his paradise, magnificently arrayed, spouted and ranted the lines accorded to the Stage's primest villain, the while he was critically regarded by the facetious Benjamin. All went well until Iago, hunching his back, came to the line, "Who steals my purse, steals trash," and then Hart gave birth to a lusty laugh noisy enough to make a clown envious. Barney stopped, threw up his chin, and glanced viciously, with a cocked eye, at his interrupter; but, with enduring faith, went on, "'Tis something, nothing.

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands." Mr. Hart again got riotously amused, at which Barney blinked, muttered a fearful whisper, and rubbed his nose with his finger. With an effort he continued, glowering like a tiger, "But he that filches from me my good name——" Once more the tormenting auditor roared uproariously as if his heart would break, and the audience, catching the contagion, joined in chorus. This was too much for the talented Iago, who, borrowing Macklin's grand pause, dropped all histrionics and declamation, and, hopping to the front of the stage, looked menacingly at his giggling critic, and ejaculated loudly, "All right, Benny Hart, when the performance is over I'll give you a punch on the nose, see if I don't." And he did.

Before I take leave of these Kimberley stage stories there is one I must not omit to narrate. As recorded in a foregoing paragraph, affairs in the theatrical world did not prosper, and after an unsuccessful season lasting some months, one Tuesday evening Mr. Cox addressed the chosen band thus: "Boys, I must have a farewell benefit on Saturday next, otherwise there will be no smoke on the table Sunday." It is a fact, so far as the Lanyon Theatre was concerned, he had come to the end of his tether, and as he was, apart from being a fine musician, a monstrously good fellow, we deeply regretted his unenviable position. So it was arranged he should have a benefit on the coming Saturday and that the entertainment should consist of an act taken from each of four or five popular dramas. "The Flying Scud," "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," and "The Two Orphans" were the pieces selected, the whole to conclude with one act from "Oliver Twist," to give the versatile violinist a chance of appearing for the last and only time as Bill Sykes—the sole character Cox fancied himself in, for he was a very bad histrio. Mr. Sutton Vane, who now in England writes stirring melodramas, was cast for his favourite parts, as were Barney, Miss Cox, the writer of these lines, and the other members of this ever memorable company. As Melter Moss, La Frochard, and the jockey in "The Flying Scud," I

felt myself all right, but the playing of the Artful Dodger in "Oliver Twist" was a different character altogether, as I had never then seen the drama of that name. Barney, however, had enacted Fagan with considerable success whilst I had been absent at the Gold Fields, and assured me that he knew the piece backwards, and that with two rehearsals "all would be right on the night." Everybody knows what "it will be right on the night" means theatrically, but I didn't then. Well, I had no rehearsal Wednesday or Thursday, and on Friday was informed the crowd had neither book nor part for me, so I had no running through of the Artful Dodger, which Barney declared was not necessary, as all I had to do at a psychological period when I got the cue was to rush on the stage and hit Bill Sykes on the head with a revolver whilst he was struggling with Nancy. However, the eventful evening arrived, and to a well-filled house the first three acts were successfully performed. As the curtain rose on the "Oliver Twist" scene Barnato was found fast asleep in his dressing-room when he should have been ready to go on the stage. Aroused, he pulled himself together, looking more melancholy than the melancholy Jacques, and in a trice was before the footlights indulging in a colloquy with the sneering Sykes. I call to mind the scene as if it happened an hour ago, for I stood at the wings. B. B. didn't remember a single word or detail of the part, and commenced to "fluff." Poor old Cox looked mighty uncomfortable and timid for such a ruffian as bold Bill Sykes, as he vainly essayed to get Barney in the trend of the play. At last, after ceaselessly gagging, he said:

"Now tell me, Fagan, where is Noah Claypole?"

"Who?" questioned Barney, to gain time.

"Noah Claypole," replied Cox, with the air of a superior Christian.

"Vait a minute," responded the alert Barnato. "Vait a minute until I get the vool out of mine ears. Who did you say?"

"Noah Claypole, you villainous old Jew," shouted Sykes, inwardly praying for a prompter.

"Oh," put in Fagan, "Noah Claypole! Vell—vell—Noah Claypole. Vell I don't know myself, but—but (looking towards me) I see a friend o' mine, the Artful Dodger, a-comin' a-down the sthreet. He knows all about it. I'll send him to you." With which promise the future financier, to my horror, hurried off the stage, leaving Cox in a most disconsolate mood and nursing a mighty grievance.

"Go on, it's your turn now. Tell 'im where Noah Claypole is," he advised me fraternally.

"Me!" I exclaimed. "Me! *I* don't know where he is."

"Don't be foolish," replied Barnato. "You'll spoil the piece. See how vexed Cox is. Get on."

"But where *is* Noah Claypole?" I asked, earnestly.

"How the devil do I know?" rejoined Barney.

"Then if you don't, how do I?" I remarked.

Cox by this time was in an awful stew, showing his yellow fangs, smoothing his moustache, and stamping his feet, as well he might under the circumstances.

"Ain't you going on?" asked Barney.

"No fear," said I. With that he made a mild running jump and precipitated me on to the stage. Cox received me as if I were the angel Gabriel, and politely inquired:

"Dodger, where's Noah Claypole?"

I never felt more wretched in my life, having no idea of Mr. Claypole's whereabouts, so in very misery I said:

"I don't know myself, but I see my friend Fagan advancin' along the road. He'll tell you," and at that I made a welcome, though ungraceful, exit, abandoning the gasping Cox to his fate. In pure desperation the poor man, having an eclectic mind, seized hold of Nancy and commenced, as Sykes would say, "to put her light out," and conclude the piece. I was beside myself with vexation as I stood in the wings, and Barney whispered to me: "There's your cue. 'It 'im on the 'ead."

I rushed on the stage with a revolver, and struck Sykes, from sheer nervousness, with all my might with the butt end of the weapon. Respected Mr. Cox staggered from the blow, and exclaimed, as he put his hand

to his bruised head, "Oh!" So I hit him again harder, and he fell, and so did the curtain.

I will call him Mr. Andrews. Mr. Andrews was a digger, and had been blessed by Nature with a goatee beard of uncertain colour, a pair of stern, cold, steely eyes, and a mind which was much in keeping with them. An illicit diamond dealer was to him what the Indians in days gone by were to the American scouts, and he hated and despised the very name. To his mind there was no punishment severe enough invented to fit the crime, and this acrid personage had been known on several occasions to aver the pride and pleasure it would afford him personally to hang a dozen in a row, and swore that if his own father or brother was guilty of the transgression under no circumstance or condition would he spare the culprit. He was a strong advocate for the use of the lash and other barbarities to keep the malefactors in check, and his face would twitch with anger and indignation when he spoke on the subject. His intense bitterness appeared to warp every good feeling in his disposition, and, although deeply religious, he would stoop to almost any subterfuge to trap an "illicit." Sour and sullen he lived alone, his spouse having died some years past in child birth. Near him resided, in a canvas-framed house surrounded by a fence made of reeds, an Englishman and his young wife, a bonnie Scotch lassie, lately married.

Andrews had long suspected this individual of I.D.B., and, as was the common custom, contrived to get the mistrusted person to engage one of his niggers as a servant. In due course the resolute digger gave this "boy" a small diamond, and great was his gluttonous delight when he learnt that the same had been purchased with considerable promptitude by his neighbour. Another and another followed, and were snapped up as eagerly as a fish does worms, and as there was not the slightest doubt about the man's guiltiness, it was now clearly the merciless digger's mission to act, so he imparted the fateful information to the police, and it was arranged that the native was to be searched by the detectives, given a diamond, and then, at a signal, the

trappers were to rush the dwelling and arrest the occupant. A pitch dark night was chosen for the consummation of the plan, and some hours before the time appointed to meet the officers, Andrews, as eager as a hound after a fox, reconnoitred the house which held his "game." Seeing the quarry hurriedly leave his home, observant Andrews got through the fence and vigilantly determined to be heedful. Hearing an unusual noise inside the habitation, he crouched and listened. Plainly enough he discovered somebody was in dire trouble, for lamentable moans struck on his eager senses. Puzzled, bewildered, and bound as if by a spell, he waited, alive with expectancy, when suddenly through the darkness, scorching his ears, came the piteous wailings of a new-born infant. A bitter heart stood still as the feeble cries smote his brain, and across his rugged and corded face unhappy memories threw their shadows, and the thought of what he had lost in the long ago fertilised some sprouts of sorrow in a hard, revengeful nature, and his thawed soul went out to the suffering mother. Perhaps he interpreted the cry of the poor babe as an appeal for mercy, or perhaps it awakened the better things which exist in all men. Perturbed, yet aglow with a high resolve that tugged at his heart strings, he rushed to the front of the Abode of Pain in time to meet the husband returning from the doctor.

"Your wife has got a baby," he remarked morosely, inclining his head towards the dwelling-place.

"That gives me joy," returned the man.

"It gives you liberty," returned Andrews.

That night the nigger, the white moon in his wake, was soon miles away, the detectives were baulked, and Andrews, half-ashamed of his weakness, and full of wonderment at himself, went to sleep with the echo of the cry of a child in his crabbed heart.

Little Brownie, with bronze-black eyes,
Tender in their soft, sad look,
They shine as stars in midnight skies,
As wayward as a sparkling brook.

Brownie, with her russet skin,
  A graceful ship with ne'er a chart,
She sailed the sea of love and sin—
  Poor Brownie, with the golden heart.

Her front name was Josephine, but friends and relations, being sparing of syllables, called her Joey. Whether she was named after the Creole Empress has not been recorded, but it is a fact that, like Bonaparte's first love, she boasted nearly black hair, which poured from under her hat, and the warm blood, nourished by a tropical sun, had slightly tinged with a warm bronze her oval face. One could never guess quite to what nationality or race the lady belonged; she had a touch of the Malay in her, the charm and regularity in features of a Creole, and withal, in her homely attire, the elegance and grace of a Parisienne. Her slightly-tinged chocolate complexion was studded with a pair of kind, though flashing, dark eyes, bright enough to light one's way to Paradise or a bridal chamber, and a set of gleaming white teeth, looking almost too good to eat with as they stood like sentinels behind her rosy luscious lips, which pouted with desire and the joy of living. A good-hearted, charming creature, in full bloom, was this little brownie, and shone like a diamond in the mud amongst her surroundings. She, however, had gone, dowered with her beauty, to a detestable, greasy Galician, whose top boots she varnished, whose shirts she washed, and helped as a go-between in his business as a diamond buyer of the most lurid and unsavoury type. It was she who dealt and bargained with the Kaffirs, he the while, in an opposite canteen, waiting the results of her bargainings at the risk of her liberty. Notwithstanding this, Joey was a good and honest slave to the wretch who lived upon her labours, and to whom she had bound herself body and soul. And so her young life sped its course in unholy ways, if you like, but adorning the sphere into which cruel fate had cast her with affection and faithfulness. She was lost, and knew it; she had no hope nor looked for any in the future. Pity poor girls,

but do not blame or punish them—the world will do all that mercilessly in time. When the hour had come, and the Galician had feathers enough to fly with, he sent Joey for her health to Blomfontein, with a chum well suited to his commission. In a few weeks, as could be anticipated, the inevitable happened, and her whilom protector was free. Returning to Kimberley, she drifted into strange alleys, until, when I came to know her, she was living in a wattle house, resigned, but as good-hearted as the day she first saw the light. Her former lover had, however, fallen on bad times, and was ill and poverty stricken.

When told of this, and congratulated at being revenged for her wrongs, she simply said,

"Oh, he fed me once. I will feed him now. Give him this money."

One night I met her at a dance, or hop, as these Terpsichorean gatherings were called, and walked with her towards her home. Arrived there, I looked through a window, and lying on his back saw in the front room, illuminated with the light of a tallow candle, a slightly off-coloured man, shooting at the wall with a revolver. Love, I grieve to say, was at once extinguished in my beating breast, and by the Shades of Deerfoot I made tracks, with a Spartan resolution highly to be commended. I saw the ill-starred girl a week after; she was unhappy and much distressed, and I assisted her. Some days later I was in the yard of my brother's cigar shop in the Main Street, when a personage in a long black overcoat rushed in, and, holding a pistol to my head, ejaculated savagely,

"Where's Joey? She's left me!" It was the chap whom I had seen lying on his back in her house, and who was called Peter. I, much alarmed, pushed his hand away, and told him I did not know, at the same time backing into the street. He followed me, but put the revolver in his side pocket, and then suddenly, to my great relief, uttered a whoop like an Iroquois, ran up the street, and disappeared in the darkness. The next Saturday afternoon, as was my habit, I rode with some friends to the racecourse. With me came Joe

Levy on his grey horse, poor Sim Samuels, Lew Woolf, and several others. I bestrode a spirited little chestnut pony, and when we reached the racing ground tied him by his bridle to the grand stand. He commenced to rear, and broke the leather holding the bit, which I foolishly re-bound with a flimsy strip of ribbon, and gave the animal to a boy to mind. On the track on this eventful day were a motley crowd of Malays, half-castes, and butter-coloured sportsmen. The racing was nearly at an end when, for what reason I forget, a scrimmage occurred between us and them. It was pretty lively while it lasted, and our lot ultimately mounted and galloped towards town, followed by the enraged snuff-tinted gentry, who rode sturdy cobs. Whilst I was cantering away I happened to think of the piece of blue ribbon, and, looking down, perceived it was gradually being worn through. The animal, too, with its head towards home, I could hardly hold in, and I saw that soon the silk would break, and the pony be beyond control. My companions were too far ahead to hear my shouts, and the pursuers were rapidly gaining ground. I could not possibly go on, so with much difficulty I pulled up as half a dozen of the coloured individuals surrounded me, headed by Joey's lover—the man Peter. They quickly dismounted, dragged me from my horse, and commenced a mighty belabouring. To save my face I threw myself against the breast of a huge saffron-hued man (he had once fought the Ladies' Pet), who protected me against the crowd, and more especially against Peter, who seemed determined to have my heart's blood. Had it not been for him I am certain I should have been killed, and lost all chance of being buried amongst my own people in Willesden Cemetery. I was hurt a great deal, and some mounted police that same evening, on my complaint, raided the Malay Camp and made many arrests. I forget if I prosecuted, but think not. However, be that as it may, it is indubitable several months later, during my wanderings (of which you will hear anon), that on a certain day, Sol having passed his meridian, I was riding forlorn and alone in the Orange Free State

when I stopped for a drink of water at a humble and dilapidated farmhouse. It was small, its aspect inhospitable, and with some misgivings I tapped at the closed door. A blinking, miserable, ragged Basuto woman opened it. Inside I saw the emaciated figure of a man, evidently sick to death, huddled in a wooden arm chair; near it stood, in a tender attitude with a smile and a tear in her eye, her nervous, thin hand resting on its frame-work, a worn, dark-complexioned girl. The invalid was none other than the gay Galician, the woman, the wreck of a joyful creature, was Little Brownie with the Golden Heart.

At the period Barney Barnato was engaged as a dealer in second-hand clothes in the delightful suburb yclept Houndsditch, there thrived a well-known resident in the "Lane" who was in the habit of lending Barnato stock money if the latter happened to run short, which he did many a time and oft. When B. and I became first acquainted he told me what a good fellow his friend had been to him, and how, if ever he got on in the world, he would remember his kindness. So one day, no doubt the door of his conscience being knocked at, and this reminding him of his ingratitude, he sat down, and, in a flowery letter, described as well as he could the glories and riches of Kimberley, his own bright and particular success, and wound up by intimating how delighted he would be if Abraham would come out as his guest, and what pleasure it would give him (Barney) if he only had half a chance of repaying the favours of the past. Therefore concluding his letter with sentiments of high consideration, which did credit both to his head and his heart, he speculated in a postage stamp, mailed the epistle, and posed as a martyr all on his own. In a couple of months' time, however, when impulsive Barney had forgotten all about his affectionate missive, and, like Nelson, had thanked the Lord he had done his duty (at a great bargain, too), his serenity of mind was very much ruffled by the sudden appearance on the Diamond Fields, arrayed in a jauntyfashioned coat, of the friend of his youth, quite prepared to accept the hospitality so lavishly offered him in that

lovin' letter full of sentiments of gratitude and esteem. All the same, when the twain met they were seemingly as friendly as two cats on the roof of a pawnbroker's shop, and after tossing each other mutual compliments in (to me) an unfamiliar jargon, Barney carried off the invited newcomer to his house, looking very much as if he had found a "mitzeer" of the purest water.

At that time Barnato, who hopped about from one residence to another like a hen on hot bricks, was sharing an abode with my old friend Leopold Loewenthal, a philosophical student who had been suckled on lemons. To that serene and moral habitation Barney introduced his patron of early days and light purses, greatly disturbing the versatile Leopold, who, with an acumen peculiarly Scottish, had discovered, as he thought, in B. B. the goose which was prolific of golden eggs—a belief doomed to be rudely shattered in time to come, when, on examination, the said products were found to be all addled; in fact, these celebrated Easter ova, which Mr. L. hugged to his yearning bosom, were Yiddisher eggs, very rotten and painted purple. But I am forgetting Abraham. It must be admitted that Barney's new *protégé*, although an exceedingly good-hearted fellow, was absolutely as ignorant as a peasant. He could not write, he could not read, he could not converse; but for all that he was as kindly a natured man as one would wish to meet. I remember once the Scottish Solomon, pointing to the moon, philosophically and learnedly asserted that the lunar phenomenon could be seen in England. "What?" said Barney's busy pal, glancing round suspiciously. "You don't mean to tell me that that 'ere moon can be seen in England? Don't kid me, I ain't no mug." Now, Loewenthal, the potent President of the Physiological Spoof Club, was a brainy man if he was nothing else, and he at once took steps to detach Barney from Mr. Abraham, a not extremely difficult matter, considering that Barnato saw things in a different light to what he did when in the Old Clothes 'Change, and regretted extremely the advent of the man he had formerly looked up to with some kind of reverence. I cannot

help laughing, too, when I remember what pains the Glasgow Sage took to separate me and his *rara avis*, the beaming B., but in that the clever one was unsuccessful—a fact I have sincerely regretted all my life; he could with great pleasure have had the gentleman all to himself. With some gusto, then, they set about making Abraham's existence miserable, and finding that the one dire dread of his life was rats, they narrated some awful tales, horrifying the visitor with the doings of the rodents. Every night before he went to bed, on the advice of "Dr." Loewenthal, he besmeared himself with some horrible compound which was supposed to make him invulnerable to vermin. But Mr. Abraham had come as a guest in quest of guineas, and he stood all the fire, like Casabianca on the burning deck. Barnato was in a great state of mind, and Loewenthal felt his character as a general of high order somewhat impeached. So one evening they procured a small monkey, and secreted it in the poor man's bedroom, and after telling some ratty tales, the unwelcome visitant, truly alarmed, rubbed in a double dose of the patent embrocation, and retired to peaceful slumber. He lay in bed courting Morpheus, or his wife, and thinking perhaps of home and the mutability of life, when suddenly, feeling a heavy substance on the couch, he, hunting troubles, put out his hand, and touched something furry, which immediately jumped on his chest and chattered. Gee wizz! with a yell loud enough to awaken the dead, Abraham leaped out of his bed, and, with hair on end, rushed to his tormentors in the other room.

"Barney, there's a r-a-t in my room," he gasped, wagging his head to and fro.

"Impossible," replied Loewenthal, with a cutting Caledonian accent, sharp enough to fit a guillotine. "Bring it out and show us."

"Bring it out and show yer. By my life, I'd rather die. I'm a goin' to Mutchy Hart's."

It was some years anterior to the times I am describing that Judah of Hamburg was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of a Welshman who worked on an

adjoining claim to the one he possessed. Both being diggers a friendship sprang up between the two, and in a short time they were inseparables. Their digging operations were highly successful, although Judah did fitful labour, preferring to tempt fortune by idleness and subtlety, which last proved an alluring bait judging by results. Judah, however, unfortunately, fell ill with virulent fever, and for weeks his faithful Welsh companion tended him at nights, and did the best he could during the day to hasten his recovery, meanwhile working the sick man's claim as assiduously and honestly as if it were his own. Each week the finds realised a handsome profit, and when Judah became himself he was, as might be expected, profuse in his professions of eternal friendship—beware of Germans when they offer that. Now, Judah was hardly convalescent before the weary Welshman, suffering from the effects of his long vigils and unceasing exertions, was in his turn prostrated by a sickness of a most malignant type. With an expert eagerness doing honour to his good nature, Judah offered to reciprocate his kindness by performing like good offices vicariously for him. Taffy made his friend his banker, was thankful, and took to his bed—and Judah took whatever he could put his hands on, which was excusable, being a family failing. For many days the swarthy Semite toiled—at enriching himself—and not a week went by that the working of the Welshman's claim did not show a big loss—to Taffy. At last the sick man's savings were exhausted, and so, when a turn for the better took place in the invalid's condition, a doctor conveyed to him his learned opinion that if he did not go away for a complete change his life would be forfeited. Judah was forthwith commissioned to sell the claim, which he did—to himself, a bargain, too, and one fine afternoon deluded Taffy was put inside a waggon tent, and the oxen carried him to pastures new. The medico, it is needless to remark, was well paid for the warning which caused the departure of the undesirable, and I grieve to add that the ungrateful, despicable Judah, who despoiled his associate and benefactor of his claim, his diamonds,

and his money, thrived in the future exceedingly, and is now a highly respectable metropolitan speculator, who is still as slippery as he was when he conspired with Esculapius to frighten the friend he had robbed into leaving the "Fields." Some years ago Judah got married in London to a young lady whose connections, highly respectable, though lawyer-like, insisted as a *sine quâ non* that any suitors for their girls were bound to be 18 carat as far as their monetary position was concerned—a daub and a big gold frame was what they sought, and considered it a patent of nobility. A few evenings before the nuptial ceremony took place, there was a family gathering at the *fiancée's* house, near Oxford Circus, to view the wedding presents, and, of course, appraise their value. Uxorious uncles, hungry cousins, asthmatical aunts, niggardly nephews, nimble nieces came to see how things would pan out. The thin, thoughtful father, in black, the fat, exulting mother, in red, the charming, blushing bride, in white, were all there full of themselves and the anticipated happy event, which was to multiply their tribe. There arose and lived long a babel of feminine chatter and laughter, when suddenly the important front door ringer pealed loudly (oh, those bells!), and great excitement was evinced when a pompous servant, with the air of one who was giving something away, entered, carrying a dainty box, on which was written, "From a South African Friend." Judah flushed with pleasure as his impatient "intended," all household necks craning, commenced eagerly to open the receptacle. Silence and expectancy reigned supreme! Then there was consternation indeed depicted on some countenances, and eyebrows queerly raised on others, when the young lady held up a pair of handcuffs, which had attached to them a large label, on which was neatly, though plainly, printed the following mystic words:

"You deserve them. Wear them."

CHAPTER XXI

Not so black as he's painted—Love Pirates—The Boys—In the Days of my Youth.

I HAVE found in my life that bad people are sometimes good, also good people are sometimes bad, and there the analogy ends. Round about the time which is so deeply embedded in my memory there sped to Kimberley in search of something not very obvious to his mind a young Israelite, quite prepared to make his fortune if he only knew how to do so. Having spent in utter waste the golden coins which were to have been the seeds of his expectant wealth, he drifted into bad company, and, tumbling from rock to rock down the abyss of desolation, soon found himself gripped by the eager hands of the law as represented mainly by a circle of individuals who were principally concerned in breaking it themselves. I.D.B. is not, I believe, specifically mentioned in the Ten Commandments, an omission which, no doubt, impelled a prime half-dozen of authorised officials to break those that were, of which bribery, corruption, and adultery were the least, and which they wiped off their consciences by religiously going to church every Sunday, and on weekdays "giving beans" to other malefactors at their mercy who happened to be sinners in quite a different direction.

However, *chacun à son goût*; but some tastes become expensive, as young B. found when sentenced to three years' imprisonment for contravening the Diamond Law. He was sent Cape Town way, to work out his sentence on the break-water, which at that period, I recall, meant an appalling experience for even the most hardened. What it was to an English fellow hardly out of his teens can be better imagined than described, more

especially when it fell to B.'s unhappy lot to incur the insuperable aversion of an anti-Semitic warder, who took every opportunity of venting his spleen on the helpless captive, thus making his existence a hell upon earth. But B. was bred of good stuff, for he stood the torture without flinching, and when at length he was a free man realised what liberty meant, turned his back on South Africa's barren path of life, and, settling near London, in a few years worked himself into a good position. The warder, in his turn, some time after the prisoner's release, left Cape Town, and, wandering about the world, found himself stranded in London, without a shilling or a friend, and suffering from an eye complaint which threatened to deprive him of his sight. Half-blind, broke, and almost homeless, he, discovering by accident where B. lived, wrote in his extremity, explaining dire miseries and appealing for help. He received no answer to his piteous letter, and had it not been for the landlady at whose house he lodged, who tended and fed him, and even persuaded a doctor to visit him, the man must have succumbed, or at least been hopelessly blind. When quite convalescent the patient heard from the hostess the name of his real benefactor. It was B., the ex-convict. Kindness sometimes hurts, so, ashamed and abashed, the erstwhile warder, the embodiment of remorse, humbly presented himself before the man he had tortured, and mumbled with averted eyes his apologies, thanks, and praise in pailfuls.

"Sir," vouchsafed the penitent in explanation, "it wasn't altogether my fault. I was brought up from boyhood to detest Jews."

"So I heard long ago," replied B. "But please no more expressions of gratitude. It was the only way to punish you; besides, I want you in future to *see* the error of your ways."

In this connection it must be admitted that she who was known as Miss Marguerite had been over the grass in her time, trampling the white daisies, frightening the black bulls, and had risen through her wit, adventures, and adroitness to the proud position of a

blooming and vivacious barmaid in the busy hub of Kimberley. The neck-or-nothing sort of a daughter of a Cockney greengrocer, she determined, even in England, to soar or tumble, became an eagerly-sought-after chorus lady of divine accomplishments, and having some good looks and no voice, consequently gave up all hopes of becoming a Malibran, so aimed at being a millionairess, and preferred entering in a humble manner, with much gusto and more ambition, on *la vie joyeuse* which innumerable Coral Pearls before her had adorned and illuminated. She was a Circean companion more sparkling than champagne, "ruddier than the cherry, brighter than the berry." Being thus endowed, she attracted magnet-like, and was dubbed "tip-top" by all the connoisseurs of dainty ankles and nape-grown, aggravating curls. As knowing and mischievous as a monkey, she withal was as playfully skittish as an innocent ewe in a green field, so much so that dour Robinson looked as if he'd like to shear her, beaming Beit to float her (which was feasible considering her teeth were full of gold), and blessed Barney to exploit her diamond eyes (possible, too, considering what he did in after years). Doctor Walter, who was more a Doctor of Divinity than of Medicine, swore he could kneel to her; Herman Myers, the storekeeper, his brown eyes aglow and his red lips aflame, bubbled with love; and her fragrance was such (she used buckets of seductive scent) that little Alfred Abrahams had been known to make four separate journeys in one day from Du Toit's Pan to get a "whiff of the briny," as he somewhat inaccurately described her enticing fascination. But lovely Marguerite, though prodigal of herself, was canny, and her refreshing candour, though always sweetly new-born on the tip of her carmine tongue, was suited at all times to either repel or allure. Asked to have a drink she, making a *moue* and opening her eyes warningly, melodiously replies, "Yes; but I am expensive," and then the bubbling golden wine would circle round her heart (if she had one) and stimulate her whimsical wit. To be sure, she was "a bit dear," and so the small world took the singing bird at

her valuation, and she wasn't bad at that. Her *début* upon the Fields was marked by an episode I will relate. When the fair *aventurière* was residing in London it was Mr. Simon Geetler's great good fortune to have fallen under her spell, so when he came to Kimberley and prospered as a cigar purveyor he was inspired with the idea of sending to the homeland for his *inamorata*, and proceeded to carry out the intention by forwarding the Merry Marguerite a draft for eighty pounds to defray her expenses. The luscious lady in due course replied, accepting the invitation with dignity and the money, no doubt, with blushes, but did not exactly, in the true spirit of modesty, specify the date of her departure. Living on clouds of love, Geetler awaited the advent of his fair *amie*, and impulsively confided in his great chum, Mr. Raphael, who, after listening to the rapturous details of the siren's charms and graces, shrugged his shoulders at his friend's misplaced confidence—yet dreamt all night of the white arm of the absent Aspasia. But Geetler, not to be discouraged, exclaimed yearningly, with a sigh:

"I'll soon see my angel."

"Yes," replied Raphael, the unbeliever, "when the clouds roll by."

"Say, rather, when the ship comes in," rejoined his amorous companion.

It happened that on the day frail Marguerite arrived in Kimberley that gushing Geetler was on business bent in the Orange Free State, and after inquiries and bleatings the Lost Lamb from Leicester Square found her way to the presence of the missing traveller's friend, who forthwith, as proud as a turkey, and quite as erect, conducted her to his own maisonette, where the lady's pert conversation and *espièglerie* charmed him while the champagne was enjoyed. So it was tit for tat, and very nice, too. Now, love is something that appeals to everybody, and Raphael was soon an eager and ardent votary of Venus. But the course of true or untrue love never did run smooth, or never will as long as the world lasts and policemen are about. So it came to pass that the same evening the speculative Mr. Geetler, unexpec-

tedly returning to Kimberley, heard of the lady's arrival, and hied to his friend's house, where he discovered (and not for the first time in the history of the world) a dear friend and a best girl in love's dalliance, and billing like two doves on an elm. The cheated cigar merchant, fuming as terribly as a tobacco fiend, was wroth at first, and not choice in his upbraidings, but, being of a philosophical frame of mind, diplomatically accepted from Raphael, after some demur, the eighty pounds he had expended. Then he left the happy pair, sought his couch, where, I am sure, he hugged the pillows in pure desperation as he dreamt his dreams. Somewhat late the day after, encountering Mr. Raphael, who seemed in a somewhat disturbed state, Geetler saluted him with the grace of a shopwalker.

"Simon," said the first-named, as if seeking salvation, "Marguerite has hopped it."

"I know that," replied Geetler, nodding his head in a satisfying manner. "She's at my house."

"Oh, is she?" rejoined Raphael, looking glum, and closing one eye as if peeping through a telescope. "Then give me back my money; you sold her to me!" he asseverated.

"Over the left, she ran away from *me*, now she runs away from *you*."

"Why, you wouldn't keep the money, surely?" queried the other, spreading out his hands deprecatingly.

"No; and I didn't. I gave it to her, and she bought an emerald ring as a reminder how very green you were. In future, Mr. Raphael, get your own girls," advised Geetler.

"I will, but not an angel from heaven, like you did," responded the deceived gallant satirically.

"I wouldn't. Try the other place—they ain't half so hot from there." A week later Mr. Raphael met the ravishing Marguerite, and looking straight in her unabashed face said rebukingly,

"Never mind, Marguerite, every dog has his day."

"Quite true," replied Phryne, with a silvery laugh,

and tossing her glossy curls. "Quite true, naughty boy, and every slut, too."

Barney Barnato at this period was reaping in the shekels, for in good or bad times he made the hours yield their profits, whether as a diamond buyer, a bookmaker, or a gambler. In the Market, it must be mentioned, there were crowds of brokers, all hustling to make a living, and as the diamond trade was principally in the hands of Germans it followed that unless one came reeking from the Fatherland, prepared to grovel and whine, their patronage was practically unobtainable, and at all times only captured by Englishmen through degrading humility. This being the state of affairs, it can easily be surmised that competition was very keen, so when one fine day a fat Hollander claimed acquaintance with Barney, and informed him he had just taken out a diamond license, it followed this true Son of the Dykes from that moment never left the precincts of the office, so determined was he to get a start in his new vocation. Now, our Dutch friend had been a grocer in Whitechapel, and had never seen a rough diamond until he came to Kimberley. Barney, getting tired of having the spicy man hanging morning and noon around his place, one day, to get rid of him, gave the ambitious broker a small parcel of bort and chips to sell on commission. The delighted Hollander, in ecstasy, clasped the parcel to his bosom, and with all the speed his proportions would allow trotted off to make hansel. In about an hour the erstwhile grocer, his substantial paunch shaking like a gallon of calf's foot jelly, came running, perspiring and breathless, into the office.

"What's up?" inquired the alarmed Barney, thinking the parcel had been lost.

"Oh, Mr. Barnato," he gasped, "I've sold the tiamonds, but they're half a *pound* short."

A broad grin illuminated Barney's face as he heaved a sigh and remarked, "My friend, my friend, remember you've given up the cheese trade, you mean half a *carat*. Get the cheque, go over to the Blue Posts, have what you like, and put it down to me." He did, *nom*

d'une pipe, ordering three cigars and six laager beers, and thus drowned his first principal in prodigal extravagance.

The "Boys" exist everywhere, not only in Great Britain, but in her different Colonies, and at times constitute quite a distinct breed and class of men as compared with the Hooligans of London, the Larrikins of Sydney, or the Apaches of Paris. They are, as a rule, the overflow of great cities, wastrels, whose aim it is to live without labour, whilst enjoying the good things of life, but to keep windward of the law if possible. Therefore, as Kimberley ripened with the times, a small brigade of the "boys" established themselves as a class of the community, and were recognised as what they were, and in divers instances felt proud of the honour they had achieved. Many of them were Germans, Poles, and East End Semites of most unwholesome types, whilst other were middle-class failures, and not a few broken-down gentlemen, who, having neither profession nor ability, and lacking the courage to be openly dishonest, were forced by circumstances to live the best way they could. Unfit to groan at a desk, incapable of standing behind a counter, and devoid of pastoral qualities, they drifted into the Black Legion, and on the face of it appeared to lead pleasant though uneven lives. But, for all that, not all the recruits of this rowdy regiment were utterly bad. Some of them were always willing to put their hands in their pockets to help their fellows—when not engaged helping themselves. But even in this choice corps the well-bred men never prospered to any extent, for when business was slack and "mugs" were scarce the members would prey on each other, with results easily guessed. The most vicious, however, who loved to sin in any form, had short, though merry, careers, for drink or the prison soon claimed them as their own. It was these last who dearly welcomed any more decent companions to their company, and became presumptuous in their society. Although notorious as sharpers and crooks, it was remarkable how eager the citizens of Kimberley were to gamble with them. I remember an unsophisticated

young fellow being rooked out of every penny he possessed by a picked crew, and one of them (to whom he had done some favour) the same night inviting him to a game and purposely permitting the fleeced one to recoup most of his losings. They were not, indeed, all llke that. A prominent leader of the gang, well learned in the scoundrels' primer, had a noisy, quarrelsome brother, who was a complete and disastrous failure in the eyes of his distinguished relative, as he could neither ring in a die, palm a card, pitch the broads, nor lumber a mug. So when a select party of these chevaliers found themselves in Cape Town at the time Sir Bartle Frere opened an exhibition there, the young hopeful tried picking pockets as a last resource, and proved himself so highly successful, farming golden ground, that his delighted brother who was, like Brer Rabbit, lying low, exclaimed, as a well-filled pocketbook reached his grasping hands, "There you are, there you are. Didn't I tell you if you only kept yourself quiet you would be always able to make a respectable living." And with these sacred sentiments sounding in his ears, the tripping sinner started on a congenial career. Some years after, when the railway was half-completed to Kimberley, an unusually strong contingent of "boys" honoured a newly-established station with their patronage. The refreshment place had been recently opened by a slim, ruddy-jowled, Dutchman, who, no doubt having some experience, armed himself, as he thought, at all points against deception. So when the place was visited by his unwelcome customers he, particularly on the alert, refused to part with any lemonade until he had sixpence in hand for the liquor and a like amount for each bottle (returnable on delivery). A roaring business was done while it lasted, but the Dutchman had forgotten he had left outside a barrel full of discarded bottles, and it was only after his guests had gone Slim Pete, purpling with rage, discovered that he had not only bought all the "empties" at sixpence a ñob, but had parted with half his lemonade for nothing and his good coin for bad change which they carried on purpose. And so for many a month after his Palace

of Delight was as a sealed book to the Children of Israel.

In the earlier pages of this book I narrated the circumstances of the arrest of Mr. Tucker, M.L.A., for illicit diamond selling, and pointed out at the same time how very unfair the judgment seemed which condemned an honourable man to a term of imprisonment for what was really a technical offence. It is hardly necessary to repeat that the prosecution, to my great regret, compelled me to appear as a witness against him, and that mainly through my unwilling testimony the gentleman was sent to gaol. Mr. Tucker had been a friend of mine, and his imprisonment was a grievous blow, and quite decided me never again to be a deponent if I could possibly help it in an I.D.B. case, a resolution which I successfully adhered to during the remaining years I sojourned on the Diamond Fields. The above explanation is necessary to enable the reader to understand my subsequent conduct, which impelled me to a series of tribulations and adventures which will be found so varied as probably to induce one to fancy that I have at times drawn on my imagination in the telling of them. Let me at once say that I will nothing exaggerate, but simply write a plain unvarnished tale of a youngster who, through misguided discernment, obstinacy, and generosity, took the wrong turning, with dire results to himself and his fortunes.

In my fifty-sixth year I look back to those stirring episodes of my life with some pride and pleasure, and wonder many a time how I ever survived the ordeal which my youth and inexperience fashioned for me. The story I am about to relate is known to many old Kimberley residents now alive, and I recollect long ago when describing some of the incidents to the late R. W. Murray, he begged me to write them for his journal. It will be found in a few instances that I have, for obvious reasons, suppressed names, and although it is thirty years ago since the events I am about to recall took place, they are for the most part as vivid in my memory as if they had happened last Christmas. To clear the ground it is essential to observe that a series of articles entitled "Gay Young Creatures," which I contributed to the *Du Toit's*

Pan Herald, had created for me a number of enemies, which was a natural result considering I had lampooned certain individuals whose characteristics were particularly attractive to an ink-fed quill of a goose, or the feathers of that interesting and festive bird plentifully besmeared with tar of the deepest black and most pungent odour. Amongst the gentlemen I had mortally offended were Mr. Arthur Wellesley Davis and Mr. David Symons. The first-named held brevet rank as an aristocrat of uncertain moods, vindictive humours and ungainly figure, but, like our own Royal Crook-backed Richard, became a terrible chap if one put a straw or a lady out of his way; the other was a harmless, good-natured fellow enough, who in a weak moment was persuaded to do me the ill he did. I have long since forgiven him his share of the transaction, and probably this whole-hearted assurance will be acceptable when he reads these lines in Johannesburg, where he is now located.

But to the gist of the tale. A healthy, careless youth, a little over twenty years of age, is not expected to be a paragon of virtue, and I, it must be confessed, had all the weaknesses of adolescence, and a singularly besetting one—I dearly loved the ladies, even those who were not invested with purity and whiteness. Woman is a sacred and joyous being, and it is clearly one of the best and pleasantest of all religions to worship at her shrine. Who that is worth a dump has not at times loved and lost—his watch? What deep-lined and saddened man is there whose heart, if human, has not clung in the past to some glossy-haired Venus, nut-brown, black, or yellow, and who now, with his tired feet warm upon the fender, does not remember his old pleasures, and in thinking of them feel but one regret—he could not have the golden time twice over? As a diamond buyer my vocation took me to the four camps, and I speedily became acquainted with numerous families whose livelihood depended on digging and searching for diamonds. Some of the delvers had wives, some daughters, and some mistresses of climatic virtues. Many of these people were at their wits' ends

to make both ends meet, and I have often, when buying their finds, given much over the price on purpose to assist them, without, as it were, putting them under any apparent obligation.

One unfortunate day, going on my rounds, I chanced to call on a married couple with whom I was particularly friendly. The man was a licensed digger, and at this especial moment very hard up. He showed me a spotted round stone, which I purchased for thirty-five pounds, although I knew it was not worth twenty. The next morning, in my office, as usual, I made up my diamonds, and distributed the different parcels to the brokers I employed, so that they could offer them for sale in the open market. The single spotted diamond I entrusted to Johnny Swaebe to dispose of for me, and the first dealer he happened to call upon in the furtherance of his business was David Symons, for whose edification he opened out his gems of rare variety, and in due course offered my diamond for sale. Symons examined it, and there and then averred he recognised it as one he had lost. The broker instantly, as was proper, revealed the name of his principal, the glad tidings were at once communicated to "Hoppy," who came limping up as fast as a jackass in the Derby, and Plantagenet-like, ordered me to instant execution. Information and *douceurs* were given to the detectives, and Messrs. Symons and Davis were busy with the police to compass my undoing. Swaebe meanwhile had apprised me of what had happened, and I immediately hurried to the seller of the stone to hear what he had to say. His explanation, though clear enough, was not convincingly satisfying, but as he was a licensed claim-holder, I was perfectly within my rights, and as safe from the law as if I had bought from Beit. But the man's wife, at our conference, developed an awful state of fear. She was a gentle, comely creature, with an infant at her breast, and implored me to leave Kimberley for a few weeks, when it all would blow over. I cannot enter into all the details (What is the use of stirring up the ashes of a dead fire?), but like a young fool—having Tucker's fate in my mind's eye—

I allowed myself to be persuaded by her tears (perhaps affection also), and promised to go away. There is no doubt that the lady had great influence over me, and that I was much attached to her. Vaguely, too, I thought, perhaps, there might be something against these people, if so, they could quit the town, and as I had acted quite lawfully, I had nothing to fear for myself on my return. At all events, for the sake of the woman, I was determined at whatever cost not to be a witness against the man, even if it happened he had contravened the diamond law. So an hour after my interview I visited a Dutch friend, and got from him a letter addressed to some Boer farmer relations of his living in Clocolan, which is the borderland of the Basuto country, and called the Conquered Territory. Another individual whom I trusted promised to write to me under an assumed name to Bloemfontein, and tell me any news. That same dark night I wished my old pal Lew Woolf good-bye, and galloped out into the darkness—for a week-end.

Dark and cheerless enough it was as I trotted out of Kimberley, and more so when, after a couple of hours' ride, I lost my way. However, I soon got on a good road, and made up my mind to stick to it till the morning. There were very few stars twinkling, and being quite unused to travelling on horseback after nightfall, my first experience of nocturnal rambling was decidedly unpleasant; but still I held on my way. I was mounted on a big white mare, and carried nothing but a riding whip and an overcoat strapped to the saddle. As I certainly had no clear idea as to my whereabouts, and the heavy, bilious moon did not seem inclined to help me, I thought it best to trust to the instinct of the mare, so let her have a loose rein, and continued my journey to no definite destination. I had intended to strike in the direction of Bloemfontein, but the Fates and the weather were against me. After about four hours' riding I knew my mount had wandered off the road again—as I could hear her feet crunching into the veldt grass—so I dismounted, detached my overcoat, off-saddled, and, hobbling the nag, prepared to rest until

the dawn, making a pillow of my saddle, a blanket of my coat, and soon was fast asleep. When I awoke, bedewed and shivering with the cold, the croaking of the frogs and other sounds of animal life gave me good-morning, as if they were asking how I was enjoying myself. I stood up and looked around, scaring some screaming birds which flew affrighted over a melancholy pond, as if I was the very devil, and far off, a couple of miles away, I could espy the white mare standing clear against the horizon. There was no help for it, so I started to catch her and bring her to her duties. After a miserable trudge I found myself near to the object of my search, but the animal positively refused to let me capture her. If I went to the right she would hobble with marvellous celerity to the left. At last, after much difficulty, I seized her, and proceeded to make for the spot where lay my riding gear. Being quite unlearned in veldt life, I did not then realise how difficult it is to find a saddle in the open within a radius of two miles. For hours and hours I searched, and was giving up my task as hopeless, when unexpectedly, to my great joy, I stumbled across it. Hastily I saddled up, but so inexperienced a traveller was I, and so helpless without a companion, that I could not guess in which direction the road lay, and whether I had to turn to the right or the left. I felt there was nothing of the Livingstone or the Stanley about me, but the sun, rising golden yellow, beckoned me with its glistening beams, so, giving my white mare a well-deserved whip-cut for the trouble she had caused, I galloped towards it, to the wonderment of sundry springbok and blesbok, and the consternation of a family of merecats, which scampered off wondering, perhaps, what Nimrod was amongst them. I rode for a couple of hours or so, the magic weather breathing its incense into my heart, and clearing my brain. After passing streams flowing gently in the dawn light, I came across some slow-footed cattle, their wistful heads bent to the glowing pasture, and near by I espied a cluster of small houses, with smoky chimneys, which wafted to my olfactory nerves that strange odour peculiar in the early morn to South African villages or

farms. As I neared the settlement I knew I was in the Antipodes of Mirth, for I recognised the dorp as Boshof (near which, in the late Boer War, fell Captain Patrick Campbell and the French Colonel, De Villebois Mareuil), a sleepy, tiny place, as sad-looking as a churchyard.

Boshof at this time was remarkable in the eyes of the diamond-fielders through a fact and a circumstance. The fact was that it boasted a splendid billiard table in its only hotel, attendance on which was the sole evening recreation vouchsafed to the good burghers of this Orange Free State town. After dinner the greengrocer, the crimson butcher, the white baker, the chocolate policeman, and the red postmaster would every evening watch an exciting game between two sporting citizens, and go to their beds fully believing they had been indulging in a wild orgie. The circumstance was that it had harboured for a couple of years a man named Folger, who had run away from Kimberley when his company was particularly desired in the Diamond Capital. Folger was a decent young man, a once gay dog, and belonged to a good English family, and on the many occasions I visited Boshof I never failed to see him sitting on the hotel stoep, melancholy and lonely, smoking a pipe, or whittling a stick. Nobody spoke to the solitary one, and it was really pathetic to notice the half-ashamed, half-wistful, and defiant manner in which he blinked at his erstwhile Kimberley friends, who often visited the hotel for refreshment, and shrugged their shoulders at him as of no account. And thus for years, a target for the malicious, did fugitive Folger bask in the sun, and become one of the curiosities of Boshof. But to return to my own woes. I made a long *détour* round the town, and ultimately off-saddled in a shady nook near some water, and proceeded to make my toilet and break my fast, for I had luckily taken the precaution to bring some arrowroot biscuits and a tin of preserved meat. After eating I rested and smoked, finding my pipe a consolation for many worries, the mare with her pink nose buried in some deep grass partaking of the luscious things of the veldt.

Suddenly remembering I had a letter, I thought to read it, but, search as I might, the missive was not to be found. Slowly I saddled the roadster, and in an irresolute mood cantered away, not knowing quite what to do, and half making up my mind to return to Kimberley.

As I was speeding over the veldt a mounted man came in view as suddenly as if he and his horse had sprung from the bowels of the earth. He made towards me, and as he passed sang out, "Good morning, Mr. Cohen." I did not know the traveller from Adam, though I studied his features, but it made me think how very small this large world of ours is after all. Puzzled and thoughtful, I rode along on a good road for a few miles, and on my left noticed a substantial Dutch farmhouse of benignant and hospitable aspect, which was erected some distance from the highway. It was surrounded by those beautiful, tall, and stately trees characteristic of the better class of Boer homesteads, which form, too, such a verdant picture to the eye as the gentle breeze in the tree tops makes its own music as it sways them to and fro. I had left the pleasant farm about half-a-mile behind, when, happening to turn my head, I distinctly saw two mounted policemen riding abreast at full gallop in my wake. Acting on the impulse of the moment, I turned the mare towards the open country on my right, and getting out a clasp knife, cut my overcoat clear, and then made helter-skelter for the veldt. Away she tore over ant-heaps, boulders, and holes, until there loomed in front of me a long bank of *débris*. I could not see what was behind and as it was impossible to stop the animal in time, I put her to it. With a bound she clambered up and cleared a wide, deep rut which ran behind. Pulling the mare up, I looked in the direction of the house with the trees, and sure enough the two policemen were making a bee-line for it. Examining the broken ground I found the extensive excavations had been made by prospectors, and that if my gee-gee had made an attempt to jump it a few yards higher up she must inevitably have fallen. Having thanked my lucky stars, I recovered my overcoat, and resolutely set my

face to the north, so as to reach the Vaal River, and pass into the Transvaal, which had been recently annexed by the British. It was late in the afternoon when I touched, somewhere near Zoutpan's Drift, the historic banks of that river, and found, to my dismay, that the recent rains had so swollen the waters that it appeared impossible to cross it. I tried two or three places without success, but at length, discovering a likely spot, I essayed to get over, and had not advanced far into the stream when the current swept the mare off her legs, and she commenced to swim. I would have given worlds to have got back, but it was too late, and after the worst quarter-of-an-hour I ever had in my life, I, drifting with the tide, landed with great difficulty at a considerable distance lower down the river.

CHAPTER XXII

The History of a Week—The Norfolk Patriot—Mr. and Mrs. Othello—A Son of the Soil.

It was only after riding a considerable distance over the veldt that I at length struck a kind of path, and went on, hoping to discover a farm where shelter and refreshment could be obtained. The sun was sinking slowly to rest, as after giving up my quest as hopeless, I espied a habitation in the distance. Approaching it, the place outlined an inhospitable and forlorn invitation, but perceiving a man standing on the stoep my hopes rose with his appearance, and I cantered up to the door, dismounted, and greeted the owner of a nondescript Boer winkle of uncertain liability. He was a tall, ungainly individual, dressed in corduroys, and his sandy hair surmounted a freckled visage, the thin veins on which marked innumerable red tracks to his poppy nose. Taking no notice of salutations, this polite son of the soil continued puffing his pipe, and, regarding me intently for a couple of minutes, suddenly ceased smoking, and ejaculating "Holy Virgin, it's a Jew!" he, pointing a frigid finger, disappeared inside his domicile, banging the door behind him. I confess I felt non-plussed, as in all my wanderings I had never known a Transvaaler who was a Catholic—due, in a measure, I think, to the fact that so few Irishmen settled north of the Colony; indeed, nearly all the Boers I had met belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church. Somewhat ruffled at this unceremonious treatment, I knocked at the entrance, prepared to prove to the proprietor that if I was a Jew I was a harmless one; but the gentleman would have none of me. Once only,

when I shouted I wanted to buy something, he cautiously opened the top part wide enough to show his carrot nose, and cried, "Voetsak!" which is a highly expressive Dutch word meaning "slip off." Feeling it useless to try and convert the heathen to a seemly sense of the laws of hospitality and commerce, I once more bestrode my unwilling mare, hurt that the man should have thought I was beyond conversion. As in these salad days I was not in the slightest degree Semitic in features, I could only conjecture that the fellow had met me on the Diamond Fields.

Sad enough I felt riding away, the evening closing in, and the arid plains as bare of trees as my soul was of comfort. The wind sighed mournfully, emphasising the apparent certainty that there was nothing in front of me but the boulder-strewn veldt for a lodging-house, and no blanket but the sky. So on I went as fast as my mare could trot, knowing the lack of twilight in these regions, and my heart gave a jump as there came in view, situated between two vleys, a homestead of hopeful proportions. The tired steed seemed to interpret my thoughts, for she answered to the bridle pull, and ambled along in hopes of redemption. It was not long before I reached my objective, and in front of same stood two full-blooded Boers, each armed with a useful specimen of the long bamboo whip used for driving oxen, before whom I pulled up and gave them a merry evening. They wasted no words, but on hearing the accent in which I spoke instanter set about lashing the blameless nag, and drove me from the farm. I felt myself a stranger indeed in the land over which the Union Jack floated, and continued my way as the shades of night were rapidly falling. The stars commenced to show themselves, and blinked like a London barmaid on the make; but the splendours of Heaven hardly interested me, my reflections being allied to mere mundane matters. From excessive riding I was sore in every limb, to say nothing of being skinned in my tenderest parts, the mare, too, was dead-beat, and stumbled on with her head bent to the ground, and like her master was almost famished with hunger. I could

not smoke, as the Vaal River had ruined my matches and tobacco, and felt that the only thing to be done was to choose the best coign of vantage adjacent, and rest until morning. Ruminating on my troubles, present and to come, I travelled on some six or seven miles, and was preparing to arrange for the night when in front I discerned something that looked like the walls of a house. Being tired, weak, and dispirited, I fancied at first my vision had deceived me, but pressing ahead, soon found myself, as far as could be distinguished through the gloom, near a humble homestead. The mare threw up her head impatiently, and when she got opposite the building, stopped, and pricked up her ears. No lights were visible, but through the night air came wafted the strains of a squeaky violin playing some old English melody. Alone and friendless in this strange country, the tune, rackety as it was, touched the chords of my heart, brought a lump to my throat, and held me as if spell-bound. Quavering and uncertain, the sacred cantata continued, and I, making sure it was not a dream, advanced towards the entrance and paused. I was never particularly fond of music, but this instrument gave forth the most alluring strains I ever heard and made me dubious how to act, the night wind playing with my coat, and tucking up my tired horse. In a hopeless mood, borne of past experiences, I hesitated long before knocking timidly at the entrance. The violinist ceased playing, and I rapped a second time; the door was opened, and disclosed inside a flood of radiance to my blinking eyes. To be sure, there were only two home-made candles on the table, but the uncertain light they displayed was redolent of comfort and good cheer as they threw their irregular rays on the old musician, who sat by a fire, and the figure of a graceful girl, with widened eyes, who had opened the portal to me. The room I saw was certainly not luxurious. The brown dented walls and floor were plastered with cow dung, the furniture consisted of a few rough articles, some odd strong chairs, and the rafters were adorned with strips of biltong and mealies which hung uninvitingly to the gaze, whilst

whip sticks stood in every corner. Yet I seemed on the outskirts of a palace. In my very best Dutch I explained that I was a belated traveller, and sought shelter. He looked me up and down, peering from under his hand, and said,

"You are English?"

"Yes," I replied, as if confessing a crime.

"I knew that," he answered, putting down his violin and rising. "Come in. You are welcome."

Calling a Kaffir, my mare, on his instructions, was led away, and soon the writer was seated before a good meal of mutton, mealies, and milk. I learnt he was a native of Norfolk, and a Loyalist, and his eyes glowed as he described how he had suffered through his patriotism, and that the country was seething with dissatisfaction. It appeared that, the Crimean War over, he came to Africa with the German Legion, and after many vicissitudes, had settled in the Transvaal. This German Legion, he told me, consisted of 2,300 men, and was recruited by a Teuton at a cost to the British Government of a hundred pounds per head. The Colonel who raised the corps, netting £70,000 as a reward of his labours, returned in due time to Europe, and losing all at Monaco, shot himself through the head in the place where his brains ought to have grown. I have never met a more ardent Englishman than this simple patriot who carried in his worn heart so much love of Motherland. Far into the night I sat talking until I could keep my eyes open no longer, and then he ordered a shake down to be made up in the room where I had dined, and that night I slept as if I had drunk a bottle of chloroform.

When the sunbeams played upon my face next morning I was still fast asleep, and only awoke when my host brought a cup of coffee. I thought I could have slept for ever, so tired and sore did I feel; but there was no help for it, so I arose and donned my outer garments, which had been dried. Before breakfast I smoked and chatted with my good Samaritan, and strolled around the farm, which was of the humblest kind. He spoke of England and his native town with such pathos and

affection as to make my soul go out to him. I knew nothing of Norfolk, so could give no entertainment regarding it, and his description of London, and questionings thereof were so quaint and antiquated that I could hardly follow them. He recalled Temple Bar and other places that I had forgotten with a tender interest quite indescribable. I asked if he ever intended to see the Old Country again. A sad, wistful look came over the good man's features as he answered:

"What needs? I see part of it every morning—my daughter and I."

"Yes, in your dreams?" I put in interrogatively.

"Not at all, not at all, my friend; in reality," he rejoined quickly.

I thought he was wandering, and my puzzled gaze showed what was passing in my mind, for a shrewd smile wrought over his face, and, rising, he went to a rough sideboard on which stood a small stand protected by a glass shade. Lifting the cover, he handled tenderly a square half-foot of hard earth, and said proudly, as he passed it to me:

"Norfolk, young fellow, real Norfolk, and it's going to help cover me when I go under. Ah, you never love your country till you lose it," he added mournfully. I was silent before this Englishman's adoration. However, I stayed with this king of an old boy until midday, and, enquiring the lay of the country, travelled with no definite purpose in the direction of Lichtenburg.

After a twelve mile ride the stiffness wore off, and, taking all things into consideration, I felt in pretty good spirits. Encouraged by the reception given me at my last resting-place, I tried another farmhouse, but the Dopper, in conventional mood, requiring me to eat upon the stoep like a beggar, I preferred not to sacrifice my independence for a pot of pottage, and as my English friend had informed me there resided some thirty miles from his abode a decent Boer, decided to trust to Providence. It was, however, always dangerous to rely on the accuracy of distances, as calculated by residents of the Transvaal, for while one man would reckon the spell he takes on horseback at six miles an hour, his neigh-

bour would fix his estimate from ox waggons at three, and time not being of much value to Boer or Africander farmers, they generally confused the two computations, with the result that the enquirer at the finish would be left utterly out of his reckoning. So I sped on until the afternoon waned, and began to sprout a belief that each day, as far as hardships were concerned, was very much like the preceding one. The wind, too, suddenly changed, ominous clouds commenced to gather, and a north-wester started to blow, accompanied by a pest of dust, which no doubt had travelled thousands of miles from the hot dry deserts. This horrible compound was charged with minute particles of salt sand, which inflame the eyes, irritate the skin, scorch the lips, and make the throat dry as a limekiln. Half blinded by the hurricane of dust, I hurried on as the darkening clouds omitted weird shapes of forked lightning, and the thunder rumbled in the distance. Seeing no shelter, I made for a space between two hills, where, dismounting, I got close to a huge polygon boulder. Then the wind dropped, and silence reigned for a short time, broken only by the abrupt appearance of heavy drops of rain, adding to the desolation which crept over the cheerless and funereal veldt. Suddenly thunder pealed as if all the artillerymen in Heaven or Hell were in mutiny, and then for hundreds of miles round the country was one mass of dazzling eye-aching coruscations. Terrifying it all was, but nothing compared to the Satanic gloom which ensued, and which was too horrible to describe. After every electric orgie the darkness became denser, and it was something of a relief as the lightning, illuminating the region in all quarters, gave birth to vicious, long, continuous, green flashes, varied only by fiery forked darts of scintillating gleams, which seemed to wreck the sky, and threatened to smite me stone blind. As if all the elements were rioting, the clouds rained as if the seas were above, and had broken loose.

In a few minutes I was drenched to the skin, and stood helpless and almost dazed with fear. Without a moment's warning a deluge of hailstones, as big as bantams' eggs, followed, striking like stones. From

the boulder some shelter was afforded, but if I had not stripped the mare of her saddle, with which I protected my head, I verily believe they would have knocked me down. When the storm commenced to subside I replaced the leather appurtenance, and, aided by the intermittent flashes, slowly made back to the road. The blackness was appalling, and the lightning a blessing in disguise. Mounting the unlucky animal, which was rolling about like a stage sailor, I continued my way for hours on this vague wilderness, the electric fluid showing me a path. One could almost clutch the darkness after a Bellonic blaze had passed, and once after a particularly vivid visitation I perceived far on the veldt a small building, which looked like the apex of a cocoa-nut. Any shelter was better than none, so in desperation I made for the harbour at every successive flash of lightning, hurrying thither. When I reached it, I found a diminutive conical hut, built of large stones. At the entrance, carelessly fixed, was a sheet of quite new corrugated iron, as used for building in Kimberley, and, to my surprise, through its interstices, I perceived a feeble glimmer inside the hovel. I knocked, but got no answer, and as necessity makes the greatest coward brave, I pulled back the galvanized tin and peered in the Avernus. As I hope to have salvation, I had never looked on so uncanny a sight. It was a filthy, frowsy, reeking dwelling, consisting of one small, round space, the smoky atmosphere lighted by something that was certainly not a candle. Seated at a dim fire of cow dung sat a hideous Koranna, by whose side huddled a still more horrible yellow-featured female, of which tribe I knew not. The beetle-browed man seemed any age from fifty to a hundred as he sat spluttering over a daga pipe, which pastime also enlightened the lady, who was certainly as old as Methuselah. Around each of their heads was a foul rag, and their bodies were half-covered with a few dirty tatters. The Black Marat, and the woman could have passed for the Devil's Own. They never stirred as I entered except to take their pipes from shaly lips, and move uneasily bright, treacly, unlashed eyes to and fro. I spoke. They gave no sign except

to smoke and gaze at the dying embers. Through the storm I did not intend to travel, so I popped outside, brought in the saddle, but left the bridle on the mare, whose devoted head and drowsy eyes looked into the weird stone cabin as the rain pitilessly fell on her body. And so, wet through, I sat inside that hut all night, determined not to sleep, holding my bridle in one hand, and a pipe in the other. I watched, they watched; I smoked, they smoked; they blinked, and so did I, through the dusk. Never a word in all those hours of discomfort did I utter, and not a click did I hear from them. Slowly the time dragged on, and when the blessed dawn commenced to break my cold and trembling body yearned to it. Quickly and surely the new day blossomed when once it was born, and, stiff and sore though I felt, I gaily stood up to welcome the goddess of the morning, nestling in tinted wisps of cloud. My host and hostess still were silent and immovable as the Sphinx, whilst I shivered ague-like as I saddled my suffering beast, and then going once more to the abode of wretchedness offered the Karonna a silver coin. He made almost the first sign of intelligence, glanced suspiciously to and fro, like a monkey does at the Zoo when one offers a nut, and then snatched the money, peering at me distrustfully the while with his horrid, treacherous, ophthalmic eyes. Never having neglected the ladies, black, white, or saffron, since I knew their value, I tended Madame Blackamoor a shilling. She seized it like a wild cat. In a second Mr. Othello seized his chocolate Desdemona by the throat, and I left them fighting for the Queen's miniature as vigorously as if they had been recruited in Trafalgar Square.

The angry sky of the day before was now peaceful and a beautiful deep blue and white, like a garden of forget-me-nots and lilies, therefore I journeyed gaily on until I came to a lucent pond, which, serving as basin and mirror, with the aid of handkerchief as towel, soon made me fairly presentable. Without a doubt I would have turned back and ridden towards Kimberley had not the uncertainty of what had happened since my

departure thence made me irresolute, so I went on for a couple of miles, when I dismounted to enjoy an ambrosial repose in the sun. I inhaled the cheer of a glorious morn, and though there was nothing to distract attention but the vagaries of the ants and movements of game far away, there is a special and fascinating charm about South African scenery in its primeval solitude and silence, its impressive solemnity and isolation, as it appears in untouched and primitive simplicity just as Nature fashioned, clothed, and adorned it, which attracts one. Poetry and philosophy are hardly condiments to fill you, however much they may feed your brain, so I resisted any inclination to drop into rhythm but scouted away in search of breakfast. Being, in a manner, stranded on the veldt, I found this difficult, and the afternoon had mellowed ere I chanced upon a dull red building standing sentinel on the high road. I knew at once it was a public resting-place for man and beast, and my hunger driving all precautions to the winds impelled me to seek its shelter.

On entering the enticing edifice I perceived the main room had been turned into a shop, on the shelves of which were displayed fancy labelled tins of jams with whiskers, condensed milk with beards, sardines with shady pasts, black rolls of Boer tobacco, variegated cotton handkerchiefs, rusty knives, and fly-blown biscuits which would have delighted the eyes of Mr. Pecksniff. Seeing nobody about, I, with the air of Robert Macaire, rapped on the counter two or three times, and soon appeared a spotty-faced, drowsy man, who seemed to regard me as an intruder of great audacity. On my ordering refreshment and stabling, he called in a wearisome manner for help, in response to which a slatternly half-caste woman, of rich tortoiseshell complexion, and a bare-footed tatterdemalion nigger hopped up, the last leading away the mare as if he was too tired to work. In a short time I sat down to some greasy cold meat, a fowl which had evidently died from starvation, a few crabbed apples, a large bottle of Bass, and a small jar of pickles. But I was almost famished, so, bad as the fare was, I ate the

mutton like Gargantua, the apples like Eve, and the fowl after the fashion of the erudite Dr. Johnson at "The Cheshire Cheese." That the advent of a customer was an unusual occurrence was apparent, for the storekeeper's wife peered in at me, the brown Hebe, buxom breasted and dusty haired, giggled, and the nigger ever and anon scratched his dirty woolly head at the door. As it would not do under the circumstances to buy food to carry away I put the remainder of the fowl and some bread and meat in my pocket, neatly folded in a sheet of newspaper. Having finished my repast, I sauntered to the counter, bought some handkerchiefs, tobacco and matches, and demanded the score, the amount of which would have "done me well" for one day's board and lodging in London. The mare was saddled, waiting, and I was departing when the serving-girl whispered something to the proprietor, who at once addressing me, said:

"Your tiffin is four shillings." I gave him another coin, when the partner of his bosom imparted further information of a sinister character, for he thrilled under its effects and ejaculated, "The tiffin is five shillings," to which I, meek as a lamb, consented and dubbed up. I had my foot in the stirrup, and all good humoured when mine host, who in the meantime had visited the eating-room, advanced hastily, and scanning me minatorily gasped, "The tiffin is six shillings." Feeling that the unfortunate meal might run into thousands, I mounted with some alacrity after furnishing the third requisition. The ragged groom regarded me with some admiration as having performed a gastronomic feat which he would like to emulate, the tousled-haired wench muttered, "I was (bein) sterk" (strong), the concerned hostess said "I ought to see the doctor," and the unsatisfied landlord asked me in satiric mood as a personal favour to let him know next time I wandered his way, as he'd kill a drove of oxen for my special delectation. You may believe me or not, but it is the stomach that rules the man, his heart, his liver, and his brains, and it being thus I cantered away as blithe as a bird, drunk with the air of spring. A fine afternoon

greeted me, a good flavoured pipe cheered me, and after covering twenty or thirty miles, with two rests of an hour each, I passed the night on the veldt in beautiful weather, as free from care as a sandboy. When I awoke in the early morn I had no difficulty in recovering my saddle after securing the mare, as I marked the place where I left it with an outspread handkerchief, and a white square cannot be easily missed on the veldt. The next two days and nights I rode and slept in the open, subsisting on the food I had in my pocket, never stopping at farm house or hotel. And the times were not unhappy, the sun shone, the moon was bright, the nag strong and well—as I off-saddled after every two hours' ride—and if sometimes I felt tired in the evening's gloom I would sit woman-like on the mare's back and sing the refrains of old comic songs I remembered in London, my especial favourites being Leybourne's "Champagne Charlie," Fred French's "When these Old Clothes were New," and Vance's "Slap Bang."

On the third morning after leaving the Red House, I found the remaining portion of the meat I carried had gone bad and rancid, and on trying to smoke my briar discovered that it, and the tobacco, were tainted. Never shall I forget the fearful odour they emitted, or the dreadful taste, and it is a fact that from that day to this I have never smoked a pipe. But something always turns up to aid a Child of Israel, and soon after the vitiation of supplies and poisoning of pipe, far away in the veldt I saw a congerie of huts, and to them I hastened. They proved to be a native village or small town. At the entrance a few cattle, a pony or two, pigs and sheep, were leading lives of riotous living and independence, and treated my advent with the utmost contempt and nonchalance, a reception which was not accorded by three or four naked piccaninnies, who scuttled into the maze of cabins to carry the news to those in authority. I had not long to wait before a quite smart young Kaffir appeared, and greeted me without any confusion or surprise. He was dressed in a dark green jacket, sported a sombrero, on which was jauntily stuck a red feather, and dangling by his side

was a bugle, the whole get-up reminding me of Robin Hood or a Margate minstrel. I could not speak his language, but he evidently understood I was a traveller, and invited me inside the Kraal. The interior was orderly, and the clean, carefully-built reed huts, arranged in rows, were graced by swarthy damsels and matrons, who squatted at their entrances, and near them crawled a rising generation on all fours, one of whom was being suckled by a docile ewe, which seemed quite content to act as foster mother. Higher up the village a marriage festivity was, I imagined, taking place. The men were doing a kind of apache dance, in which they were imitated by a round dozen of chocolate-coloured coryphées, all as graceful and gyrating as Genée, as alluring and unadorned as attractive Maud Allan, but emitting a perfume peculiar to strong and lusty goats. Gallons of native beer, made from Kaffir corn and grain, resembling millet, were drunk, and I regret to say I imbibed some with unfortunate results. An old, white-haired chief, apparelled in a racing coat and a flamingo-decked topper, was sitting under a bush enjoying himself as if he were a City magnate, whilst by his side was an enormous snuff and butter oleaginous lady, sporting a pair of men's riding gloves, dressed in a gay picture hat and an old English blouse of once fashionable make and shape, who at times did a *pas seul* "on her own" as perfectly as the polished Pelissier. I was also offered some wild honey, of which I partook, but cannot say I enjoyed the delicacy. The honey, I learnt, was procured much farther north through the aid of the far-famed honey bird, a small, grey-plumed creature, with a red beak, about as big as a sparrow, which is held in particular regard by the Kaffirs. This little intelligent feathered animal hunts about in woods searching for the nests of wild birds, and when it discovers one it waits for the approach of a man—like a lady on Waterloo Bridge—and then flutters in his face, leading him to the sweet mine, expecting and obtaining its share of the plunder, which is left in a comb filled with honey, on the nearest bush. Not the meanest Kaffirs would cheat the bird of its full rights, believing

that if they did so, another time it would lead them to the lair of a lion or the home of a snake.

After staying at the kraal some time I went on my way, not, however, forgetting to give the dusky bride and bridegroom a small present. This part of the country abounded with game, quagga, wildebeeste, etc. and I had not travelled far when I descried the young Kaffir Chief of the huts I had lately left, and who had evidently quitted the village anterior to my departure, busily occupied on the veldt with what I took to be a buffalo—man and beast being engaged in a deadly duel, the latter with his forefeet and head planted on the ground defiantly facing his aggressor. The native at length fired, and wounding the animal it rushed at him, but he succeeded after an interesting combat in bringing his quarry down, and then quickly despatched it. Riding along I began to appreciate the fact that Kaffir beer did not agree with me, and seeing looming above the horizon a small Dutch dorp I had no option but to accept it as a heaven-sent harbour, and accordingly steered in that direction.

When I reached the hamlet I was in great pain, and a Boer inhabitant directed me to a small building on which was written "apotheek." Inside I saw a diminutive fat man, possessed of a pate as arid as the deserts of Sahara, who, with a glint through a pair of blue goggles, informed me in a melange of languages that he was a physician. I explained as well as I could my ailment, and he administered perfunctorily a vile mixture which made me worse and caused me to think of home. After an hour's treatment, during which torture I almost vomited my immortal soul, perceiving some "square face" (gin) on his table I, much against the medico's learned advice, drank the lot—and recovered. As I paid he mumbled something about the failure of his medicine, but explained he "vas no goot for die stomack, but if ever I had rheumatiz or fits, and consulted him, he would cure me as quick as no time." Inwardly hoping I might never meet the doctor again, I started off, but not feeling quite fit hoped to sleep in some friendly farmhouse, more especially as the mare had

gone lame. It was not a nice predicament to be in, and I was not sorry when a kindly-faced Boer, mounted on a fresh and well-groomed horse, accosted me and spoke sympathetically about my animal's misfortune. I used the spare words of Dutch I knew to keep in conversation with him, he, in quite an unusual manner, condescending to utter a few broken English phrases, and the upshot of our meeting was he invited me to his farm two or three miles distant. Over the veldt we went slowly, and in due time came to the demesne, which was well supplied with sheep, oxen, and horses. Seeing some cattle pass he informed me his daughter was shortly to be married, and that they were her property. It seems that whenever a Boer girl is born she is given by her prosperous father a heifer, and from that time its produce belongs to her, consequently when the maiden grows up she frequently possesses in her own right two or three hundred head of cattle, and so, without calling on her parents to supply a dowry, she does not go portionless to her husband.

The farmhouse itself was built on the top of a kopje, which, after treading a somewhat wayward path, we reached. The family, mother, daughter, and sons, were seated in the common large sitting-room, and their faces betokened neither welcome nor dissatisfaction as I went the round shaking hands and murmuring "*Goe n'ant,*" which I pronounced "Queen Anne" as a way out of the difficulty. After a brief interval home-made candles were lighted, shedding a solemn light on the silence of this Puritan family. When dinner was served we all sat round the table, the boss uttered a fervent prayer, and the party partook solemnly of luxuries. We first had soup, followed by a bowl of salt meat and mealies, into which each person dipped his fork with military precision. The repast over, there were concluding psalms, and after more handshaking, the old vrouw, the Boer maidens, and the mute sons retired to bed, and I was left with my kindly host, who proceeded to smoke and talk politics at an alarming rate. As good-hearted a man as one could wish to meet, he was exceedingly bitter against the English, and more especially

against Colonel Lanyon, whose appointment as Governor of the State had been mooted, and whose dark complexion gave rise to the absurd rumour that he came of negro extraction, and was to be put over Boers on purpose to humiliate them. This simple, ignorant fellow, whose father, after having been driven northwards by the British, had been killed in battle with Dingaan, the Zulu King, professed to a supreme contempt for the rooineks (red necks), as he styled the foreign occupants of the Transvaal. Rooineks referred originally to a flock of merinos, branded red, introduced by a farmer into the country, an expression afterwards extended to the English themselves, from the fact that their necks are often burnt red by the sun in contradistinction to the Boer, who always wore a broad-brimmed hat, and thus by easy graduations the term became one of opprobrium, levelled at the scarlet uniforms of the British Empire. My hardy, worthy, and shrewd host, brimful, too, of common sense, was assured of the justice of his antipathies, though unable to understand a modern Dutch book, or even a Rotterdam newspaper, facts not to be wondered at, considering his ancestors had come over from Holland a hundred years ago, and the mother tongue had merged itself into what is called the Taal, a medley of Dutch, Kaffir and Hottentot words, a linguistic compound enough to drive a *savant* crazy. Such has been its history since the Batavians took the Cape more than two centuries ago to plant a cabbage garden, and the British, later on, emulated them, so that they might have a naval station and a half-way house to India. However, I was afforded a good night's rest, and in the morning, the Boer, always on the look-out for good mares, swapped a nice horse for my mount, and sealed the bargain over a glass of Schiedam. When I made out the receipt, the Dutchman—I think he was called Barend—could not sign his own name, and on asking him how he spelt it, replied, "I do not know; spell it as you like." I must mention, too, that whilst undressing myself in this tenement, I found, in the linings of my overcoat, the letter directed to the people in the Orange Free State, and which was

addressed to a farm boasting a very long name. I couldn't say it now if I remembered, and it really is a mystery how the natives could ever pronounce it themselves, being similarly made up of double Dutch and jargon German, mated and bearing fruit, which would require one's tongue to do a prodigious gymnastic performance before mastering the first syllable. It ran something like this: "Khatuchayacatikewesephoopha"; but, long, short, or middling size, it was good enough for me, and riding away from Barend's farm I headed once more, by different roads, south, towards the Orange Free State, whose capital, Bloemfontein, I knew held a letter in safe keeping for me.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Transvaal—Waggons that pass in the night—A Drama in Dutch—Our Mutual Friend—Back to Kimberley.

I WAS not sorry when I commenced to turn my back on the Transvaal, a country of mean things and ideals, with seemingly no hope for the future commercially, for it is a fact that when Theophilus Shepstone annexed it he found twelve-and-sixpence in the Treasury, which no doubt had been left by accident. Politically, the Transvaal then was swayed by men of straw, over whom the expanding figure of Paul Kruger towered like an indistinct Colossus. South Africa, with the exception of Oom Paul, never produced a great white man, either as soldier, statesman, writer, poet, or those commonest of mortals—a hero. This is all the more to be wondered at, considering that their blood was the same as nourished Van Ruyter, Van Tromp, Turenne, Condé, and commingled with good strains from the Anglo-Saxon race. Even in the late Boer War no Africander or Boer soldier appeared of transcendant merit—J. B. Robinson himself being deaf to war alarms. One found, to be sure, the ignorant Cronjé, the elusive De Wet, the fly-by-night Delarey, and the lucky Botha; but where was the Boer Kitchener or French? Where were their heroes, such as Le Gallais and young Roberts? They can point to none—except the Dutchman, who, for Fatherland and safety, refused at Paardeberg to sell the vantage ground of his protecting boulder to a commandeered Jew for fifteen shillings. South Africa's greatest men have all been exotics, such as Rhodes, Colenso, and Bartle Frere—this is, of course, not to say that Abe Bailey (V.C.—Very Choice) won't carry the

country if there's an earthquake, and the continent's loose; her home-born statesmen venal and self-seeking; her writers non-existent (Olive Schreiner apart); her financiers Petticoat Lane cheats of neither country nor conscience, and for poets she had to go to Scotland of all places in the world, from which land of cakes one Robert Pringle turned up and wrote,

> "Afar in the desert I love to ride,"

which was a monstrous inexactitude, and the singer would have confessed so if he had only put his Pegasus into motion, and wandered, as I did, in the late seventies.

My next few days of variable skies and blinding dusts were much like the preceding ones except the episodes were so commonplace that they are not worth recalling. The Boers, with an exception here and there, were hostile and suspicious, particularly the Doppers (dissenters from the Dutch Reformed Church of whom Kruger was their most distinguished leader and preacher). I recrossed the Vaal at low water and made for Hopstad after experiencing the effects of a grass fire which were decidedly unpleasant as the flames swept over the veldt and threatened to envelop me and the horse. Every night I slept out and foraged during the day the best way I could. The Free State, nearly as big as England, in the main is dry and undulating, though primarily a land of pasture. After rain has fallen its great plains become brilliantly green, and a ride across the wide expanse exhilarates and inspires one, for the pure air is keen and bracing. About forty miles from Bloemfontein I chanced to meet, outspanning on the road, a transport rider who was enjoying his evening "skoff." A big dark-skinned Africander, expressionless as a plaster cast, with a decided touch of the tar brush, he greeted me cheerily, and this civility, combined with the odour of his flesh-pot, incited me to stop, and soon over a burnt mutton chop I became quite friendly with my new acquaintance, who suggested a shake-down for the night in his empty waggon, which I was glad enough to accept. As far as South Africa

was concerned he was a well-travelled man, and had ridden transport to Kimberley, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and the other colonial centres. More than this, he struck me as a likely individual to procure my letters at the Bloemfontein Post Office. To rest without wearing apparel being a luxury not to be resisted, I doffed my outer garments and enjoyed a glorious sleep until sunrise, when he inspanned the cattle and trekked, during which operations I dressed by the early light, to the dolorous crack of his ponderous whip as, with a peculiar and evil-sounding cry, he plied the heavy lash. "Yi ho, Blesbok!" (crack) "Hi skilum Pontac!" (crack) "Ah! you verdompt England!" (crack, whack, bang), and poor England would plunge into the yoke mad with pain and terror. The most useless ox in a Dutchman's team is always named England—and suffers accordingly. After the festivities of the matutinal meal, which consisted of mealie pap, we smoked inside the waggon while the Hottentot forelouper (or leader) guided the bullocks on their journey. To beguile the time my friend of the veldt proposed an innocent game of cards, and after losing a few shillings, his head following suit, he excitedly produced the crumpled half of a fiver, which he staked as guarantee for a side wager. Now I had left in my coat pocket the previous night a colonial note of the same value, and which was in halves, as is usual with South African paper money. On smoothing the Africander's stake I recognised it as my property, and immediately exhibiting the other portion placed it alongside its fellow and exclaimed, "I say, my friend, you stole half my note last night." The chap looked dumbfounded for a moment and then astonished, as he replied unabashed, "Alamachtig, young kerel, you are right. The Lord must be on your side to let you find it out." My horse being fortunately saddled and attached to the back of the waggon, it did not take me long to do a highly scientific equestrian vault, to the accompaniment of a roulade of curses, highly edifying to lovers of the occult, but certainly not complimentary to the writer. Indeed, so impressed was I with the florid flowers of speech that they left me uncertain for

a moment whether I had annexed the knobby-fisted Dutchman's note, or he had taken mine.

After this experience I did not attempt to make friends on the road, and confined myself to an occasional visit to the Boers who lived in the few farmhouses I passed, generally avoiding the smaller villages or townlets that were scattered over the surface of this sparsely populated country. It must, all the same, be admitted that I found the Free Staters much easier to get on with than their Transvaal brethren. They were not so malicious and aggressive as the erstwhile Republicans, but their ignorance, prejudice, and conservatism were appalling. These people recognised no superior in rank to themselves, except it was the nearest Koopman (often a once two-curled Pole), whose office was in their eyes a sacred calling, as in the old Dutch East India Company trade was a complete monopoly, and the officers of the Corporation had entire control of the general stores which they bartered with the natives and sold to the settlers. Thus did bad old customs survive the deadly past, and the first emigrant Hollanders develop into dependents on Free State shopkeepers, whose recognised methods were to have two sets of weights and measures, one to buy with and the other to sell by, which, in every transaction, gave them hopes of becoming Hyde Park millionaires, and later on dictating politics to a country whose welfare the genus care about as much as if it were a coffee bean.

In all conscience the Free State Boers were simple enough, and easy targets for men of the world to aim at. During his South African tour the late Duke of Edinburgh visited these farmers, and after chatting with one supposed to be quite ahead of his neighbours in progress, the Prince shook hands on parting. "Oh," cried the old Boer, no doubt wanting to show his high appreciation, as the Duke sprang into the Cape cart, "don't forget, don't forget, give my compliments to your mamma." It is not recorded whether Her Majesty Queen Victoria ever received these greetings, but the anecdote is authentic fact. So, too, when the size of Buckingham Palace was explained to a gray-

beard, he pondered for a moment and expressed his undying opinion that it must take a day at least to smear the floors with cow-dung. Another Boer wanted to know, when he heard that a steamship service was proposed to be established between the Cape and Natal, where the vessels outspanned during the night. At the time I was riding in the country of course there was no telegraph. There had been a meeting to discuss the installation of something of the sort, but a Boer wise-acre sat promptly on the proposers by explaining that as the ox waggons had to cease from trekking during many months owing to the lack of rain, therefore the telegraph would die from thirst before it had started a month. Again, when I ventured to remark to a farmer that there was no payable gold in the Transvaal, he exhibited a Burgers' sovereign, and assured me that the British troops had invaded the Transvaal to annex the thousand the President had minted. (They were coined from the gold found in Pilgrim's Rest, and are worth £12 each now.)

Serenely the sun was falling in red as I descried Bloemfontein, which lay ahead of me peaceful and quiet as a meadow full of flowers. The Orange Free State capital is one of the neatest and best-appointed cities in the world, and amid churches, white, clean-built houses embellishing wide, well-laid-out streets, the small brown, useless fort (originally built by the British) looked strangely out of place as it towered in opposition to a cathedral which ministered to the religious requirements of the idyllic community, governed benignly by a wise and good President, Mr. John Brand, a lawyer from Cape Colony. Remembering that a friend of mine lived in the town, I resolved under cover of darkness to call, and had no difficulty in finding his house, as everybody knew everybody in this peaceful city of Holy Ones. I was received with the greatest hospitality, afforded shelter for the night, and in the morning Mr. S—— procured my letter, wherein I read that my enemies were trying all they knew to "make it hot," and that a further communication was awaiting me at a post office near the farm with the unpronounceable name. Ever since

Mr. Tucker had been so harshly convicted on my evidence his sad case had planted a long regret in my heart, and I was determined not to be a witness again for the Crown, so in my midsummer madness resolved to drift further on the stream of adventure, and visit the farm, which was situated some distance from Ladybrand, and many miles from Bloemfontein.

It was the most beautiful part of the Orange Free State which I traversed, a country of successive picturesque ridges, between which lie rich and bounteous agricultural land, from where could be seen rising larger and larger the grand and impressive Maluti mountains. In due course I reached Ladybrand, a pretty townlet, abounding in trees, snugly ensconced under the shadow of the Plaat Berg, which frowns on illimitable stretches of verdure, fertile fields, yellow corn, and the waters of the Caledon River. It was late in the day when I beheld the farm I had come to find, and saw a fair-sized homestead nestling near a large kopje, which threw into additional colour the emerald expanse it commanded. Not being unexpected, I was soon thoroughly at ease, and welcomed in a humble manner as if I had been a king. The family consisted of a tall Africander lady as stiff as a poker, a kindly soul with a granite face, adorned with great brass-rimmed spectacles, a little worn man (her second husband), two daughters, three grown-up sons, and a younger one, Philip. They all lived in the same dwelling, except the first-born boys, Gert and Hendick, who were married, and inhabited, with their wives, two large log cabins about a mile lower down in front of the principal tenement. For a few days I stayed in the midst of this simple family, riding about the country with the eldest girl in the cool of the afternoon, and sleeping on the front-room table o' nights—an ideal slumbering place no doubt if it had not been for the fowls which shared with me this happy shelter, and whose presence in the apartment caused me to scratch during the small hours with an activity worthy of a better cause.

Primitive farming and husbandry went on at all times,

and as I did not understand agricultural methods cannot describe them. The Dutch settlers had their pleasures, too. I remember once the marriageable daughter (she was about eighteen) being invited to a dance in Ladybrand, some thirty miles away, and the excitement and interest that were manifested as the white angel, dressed in decorous black, but tightly laced in, powdered, and slightly berouged, stepped through an avenue of family admirers into the convenient Cape cart waiting to take her ladyship to the giddy maze. When I had completely recovered from my bronzing ride I asked the youngest son Philip to go to the nearest post office, ten miles off. He did so, and returned at about six in the afternoon, but without the letter I had come to this Promised Land to seek. As my messenger entered the common sitting-room and told me the result of his mission I enquired if he had noticed any strangers on the road. He said "No" at first, and quickly correcting himself, added, "Oh, yes, I did see a thick-set man on a brown horse." I requested him to describe his appearance. He could not.

"Was he inclined to be stout?" I asked.

"Slightly," Philip replied.

"Did he squint?" I questioned.

"I think he did," rejoined the lad.

At this, getting interested, I bent forward and eagerly enquired if he wore gold earrings.

"Yes," responded the boy, "I noticed that at once."

"That's done it!" I ejaculated. "The man you saw is John Collins, the Kimberley detective."

I lost no time, but summoned the family, and it was agreed that I should pass the night in Gert's cabin, which resolve I commenced to put into effect by departing with the owner; a splendid young fellow, blonde, bearded, straight, six foot high, with a Garibaldian face of wondrous honesty and magic softness. His house was small but clean as a pin, and his wife a pretty dark woman, with jet-black hair and eyebrows, was suckling a baby as I entered. The next morning at about seven o'clock I was walking with my host in front of his cabin, he minus boots or stockings, bathing his feet in

the dew-laden grass (the Boers knew all about the new-fashioned cures), when suddenly he paused, got hold of my arm, and pointing to his parents' house, exclaimed excitedly: "Look there, Mister; look there!"

On the top of the upland I perceived the recently quitted homestead surrounded by a few mounted men riding hither and thither. Then I knew. Without another word the bare-footed Gert beckoned me to follow him, which I did instinctively, though not knowing where I was going. For ten minutes he ran until he came to a long gorge about half a mile in length, the sides of which were cavernous and capable of hiding a regiment of soldiers. Into a deep side-cleft I crawled, and Gert, saying he would see me again, turned his back and quickly disappeared from view.

The place in which I found myself was not exactly a spot one would have chosen to spend a merry afternoon, yet under the circumstances its very lugubriousness was quite inviting. On no account was I willing to be arrested by Mr. John Collins, one of the roughest and most callous of the Griqualand West detectives and certainly fitted by Nature to play into the hands of Messrs. Hoppy and Co. The cave or cleft was wide and deep, and in recesses of the dark interior were boulders large enough to hide a horse, so in its sombre bosom I rested to await events. When the morning mellowed I heard overhead the pattering of horses' hoofs as Collins and his men galloped to and fro on the sward above me, and it was fully midday ere I moved, impelled to do so by discovering an apparent cake of manure to be a coiled up snake, in the Cimmerian gloom, and sat near the opening to get a breath of fresh air, and watch the birds and frogs as they hopped and hovered about enjoying the sweetness of the day. Amusing to observe were the many brown and black lizards with bright red tails darting around which approached me without fear until I moved, then they would be off like a flash. Slowly time passed, the afternoon cooling as the sun set in its golden bed. Soon the winking constellations came out in all their radiance, lighting up the solitude of this uncanny spot, and

nothing was heard but the occasional coo-coos and screams of different birds as they flew from place to place and the comforting croakings of frogs and toads. I began, however, to feel famished, weak, and fatigued, and the loneliness and everlasting silence of the scene got on my nerves, making me horribly depressed and downhearted. So the hours of the night lived and died as I stood hoping and waiting. The acoustic properties of this gorge were marvellous, and if a pin had been dropped the echo would have resounded from end to end, so it was with much trepidation that at about midnight I heard a distinct noise as from something falling —reverberating through the gorge and alarming the birds which went soaring away. Again the sounds recurred at intervals, and then I knew they were the footfalls of a man which, massy and elephantine, became every instant more distinct. I retreated into the shadow of the grotto until I heard my name softly called, and recognising Gert's voice in a minute the owner was at my side proffering a small milk can. He appeared deeply concerned as he turned up his eyes and raised his hands in a deprecating manner and inquired, peering, and looking at me, "*Ho qaau'd het oud kerel?*" (How goes it, old fellow?) I answered, "All right" in a tone that betokened that it wasn't by any manner of means all right.

"They know you are here," he affirmed, jerking his thumb in the direction of the homestead. "They have seen your horse," and he continued excusingly, "my father thinks it is better you should give yourself up."

"I'm a bit tired of this," I replied mournfully, "and suppose that's the only thing to do."

"Vrachter" (true), Gert remarked. "All the roads are blocked."

"That settles it, then," I agreed, commencing to devour the bread and milk and eggs he had brought, the broad-shouldered blonde man the while standing silhouetted against the moon-tipped rocks and sorrowfully eating dried peaches. My mind was fully made up to go to the farmhouse, but after I had finished my repast somehow all depression vanished, giving place to

a grave disinclination to meet Collins. So suddenly turning to my Boer friend, I said, "You say all the roads are guarded—Bloemfontein, Ficksburg, Ladybrand?"

"Ya, ya," he said, nodding his head.

"What about the road to Kimberley?" was my question, a happy inspiration coming to life.

"That I don't know," he rejoined, opening his eyes wide.

"Then that's the way I'm going," I said decidedly. "I'll ride back." I remembered then he owned a beautiful little cream-coloured mare, which I there and then bought, it being agreed that in an hour or so he was to come and pilot me to a secluded spot near the end of the gorge where two saddled ponies were to be waiting in readiness, and that he was to accompany me twenty or thirty miles on my journey. Midnight had long passed when he re-appeared, and guiding me the whole length of the gully with some difficulty I eventually clambered up its rugged slopes and presently was on a pleasant piece of meadow where, impatiently champing their bits were the animals, and close by Gert's mother, two sisters, and a brother standing in the moonlight. It was a beautiful night, not too bright, but sufficiently so to put new life in one. Not many minutes were wasted in farewells, and I had hardly time to thank my kind hostess, as my companion had mounted and was impatiently urging me to "come on." Hastily expressing my heartfelt gratitude, I jumped on the mare, and was soon scuttling after Gert, who, with his large hat flapping in the fresh, delightful air, was racing full speed down a beaten track at the bottom of which was a deep descent looking like an abyss opening beneath. Over rugged boulders, flinty rocks, granite stones, sparkling spruits full of beautiful quartz pebbles smoothed by the waters, and treacherous ant-heaps my conductor went, I following with the greatest ease, as the pony knew every inch of the ground and was as surefooted as a goat. Throughout the early hours we rode, and the morning was well advanced when we struck a highway and outspanned near it, my Boer

friend riding to a store a couple of miles ahead and returning with sardines, bread, two bottles of beer, cigars, etc. It was here that Gert said "Good-bye" over a pint of Bass (he would not stay to eat), and I was left to continue my journey to Kimberley.

I felt a trifle lonely and sorrowful looking after the slowly disappearing horseman as now and again he turned round and encouragingly waved his hand. So quickly knee-haltering the mare and hiding the saddle, to divert my mind I climbed a flat-topped kopje and enjoyed a glorious view of the country I had traversed. In a background of purple mountains almost at my feet lay rolling uplands, yellow cornfields, the emerald valley of the Caledon, and green pastures, on which browsed innumerable cattle, sheep, and Angora goats. Finished surveying the lovely landscape, I turned my thoughts to breakfast, feasting on a box of sardines, a loaf, and a bottle of beer, supplemented by a Manilla cigar, after which comforts I dropped into a fat sleep, not wakening until the sun was shining in full splendour, when once more I took to the road. Returning by a different route to the one previously chosen, I did not endure half the hardships heretofore suffered, and, being quite inured to the veldt, travelled with confidence, not feeling the slightest inconvenience from sleeping out. As I have, as far as my humble endeavours permitted, represented Boer life as I saw it, further descriptions would be wearisome, but I cannot help recalling that once near Reddersberg, on the highway, I came across a new framed-built canvas tent, in front of which lolled a sandy-haired Dutchman. There was no vegetation, or sheep, or goats to be seen around the dwelling, nothing but an almost arid desert. I asked the proprietor the distance I was from Ladybrand. He had no idea, and did not even know how far the next townlet, Bethany, was supposed to be. It is a fact, this man, born and bred on the very spot I met him, had never left it in his life to wander even to the nearest hamlet. Of course, the new canvas tent was an innovation. What a life for a white man! Near Fauresmith I met, on his way to Bethulie, a tocker (travelling

merchant) whom I knew slightly and learned from him that Ikey Sonnenberg was on a visit to a farmer residing in the former village, and remembering that the money I carried was composed of highly-valued banknotes I determined to see him, and, if possible, change one. It was nightfall when I tapped at the door of the house in which he was staying. A Kaffir answered my summons, and soon appeared the lank, ungainly figure of the immortal Ike, who waddled benignantly along a dimly-lighted passage, attired in a shabby dressing-gown and sucking a pipe. Shuffling towards me with protruding head, he kept muttering, in guttural tones, "Who is it? Vat do you vant?"

As he peered from under his bushy eyebrows I was standing at the entrance, my features being undistinguishable, and in reply to the mumbling inquiries held up my hand and ejaculated mysteriously, "Ssh."

That upset the business, for Ikey stopped in the middle of the hall as if he had been shot, and questioned again with anxious, impatient gestures, "Vat do you vant?"

I simply said "Ssh!" once more, and beckoned, which proceeding violently alarmed him, as he retreated a step or two backwards, and reiterated, in quavering accents,

"Vat do you vant of me? Vat's your name?"

Another "Ssh!" put the suspicious Sonnenberg to rout, for with his face to me he backed with much precipitation, and on reaching a small closet at the end of the passage darted into it, exclaiming,

"Vat do you mean by 'Ssh'? 'Ssh,' be damned! I don't know you. I ain't in, and am a-going to bed!" and hastily shutting the door with angry satisfaction locked himself in the recess. It was with great difficulty, even after disclosing my identity, I enticed him out, and then the big-hearted man extended me a hundred welcomes, as he remarked, "Vy didn't you say it it vas you? I thought you vas the Messiah!" I learnt afterwards that having been engaged in selling land he imagined that one of the purchasers had called for explanations. The farmer was in bed, so I stayed

with this best of fellows, and after changing a note, I, in the early morning, full of beans and thankfulness, departed, taking care, however, to avoid the main road, thus making the journey longer and incidentally losing my way. A few nights later, nearing Kimberley, I was beset with grave anxiety as to the approximate hour I would reach the Diamond City, it being necessary to enter either at midnight or early dawn. Enquiring from occasional transport riders the distance of my objective, one would say twenty or twenty-five miles, and then, after riding with quickened pace for a couple of hours, would be assured I was no nearer the town. This was all very distressing, and when the morning broke I was puzzling about my whereabouts and (having no watch) the exact time. There was nothing to do but to push on at top speed, so, shaking my bridle, away I careered along a wide and even road.

Since I had started from the Caledon farm I had never put a whip across the pony's back, and, notwithstanding the long journey, she was reasonably fresh. The morning was breaking fast as another erudite waggoner informed me I was yet twenty miles from Kimberley. Mile after mile I galloped through the early mists, the sharp rattle of the mare's hoofs keeping time with my thoughts as I eagerly scanned the changing clouds which had heralded the morning. The nag bounded along; the faster she galloped the more exciting became the wild ride. Except once or twice, when I dismounted to drink at some running spruit, there was no rest during these silent hours, and after a time the animal began to show signs of fatigue, but when I plied the whip she bounded under it and galloped bravely on. The atmosphere, though dark, was clear enough, but I could see nothing tangible in front, so had to press the distressed creature, the sweat rolling down her shaking flanks as she left behind miles of veldt, isolated farms, valleys, and gullies. But on I went, wondering if ever Kimberley would be reached, and had almost given up when the panting horse passed some familiar outlying buildings. Then I knew I was near Diamond Town, but far from heaven. Not only was the pony done up,

but I was very tired and weak, and could hardly sit the saddle; still I persevered, urging the straining animal to fresh endeavours. Excitement and anxiety, however, had muddled my brains, for I missed my way, and unexpectedly found myself near the racecourse. Pulling what remained of me together, soon my half-dead horse, making an effort, uneasily ambled into Du Toit's Pan. I was now three miles from Kimberley, and never shall forget the short pilgrimage thither. It was useless to flog the mare, so the ride simmered down to a go-as-you-please arrangement. When I had got, by hook or by crook, through two-thirds of the journey, as I reached the Jewish Synagogue (with the Little White House on the left) she reeled from one side of the road to the other, and it was quite light as she crawled up Curry Street, but I met nobody as I went nervously on my way. Land at last! With a sigh of relief I came in sight of the dwelling-place I had intended to visit, and, reaching its front, jumped off the jaded steed, she, poor, panting thing, standing with lowered crest and lack-lustre eyes, ears cold, and head bowed to the ground with weakness. The domicile looked strangely silent and comfortless as the rain-laden wind blew around its reedy fence. I dismounted and looked about—the place was untenanted. My "land at last" was a desert island. It was no use repining, so I led the pony to the back of the habitation, loosened the girth, rubbed her reeking limbs down with straw, and laved her mouth. Then I remounted and walked the plucky steed to the West End by unfrequented roads, calling at the house of a friend, who received me most politely. Two days after, in that very West End, I stood in a yard which was separated from Lofstrom's canteen by a mud wall barely six feet in height, when I heard voices in the adjoining stand. One of the speakers, an unmistakable Africander, said in rasping tones, "I'm sure he is on that Caledon Farm, but could not find him." It was Collins, the detective, returned from his useless quest.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Roll of the Drum—Natal—Ladysmith—John Dunn—The Prince Imperial—Arrested—Ladysmith Gaol.

SNUGLY sheltered, I stayed a few days in Kimberley, after my long ride, but learning that the lady on whose behalf I had adventured so much was seriously ill, and her husband away, resolved—so that the fruits of my labour should not be thrown away—to travel once more for a few weeks until she should have recovered. This was altogether necessary, as my flight had made me appear guilty, and my enemies had taken full advantage of my Quixotic proceeding. The Zulu War being in full blast, I thought I could do no better than visit Natal, so having had a fresh horse purchased for me (the cream-coloured mare being useless), I one fine evening started on the way to Ladysmith, which, by the route selected, was more than three hundred miles distant. Passing through Brandfort, Winberg, Senekal, and Bethlehem, I made for Harrismith, a small, though busy, town lying at the foot of the Drakensberg Mountains, which separate the Orange Free State from Natal. It was late, in the dark o' the moon, when, below me, the faint lights of Harrismith twinkled, as it were, at my feet, and knowing Dodds, the proprietor who kept the principal hotel in the Market Square of the frontier town, I decided to call on him. The night grew blacker and cloudier, and I somehow wandered from the road, but always trusting in the horse (and Providence), rode him quietly on a loose rein, thinking his instinct would lead him to the town. For half-an-hour I jogged along, quite lost as to my whereabouts, except for the lights, when suddenly the big roan snorted, stiffened his fore-

legs, and pulled up at a dead stop. In an instant I had clambered from the saddle, and putting the bridle round my arm, knelt down and groped, and soon found the animal had stopped in front of an immense hole or excavation. It was so unutterably dark that nothing could be seen ahead, so had to trust to the sense of touch, and for five long hours groped and crawled, time after time coming on the edges of immense hollows and cavities. Only at early dawn I found myself landed in a wilderness of chasms and pits, which surrounded me on all sides. This uncanny endroit no doubt exists to-day, and I have many a time thought of the dreadful death I should have died, crushed and broken, if it had not been for the horse. My hands were torn and lacerated, trousers cut to ribbons, as in the early morning I cantered through Harrismith and made at once for the Drakensberg, towering like a great wall in front, through which a mountain pass leads to Natal.

In high spirits I traversed these beautiful mountains, and half-way through came to a cosy hostelry called the "Dew Drop," a house I had yet to see again. But pressing on, the morning sun seemed to welcome me as I found myself in Natal. A lovely country is this Garden of South Africa, reminding one of Devonshire, with its steep, rapid rises and verdant valleys, and the people, too, were different to those I had lately quitted —one felt nearer home. I rested and refreshed myself at one of the wayside stores, not forgetting to replenish my wardrobe, and felt it was good to live as I reached Escourt and Howick, as jolly as a sandboy. A few miles from Ladysmith, at a sweet and unpretentious inn, I partook of a clean and wholesome breakfast. It was kept by a Norwegian, and directly I saw the man took to him; a short, serious fellow, with kind, brown eyes, and in a couple of hours we were the best of friends. On leaving I noticed standing outside an inexpensive pony and cart, fully equipped for starting, and learnt that he intended driving into Ladysmith with his daughter, a pretty little maiden of sixteen. He offered me a seat, which was gladly accepted, so, tying my horse to the back of the conveyance, we started for

the historic town which, in the future, was to give Sir George White his marshal's baton. Conversing with the Norwegian during the journey, he informed me that in these busy times of war it was his habit each week to leave the humble hotel in charge of his wife, and spend, with his winsome daughter, five days in Ladysmith, where he had a blacksmith's forge, and his services were at a premium. I did not tell him, of course, much about my business, but before the journey was ended I had planned to lodge at the smithy. It was mid-day as we trundled into Ladysmith and halted outside his workshop, a diminutive building, situated next to the Royal Hotel, the principal place of entertainment in the district, kept by a carrotty-moustached, spectacled individual named Clarke, who was, I subsequently found, highly unpopular. In his tavern at times had put up all the "swells" of the war—Chelmsford, Wood, Buller, Pearson, Crealock, and the best of them. It did not for many reasons please me to stay in this hotel, so it was arranged that I should sometimes eat with my Norwegian friend in addition to having a "shakedown" in his smithy. As the place was very small, and we all slept in the one compartment, it was settled that I should retire after the father and daughter had gone to bed, and likewise rise an hour before they did, an agreement perfectly conformable to my sense of modesty and decorum. When these trivialities had been disposed of, I strolled around, and never felt freer and happier in my life. The picturesque town was full of troops, and in the principal street one could hear the Lancashire dialect, the burr of the Yorkshireman, the harsh twang of the Glaswegian, the dear brogue of Paddy, the quick snaps of Taffy, and pure unadulterated Cockneyese, all pantingly expressive of gin and glory, and more particularly breathing an intense desire for Cetywayo's woolly scalp. It was as if I were on my native heath in four countries, in every British city from London to Limerick, from Cardiff to the Clyde; quite in a garden fair of Roses, Shamrocks, Leeks, and Thistles. I soon made friends with the soldiers, officers, and privates, and they were practically unanimous in their opinions

as to their leaders. Evelyn Wood was a particular favourite, and Ashantee-laurelled Buller, as always (who had lately distinguished himself by saving D'Arcy's life at Zlobane), was in everybody's mouth and regarded as the Ney of the Army—the bravest of the brave and a man of so determined a spirit that had a thunderbolt fallen it would not have ruffled his cool demeanour; Chelmsford, Crealock, and Marshall were not so worshipped, and Drury Lowe (nicknamed Monkey Mick), the cavalry leader, for some occult reason was not loved. Whenever it suited I slept in the Norwegian's hut, but a strong commercial spirit soon impelled me to deal in cattle and ride about the country visiting Dundee, Colenso, Greytown, and once Durban and Maritzburg. My good Norwegian and his gentle daughter were always more than kind, but the blacksmith had a bad habit at breakfast of using his hands as a handkerchief and then cutting the bread and spreading the butter; a harmless pleasantry no doubt, but one apt to curtail appetite, so my arrivals got fewer at mealtime. During the trip to Durban, a neat and thoroughly English town, full of Scotchmen and Semites, a kind of Aberdeen and Amsterdam *entente cordiale,* I caught sight of the white adventurer, John Dunn, better known as Chief Dunn. This man had risen high in favour with Cetywayo through espousing the latter's cause against his brother at the time Umpanda's son happened to be on the wrong side. When the turn of fortune came the dusky monarch rewarded his white henchman with substantial kingly favours, and the dauntless Dunn was thus enabled to enjoy two lives—that of a Zulu chief and a British emigrant. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were not in it, to say nothing of Brigham Young and unfrocked Pigott. The day I cast eyes on this unique personality he was driving with remarkable dexterity four horses, and struck me as being a strongly-built man of medium height bronzed by the sun, with alertness in his fearless glance and resolution in his strong face.

On the termination of the war, John Dunn was recognised by the British as a Zulu Chief, which was only proper, as he had lived from boyhood amongst this

valiant black tribe, and had been of some use to his own people. Taking it altogether, my varied life, full of excitement, was not an unpleasant one, and some happy days were spent with the Norseman and his nut-brown daughter. To give point, however, to my little experiences, it is necessary for me to go back a few years. In 1872 I was one afternoon walking towards St. James's Street, London, when I encountered the Duc de Grammont, who had been France's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had precipitated the conflict between that country and Germany. Continuing my way, I saw a single horse barouche standing outside a saddler's shop, into which two people were preparing to enter. One was a frank-faced boy, the other a short, stout, old man, uneasy of gait, with an unhealthy, parchment skin, thin, lank hair, melancholy, drooping, grey moustaches and puckered, almond-shaped eyes, which were hardly discernible. I knew them at once. The first-mentioned was the Prince Imperial, and the elderly, small-legged gentleman the deposed Emperor Napoleon III., looking indeed more like a Badinguet than a Bonaparte. This incident came vividly back to my memory when L'Aiglon visited Ladysmith on his way to the front. He had left England in February, after having received the sacrament before his father's tomb at Chislehurst. At Ladysmith he stayed at the Royal Hotel for a short period, and was wont to amuse himself by pitching bundles of forage from a loft in the backyard to the silent indignation of Carrotty Clarke. On one occasion a poor Natalian walked all the way from Maritzburg to see the golden-hearted Napoleon, and meeting him outside the Royal Hotel, said, "Prince, I've walked sixty miles to see you. Will you shake hands with me?" a request which was readily complied with, but an invitation "to have a drink" was laughingly declined.

It is sad to think that a few short weeks after the corpse of this Chevalier of the Splendid Name was brought into Ladysmith, bearing eighteen assegai wounds, all in front of his body, showing how the hero died facing the foe. The Prince, around whose figure played the aureole of his great ancestor, certainly would have

escaped had not the band uniting the holster given way as he sought to vault on his horse, a mode of mounting he always adopted. Among the troops he was adored, going about the camp from bivouac to bivouac with a cheery word for everybody and singing snatches of Judic's and Theresa's chansons in the exuberance of his heart. The sorrow his death evoked in the British Army spread throughout the world, and it is a fact that the late Queen Victoria had never been so poignantly affected since the Prince Consort died. Of the lamented Prince it may be truly said, as Béranger wrote of his famous uncle: *"On parlera de sa gloire. Sous le chaume bien longtemps."*

Evenly the time sped on with me, each day's excitement adding to the joy of living; but life is like an April day in its changes—shower or sunshine both unexpected, but either coming at perverse or unpromising periods. You never know your luck. Having purchased some oxen it became part of my daily duty to put them out to graze and in the evening to shelter the animals. One morning coming from the first of these pastoral pastimes I was promenading contentedly when, just as I passed a canteen nearly opposite the gaol, I became aware of the fact that two gentlemen, one on either side, sporting sombrero hats and top-boots, were escorting me down the street, the while curiously quizzing me. On the right walked a well-made young fellow of the transport rider class, and the other was a measly-looking individual with white eyelashes, speckled face like a seed cake, and colourless lips, who was examining me from the corner of his wicked eye. I strolled on apparently unconcerned, glancing neither to right nor left, but the two gentry stuck close by my side. At last the mealy one said:

"How do you do, Mr. Cohen?"

I cannot truthfully say I was grateful for the solicitous inquiry after my health, but to ease the gentleman's mind imparted the solid fact that I was quite well, and asked, without knowing him or having the slightest curiosity as to his well-being, how *he* was, receiving forthwith a consolatory answer. Anxiety as to my

physical welfare having evidently seized upon the first speaker's companion, he shook me warmly by the hand as if he'd found a dear and long-lost friend of inestimable value and prospects.

Putting the best face on the matter, I invited my two unwelcome patrons to have a drink, and found their honoured names to be respectively Dunn and Keeley, and that both claimed to have seen me in Kimberley. They were quite welcome to the liquid refreshments, but when one attempted in vulgar parlance "to tap" I did not rise to expectations, but left them in all friendship and good humour, expressing an unborn hope to meet them again. On the following Sunday at about five o'clock, being on a commonage in the heart of the town and having saddled my horse preparatory to bringing in the cattle which were pasturing in the veldt, I was on the point of mounting when Mr. Dunn popped up from goodness knows where and clung to the off-side stirrup as if to balance the saddle. As the roan was a very big horse, I thought this was rather kind, and my gratitude increased when the mealy-faced individual also appearing on the scene most thoughtfully held the animal's bridle. I had made half a spring when a tap upon my shoulder impelled me to turn round, and in doing so confronted a tall, thin, sandy-haired man in uniform, the red of his left optic exposed like a woman's cherry lips. I knew him at once—Mulligan, the Ladysmith constable, with the sore eye and a grievance.

"Are you Louis Cohen?" he inquired with a Ballyhooly brogue, as he blinked his one, good, eagle-eye, and made it do the work of two.

"I am," said I.

"Then there's a tallygram bin received for yer a-r-r-est!" he replied impressively as if he'd made his name immortal as a familiar of the Inquisition.

"If that is so I will come with you, but don't make a fuss."

So stepping by his side I walked towards the gaol, flicking my whip to show a composure which was non-existent. Once looking behind I observed ten paces to the rear two muscular, assegaied, armed Zulu police

following, dressed in white jackets and drawers trimmed with scarlet braid, and in the distance Messrs. Dunn and Keeley off-saddling my horse.

From the outside, Ladysmith Gaol did not strike one as a formidable or gloomy prison, and its portals failed to awaken any very lively emotions in my bosom; but Mr. Mulligan, on the contrary, as we stepped inside, heaved a deep sigh of relief, feeling, no doubt, he had completed a great work. The interior, too, was hardly a Bastile in its proportions and architecture; in fact, there was nothing suggesting dungeons about the place, except the uniformed Irishman and the two ebony Zulus, who, still grasping their assegais, stood sphinx-like at attention. After waiting some minutes in a nondescript office, to which the elated Mulligan, with much pride, had escorted me, a door at the other side of the compartment opened, and there entered a middle-sized, thick-set, well-built individual of about fifty-five, wearing a cork helmet, ordinary clothes, and jangling a huge bunch of keys. A harsh, austere man he appeared, with square, bearded jaws, abrupt manner, and shaggy brows, half hiding the glint of a pair of sharp eyes, which looked me through. He was the governor of the gaol, and also chief constable of the town. In quick, decisive, military tones he enquired the purport of the visit, and when told I had been arrested on receipt of a telegram, pursed up his lips, and questioned its legality, to the great consternation of red Mulligan, who indulged in a convulsive "atichoo." At first gruffly interrogative, the official grew kinder, ultimately sent the crestfallen constable about his business, and then I related the circumstances of my position, on the conclusion of which he opined there was no reason for detaining me, as no warrant had arrived to enable him lawfully to do so. I explained that having been arrested, I did not propose to leave the town, having had enough of wandering, and so preferred to await in custody the arrival of the authorization. The inspector replied that if such was my determination, he had no mind to interfere, and with a smile, saying he would do "the best to make things comfortable," bade me follow him, which

I did, he walking ahead, with his huge bunch of keys. Across a polygon courtyard he strode, until unlocking a clean and comfortable cell, situated in the front of the prison, he requested me to enter, and soon I was left to my own ruminations. While traversing the enclosure, it was apparent to me that the gaol held many military prisoners, and presently, through the barred aperture gracing the cell door, prying faces surmounted with the undress army headgear of the time, peered curiously at the new captive. In an hour I heard the clanging of keys, the cell door re-opened, and my custodian again appeared, followed by two Kaffirs, one bearing a mattress and blankets, the other a substantial supper and some candles. A good meal put me in the best of spirits, and I was shortly afterwards in bed reading a newspaper, and feeling more contented and comfortable than had been my lot for many a day or night.

It came to my knowledge afterwards that Jesse Nutley, the Governor, was a retired soldier from a Highland regiment, which had done duty in Natal in the long ago. Under a rough and severe exterior, there never was a kinder man than this gruff Scotch soldier, silent, just, and determined, a lineal descendant of those kilted warriors who won Quebec for Wolfe, and gladdened the eyes of the dying Moore at Corunna. Nutley lived in the gaol with his wife and two daughters, and between him and me a friendship grew which I recall always with pleasure. A strict disciplinarian, and one respected as such throughout the Bridewell, he was cute enough to recognise with all his dourness that an individual arrested unlawfully, who refused to be liberated, was on a different footing to that of an ordinary prisoner. During the seven or eight days I stayed in Ladysmith gaol I had the run of the place, and could have walked out at any time. The prison itself was surrounded by a low wall, and by standing on one of the different mounds in the courtyard a perfect view of the street in front was obtainable. Thither every forenoon I repaired, and seldom missed seeing the good-hearted Norwegian and his gentle daughter waiting in the road for a sight of me. I would cheeringly salute

my two friends, which greetings were received with downcast glances by the daughter and an ominous shaking of head and lifting of hands by her father, who evidently imagined I had committed a murder, and pitied me for my sad fate. Inside the gaol all was life and bustle, and I never got tired of talking with the soldiers who passed through, either on duty bound, or were detained as prisoners. If the Zulu War was not popular in England, this cannot be said of the Cape Colony and Natal, where Sir Bartle Frere was revered, and whose unselfish patriotism, contained in these few pathetic lines he wrote—

> "Where in the summer sun the early grasses grow,
> Six feet of English ground, a Briton's grave,
> Rest in my native land, is all I crave"—

went straight to the hearts of the people.

The soldiers were particularly incensed against Cetywayo and his chiefs, the details of whose horrible cruelties to native women were bruited amongst them. To enlighten these savage beasts was impossible. A trader once gave Cetywayo a watch; he looked at it and asked: "What's the good of it? To tell where the sun is; we can see it; when cloudy we rest in our huts and sleep. Does it give milk or calves or goats? No; then take the thing away." It was the Zulu King's Imperial will to order to be executed each month for witchcraft hundreds of maidens, because they refused to marry old men, putting firebrands into their bodies, and doing them to death by the most repulsive tortures and degradations. Cetywayo and his more fiendish brother, Dabulamanzi, have also been known to slaughter fifty women and children to feed their golden eagles, and the iron rule of these barbarians was such that if even a scratch was perceptible on a warrior's back the unlucky one was at once put to death as a coward. When remonstrated with, the Chief replied: "Sir H. Bulwer is Governor of Natal, and I am King of Zululand." If policy did not call for this war, certainly Christianity did, which William Ewart Gladstone had quite an original mode of practising with all his preaching. Of

course, in the gaol, there were some particularly vicious characters amongst the military *détenus*. One purple-faced private, dubbed Blueskin, spent his days and nights reviling Country and Queen and glorifying half-ale, his especial worship, and the lack of which made his heart grow fonder. In my cell I invariably kept a flask of Pontac, which was patronised as inclination seized me, but discovering that when I wandered from my abode the beery Briton would visit its interior and hastily gulp the wine from Constantia, I procured some jalap, with which I filled the bottle, one dose of which put the blue-nosed burglar in full retreat, and he never bothered me again. I must mention that my meals were supplied by Jesse Nutley, which repasts I often shared with some unfortunate, and it was astonishing the different types of humanity I met with fallen by the way. One, a poor, forlorn, untutored Irishman, whose brother had been killed, had but a single wish (which I gratified), and that was to get somebody to write a letter to his parents, and enclose a little money to be spent in Masses for the departed soldier's soul. After breakfast, the serious business of the day commenced, when a batch of men were invariably led into the courtyard to be flogged.

It was no doubt a morbid pastime watching the gruesome operation, but it had a certain unhealthy fascination, and each morning I visited the skeleton-like wooden triangle which was erected in the enclosure. Most of the sufferers were Cape boys, but some of them were white enough to be Europeans, which perhaps they were. The Hibernian doctor, I remember, was a facetious gentleman of more humour than humanity, and appeared to take great delight in his grim functions. It is a physiological fact that the duskier the victim the more terrified and unhappy he appeared when brought for medical examination before the ferocious medico. "What's yer name, me man?" queried the doctor with a kindly air, insinuatingly inquisitive to a Cape boy.

"Hendrik," replied the trembling fellow, paling under his copper skin.

"Is it now? Well, how are ye this morning, at all?"

"Baaije ziek, boss" (very sick), affirmed the delinquent, shaking his head to and fro dolorously.

"I belave you when tousands wouldn't," remarked the examiner, consolingly. "But in the meanwhile off wid yer coat. How's yer hear-r-t?" added the comico, flourishing a stethoscope, which the half-caste eyed with infinite concern.

"Baaije ziek, too, boss," answered the quavering one, turning up his eyes as the doctor clapped the instrument to his side.

"Now put out yer tongue," ordered Esculapius, finishing the thorax investigation. The boy did as he was told, and immediately the "healer" cuffed his victim viciously under the lower jaw, and cried:

"Tie him up."

In a minute the shaking wretch was seized and bound to the triangle, a stalwart Zulu furnished with a formidable cat o' nine tails, awaiting the signal to lay on. At the first blow the condemned one shivered like a struck ship as the cruel lash left a white mark across his back as if it had been seared by a hot iron; at the second stroke the flesh turned purple, at the third it broke, showing blood, and then the poor tortured one screamed loudly, "Mamma! Mamma! Mamma!" as he writhed in agony under the pitiless whip. And so it continued until the blows fell on an inanimate crucified body, eliciting no scream from the helpless sufferer, whose very silence was more horrible than his cries. But they were not all like that. I remember one chap with the skin and demeanour of a white man being tied up and looking the officer on duty (I think his name was Churchill) full in the face during a terrific punishment, the while he cursed him with the most blasphemous oaths and maledictions ever heard, and when it was all over throwing on his bleeding back a torn shirt and walking smilingly to his cell.

One afternoon I was informed that the warrant had at last arrived, and next morning there came to the gaol the official deputed to escort me back to Kimberley, and whom I recognised as Charles Wilson, a well known and reputable Diamond Field detective, who appeared in

great good humour with the holiday which the journey afforded. A tall, thin, young man, with a fresh complexion, a weak throat, and a black moustache, Wilson was quite a nice fellow, and within a quarter of an hour had invited me to stroll round the town, an invitation which I declined with thanks, as an editor sometimes says. In a couple of days he was ready for the return trip, and so on an auspicious morning, when the sun was gilding with gold the countryside, we started on horseback for Kimberley, the serious-faced Nutley giving me all his best wishes. We rode side by side, chatting and laughing, and had well cleared the town when Wilson abruptly stopped his nag, as if a sudden inspiration, prompted, no doubt, by the superior quality of my steed, had seized him, and proposed to attach a a leather rein to my horse's headgear, one end of which he designed to attach to his own animal for my better keeping. I said nothing, but accepted the inevitable, and then for half-a-mile led my guardian a pretty dance. On starting I perceived Wilson could not ride; he was like a hen on a hot griddle, and I wondered how he ever managed to do the journey down. The horse I bestrode was as fresh as paint, and the detective no sooner affixed the rein to his quadruped's bridle-piece when I caused my mount to curvet and bound hither and thither, to the consternation of Mr. Wilson, who looked unutterable things. Notwithstanding he was armed with a revolver encased in a stiff yellow leather holster, which he carried slung over his shoulder, I could, without much difficulty or danger, have got away easily, my horse being speedy, and as to my custodian drawing his weapon that would have been difficult to accomplish quickly, even on foot, considering the hardness of the tanned hide covering. So he jogged along, stirrupless, to the frolics of my steed, bobbing up and down, with flapping hat on the back of his head, and soon hastily stopped and gasped:

"Will you give me your word you won't escape if I take off the rein?"

I laughed, declaring I had no intention of leaving him, and the little matter thus arranged, ambled on in comfort until the "Dew Drop Inn" came in view, where

we off-saddled for the night and had a royal time at supper, at which feast a pair of chickens were placed before us for our delectation, and afterwards red and yellow wines, helped by consoling cigars, mellowed a good night's rest. Frankly, we were getting on very well together, and next morning saw Wilson free of all care, as far as I was concerned, journeying as boon companion. Arriving at Harrismith, we put up at Dodds's Hotel, a large hostelry on the Market Place, the proprietor welcoming me as an ordinary friend, knowing nothing of my predicament. In the afternoon, having had a conversation with the vainglorious Wilson, Landlord Dodds approached me in the front bar (there was a second one at the back, looking out on another road), and, much perturbed, anxiously whispered: "Cohen, are you a prisoner?"

I told the genial, big-faced, big-hearted man the truth, and then he exclaimed:

"Then you shan't go back to Kimberley. I'll tell you what I'll arrange. You and Wilson, in an hour's time, shall drink with me in the back bar, and whilst I and some of my friends are talking to him, a native will pass down the road riding one horse and leading another; jump on the spare nag, and gallop after the Kaffir, who will lead you to a farm forty miles distant." I could not help bubbling over with gratitude at his warm generosity, but shook my head, and said there was nothing to fear. So impressed, however, was the landlord with the idea that arrest for diamond dealing meant conviction and imprisonment, that he would not hear of my refusal, but left me saying:

"Nonsense, the Kaffir and the horse will be ready in an hour. Leave the rest to me."

About the time specified the cheery host, his rubicund face glowing like the sun, invited Wilson and me, in a bluff, off-handed manner, to the back wine place. The detective agreed, and nodded me to follow. Around the bar in that sequestered canteen, were congregated five or six sombrero-hatted, top-booted men, whose occupations were apparently connected with the war then in progress. In a trice Mr. Charles Wilson was sur-

rounded by the conspiring customers, who, over drinks, commenced to argue with him some burning question, during which the decoying Dodds glanced at me, grew red, dilated his nostrils, and winked. The front door of the canteen was wide open. I looked out, and sure enough saw a mounted Hottentot come slowly down the road, a riderless horse by his side. He passed once, twice, three times, Dodds each minute growing redder and redder; but I kept my ground, regretting so much kindness was wasted, and thinking, after all, there is a lot of good in this bad world of ours. Dear old Dodds was well-known on the Diamond Fields, where he kept a tavern in which the sporting Ashwell's amassed a fortune, and in my heart there is a corner which I have let for ever to my would-be friend, and to whose memory I kiss my fingers. However, to the benevolent boniface's disgust, that afternoon we departed on the way to Griqualand West, no restraint of any kind being put on my movements, so much so, that at one of the places we rested at I wandered after breakfast alone on the veldt, and struck a full-watered spruit nestling between two mounds, on the opposite side of which I observed a young native wench of Zulu blood disporting herself. She was as nature fashioned her, and much like the symbolic dancers of to-day, except *she* had an engaging covering round her. The bronze naiad grimaced with the enthusiasm of a Shaftesbury Avenue virgin, to which I responded like a Maiden Lane masher. She showed a set of teeth, white as the ivories of a new piano, and capered towards me, frolicsome as a lamb sighting its mother.

I showed her a shilling, she did twelve bobs with her woolly nob, took it, and bounded away like a springbok, still laughing with mouth and eyes. Speculatively I pulled out a florin to lure her back again, and she, full of mischievous meaning, pirouetted, as if playing hopscotch, in its direction, and getting at striking distance, snatched the coin, giving me as my reward the sight of a rounded form as she flew up the mound and disappeared. I felt as if I'd had two shots at a railway automatic slot, and found the machine didn't work.

CHAPTER XXV

All's Well that Ends Well—The Basuto War—Carrington's Column—Tangesberg—Homeward Bound.

THE weather was generally dry and pleasant, and Wilson and I travelled on without anything of note happening, until off-saddling at a farm where we rested to forage the horses. It was a ramshackle habitation, the one and only room being littered with bundles of evil smelling skins and sacks of mealies, around which melancholy cocks and hens roamed at will, apparently consoling the owner, who appeared in deep trouble because of some paltry law case he had lost. Full of the cause, he would do nothing but talk of it, asking Wilson's advice, and showing me legal communications, quite a needless proceeding, as they were in Dutch. These documents he took from innumerable others deposited in an ancient mahogany desk, and I noticed amongst them ten or twelve old envelopes which had been through the post, and on which were affixed many of the obsolete three-cornered Cape stamps. Knowing a little about philately, I ultimately, to the farmer's great surprise and satisfaction, bought the lot for five pounds, and, it is interesting to record, later on sold them for a hundred, which was much under their value. Everything has an end, so days after, it was late one afternoon, when, rising upon the red and brown horizon, the tented town of Diamondopolis loomed in sight. To the Kimberley gaol we wended our way, and soon found myself lodged there in a white plastered cell, tenanted by three men, one of whom was the Chasseur D'Afrique I wrote about in an early paragraph of these reminiscences. Bail was shortly forthcoming, and in

due course I was brought before the magistrate, and discharged, without a stain on my character.

Among other sublunary events I remember, on my acquittal, walking down the Main Street, Kimberley, feeling in buoyant health and the pink of condition, which was not surprising, considering I had ridden some fifteen hundred miles, and led the simple life. On passing the "Red Light" canteen, I glanced in, and Charley Hughes, the new proprietor, catching sight of me, insisted on my entering and having a small bottle with him. Whilst at the bar indulging in the flowing bowl, I noticed standing near a bullet-headed, typical Irishman, with deep-set eyes, whom Hughes indicated as Jack Keeley, brother to the fellow I had met in Natal, so feeling fresh and well, I spoke to the individual, telling him something of his blood relation. No doubt, burning to defend the family honour, Mr. Jack Keeley became aggressive, and we had a set-to, with the advantage altogether resting with me, which the gentleman thought to equalise by badly biting the fleshy part of my arm. However, in a few days, I was established once more in Kimberley as a diamond buyer, next door, if you please, to Hoppy, who sought to make up for his bad behaviour by assiduously touting for my patronage.

Once a young man goes wandering, campaigning, or play-acting, the fever for any one of these diversions comes periodically, and is irresistible. I stayed a few months in Kimberley, and while there got acquainted with a touring troupe of entertainers rejoicing in the name of the Cassandras. The company consisted of Professor Lover (the wizard and proprietor of the show), two charming girls, Elise and Adèle, a dancer, and Smith, a baritone, who, in the long ago, held a good position in England, and was a rival to the celebrated Russell. Becoming enraptured with one of the young ladies, I journeyed with the company as manager and *jeune premier*, receiving, however, no monetary consideration for my services, and playing in all the towns, large or small, of the Transvaal. It was rare fun at some of the villages when we gave a show at times in the chief Boer's parlour, and "fashion" came from miles

around to watch, with mouths agape, the talented professor, with Barnatonian facility, produce eggs from his coat sleeves and other parts of his person. "Ah," remarked one Dutchman, "die oud kerel is better than a brood of hens"; but what puzzled the worthy burgher was the absence of a rooster, whose presence he deemed necessary to unravel the mystery. After Elise, whose song, "Good-bye lovely Loo," enticed me from Kimberley, had done her turn, she and I would retire to the back of the "stage," in the vicinity of the boiler, where we passed the time contributing to the professor's marvellous legerdermain and our own mild flirtations. Professor Lover was a decent chap, but addicted to drink, and at Vrede, being happy with the bottle, thus causing a card trick to miscarry, he blurted to the audience, "Two damned fools behind don't know their parts, and I order Mr. Smith to sing 'The Ship on Fire,' after which Mr. Cohen and Miss Elise Cassandra will appear in the sketch, 'A Cup of Tea,' which, as you don't understand English, and I don't drink tea, beg most respec'fully to say won't be much good to any of us, so I'll retire to the Hotel to sell a few tickets for to-morrow evening. That's me. See."

In Standerton Court House, Lover, addressing the auditory, said he'd rather stand them a liquor each than play, an offer later on he did his best to fulfil, getting so merry that the constable ran him in for safety. At Potchefstroom we did fairly good business, and stayed at Young's Royal Hotel, the back yard of which in a few months, during the war of independence, was to be the *locale* of the execution of Dr. Woite and Vander Linden. Arriving in Pretoria, one could hardly believe that such a change could come over a place; instead of lethargy there was sparkle, money was plentiful, and the streets were gay with the red of British uniforms. On the Queen's birthday, at a review held by Lanyon and Colonel Bellairs, three hearty cheers were given by the Englishmen present, who all uncovered their heads, a proceeding not imitated by the Boers. About this time the fourth attempt to conquer Secocoeni was being made by Wolseley and

Colonel Baker Russell, and the walls of the capital were plastered with bills, of which the following is a copy:—

V. R.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR THE FRONT.

and

GRAND ATTACK

on Secocoeni's Town.

LOOT AND BOOTY MONEY.

Better prospects than the Blaudbank Gold diggings.

Pay awarded. £5 before leaving.

SAME RATIONS AS A GENERAL.

ENROL BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

The influence of English £ s. d. was everywhere, new restaurants and shops were opened, and Lover made a heap of money with his show, the large hall in which we played being packed every night. One would scarcely have imagined that in a few months the town would be besieged—about which the least said the better. I met in the city many old acquaintances, amongst others Charles Duval, an entertainer of the Maccabe type, who, with Deeker, ran a typewritten newspaper during the siege, the hardships and vicissitudes of which so upset the former that he jumped overboard in Delagoa Bay and was drowned.

My pleasant theatrical tour finished, I looked in the direction of Basutoland, where a war was raging, and, landing at Cape Town, fell across my old and esteemed friend, Mr. Woolf, who appeared as if he had just come off the Catskill Mountains. *On revient toujours a ses premiers amours,* so although he had no money I took him into partnership, buying two complete spans of splendid mules and a couple of large covered waggons, which I filled with merchandise. Thus equipped, we started for Basutoland, a distance of over six hundred miles. In due course, after undergoing many hardships, we arrived at Wepener, and discovered we had brought the wrong sort of goods, but, nothing daunted, waited for an escort, and got safely into Mafeteng, staying some weeks in the garrisoned village. During my sojourn there it was rumoured in the camp that a large

number of volunteers were expected, and judge of my surprise when one afternoon at Fraser's store the commander of them entered. The officer was Digby Willoughby, and as true as the Gospel he sported the same red theatrical vest which was so useful a "prop" at the Theatre Royal, Kimberley. Forgetting myself for a moment, I cried, "Hallo, Shah, how are you?" a reminder of his Thespian days which did not please him, so he edged me into a corner and whispered, "Don't call me that here." On leaving, he promised to come to my waggon that same night, but forgot to turn up, and I did not see him again until some years later in London, where, in Waterloo Place, he explained how a gentleman could live in Duke Street, Piccadilly, on a pound a week.

However, to return to the Basuto War. Guarded convoys left the fighting columns once or twice a week to trek to the border and draw supplies from Wepener, which was a couple of miles distant from the boundary, where the escort encamped to await the army stores. In this locality, a few yards only from Basutoland territory, lived an Africander farmer, named Massene, and his family, and, thinking it would be a good speculation to acquire a store on the borderland to trade with the men of the escort and passers-by, I made an arrangement with him, and in a few days a fair-sized corrugated iron structure was erected. We soon commenced to do a profitable business, and as we two partners were always with one of the columns, an old German Israelite named Kestner, whose ambition, however, was to go campaigning, was engaged to look after the shop during our absence. Not having done well at Mafeteng, the firm moved into a laager held by Colonial Dutchmen a few miles away, where we found the life very hard, as for weeks and weeks it poured incessantly, and of course we were wet through the whole period. The oxen, horses, and mules each evening were driven into the middle of the encampment, and as it had rained for a month, one can imagine the state of the place with the mud and filth. It was during these tempestuous times that Mr. Kestner visited the Dutch encampment, driv-

ing, under protection of the convoy, a ramshackle conveyance containing goods of which he thought we stood in need. A cold and pitiless evening was succeeded by a pitch black night as the pelting rain, to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, made a quagmire of the laager. We slept in wet clothes on top of the merchandise in the waggon, and a place in the back of same was found for Kestner, who by now had lost his martial ardour. At about twelve o'clock we were awakened by the noise of a terrific fusillade, and, much alarmed, I struggled hastily out of the waggon, in my haste falling amongst the mules, and narrowly escaping being kicked to death. Standing waist deep in mud and filth, I beheld the laager environed by a line of fire, which, in the darkness, looked like a wedding ring of flame encircling the place. Certainly the enemy was attacking, or it was a false alarm. While watching the circle of blaze attending each repelling volley, feeling miserable and anxious enough, a voice behind me quavered. I turned, and saw old Kestner, who had opened his wet umbrella, which swayed to and fro in trembling hands. "Gott in Himmel! Nach a platz," he exclaimed, turning up his eyes, and enquiringly added, as he floundered in the mud: "Vat is it? Battle ain't it?"

"It looks like an attack," I replied.

"Shermah beni! I've come a long way to get in this shermazzle." At this moment a particularly heavy volley sounded.

"Artiller*ee* not so? Dat's dirteen times. My enemies shall have it. You don't think the black niggers vill reach us?" he mumbled on.

There was an empty barrel standing near the waggon, and on this Kestner mounted and directed his eyes towards Mafeteng, a light or two from which glimmered in the distance. He was a strange figure, this old man, his gingham wrestling with the air, straining his sight like sister Anne looking if "there was anybody coming." Every time the anxious German caught a glimpse of the elusive Mafeteng flash he cried, waving his umbrella, "Tank Gord, they're a comin' now," and

when he heard a musketry volley, ejaculated, "Artilleree, ain't it?" to show his knowledge. In the pitiless rain the poor chap stood with his eyes bent on Mafeteng, until an unsympathetic mule kicked over the barrel, throwing him violently to the ground. I called twice, but at first received no reply. "What's the matter, Kestner, are you killed?" to which, to my relief, he answered:

"No, dank you; but by yours and by mine, I felt so sure I vas dead I vas frightened to speak for fear I couldn't."

All night the firing lasted, a state of things occasioned by wandering cattle, which engendered the false alarms. In the early morning a convoy started for the border, and distinguished in its midst could be seen the eager Kestner, urging his pair of ponies on, and chastising them with his dilapidated umbrella. From the Boer quarters we moved deeper into Basutoland, and joined Carrington's column, always the premier fighting host of the expeditionary force. I shall never forget the first night reaching it. Before trekking with the waggons, to see what the camp was like, I one evening rode in with five or six young fellows, and as we had to traverse thirty or forty miles of the enemy's country, it was rather risky, but being all youthful and merry, the trip only seemed a pleasant moonlight outing. The danger, however, of striking Carrington's laager did not altogether depend upon meeting roving bands of hostile Basutos on the way, but really commenced on nearing the encampment, and passing through the outpost lines, which were kept by the most undisciplined, unreliable set of men ever drawn together. It was about two o'clock in the morning when the camp, well placed upon a mound, hove in sight. Carefully we approached, the leader of our crowd, a fine young fellow, mounted on a white horse, riding forward and calling out, "Post! Post!" which was responded to by the outlying pickets sending in a volley. With the greatest difficulty and peril we managed to get into the laager, and one of the party, being a non-com., invited me to share a sergeant's tent. I

did so. There were five or six of them partaking of its shelter, and I slept the sleep of the tired and just until about five o'clock in the morning, when a thunderous report nearly made me jump out of my skin. I peeped through an opening, and found the tent had been rigged quite close to an immense gun, which was in full action, and under the command of a tall, handsome British Artillery officer, in full uniform, with the small gold-braided hat cocked saucily on the side of his head. And that was the first time I set eyes on Major Giles, remembered, I am sure, by hundreds of the people who read these pages.

We stayed many months with Carrington's column, which, with the exception of the Cape Mounted Rifles and the Loyal Basutos, was not apparently a very efficient force, the hastily levied volunteer corps having, in a measure, been recruited from the human flotsam and jetsam drifting about South Africa, and comprising all the ne'er-do-wells from Kimberley, missing sailors from Cape Town, and aliens from Anywhere. But the C.M.R. constituted a splendid force, and the officers a gallant band of Englishmen. There was D'Arcy, a Victoria Cross man; Shervington, the bravest of the brave; Crutwell, Dalgetty, whose gallant defence of Wepener in the late South African campaign will always be remembered, and a crowd of others. Poor D'Arcy's brilliant career came to a sad and untimely end, and it is only a few years ago that Shervington's death, under mournful circumstances, took place at a London hotel. Colonel Carrington, idolised by the men, was in those days a daring, high-spirited commander, full of pluck and resource; how he failed so disastrously to realise expectations in the Boer War is a mystery. He certainly did not lack initiative in Basutoland, for even during the different armistices the Colonel was of such a restless and adventurous nature that he did not discourage "wood patrols," thus inducing fighting, and many a fellow was brought back to camp legs first in consequence. The Basutos, too, were stubborn foes to beat, and it is not certain that Great Britain got the best of the war, something not to

be wondered at, considering the host she put in the field. I call to mind Moletsane's warriors, well-mounted and armed with a kind of battle-axe, in open daylight swooping down upon the cattle which were grazing not far from the laager. The men in camp were willing enough, for they went, rifles in hand, streaming out pell-mell, hatless and coatless, to repel the black raiders. One small boy, about sixteen years of age, attached to a Colonial corps, on this occasion rode up to a huge Basuto chief, and, pointing a revolver at his dusky enemy, pulled the trigger. The weapon, however, missed fire, and in a moment the youth was at the mercy of the bronzed Bruce, who seized him, and then, contemptuously pushing the boy aside as he rode away, said, "Go home, my lad; go home and tell your mother to send your father."

A number of men were in laager I knew on the Diamond Fields, who, through bad times, had enlisted in the different corps. One cold and humid evening, having retired inside my waggon for rest and shelter, I heard somebody tugging at the tarpaulin which protected its entrance, and on opening same came face to face with a tall, well-made chap, dressed in the uniform of the Cape Mounted Rifles. I did not recognise him at first, as he stood enveloped in a military cloak, the upper part of his countenance hidden by the regulation helmet, from which the rain dripped on to a blue, discoloured face; but when my visitor addressed me by name I knew him at once. The man was Ricketts, the erstwhile croupier at Ashwell's Gambling Saloon in Kimberley, whose fortune had gone to ashes. This chap had always been a decent, open-hearted fellow, liked by everybody, and it was painful to see him reduced to his present circumstances. The trooper looked very ill, dejected, and agitated, told me he had been badly treated by his superiors, intended to leave the camp at once, and wanted me to help him, that is, to supply civilian's clothes, of which the waggon was full. I would have done much to assist him, but to aid desertion in the face of the enemy was a big order, so I refused to have anything to do with it, but, all the same,

invited him inside to have a drink, and lent him a few pounds. More I could not do, but as he was suffering from colic, left the waggon to procure chlorodyne. On my return Ricketts had disappeared—and, I believe, a few days after, was found dead on the veldt.

The evening before the battle of Tangesberg I knew a fight was intended next morning, so rose at 4 o'clock to witness the proceedings. Except those men—Landry's Horse, no doubt—told off to guard the laager, the whole of the force was marshalled outside its walls. There, standing at ease by the heads of their horses, smoking pipes and drinking coffee, stood the Cape Mounted Rifles, waiting for instructions. Near them could be seen the Loyal Basuto Corps, average-sized, well-made natives, on small ponies, the very pick of the force. The rest of the troops were forming in square, and the objective of the little army was a ridge of low hills occupied by the enemy lying at the end of a kind of wide gorge, perhaps two miles distant. Suddenly an order was passed to the Loyal Basutos, who sprang on their horses, and at the word of command these intrepid fighters were off like a whirlwind, charging down in front of the enemy's position. In due time the natives were followed by the C.M.R., and then the bulk of the host moved out until it got in touch with the foe. Now, the force which had been left behind to guard the laager was not exactly a corps *d'élite*, and I, thinking if the Basutos rushed the camp it would be all U.P., decided to advance with the main body. The action was pretty lively while it lasted, and I was only a few yards from Carrington when he was badly wounded. His face quivering with pain, but resolute and brave as ever, he was placed on a stretcher, and a guard from the C.M.R. escorted the injured officer back to the camp. I had just got back there when Colonel Clarke (who was in command) rode up, looking decidedly pleased the day's work was over, which consisted of a quick advance and a slow retreat. Carrington's wound was severe, and he lingered in camp for some weeks, the Army doctors in vain endeavouring to extract the bullet.

A short time after Tangesberg, there being a lull in

the operations, and having two or three thousand pounds' worth of Government cheques in hand, we decided to drive to Aliwal North to deposit them in the bank. Leaving headquarters with a convoy, in due course the iron store on the borderland, which had been well looked after by the non-militant Kestner, was reached. The escort which accompanied the waggons happened to be a particularly rowdy one, therefore when evening came we were not surprised at the number of men who deserted their encampment, a quarter of a mile distant, to honour us with their patronage. All went well until about nine o'clock, and we were preparing for a night's rest, when there entered four individuals, two of whom were Irish Americans, one a Yankee, and the other a terrible Englishman. They wanted to buy a case of whisky to carry to the bivouac. Now we didn't mind a bottle or two, though strongly objecting to wholesale orders, but these troopers became so persistent, alleging a hundred men had clubbed up to enjoy a "sing-song," etc., that at the finish they departed with the liquor. In an hour or so they returned, horribly and dangerously drunk, with purple eyes and crimson noses. Refusing to serve them, they pulled out revolvers, and politely requested Mr. Kestner to "be shifty," and that gentleman hesitating, one of the party put a bullet through the counter, within a few inches of the German's abdomen, a proceeding which considerably accelerated his movements as a purveyor. It was not long before the four ruffians commenced to quarrel among themselves, and to fire at anything that took their fancy, Mr. Kestner the while bobbing up and down, exclaiming in great alarm as he ran to and fro: "Shentlemans, my tears, do take care of the artiller*ee*." Woolf and I made an attempt to pacify the madmen, but it was of no avail, for they shot at us, and were aiming all round as we fled from the place. Massene's farm was a few hundred yards away, and we made for that, the scoundrelly troopers standing at the store door firing in our direction, which, as it was dark, did not matter much. The Boer farmer refused assistance at first, but after great persuasion he and two stalwart sons

accompanied us back to the store, where poor Kestner had been left with the evil ones. I peered through a little window at the side of the structure, and beheld Kestner, very frightened, very accommodating, and very busy, surrounded like a lamb by four wolves. The men were busy gulping liquor, an opened bottle of whisky standing near them.

"Now, then, you old knuckle of pork, fill them glasses," ordered one frowsy ruffian, accentuating each word by tapping the counter with his pistol.

"Vat a vonder, Patrickeeley," assented Kestner, soothingly stroking the vagabond's cheek. "But put avay the artiller*ee*."

"I shan't. I shall put some of it into you, you old Jew."

"Me a old Jew. Gord forbid," exclaimed Kestner tremblingly. "By yours and by mine I come from behind London."

"D'ye know," said one of the customers with a strong Irish accent, "I'd loike to pull down his trousers."

"Don't make laughter," quickly replied the admonitive and terrified Kestner, filling up their goblets as a peace offering, and adding, with pretended merriment in dovelike murmurs, "Have a glass mid me. Gents, your memory for a blessing. *Santait*."

"Good for you," cried the American, depositing three shots, one after another, into a barrel. "Now stand still, and I'll have a pot at your hat." As Kestner dodged in defence against the artiller*ee*, we entered, and as their ammunition was exhausted, and they very drunk, managed to get them outside, where they lay like swine. A patrol, however, in the early morn, pounced down upon the quartette, a guard was put round the store, I was ultimately fined £100, and the hall of brandy and Boer tobacco effectually closed for ever and a day.

We drove down to Aliwal North in a Cape cart, drawn by two mules, and while traversing this really beautiful country the conveyance turned over, breaking my ribs. In much pain I reached Aliwal North, and was attended some weeks by Dr. Hall. Across the road lodged

Colonel Carrington, who, despairing of having the bullet extracted in camp, had come to this town, and whilst being examined on a chair, the bullet dropped from the wound—and medical scientists of South Africa proclaimed Hall a great surgeon. To show how small the world is, I may mention that a decade and a half after these events Dr. Hall resided next door to me in Kerk Street, Johannesburg.

Having spent upwards of a year in Basutoland, my thoughts once more turned to Kimberley, so one fine morning I settled up with Woolf, leaving him mules, waggons, etc., and in another week rode into Kimberley. I found the place strangely altered. The old-time digger, the farmer-digger, the gentleman-digger had almost disappeared, and in their places had sprung up a mushroom breed of financiers, who were destined in the near future to put their hands deep in the pockets of the British public, and form the cradle of a brood of costers and aliens, whose business methods later on made South African company promoting a vehicle for wholesale plunder and chicanery. In 1881, that bubble year, there were in Kimberley more than a dozen companies. Central shares stood at £400, they fell to £25; Rose Innes at £53, fell to £5; and so all along the line. Barney had come on by leaps and bounds, and with the Barnato, Frere, and Fry's Gully "corporations" was well to the front, making straight for that Mansion House Banquet which set the seal to his fame, and a grinning memory on his renown.

And now it is time to end the first part of these reminiscences. After a rest, I intend to write those appertaining to the Johannesburg period, which may prove readable. For myself, I have only to add that after a couple of years' prosperity in Kimberley I came home in the early 'eighties on the "Congella," which struck nigh the spot where the "American" foundered, nearly went on the rocks close to the Scilly Islands, steamed in a fog up the Bristol instead of the English Channel, and finally landed me, to my great joy, at Gravesend.

THE END.

A Selection from the Publications of :: ::

THE CENTURY PRESS

(BENNETT & CO.)

A Handful of Gems. Sonnets by "Agricola." Crown 8vo. 1s. net.

A King of No-Man's Land. By Effie Chamberlayne Crown 8vo. 6s.

A Little Cloud of Dust: or, The Indian Peril. By Hugh Naybard. Crown 8vo. 6s.

A Modern Goddess. By Gertrude M. Savery. Crown 8vo. 6s.

An Unconventional Tour in Norway. By George F. Tanner. With 48 Illustrations from Photographs. Crown 8vo 5s.

A Shooting Star. By Effie Chamberlayne. Crown 8vo. 6s.

A Son of the Sea. By Frank Bullen. 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

At the Grange. Verse by Henry Rose. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

Baden-Powell (Lt.-Gen. Sir Robert). "The Matabele Campaign." 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

B-P's Books for Boys. 4d. each net. The first Volumes are—

Jack Archer. By G. A. Henty.

Cormorant Crag. By G. Manville Fenn.

Snow-Shoes and Canoes. By W. H. G. Kingston.

The Matabele Campaign. By Lt.-Gen. Sir Robert Baden-Powell.

A Son of the Sea. By Frank Bullen.

Rob the Ranger. By Herbert Strang.

(Some splendid Volumes to follow.)

Basevi (Vincent). "Ixion's Wheel." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Ballyfrench (Morton). "The Lighter Side of War." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Beautiful Teetotaller (The). By T. W. H. Crosland. Crown 8vo. 5s.

Benel (Alfred). "The Fall of Minni." A Poem. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

Bess (Percy). "Mr. Micksup's Mishaps." With numerous Illustrations by W. G. Johnson. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

Between the Rivers. By William Maude. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Brooke (Captain Will). "The Log of a Sailorman." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Brooke (Captain Will). "Over Brave Blue Seas." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Brooke (Captain Will). "Love and Treasure Laden." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Bruce (Rev F. D.). "The Legal and Constitutional Relationship between Church and State." Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

Bullen (Frank). "A Son of the Sea." 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

By Aeroplane to the Sun. By Donald W. Horner. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Chamberlayne (Effie). "A King of No-Man's Land." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Chamberlayne (Effie). "A Shooting Star." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Christian Science in a Nutshell. Crown 8vo. 1s. net.

Clarke (Ethel M.). "The Potter's Vessel." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Coming of May (The). By Rev. John Deas Logie. Crown 8vo. 1s.

Cormorant Crag. By G. Manville Fenn. 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

Crosland (T. W. H.). "The Beautiful Teetotaller." Crown 8vo. 5s.

Dewett (Mary). "Feet of Wool." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Dewett (Mary). "The Seven Watchmen." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Diamond and the Rose (The). By Hope Protheroe. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Publications of the Century Press.—Continued.

Fall of Minni (The). By Alfred Berel. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

Feet of Wool. By Mary Dewett. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Fenn (G. Manville). "Cormorant Crag." 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

Gerrard (Morice). "The Silent Conquest." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Henty (G. A). "Jack Archer." 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

Horner (Donald W.). "By Aeroplane to the Sun." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Hub of Life (The). By Victoria Maitland. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Ixion's Wheel. By Vincent Basevi. Crown 8vo. 6s

Jack Archer. By G. A. Henty. 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

Kingston (W. H. G.). "Snow-Shoes and Canoes." 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

Knott (Stephen). "Tony Hughes." A Novel. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Legal and Constitutional Relationship between Church and State (The). By Rev. F. D. Bruce. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

Lighter Side of War (The). By Morton Ballyfrench. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Log of a Sailorman (The). By Captain Will Brooke, R.N.R. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Logie (Rev. John Deas). "The Coming of May." Crown 8vo. 1s.

Love and Treasure Laden. By Captain Will Brooke, R.N.R. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Maitland (Victoria). "The Hub of Life." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Maitland (Victoria). "So Very Human." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Matabele Campaign (The). By Lt.-Gen. Sir Robert Baden-Powell. 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys).*

Maude (William). "Between the Rivers." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Mr. Micksup's Mishaps. By Percy Bess. With Illustrations by W. G. Johnson. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

Publications of the Century Press.—Continued.

Miss Vaughan. By Hon. Mrs. Moor. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Moor (Hon. Mrs.). "Miss Vaughan." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Naybard (Hugh). "A Little Cloud of Dust; or, The Indian Peril." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Over Brave Blue Seas. By Captain Will Brooke, R.N.R. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Potter's Vessel (The). By Ethel M. Clarke. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Protheroe (Hope). "The Diamond and the Rose." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Rich Fisherman (The) and other Poems. By Eric Duncan. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

Rose (Henry). "At the Grange and other Poems." Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

Savery (Gertrude M.). "A Modern Goddess." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Seven Watchmen (The). By Mary Dewett. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Sidon (J. A.). "That Kind of Love." Crown 8vo. 6s.

Silent Conquest (The). By Morice Gerrard. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Snow-Shoes and Canoes. By W. H. G. Kingston. 4d. net. *(See B-P's Books for Boys).*

So Very Human. By Victoria Maitland. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Strang (Herbert). "Rob the Ranger." *(See B-P's Books for Boys.)*

Sun-Worshippers (The). By Ethel Sheppard. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

Tanner (George F.). "An Unconventional Tour in Norway." With 48 Illustrations from Photographs. Crown 8vo. 5s.

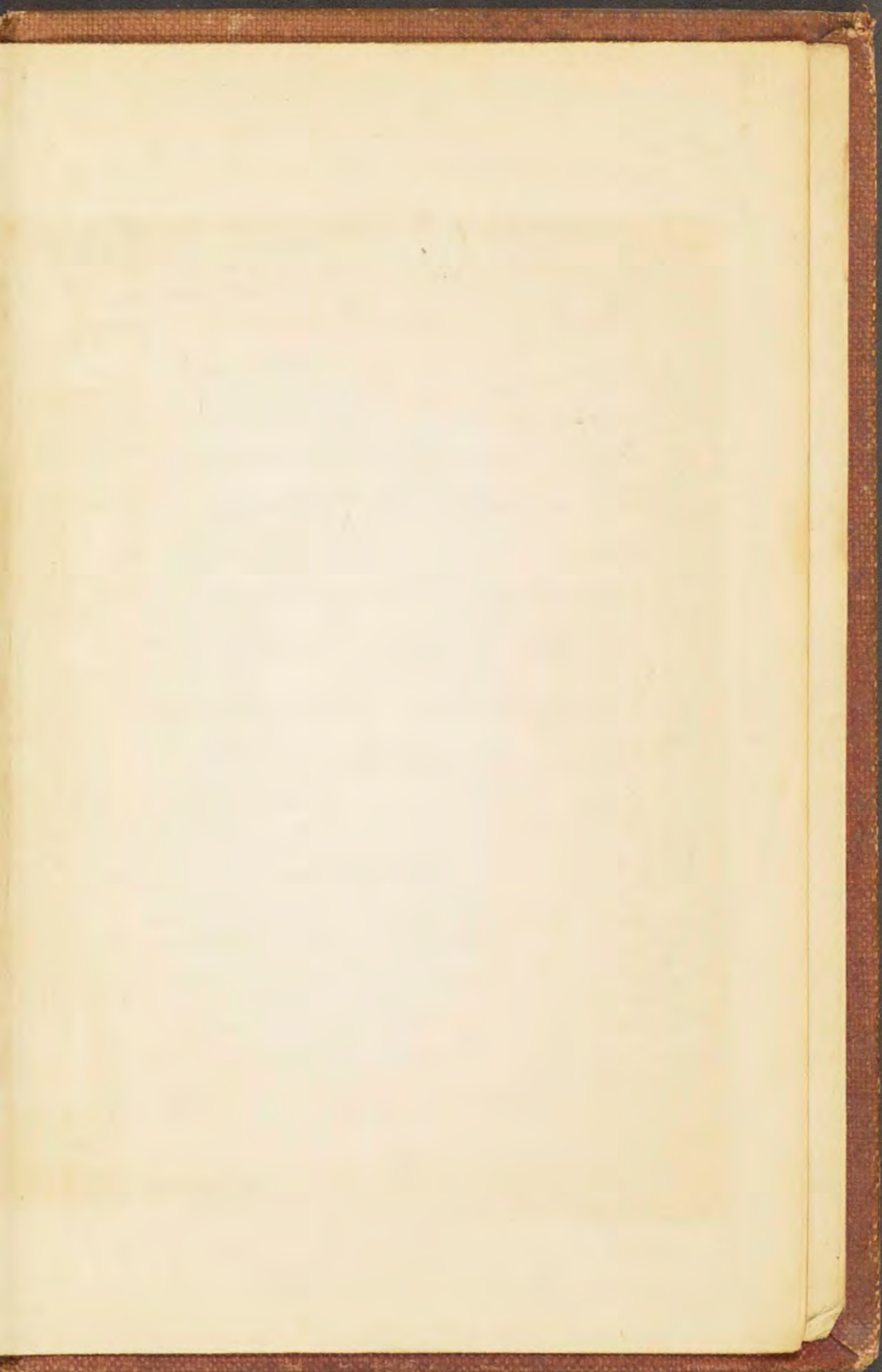
Tearin' the Tartan. By Tyndal Wilson. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

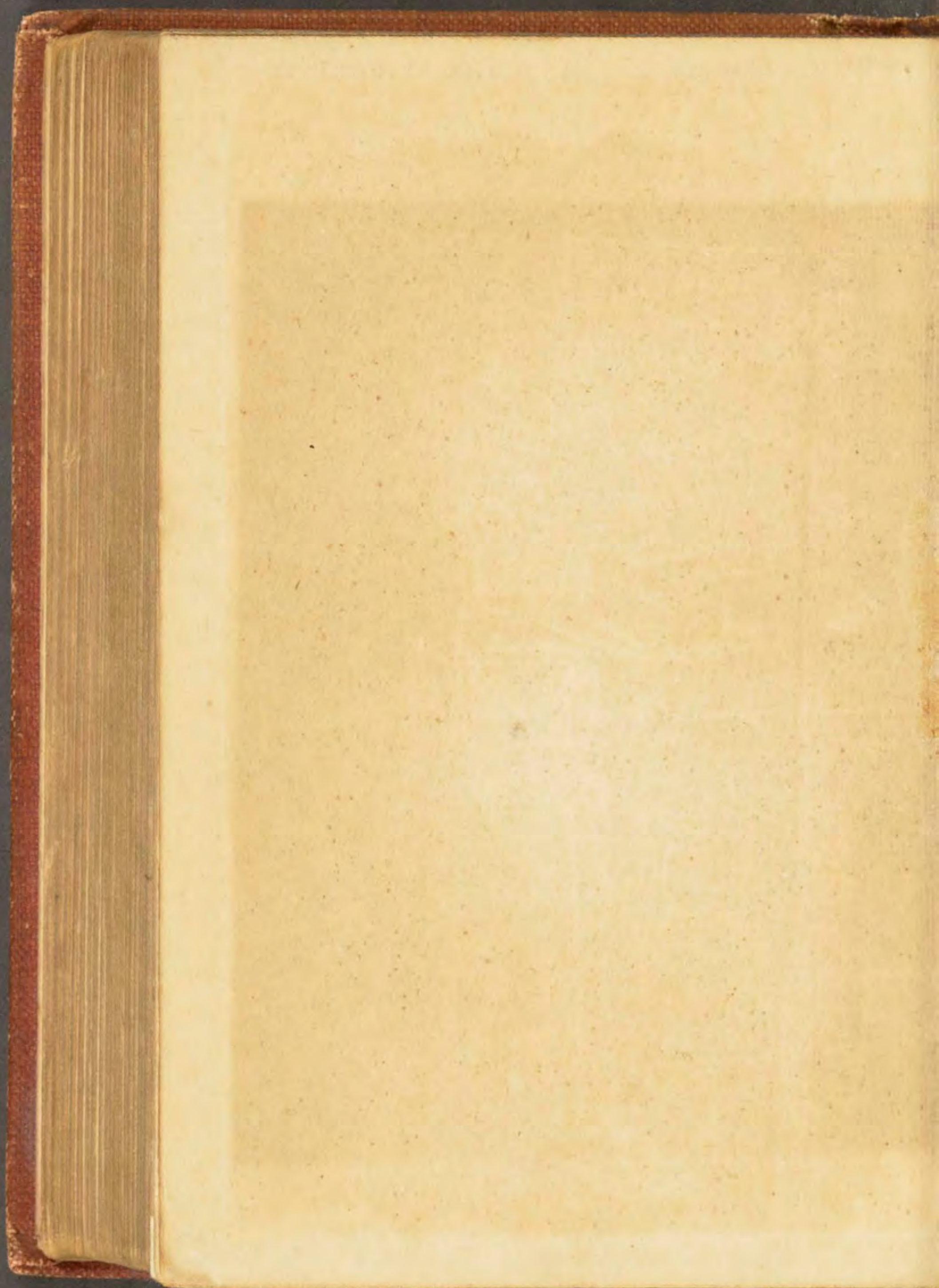
That Kind of Love. By J. A. Sidon. Crown 8vo. 6s.

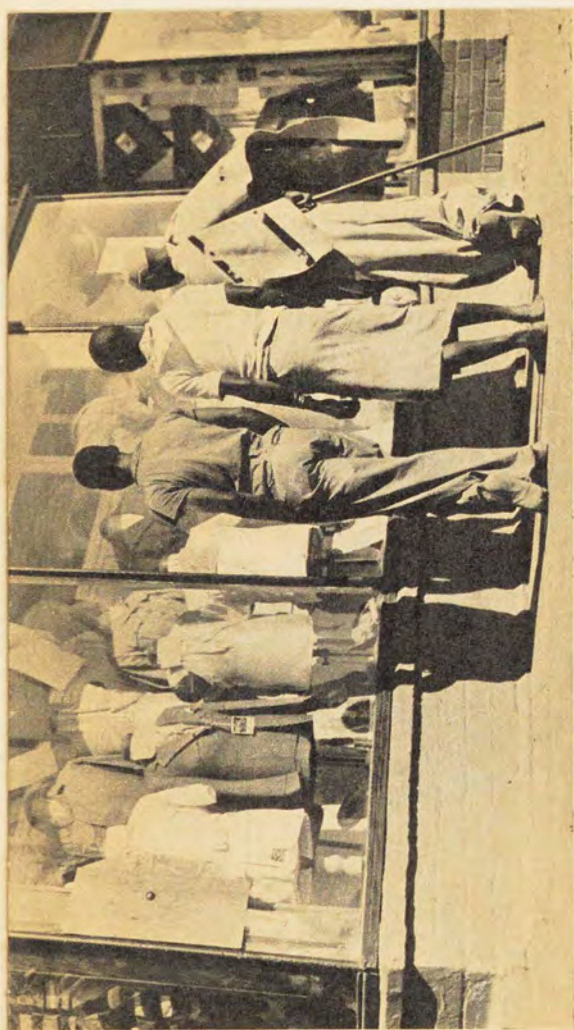
Tony Hughes. A Novel. By Stephen Knott. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Wilson (Tyndal). "Tearin' the Tartan." Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

8, HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.







ALFRED BEIT . . .

who was born in Germany, got to Kimberley in 1875 via the Amsterdam diamond trade. In a decade he made a fortune and in 1890 he formed Wernher, Beit & Co. Important French and German banks entrusted about $600 million to Beit; even the Rothschilds overcame an initial reserve about the Rand and invested in his ventures. Eventually Beit's interests were merged with those of Rhodes, and the two rivals became allies. Beit died in 1906, leaving a fortune of about $150 million. Other Rand leaders of an earlier day: Sir George Albu, Woolf and Solly Joel, and Sir Abe Bailey.

JOSEPH B. ROBINSON . . .

a Kimberley fortune hunter, was in the red when a business friend telegraphed him to trek to the Rand. A great gambler, "J.B." quickly bought up many farms as potential gold mines, despite the ridicule of the Boers who sold them. "J.B." made a fortune, was created a baronet, ran with Mussolini's set. But he was caught swindling and, when he was proposed for a British peerage, the House of Lords turned him down. In 1929, Robinson died cursing his enemies. The cautious *Cape Times* predicted that future rich South Africans would "shudder" lest their reputation approximate his in loathesomeness. Today "Randlords" in general, unlike "J.B.," avoid personal publicity.