

towered above us. The morning dew not having been dissipated by the sun, fell in heavy showers upon us. Cum-cum, who was only clothed in a small square of skin, did not suffer much, and the drops rolled glistening off his well-oiled skin. But I got soaked through and through, and rather wondered if I could ever get dry any more. However, I was not to be put off my day's outing by a trifle like that, and sure enough by nine o'clock there was not a wet thread left, and beyond looking as though I was wearing rough-dry clothes, there was no harm done. On and on we walked, the day getting hotter and hotter. Through long tracks of mealie fields and Oofoo, a kind of grain that grows upon high stalks of grass something like our wheat, only much higher. The natives make a kind of meal of it, and look upon it as we do on our bread. Here and there we came upon a patch of melons; great, big, delicious water melons, a delicate pink inside, with great, big black seeds. Of these Cum-cum took what he considered best, and in his broken English told me I could "pay backie" to the natives to whom the ground belonged. As we never struck those natives, I fear our sense of honesty was not so good as we imagined. When we had been walking for three hours I called a halt, and by a running stream sat down to breakfast. It is not seemly for a kaffir to eat with the "Mocassacassi" or "top of all lady," so Cum-cum squatted down a few yards off, and apparently enjoyed his dry, white loaf as much as I did my more elaborate fare. Then on again, till really I began to wonder whether we were not marching straight into the heart of the veldt away from kraals or human habitation altogether. Certainly the walk was lovely; the scenery varied every few miles. Through forests, out into open stretches of country, covered with a rank grass, the nearest to our fields at home. Through low wooded tracks of scrub, where the trees hardly reached even to my short stature. We did not run against any wild animals, but saw some lovely buck scurrying away in the long grass at our approach. And snakes there were in abundance; only too many of them for my peace of mind. Nasty sinuous gliding things coiled round the branches of trees, watching these strange intruders with their evil beady eyes! Some green mambres very beautiful, and brown mambres—not so beautiful, but equally venomous and more dangerous, since they are ground snakes and difficult to distinguish. Just as we were going through a wood, and, kraal or no kraal, I felt I must sit down for a long rest, a most unearthly noise startled me. Yells and boo-hooings of the most ear-splitting shrillness, and in fear I hastily got my weapons ready for self-defence. At the very moment I saw a party of creatures, whether men or women I could not determine, a few of whom had babies slung upon their backs, and of whose sex there could be no doubt at all, owing to the pendulous breasts that in some instances hung down to the knees. I found out later that it is no uncommon thing for children of two and three to be still unweaned, and whilst trotting by their mother's side to partake of nourishment. This body of women, for I found they were all women, were quite as astonished at me as I at them, and evidently considerably more alarmed. They were occupied in making a road through the wood, by means of a sort of hoe fastened on like an axe, and the weird sounds were simply jubilation at the prowess they were exhibiting. They clustered close together when we got

nearer, and my boy Cum-Cum had to parley with them and present them with some needles and a reel of cotton before they quite decided not to run away from us. As soon, however, as their first shyness wore off they became unpleasantly curious, trying to inspect me all over. In solemn conclave we all marched on, back to their kraal, which I was told was only a few hundred yards away. So it proved—only no one not knowing the way could have found it, so cleverly was it hidden in a little valley, the approach to it winding in and out of a wood, and across a stream, finally skirting a granite kopje. Even when it *did* appear, so quaint was it that one could easily have imagined the low huts were but a collection of bee-hives. There were about fifty huts altogether, some quite a little walk away from each other. The huts were thatched and very low; later on being allowed to enter one, I had to almost crawl in on my hands and feet. Very poor workmanship indeed. Different to the lordly tribe of Zulus, or even Zambesi boys higher up, these Mashonas were a somewhat degraded tribe. Terrible cowards, and with apparently no folklore, but superstition and witchcraft. Closer to, the younger women were not ill-looking, but not very tall, and the thick negro lips spoilt otherwise very good features. Their hair was done up in many quaint ways, and all the full-grown women had beads plaited into a greasy mess that looked as if nothing but a close shave could undo or get off. They were all more decently dressed than the men, having white limbo, a sort of cheap calico, which was grey and yellow from age and dirt round their waist, down to their knees or feet. Huge brass ringlets, armllets, and anklets on all of them, and various other curious ornaments stuck in their ears, noses, lips, and hair. It took me a great deal longer to find all this out, however, than the mere telling of it. Knowing a little of the lack of respect accorded to Europeans who do not observe their particular etiquette, the first thing I did on arriving at the kraal was to sit down on the ground and appear to take no notice at all of anyone. Out of the tail of my eye, I watched a ring of men seated near me, who were smoking and making rush baskets. Presently one of the men began softly clapping his hands, and at that signal of friendliness I despatched Cum-cum with my present to the chief, and signified the will of the "Macaroo" top missus to talk with them. After a short discussion, two of them came over to me, and standing in front of me began gently stamping up and down on the ground, at the same time clapping their hands. After that we all became quite friendly, and after a good deal of persuasion I induced the chief to let me take some photographs. The difficulty was to persuade the more timid of them no harm was intended; as soon as ever I got my Kodak into anything like the proper focus they all scattered away into the bushes or their huts, whichever came handiest, and it all had to begin over again. Also my Kodak only held four plates, and I had to find a dark room to put new ones in. This presented almost insuperable difficulties, since even the huts had so many cracks and no doors, it was next door to impossible to get it dark enough. Moreover, after a long "indaba" (talk), they only agreed to my using a hut if three could be present to watch all I did. This may sound harmless enough. But in a temperature of 110 deg. to cram in three evil-smelling oily bodies as well as my own, was no joke. I wondered my very

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