Chapter I

IT WAS A HOT DAY in Lower Albany, and the slow beat of the surf went over the land with a drowsy hum, sending to sleep all things but ants and white men, and the ants simply made a show of doing something. One white man, a stalwart young fellow, by name John Dale, sat on the stump of a tree, and watched a colony of ants. Watching was a favourite occupation of his. He could sit still anywhere except under a mimosa, where thorns were troublesome, and watch anything. His excuse was, that he studied nature to improve his mind, but the result was that his maize and his melon patch were never worth much.

“‘Go to the ant, thou sluggard,’ said the wise man; and I have been to him. He bears out my theory of work—that misdirected energy, especially on a warm day, gathers less moss than a rolling stone. During the last hour, one of these full-grown ants has run twelve ant miles in a circle, under the impression he was doing something for the common good. The majority of men are like ants, always running after something they can’t find. The sluggard, with his well-directed laziness, knows what he wants, and gets it without running. I believe I am a sluggard: I know what I want. I wonder if she will say, yes!”

John folded his big brown hands over one knee, and began wondering until hunger put in a claim for attention. He rose up, stretched himself, and lolled over to his melon-patch in a shady opening in the thick woods.

“Well, now, if this is not enough to make a man sick! It took me a full month to dig up that patch, and every morning for six weeks I have watched the melons swell out bigger and rounder, gathering sweetness from the dew, and rich colour from the sun. Now there is not so much as a pip left. All that labour gone to give one hour of satisfaction to a family of greedy pigs.”

John leaned up against a tree, his hands thrust into the pockets of his stout cords, and gloomily surveyed a small clearing scarred all over by the long snouts of wild pigs. But looking on did not satisfy his hunger, which now increased with alarming rapidity on the discovery of the empty larder. He
shoved himself off from the tree, and strolled down to a dry watercourse with steep banks, in one of which the current during flood-time had washed out a spacious cave. This Dale had selected for his home; for it saved him labour in building a log hut. He drew out a long line, with large hooks attached, about six feet above the sinkers, and went slowly through a sandy bush path to the pebbly shore of the Kareiga.3

The broad blue shallow river flowed on between its silent bush-covered banks, and cut its way through the white beach to the sea.

John loved fishing more than anything. He could sit on his favourite rock all day long, feeling the touch of the line over his forefinger, and watching the ebb and flow of the current with all its shades and variety of life. Reaching his post, he baited the hooks, and swinging the lead round and round, let it hiss through the air with its trailing length of line, and plumb into the deep water, where great kabblejauw,4 tasty red fish, were likely to be making their way to the shallow feeding-grounds. Large jelly-fish, with delicate colours glowing through their transparent bodies, floated gently down, some to be left stranded amid the rocks, others to be caught by a chance eddy and carried back again to the bosom of the ocean.

"Man, after all," mused John, as he watched the floating globes of suspended animation, "is in his coming and going something like a jelly-fish. One, in the prime of his life, is stranded on a mud bank high and dry, to be forgotten; another, caught by some happy circumstances or freak of chance, is borne triumphantly into the sea of fame, now lifted into prominence on a swell, now lost in the trough, but always in existence. Halloo! here’s a bite!"

The line pulled out taut, and he landed a couple of fine fish. Then the hungry man discovered he had no tinder wherewith to make a light, and had to turn his fish into a small pool, made for that purpose on the shore.

"There is nothing for it but to go off to Mrs. Purdy’s, even if it takes me till night to get there. I must change this old hat for that palmiet.5 As Kate made it, she will like to see how it looks.” He placed the broad-brimmed hat of rough straw on his shapely head, and started to poise, but gave up when he remembered there was no glass. He set off across an undulating country, well carpeted with tall grass, and bordered some ten miles off by a round hill, where a white speck marked the homestead of Mrs. Purdy. As he passed a vley,6 bordered by green rushes and lovely harebells, he stopped to gather a few flowers for Kate, then pushed on steadily. At intervals gusts of hot wind, like blasts from a furnace, swept over the plain, and out of the sandy patches twisted tall dust-columns. One of these came suddenly on John, filled his eyes with dust, and whirled his treasured hat high into the air. He saw it grow smaller and smaller, a white speck against the blue, then marked it slowly float earthwards, and finally settle away to the left above a cleft in a ridge.
“It has gone into the devil’s kloof. The Kaffirs\(^7\) say there is a mysterious pool there, and if I were not so hungry I would like nothing better than to explore. Chance, circumstance, or fate, supported by an erratic whirlwind, however, has shaped my course against my present wish, and appetite must wait on the finding of the hat.”

In a cleft of the hill was a dense wood, looking almost black from the shadow cast by the steep sides. Where the opening broke the continuity of the skyline there was a sheer precipice, as though the side of the hill and the kloof had been cut clear away. Trailing vines grew over the rocks, and bushes held tenaciously to a precarious footing in the clefts. Below, the dark trees continued along a valley, winding at the base of an overhanging krantz,\(^8\) and went right on to the river bank. John had to retrace his steps back and down the ridge, till he at last reached the narrow mouth of the kloof. There was no opening, and only by going on hands and knees could he break through the first barrier of dense bush. At last, after patient crawling, he reached an opening by the side of a gliding stream, and stood up to look around.

Nothing was there to be seen but moss-covered trunks and gnarled vines. The steady fall of a drop of water—a gentle sound in itself—seemed to heighten the silence of the lonely woods, and John, standing motionless, found himself counting each silvery splash, and marking how loud was the echo. The sombre scene gave a dark tinge to his impressions. A feeling of depression sank upon him, such as he never before had felt in the saddest moments which come to an idle man. He shouted, to disperse the gloomy silence with ringing echoes, but his voice could not travel, and came back from out the dark shades a mere inarticulate moan. Smiling grimly at his weakness, he stepped boldly on over the shining boulders to a large yellowwood,\(^9\) round whose trunk he swung, landing, to his astonishment, in a beaten path.

“Game track,” he muttered, stooping down to trace the spoor.\(^10\) No, there were no indents such as would be made by the sharp hoofs of buck. The path was flat, as though trodden by human feet, and bare of grass, showing that naked soles had passed over it, the perspiration killing vegetation more surely than would the covered feet of Europeans.

“A Kaffir path,—that is strange.” He straightened himself and looked round suspiciously. “Seems well used; but there are no Kaffirs in this neighbourhood; and when they do chance by, they avoid this kloof.”

A sharp crack, as of a twig breaking, made him leap into the air, so startling it was after the intense stillness. He bent forward and listened, impelled by instinctive fear. A deep, quivering sigh followed, and after that a deeper silence, so still that his straining ears could catch the far-off beating of an eagle’s wings as it poised high above in the glorious light. Gently, his soft
veldschoens making no noise, he crept forward to a rock which projected into the path. Over this he looked, and saw the path stretching away among the trees. His heart stood still as his eyes, piercing the gloom beyond, lighted on some dim form—something human, with fierce eyes gleaming under low brows. The thing rose up erect, and still; as John looked, striving to make out its uncertain outline, it disappeared.

“The Kaffirs say there is a spirit in this kloof. I wonder—pooh, nonsense? I am growing cowardly.” He braced his nerves, stepped round the rocks, and walked quickly on to the spot where he last saw the strange form. He kicked against something large and round.

“A melon,—well, I’m dashed! And here is the spoor of a baboon. An ugly spirit, but a good one, with a fine eye for a ripe melon.” He recovered his usual equanimity in a moment, and sat himself down with the generous fruit between his legs. If there was one thing more than another he liked, it was a watermelon, ripe, cool, and crisp. He rapped the glistening rind with his knuckles, and it gave forth a hollow sound, telling of ripeness.

“Just perfect! The old thief is an excellent judge.” He opened the blade of his knife, shaved off the top and bottom ends of the melon—the north and south poles—then slid the sharp blade down the parallel lines drawn for the purpose by nature, from the north to the south poles.

The slice removed was red with the sweet juice held in tiny globules like diamond points, and the black pips lining the inner ridge.

“That was good. At least I think so; but I must try a second slice to make sure.” The second was larger than the first, and the third than the second, but each was cut with a cunning hand to leave the heart, a luscious morsel, for the last.

John was gay and inclined to warble when the heart was exposed, free of seed and brimful of nectar. He took it up, admired its juicy hollows, pink heights and smooth undulations. He lifted up his long arm to its fullest extent, and opened his mouth to shout out some snatch of an old wine-song, when the morsel was suddenly swooped from his grasp, and he received a blow which sent him roughly against the nearest tree.

He sprang to his feet with his fists clenched; but his angry looks, rapidly searching the bush around, fell on no living creature, nor could he hear the slightest noise. He searched the boughs above, and looked round the large trunks, but in vain. A strange feeling of dread swept over his heart, like a cold wave over a drowning man. He turned to retrace his steps, and the movement was greeted by a jeering laugh.

“Ah, if I could only see you!” muttered Dale, as he glared around with increasing rage, “you would not play with me.” He stood irresolute, not
knowing what to do, but the knowledge that something was watching him shook his nerves more than would any visible enemy.

The same dead silence filled the kloof again. It seemed to him ages since he had last heard a joyous note, and a strange idea took possession of him that he had strayed into some dread region, out of which he would not escape without meeting with a terrible experience. No man likes to be watched by even friendly eyes. There is that in a furtive gaze which will cause uneasiness to the person examined; but this feeling of discomfort is as nothing to the fear, caused by the knowledge that an enemy, himself concealed, is watching your every movement. When that enemy has no tangible form, the fear takes on the numbing sense of horror. Dale tried to locate the direction from which the laugh had come; but when he looked one way he was impelled to turn his head suddenly, lest the creature might be stealing on him from behind. Then, more terrible yet, out of the brooding stillness he fancied strange whisperings, and in the dark shadows he conjured wild shapes with bright, fierce eyes. His brain throbbed, and there came to him that awful experience which sometimes comes to the weak or over-wearied, and strains the reason to the verge of madness. Within his skull there seemed to be an immeasurable space, out of the utmost boundaries of which, from opposite directions, there travelled two globes, rushing with fearful speed. Their course was the same, and, as they grew in size, it was evident they must come together; they grew until they occupied the vast space, and Dale waited for the tremendous shock with nerves all strung.

“Merciful heavens!” he gasped, recovering the command of his reason by a last exercise of the will. He staggered, weak and panting, then sank to the ground, as a wild unearthly cry, intense with mortal agony, but more fearful than any human soul gave vent to, rent the silence. It came from out the ground, rose with increasing power to one dreadful shriek, then died away in a low murmur.

Dale drew himself up, and swayed to and fro. He laughed in a strange, mirthless way, and staggered blindly on. The jeering laugh was repeated from out the gloom before him.

“All right, old spirit, I’m coming; and we’ll laugh together—ha, ha, ha!” He bruised himself against the trees, but went on regardless of the path, with eyes fixed. He stepped at last out from among the dim trees on to a broad smooth rock, slipped, fell, and glided along. He threw out his arm instinctively and grasped a vine. Then as out of a nightmare he awoke, and cast a startled look around. The sight that met his gaze was appalling. He was balanced on the very rim of a waterfall, and below him some fifty feet yawned a dark hole. On either hand rose the rocky sides of the krantz, and at the back the tall trees, from one of which hung the vine he grasped. He followed the
tendril downwards with his eye, and marked how it stretched, a thin brown line, across the hole beneath to the brink of the pool, which describing a half-circle rejoined the precipice. The hole, in fact, was a cup on the face of the precipice. The water slid over the rounded lip of the krantz and flowed, without a murmur, into the dark space. Dale shuddered as he looked down, as well he might, for a more gloomy scene could scarcely be imagined.

“This,” he muttered, “is the pool the Kaffirs speak of. Nothing that enters it ever comes out again, either dead or alive. The water even does not escape, they say; and they say true, for the water-line is below that enclosing ridge. Good heavens! how dark it is! No sunbeam ever strikes into those mysterious depths. The Kaffirs believe this is the home of Ikanti, the Water Spirit, and no man can look down without being drawn in by the power of the shining eye.”

There was a time when he laughed at the idle fable of the superstitious natives. How long ago that time seemed! He vaguely wondered whether he would ever laugh again; for his throat was dry, and his heart had a feeble motion. Slowly he began to retreat, steadying himself by the rocks at his side; but scarcely had he moved a yard, when a stone whizzing from above struck where he had just stood. The fragments scattered into the pool, and by-and-by there came up hollow reverberations strangely weird; then arose again out of the very pool, that fearful cry tearing through the startled air, and shaking the solid rock on which he stood. Upon this scream followed the noise of a wild commotion in the waters of the pool. A power was drawing Dale back; the very branches pointed to the pool. His legs were like lead. He threw himself on the rock, and wriggled on to the soft path, where by the strength of his arms he pulled himself along, then regaining his feet, dashed wildly on, not daring to look behind.

Chapter II

MRS. PURDY, the widow of one of the early settlers, lived in a wattle and daub cottage, not imposing but snug and clean within. The settlers in the Cape never built log huts, as did frontier men in the States; but between these types of pioneers there was a great resemblance. Men and women who, had they remained in the crowded cities of Europe, would have taken upon them a depressing sameness, the stamp of monotonous drudgery and limited ideas, developed in new lands: they became different creatures. The stunted trunk threw out roots in the virgin soil, bore buds and leaves, and rejoiced in a new life.

The man who, as a toiling labourer in a city, would have borne his burden day by day, without pleasure or the power of reflection, as a colonist, with all his responsibilities developed, took on the God-sent dignity of reason and the heaven-born sense of beauty. The American frontier men turned
out from the humble log huts in the lonely woods such a man as Lincoln, whose great heart was large enough to embrace the sufferings of a nation; and from solitary huts in the Cape have come forth men of large natures. The possibilities of leadership, the germs of fine characters, lay hidden in the hearts and minds of thousands, now toiling as mere mechanical drudges in the overburdened populations of great cities.

Mrs. Purdy who would have been commonplace amid the humdrum surroundings of civilisation, developed a finer nature under the stimulating influence of independence.

Her face was thin, but bore on its homely features a certain refinement, which comes of suffering. After her husband’s death, she had managed the farm herself, with the help of her son and daughter. Now that her son had grown up, he managed everything without, and left his mother only indoor work to do. She was now curing bacon, which, with home-made cheese and pumpkin, was rather a favourite food among the settlers.

In a valley below the homestead was a magnificent grove of orange trees, and the mother came to the door, now and again, to look under her shading hand for her daughter, who could be seen in her cotton gown, a dot of white under the giant tree of the grove.

Kate would have surprised an English visitor; for, though colonial born, and reared under burning skies, she was wonderfully fair, with long dark lashes shading eyes that varied between grey and blue. Her yellow hair was rather scorched by the sun, and floated untied over her shoulders. Her hands were brown, and bore marks of hard work; but that defect was trifling. She moved with a natural grace, bearing herself erect, with the proud poise of the head caught, perhaps from the example of Kaffir girls, whose springing gait and upright figures are the gift of nature. To see her walking in the grove, dressed in simple white, recalled to memory that gem of Wordsworth:

“Comes stealing in with lovely gleam,
Comes stealing in serene and slow;
Soft and silent as a dream—
A solitary doe.”

Kate has lived an uneventful life, helping her mother, playing with her brother until he grew too important; but, lately that idle fellow, Dale, had with his poetry and sentiment, opened up to her quite a new world. At this moment, sitting beneath her favourite tree, her mind was engaged weaving a bright woof of fancies while her fingers quickly opened and stoned large red and creamy apricots, preparatory to their being dried.

On the trees were fruit in three stages. The air was sweet with the scent of white blossoms; in the shadows under shining leaves were the young fruit,
dark green; while glowing golden in sun and shade were the ripened oranges, slowly absorbing long miles of sunbeams from above, and sucking in liquid sweetness from the moist ground through innumerable channels. The hum of bees, the gurgling of the stream winding among the roots, and the swishing of banana leaves filled the little valley with a gentle music, telling of peace and content. Now and again an over-ripe fruit would fall rustling through the leaves to the ground.

The old Dutch colonists, who left behind them such gardens as this, were wise beyond the average of men. An avenue of stately oaks, a grove of pines, an orchard of generous fruit trees,—how beautiful a monument these, compared to the dumb and crumbling stone! The inscription fades, the stone itself falls, while the tree, instinct with life, lifts its branches to the heavens. The old boer with his pipe, would sit on his stoep\textsuperscript{14} in the cool of the afternoon and fix his gaze on his plantation, his vineyard, and his orchard, while the lowing of the cattle and the bleating of the sheep sounded pleasantly in his ears.

“The old man simply ruminated—chewed the cud like his cows,” says the modern. No; as the trees drink in the dew, the quiet minds absorbed the spirit of gentleness resting on the land, and the wisdom written in the fields in characters of rocks and trees and living things.

Kate’s brother, Farney, or boss, as he was named, from his masterful disposition, was on the far side of the hill, reaping. The crop of wheat meant a year’s supplies, when bartered at the nearest market; and it was already ripe. Farney’s back ached from stooping, but he kept steadily on, grasping a handful of stalks in his left hand, and sweeping the sickle through. He had met with much trouble that season from the Kaffir labourers. Always difficult to manage, and going off whenever they felt disposed, they have this moon been more than usually prompt in taking the homeward track without giving notice. All help he counted on now was from one rather ill-tempered Gaika,\textsuperscript{15} who moved to his work sullenly, when he went at all. This man was reaping at the far end of the field near the melon-patch, and Farney’s good temper was fast ebbing away when he noticed how often the Kaffir stopped to examine the melons. At last the man disappeared, and would not answer when called.

Farney threw down the sickle, straightened himself, and with an angry frown strode down to look after the idler. The latter was not in view; but Farney at once traced the spoor of the bare feet to the melons, and then on to a nois-boom,\textsuperscript{16} within whose shade the Gaika was sitting and munching a fine ripe melon. He looked up and greeted the young white man with a cool glance, followed by an insolent grin as he noticed the signs of anger brewing.
Farney stooped down, picked up the remains of the melon, and smashed it on the Kaffir’s hard crown, the juice making furrows in the mask of yellow clay which he had smeared over his face, to keep the skin soft.

“Yoh!” growled the man in astonishment. He had not dreamed of any such conduct on the part of his master, a mere boy in his eyes, and admired him rather for it.

“Come and reap.”

The Kaffir grinned again. He did not attempt to get up, but picked the melon-pips out of his wool.

It was a ludicrous spectacle; but not so to Farney. Either he or his servant had to be master, and he meant to be. He grasped the man by his naked ankle, and dragged him out into the opening. The Gaika sprang up with gleaming eyes—for it was an indignity to his manhood to be pulled along like a dead dog—and ran off.

“Come back,” shouted Farney.

“Yes, boy: wait for me.”

The man entered a rough shelter by a bush, and in an instant was returning, carrying two long sticks, such as the Kaffirs use for fighting.17

Farney started; then his thin lips shut tight, and he glanced around for a weapon. A dry mimosa-branch met his eye, and this, for want of something better, he picked up.

In a few bounds the Kaffir was up with him, and began the preliminary flourishes with his sticks, no thicker than his middle finger, but pliant as whalebone and hard as iron-wood. They whizzed through the air about Farney’s head, and swept over the ground to an accompaniment of taunting jeers.

“Oh! oh! quedin—boy, tremble! I am the red ox, famous in battle. I will kill you by inches. Your blood will flow at each stroke; is it red or white?”

One of the supple sticks bent over Farney’s guard, and the sharp point tore open the skin along his forehead.

“Oh! it is red blood. Good: it will strengthen my kerries. How is that sister up at the house? She is plump and pleasant to look upon. Ah! be careful.”

Farney made a wild blow with his miserable weapon, but it shattered against the hard kerries. He knew his assailant was playing with him, and in his helplessness he ground his teeth with rage. He kept his eyes fixed on the Gaika, and marked from the brightening glare in the black eyes that the play was over. The sight of the blood had stirred up the black man’s ferocious instincts. His nostrils expanded, and the muscles on the sinewy legs and arms stood out under the shining skin.
The next blow sent the fragment of the dry branch out of Farney’s grasp; and that was followed by a sharp stroke over the arm.

Farney stepped back and cast one quick glance around for a weapon. To his rear he noticed what appeared to him a stick, planted in the ground. He took another step back, and with his gaze fixed on his enemy, who stood unaccountably still, made a swift sweeping grasp.

“Yoh!” The Kaffir stood transfixed, with kerries outstretched. Farney’s fingers closed on something cold and clammy to the touch. He looked down and saw the hooded head of a cobra above his hand. With a shudder he hurled the reptile through the air. It circled round, hissing, struck against one of the poised sticks, slid along, and was gliding past the head of the Kaffir, when the thin, quivering tail circled the man’s neck, and the hideous head came up over his shoulder.

The cobra looked into the warrior’s face; its hood expanded, and black tongue darting in and out. For a few awful seconds this silken tongue alone moved.

Farney stood breathless, waiting for the deadly stroke, then moved forward, with some idea of saving the Kaffir; but, at the noise of his approach, the cobra gave a warning hiss and bared its curved fangs.

The Gaika remained, under the strain, still as a figure of stone, with rigid arms outstretched and right leg advanced. His arched chest heaved slowly under the cold grey coils, and his black eyes, just now terrific with rage, were crossed in a fixed, horror-struck glare. His lips were drawn back, exposing even rows of white teeth. Beads of sweat gathered on his forehead and slowly trickled down, dropping on the tightening coils; but the strong man never flinched, no shudder shook his frame; he looked death in its most horrible form straight in its baneful eyes.

Farney, trembling himself with excitement, admired the magnificent nerve of the native, who knew that his safety lay in absolute stillness. Any moment the snake might strike; and should he do so there would be no avoiding the blow, dealt as it would be with lightning rapidity. Once those needle-pointed fangs, grooved and charged with venom, pierced the skin, death in dreadful agony was inevitable.

Now a strange thing happened. The Kaffir could control his muscles, but not the roots of his hair; the short, crisp, black kinks began to stir as though alive; they uncoiled and quivered. The blazing eyes of the cobra detected the movement; the curving neck upstretched, and the head, with the hood still expanded in evidence of anger, overlooked the upstanding hair; there was an undulation in the coils, and the snake glided over the motionless face, and wrapped the man’s head as in a living turban; over the forehead the rep-
tile reared its head, and the warrior stood statuesque, like a carved image of Pharaoh with the dread sign of royalty over his brow.

Relieved from the sinister glare, the Kaffir allowed his eyes to travel to Farney’s face, on which they rested with a mingled look of horror and supplication.

“Drop your stick!” gasped Farney in terror, as though he himself were in danger.

The Kaffir lowered his right arm gently until the point of the kerry rested on the ground; then he opened his hand, and the stick slid down his leg. Farney picked it up, and, thinking out a plan of attack, moved the point up towards the coils. Slowly, inch by inch, but moving all the time, the stick crept up higher and higher, now over the still face, now resting on the forehead, now touching the lowest coil.

The warrior’s eyes followed the moving stick, and at the hope of rescue he lost for a moment control of his nerves, and his frame trembled. Farney, watching the cobra, saw its eyes flame an instant, and it would have struck; but with a twist of his wrist he tossed it up, and dealt it, as it touched the ground, a disabling blow. It writhed, hissing, and striking with impotent fury at sticks and grass within its reach.

Farney turned, and saw that a change had come over the Gaika. His eyes were blood-shot and fixed, his breast rose and fell, labouring under the heavy breathing, and his body swayed to and fro; a thin foam gathered on his lips, and a green hue tinged his skin. Farney recognised the signs of madness, and quailed at the presence of a greater danger than had ever yet confronted him; but while he yet looked, the spasm passed away. It was characteristic of the young colonist that his next thought was of the struggle for mastership.

“We have each a stick now.”

“Eweh-inkosi—Yes, chief,” replied the Kaffir in mild tones.

“Let us fight.”

“Strike!”

Farney made a feint, but his opponent did not attempt to guard. It requires two for a fight.

“Well, come and reap.”

“No, white man, I must go. This place is bewitched. It is here lives Umtaphina, the ‘Ukutwasa,’—man of the spirit-world. He waxes strong with the moon, and seeks the lonely places when it wanes.”

“He cannot hurt you.”
“He is mysterious and dark in his ways. He alone dares look at the *Ikanti*, where it dwells in the still pool. He moves out in the night with strange creatures.”

“But why have you thought of this now? It is a pretence.”

“I knew it before; but I was strong, and would come. The spirit of the *Ikanti* was in that snake. I saw it shine through its eyes; it warned me to go.”

“But I have destroyed it. See, it is dead.”

“The Water Spirit never dies,” replied the Kaffir, who turned, facing the Devil’s Kloof, and began a chant in deep, thrilling tones—

“*Ikanti*, Spirit of the Water, dark form of the night, why have you troubled me? You looked into my heart with cold eyes of death; you encircled my neck as with a ring of iron; your breath was hot on my face.

“You are powerful. You creep like a shadow through the kloof. You look up in the darkness through the still water, and drag the maiden down into the silent caverns. You stretch along the trees, and the wayfarer passing under knows not what it is enfolds him in the grasp of death. The cry is frozen on the lips of those who see you; they remain as dead—neither speak nor eat; they look as a thing of dread.

“Ah! dark one, what is coming? The shadow flies before the morning. The white man has brought his spirit with him. Who will conquer?

“In the white man’s eyes is the light of knowledge; they are blue as the sea whence he came, as the sky when the sun is high. His spirit is the spirit of the day; they tell me it lives beyond the stars; it descends on the wings of an eagle, and sees all things.

“Ah! dark thing; you will lash the water in anger, and scream from out the blackness, so that men hearing you will wither away. I know not what will be the end; that only the Ukuwasa knows. But the light and the darkness cannot live together: the fight must be long before one is rolled back into the sea, or the other is driven from kloof to cavern.

“Oh! white man, I go. Some one greater than you has subdued me. But hearken! I warn you now against *Ikanti*; against Ukuwasa. Beware the kloof!”

The Kaffir pointed with his kerrie to the kloof, then turned and went east, never turning his head.

**Chapter III**

IT WAS DUSK when Farney reached the homestead, and found his mother waiting at the door, and on the table pumpkin fritters and crushed mealies, with milk.18
“Oh, bossie,” cried Kate, “what is that mark on your forehead?”

“Why, the Kaffir boy has gone, and he left that as a reminder.”

He described the events of the afternoon briefly, while his mother laid over the bruise a thin transparent leaf, peeled from a large bulb possessing great healing virtues.

“He was also troubled about the Water Spirit. Confound it for scaring off my last hand, and the crop not gathered in! What is to be done, mother?”

“Is there any one who could help you?”

“Not a soul. All the neighbours are busy, and have had some trouble with cattle-thieves: so Keeton told me last week.”

“There is nothing for it, bossie. Kitty and I will help you. Ruth19 garnered, and why should not we? Besides, I have followed the plough before, and gathered potatoes.”

“Nonsense, mother. The house, and not the field, is your share now; and Kate is better in the garden. Eh, kitten?”

Kate was busying herself arranging, on fresh banana leaves, a tempting show of prickly pears, cool and sweet, of yellow bananas, and thin-skinned oranges almost bursting with juice. She answered softly—

“Perhaps Mr. Dale would help.”

“Perhaps he would—help suck oranges,” was the rude reply.

“I don’t know why you should say that,” rejoined Kate, trying to throw a shade of indifference into her tone. “I am sure he is strong.”

“Strong enough to sit down and look on.”

“You are unjust,” answered the sister, going to the door. “Hark! what is that? Come, bossie, and tell me.”

Farney stepped outside, and bent his head. A plover, flying high overhead, uttered its clear note, and from some spot near by came the plaintive cry of the dikkop. Between these cries the sharp ear of the young farmer detected another sound.

“Here is some one coming: it is Dale himself.”

“Is it?—oh how glad! But how can you tell? You are making fun of me.”

“It is Dale, and he is in a hurry. Dale in a hurry. There is something wrong: he must be hungry!”

Farney stepped indoors, chuckling. Strange though it may seem, it was no uncommon thing for the woodsman to identify a man in the dark by his tread.

Kate waited until she was satisfied someone was really approaching, then, leaving the door wide open, skipped into her little room.
It was not the familiar, easy-going Dale who staggered in and sank on to the rheim-covered seat, but a counterfeit with haggard face.

“Why, what ails the boy? Where is the buchu?”

Mrs. Purdy hurried to the stores for her specific.

Kate, returning from her room with a blossom at her throat, paused at the door, all the joyous expectancy gone in a flash from her eager face.

Farney alone was selfishly unconcerned. He leaned back in his seat, and examined Dale critically, summing up his cogitations in an under-tone—

“Lost his hat; bruised his cheek; scratched his arm.”

Dale, like Farney, wore his shirt-sleeves rolled up over his brown fore-arms.

“He’s been scared. I say, old fellow, what is it?”

Dale muttered something about the Devil’s Kloof.

“By Jove! here’s another fellow a victim to the Water Spirit.” Farney gave vent to his astonishment in a low whistle.

Kate stepped across the floor and laid her hand upon Dale’s tired eyes. At the touch of her cool hand, the distressed look passed away from his features; he put up a bruised hand to smooth the tapering fingers, and smiled.

“You must find me a nuisance; but I think the sun has affected me, or else I have been under a day nightmare—a sort of piebald affection. Ah! boss, is that you?”

Dale looked about him with a brighter look. “Miss Kitty, where are your roses? No, thank you, Mrs. Purdy; put that abominable buchu away for boss, it will sweeten him. Ah! those bananas look nice.”

“I thought it was hunger,” muttered Farney.

Kate, with her fresh young face all ablaze again, picked out a bunch of the ripest.

“We were talking about you,” said Farney, with a sly look askance at his sister’s shining eyes.

“Nothing bad, I hope?”

“Kate said you had a healthy appetite for melons.”

“Oh, bossie, how can you!”

Dale looked up with a good-natured smile. “Yes, I have that weakness;” then he paused and shuddered. “I don’t think I will ever eat another melon again.”

Farney laughed unfeelingly at the tone in which Dale renounced his favourite fruit.
“How are your crops?” intervened Mrs. Purdy.

“How, mother, he only had one crop, and that he planted in a river-bed, where the first flood found it.”

“Look here, boss,” replied Dale laughingly, “you give me a lesson in farming, and I’ll give my labour.”

“Are you serious?”

“Quite; only I stipulate for tobacco, and a good resting-time. You will have to reap fast to keep pace with me.”

Kate clapped her hands in triumph, and skipped out into the air, saying how lovely the sea breeze was.

Dale moved to follow; but his face paled strangely as he looked into the impenetrable blackness, and he sank back into his seat.

Kate, moving up and down outside, felt a flutter of disappointment; but she thought perhaps he was tired. The fireflies in myriads flashed in and out in fiery undulations. She caught some, and held them in the hollow of her hand, over which a delicate glow was shed. Then once again she heard a sound in the distance.

“Bossie, I want you again; here is something coming fast.”

Farney stepped to the door, and in a moment answered, “Show the light, mother. There are two horsemen coming. One horse canters, and the other trots; you can hear the rumbling of his stomach.”

A home-made candle of berry wax was held up at the door, and cast a flickering light. A loud halloo showed the signal was seen.

Soon after the first horse came up, and was drawn up just before the door, snorting with fear at the light. The rider leaped off, unbuckled the girth, slipped the saddle and bridle off, unloosed the slack of a rheim, coiled round the neck and knee-halteried the horse with a deft twist above the knee. The other horseman came more cautiously.

“Hurry up, Hendrik,” said the first com'er, in sharp commanding tones.

“Gott, yah! race, race, race, jes like a jackal. Nefer come oudt as after-rider met Walter Currie no more.”

The speaker came up, growling and spluttering all the way with an occasional vigorous swear in Dutch.

“Is that Walter Currie?” asked Mrs. Purdy of the first arrival. “Ay, it is, Mrs. Purdy, and glad to find you, after a wild hunt in the dark.”

“Come in right away. Bossy will look to the horses.”

Walter Currie was J.P. of the district, the most daring horseman, and the most dreaded foe the Kaffirs had to reckon with. A fearless, headstrong spir-
it gleamed out of his sharp, bold black eyes, and his figure, though short, was broad and sinewy.

“Ah! Miss Kate, growing fairer every day. A flower of old England, Mrs. Purdy, under a southern sky. Dale, is that you? Glad to find you here. Boss may want your help.”

“You will remain to-night, of course?” said Mrs. Purdy, suppressing her anxiety. She knew Currie was not out, except on serious business.

“No; boot and spur; mount and ride. No rest for me to-night. The horses however will like a bite. Hendrik.”

“Allemagtg!23 what is it now, boss? I am feeling ef dis old neck of mine is all right.”

“You’ll never break your neck, old man. Get some forage, and rub the horses down, to cool them off before starting.”

“Befo’ starting! Does yer ride more dis night?”

“Exactly!”

“‘Zackly; well, dis ole Hottentot24 will zackly off ter sleep,” muttered Hendrik, carrying out his intention at once by stretching himself on the bare ground.

Farney, to save the old man from the consequences of his disobedience, went off himself for two large bundles of oat hay, at the rustling of which the horses pricked up their ears and whinnied. He rubbed them down with a whisp of hay, and then roused Hendrik up to take a calabash of amasi, or buttermilk.

“Boss, have you any cattle?” inquired Currie as the former entered the room.

“Yes; they are down in the hoek,25 running loose.”

“Get them up to-morrow; kraal them at night and keep watch. The Kaffir thieves are about; they have already lifted some hundred head of stock, and not one has been captured.” Currie got up and strode up and down, his eyes flaming.

“This Government has damned itself by mistakes. A number of helpless settlers are placed on the border and then practically abandoned; and not only abandoned; but, thanks to meddling missionaries in Cape Town, are abused throughout England for defending their homes against the ‘noble black man.’ The word of an English colonist stands as nothing, and every act in self-defence scores against him. Well, this is my district, and I will uphold the law myself, as far as it is possible for one man.”

“By the way, boss, I met a Kaffir at the Korie Drift;26 he said he left your place this afternoon, and was in a hurry.”

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“Yes, he said the place was bewitched.”
“Dot is so, seur,” spoke Hendrik from the door.
“Be still there!”
“Yah, baas.”
“No,” said Dale, with an effort; “let him speak. It may lead up to a spook story.”

The horses snorted in alarm, and hobbled up to the friendly light, putting their heads in at the door.

“Hendrik is a wonderful story-spinner. Even the horses come up to listen,” observed Currie.

“Are they frightened at something?” asked Kate in a whisper.

“Yah, little missy; they see the Night Spirit. It is so with horses—when the night is dark and still—they come up to their master for company. Yo; dis place is bewitched.” The Hottentot crept in at the door, and crouched on his knees, the innumerable lines on his yellow face appearing deeper than ever.

In the unbroken silence there came from afar off a strange noise. The horses heard it first, and they shook in terror; then Hendrik caught it and stopped his ears with his fingers, while he bowed his head, moaning.

“Good God!” said Farney, “what is that?” Now the others heard the sound swelling out of the darkness in a wild unearthly scream. It impressed them all with a feeling of dread; even Currie’s firm nerves and Farney’s daring spirit quailed. Kate threw her arms round her mother’s neck, who stood pale but calm. Dale clutched at his chair, and glared wildly out of the door.

The awful sound died away in a long drawn-out moan.

The old Hottentot lifted his head.

“Listen! it is the Ikanti. He calls for blood to the Ukutwasa—spirit-doctor. One of us must fall. Ya, master, we must ride; let us go now—jus’ now.”

“Not so fast. Tell us what you know of this noise. If it is any Kaffir foolery, I will find the rascal out, and make him smart—witch doctor or devil.”

Hendrik looked curiously at the frowning face of his master. “Baas, you are strong, but you cannot grasp the wind; you are fearless, but the Ikanti would treat you like a child.”

“Well,” replied Currie, “when I have been my rounds, my first business will be to enter this Devil’s Kloof and find out the mystery.”

“I will go with you,” said Farney.

“And Hendrik will show us the way.”

“Mein gott, no baas, no; dot I will not do. Once I was dere, but never again, never. It was long time ago; befo’ any white peoples came, when
eland and springbock was like sheep in the veldt. I was hunting mit some Kaffirs, and a big eland, most dead, run into dot same kloof. The hunters said no man who entered there efer came oudt alife; for the Ukutwasa watch ’em und trow ’em to the Ikanti. I laf same as Mass Currie, und go in after dot eland. The blood spoor was heavy, and soon I see the buck going slowly ’long, but the path was narrow und I could not get roundt to stick him. By-and-by, maybe, we would come to a broad place where I could use the assegai, und sure nuff, after wile he came out on a flat rock. The kranz was on each hand, und below was a deep fall. Then I think he was mine, but he turn round his big eyes once to see me; then look down again, and next he jump. From the edge I see him sink into the pool, und the dark water close over him. No splash he made; then I find it was lonely still, und oudt of the pool looked up at me a great bright eye, like the moon seen in a still water, but mit fire shining behind. I turn and crep’ away—weak as a baby—when dot same noise we jus’ hear only louder, came from the pool. I can’t tell how I get away, becas myself was dead, und when I fine my body again oudt in de veldt dere was a jackal biting my hand. See, seur, dis finger is half gone,” pointing to a stump of the little finger on the left hand.

“That is a good story, Hendrik; now saddle up.”

“But ek is frightened.”

Farney saddled up, and brought the horses to the door, where one of them began pulling back.

“Willie is schriek, baas; he will buck, passop.”28

As Currie sprang into the saddle the horse reared; and as his fore feet touched the ground, he lowered his head, and sprang into the air with arched back. When he came down the third time, Currie drove in his spurs, and with a snort the horse bounded into the night. Hendrik listened for a moment to ascertain the direction, then started after.

The others, left alone, stood at the door listening until the last echo of the retreating horses was lost; then entered the little room, saddened.

“What do you think of the spook story?” asked Farney of Dale.

“It is terrible,” replied Dale slowly. “There is something mysterious there.”

“Do you think so? I don’t. I agree with Currie that it is some Kaffir trick. They hope to scare us away, and they have frightened poor little Kate. But noises do not hurt; do they, mother?”

“The spirit of darkness is helpless against those who have faith,” answered the mother, smoothing Kate’s hair with a tender touch.
Chapter IV

BEFORE SUNRISE next morning Dale and Farney were reaping; and when Kate came tripping through the dewy grass, bearing a dish of mealies boiled in milk for their breakfast, the last of the waving corn had gone down before their sickles. By noon they had loaded up the small wagggon with sheaves, and driven to the threshing-floor, a circular enclosure, with a hardened surface made from ant-hills stamped down. The threshing was done in primitive style by the slow feet of oxen moving round and round, in their progress crushing out the grain. Bottle-shaped pits after the Kaffir plan, for storing the wheat, had a long time before been made in the cattle-kraal. When the grain was poured into the brim, the narrow aperture would be hermetically sealed, and the lid covered with loose kraal-stuff. To secure against attacks from damp or insects, the interior of the pit was carefully smoothed, and smeared with cow-dung which, when dry, forms a hard and inodorous plaster.

In the afternoon Farney went off to a wooded valley to collect and bring up the cattle running free, while Dale busied himself gathering ripe mealie-cobs, stripping them of their sheath-like leaves, and storing them, with their regular rows of yellow grain, in tall wattle huts.

In the evening, after the cattle had been safely kraaled, they gathered again in the little room. Kate appeared with a familiar rectangular cardboard box, out of which, with loving care, she took a concertina. In those days this humble and despised instrument cheered many a lonely family, and quickened the blood of young men and maidens assembled on rare occasions in woodland parties. By the camp fire, when the wagggon was outspanned under the starry sky, some member of the silent group would bring his concertina and play on far into the night. There is more of sadness and of earnest purpose, in the life of pioneers, than of gaiety. The nature of their work, with its difficulties to be overcome, develops a spirit of endurance; the enforced loneliness gives to their thoughts a tinge of melancholy; and the wide country round and round, with its kloofs and towering krantz and brooding calm, saddens while somewhat refining the feelings.

Their favourite songs, whether English ballads or American ditties, were generally about blighted affections. The more pathos there was in the words, and the more plaintive the tune, the greater favourite was the song. The most pathetic words ever written have been about the rough, the rugged, and the humble. Bret Harte and Dickens, with their tales of maids and of helpless children, of Toby Vech and Tiny Tim, touched the heart of the world. So the humble and the lowly, who are passed over as unappreciative or mere dull clods, respond most quickly with sympathy for human suffering.
Kate, with swaying arms, her soft eyes subdued by emotion, and features set in gravity, as befitted her important task, drew out the wailing tunes, and Dale sang the words in a fine resonant bass. Sometimes Farney would join with a rich tenor, untrained, but still musical.

Everything must have an end, and the spell of sentiment which had settled on the group with a quieting effect was shattered by a reminder from Farney.

“It is time we went to watch.”

Kitty sighed; and Mrs. Purdy looked anxious. “Do you think it is necessary to go. You must both be tired?”

Dale looked his gratitude; but Farney was inflexible. He threw open the door and showed the solid wall of night. “The very night for thieves,” he said.

From the wall he took down his double-barrel muzzle-loader, bound round the stock with the skin of a puff-adder. He blew down the barrels to see that the nipples were clear, poured in the charge from a polished powder-horn, and rammed down the wads until the ramrod leapt half its length out—sign that the powder was driven home. Out of a leather pouch he took a glistening ball, wrapped it round with an oil rag, and gently drove it down, the escaping wind giving forth hollow reports. In the other barrel he placed a charge of slugs, and was ready.

“Reckon I won’t have to shoot more than twice,” he said, with a glance at Dale. “You look tired, and no wonder, after such a day’s work as you have done. You had better remain here, and look after mother and Kitty: she would like it.”

Kate pulled her brother’s ear; but Mrs. Purdy did not like the plan.

“I don’t think you had better go alone, if John does not mind.”

Dale picked up a heavy knobkerrie, and signified he was ready. Without a word more, they passed out to the kraals, where the cattle were all safe.

“I will watch by the gate,” said Farney. “You may as well take up your post at the back.”

Dale moved round the thorn fence to the rear, finding himself with face towards the Devil’s Kloof. He would far rather have taken the post of danger, near the gate, than have that mysterious place, with its terrible associations, before him, although in the darkness he could not trace its form. At first he listened to the soft noises made by the cattle contentedly chewing the cud, to the rumbling sounds as now one, then another brought up fresh balls of undigested grass from the storehouse in the stomach, and, lastly, to the deep sighs of satisfaction as the animals went on their knees and rolled heavily on their sides to rest. After that the watch was to him a period of horror. Do what he could to prevent it by thinking of Kitty, his mind would wander away to the Devil’s Kloof, and go searching through dark shadowy
places for nameless forms. All that was superstitious in him rose up, gathering strength from the wild imaginings of the brain, until, like the Kaffirs, he believed there was something of evil, supernatural, and malignant in that dark wood. Few men can watch in the stillness of night anywhere without a feeling of uneasiness, and as the mind of the watcher is more imaginative, the feeling becomes more acute. Every sense is strained to the fullest tension; the slightest sound becomes painfully distinct; a gentle touch causes the nerves to shrink, and the blood to run cold; the objects dimly visible to the sight take on strange forms. To Dale it seemed the forms of bushes, all blurred and indistinct, became things of life which waved and beckoned to him. They would disappear while he looked, and become again suddenly distinct. Then, where nothing else had stood before, there came a thing which leered at him. Crouching forward, with muscles twitching, he uttered a savage cry, and dealt at this mocking form a desperate blow. The kerrie descended through the thin air, and resounded on the hard ground. He drew his hand across his brow, and lifted his drawn face to the heavens.

“Oh, my God, spare me!”

He went back to his post, and his watch was calmer. The far-off cry of a jackal, dismal in itself, came as a relief; and his blood warmed when near at hand he heard the low “gurr-r” of a prowling leopard. That growl, however, was given in rage as the four-footed thief caught the taint of his enemy, man, and he went off without courting battle. Then Dale forgot his surroundings in watching the moon coming up over the dark horizon, and marking the pale beams stealing over the land, giving a shimmering, uncertain outline to trees and bushes.

He blessed the light; but ere the blessing had died on his lips, his blood was frozen in his veins. For there came again that wild cry from the woods, weird and mysterious. The old horrors were awakened; he would have crawled round to Farney, but his limbs refused their work. Between him and the house was a stretch of grass, and at that moment across this in the hazy moonlight moved two figures. One was upright of human form, with something glistening round its body, and waving above its head; the other now moved sidelong on all fours, now shambled erect, with long arms hanging to the ground, the huge head moving to right and left.

Dale moistened his parched lips with his tongue, and tried to call out; but only a gasp he gave, yet loud enough to be heard. He caught the glint of fierce eyes turned upon him, saw the one form of human shape lifted on to the shoulders of the other, and crouched horrified while they advanced towards him. He could not identify the mingled shapes; but as they came nearer with silent steps, he traced the large coils of a huge snake glistening in the light.

“It is the Ikanti,” he cried. “Farney, come, for God’s sake.”
There was a sound of running feet, as Farney answered his friend’s despairing cry, and the creatures turned and melted through the grey light.

“What is it?” asked Farney.

“See!” said Dale, clutching his friend’s arm, and pointing to where a dim object was fast disappearing.

Farney shook off the grasp, and dashed away at full speed, while Dale rose to his feet and moved off to the cottage.

Before he reached the door a sharp rifle-shot rang out; and when his foot was on the threshold, Farney’s voice hailed him loudly, “Dale!” then in a weakened tone, “help!”

Dale looked towards the spot, and took a step forward, then hesitated, while there came, with utmost distinctness through the air, the noise of a struggle mingled with wild chatterings. His heart again quailed within him, and he reached for the door to steady himself.

“Do you not hear?” said a voice, low but vibrating with intense emotion.

He looked up, to encounter a pair of stern blue eyes in the mother’s pale face.

“Go!” said Mrs. Purdy; “he has called you twice.”

Dale staggered a step, but stood aghast at a fiendish laugh, the echo of that he had heard in the woods.

“Oh, heavens!” he whispered, “I cannot.”

“Well I will go myself;” and Mrs. Purdy moved on.

“Mother, mother, stop! I will go with you;” and Kate slipped by, as Dale, with one last impulse to conquer his fear, called to her to stay.

There came but one reply, but he reeled under it as if struck.

“Coward!” she said, and passed away.

He wandered away aimlessly; but some instinct guided his erratic steps, and the blundering course he took shaped towards his home at the Kareiga mouth. When at last the cool sea breeze blowing on his face revived him, he recognised the vley he had stopped at but two days ago, and wondered in vain what had happened to make the interval between that time and the present seem a measureless period of agony. There was a dull beating in his brain, and a gnawing at his heart; and as he tried, with a pitiful patience, to trace the cause of this: the answer was given by the beating in his head, giving forth articulate sound. At every thud a small voice responded, “Coward, coward, coward!” It was a tiny voice at first, but it increased steadily in power, and at last rang out with a volume which filled the air. He put his hand to his head to still the cry, and groaned in agony.
A deep sigh came as if in response, and, looking with burning eyes over the vley which shone like an opal under the moon, he saw looming on the other side the vast form of a solitary elephant. As some great rock in a wide plain, immovable it stood, its stormy spirit soothed by the quiet of the night. Man thinks he alone can understand the finer moods of nature, with all their beautiful promptings at some divine, over-watching influence; but as the creatures of the earth know the signs of the earth and the air better than he, they may also detect the secret of the brooding calm, as well as he feels he can. Reason is not wanted to find out this meaning. The spirit of beauty sinks into the heart like dew into the open flower.

The elephant turned its head, and Dale noticed a white patch on its broad forehead. By that he recognised the rogue, well known in the country for its savage disposition.

Death appeared inevitable but he stood unmoved, and smiled as he felt his nerves steady. At least, he thought he did not fear the danger he could understand, and there followed on this another thought, that if death was coming, it would end his misery.

But the elephant swung its ponderous head back with a certain dignity of motion, regardless of the man who had broken upon his reverie; and Dale went on feeling somewhat mean, as though he had been despised. He reached his retreat in the grey of the morning, worn out.

In the afternoon he went down to the river-mouth, and watched the swift current eddy and swirl in its fight with the tide. Reflection had shown the utter contemptibleness of his conduct. He condemned himself over and over, but there was no relief in that; and he sat there, the most miserable creature on God’s earth. The bowed figure and suffering face of the lonely man told its tale. The wary snipe flew by him unconcerned, and the white-breasted sandpipers traced patterns in the sand with their twinkling feet between his legs.

After a time he sought the pool where he had placed the fish two days ago, found the bank trodden down, and the fish gone. The spoor of a leopard told of the thief.

“I will find him out; it would do me good to kill something—or be killed,” he added. The spoor was plain enough, and he followed it along the bank, and into the bush, by a game-path. Presently he noticed a blade of grass within the circle of an indented spoor slowly rising to its original position. “He is not far off,” he said, and cut a stick. He went on paring off the twigs, when a terrified cry reached him, and he sprang forward to a bend in the path. Here he stood in amazement.

Kitty!
There stood a white figure in the green woods, and between them was the leopard, crouching low, with his green eyes fixed on her face, and his tail sweeping a half-circle in the sand. A moment Dale paused, then moved to the attack, while the leopard turned swiftly to meet the unexpected foe. Its ears flattened against its round head, and then it shot into the air. The green stick came down with a tremendous thwack on the hard skull. The blow dazed the leopard; but the impetus of the leap carried it full against Dale, who was rolled over and over. Recovering, he saw the brute just making off, having had enough, and gave chase, following so close that it had either to give fight or take to the river. It chose the latter alternative, and was soon breasting a deep channel near the bank. Dale, without thinking, plunged in after, and soon stood face to face with the leopard, which had come to bay on a small sand bank. He had no weapon, and was at a disadvantage.

It was true that the brute could not spring; but it stood with one huge paw lifted out of the water, ready to strike, while it kept up a continued hissing through its open mouth. Dale’s blood was bounding through his veins, and he experienced an intense feeling of exultation at the approaching struggle. He went closer, and the raised paw was lifted higher, until it was on a level with the leopard’s ear. He made a feint of striking, and it gave two lightning pats, baring its steel-like claws. One of those sweeping blows would tear the muscles from his arm, but he would run the risk. Making a hollow of his left hand, he dashed the water into the green eyes, then struck with his right. The blow fell with terrific force on the leopard’s ear, but a tingling pain along his knuckles, and a weakness of the wrist, told of the hardness of the skull. The brute, however, did not like this one-sided attack, and came on through the water with its mouth open. Dale seized it by the neck, and a desperate struggle ensued, he endeavouring to keep the animal’s head under water, and the latter trying to use its claws. Gradually, however, the leopard’s efforts grew weaker; the tightening grasp on its throat was choking it, and soon its striped body floated lifeless down the current.

Kate reached the bank to see the end of the fight, which she watched in breathless suspense, and ran to meet Dale, who had just sufficient strength left to reach land. There were two fearful gashes, besides innumerable scratches on his bare arms.

“Oh, how could you!” cried Kate, the tears running down her cheeks.

“Yes,” he gasped, with a ghost of a smile; “it is strange, is it not? I suppose I never thought of running away.”

He reeled with weakness, and Kate steadied him, then looked to the jagged wounds and bound them up.
He looked down wonderingly on her waving hair, and the pain of his wounds was not unpleasant while those soft fingers gently worked about his arm. But what had brought her there? What but one thing?

“How is boss?” he ventured at last to ask.

She looked up, with her eyes again suffused with tears; but the mental suffering in his face was visible now that the excitement of the fight had worn off. She raised her hand with a protecting touch to his shoulder as she answered—

“He has not come back.”

“What! not back? Bossie not back?” he said vaguely; then caught the full meaning of the words. “And I have killed—him and you—O God!”

“He is not dead, John; I am sure he is not dead. He cannot be. He was too strong.” She had used the same words to herself over and over before, and they were losing the tone of conviction now.

“Kate, tell me all.”

“All!—it is not much. We found his gun, mother and I, and by it the dead body of a python, with a bullet wound through its head. There was nothing else. We went up and down calling, but no answer came. It is strange—it is dreadful; and mother is watching now from the hill.” Her voice broke down.

“I want you to help us find him.”

“Let us go, Kitty.”

They went up through the woods, and over the long plain. As they approached the homestead, they saw a solitary figure on the hill. It was the mother now watching for the return of her daughter, with a growing dread that she also was lost. She had stood waiting through the long hours, her dim eyes trying to pierce the distance in search of the white speck, but not until Kate’s voice hailed her did she know of her child’s return. The calm, patient spirit which grief had not subdued broke down under the sudden joy, and she ran with open arms to meet Kate.

She looked into Dale’s face, marked there the expression of a settled purpose, and gave him a thin hand.

“God will bless you, my boy, whether you find my son or not. But, oh! find him.”

“I will try,” he said quietly; but Mrs. Purdy felt his strong fingers tighten over hers, and she grew somehow comforted. She noticed how worn and changed his face was.

“Better come in and rest awhile.”

“Only a few minutes,” he said, adding half apologetically, “to take a cup of coffee, if I may. I have not eaten since last night, I think.”
Kate, in distress, hurried off, to prepare a hasty meal for them all; and then Dale set off on his search.

**Chapter V**

DALE WAS CONVINCED that Farney had been carried off to the kloof, and perhaps ere this had been thrown as a victim into the pool. The feeling of superstitious dread, which had numbed his faculties before, had now worn off leaving his mind free to work at the problem of his friend’s disappearance. What puzzled him most was the cause of the mysterious noise, and in vain he endeavoured to invent some theory in explanation. Leaving this to be unravelled, he called to mind the different stories he had heard from time to time of the cruelties practised by witch-doctors on their victims, and found that this vein of reflection rendered him as miserable as superstition had before made him helpless. Come what might, however, he was determined to find out the human agency involved; and as he had to deal with cunning minds, he became more careful in his movements as he drew towards the kloof.

He stood still for a moment, scanning the narrow entrance to the wood with the hope of finding the proper entrance; for he knew there must be some beaten way in, when, by a happy chance, the clue was given him. His eyes roaming over the ground, while his brain was at work, rested again and again on a little white object, and at last fixed themselves upon this, but without recognition. He was moving off, having arrived at no definite result, when again the object caught his gaze, this time all alert.

“Holloa!” he said, starting violently, then picked the object up, and rubbed it in his hand. It was the white fibre of *imphi*, or sweet cane.

“Ah! some one has chewed the cane and ejected the fibre. What a fool I was not to have looked out for a sign before!” He marked the spot and took a cast round for spoor, but there was not a mark on the grass. Twenty yards further on, however, he found another ball of fibre.

“Now which way was he travelling?” Dale paced off the distance between the two points where he had seen the fibre, then retraced his steps along a line of chewed cane. He measured the intervals between the ejections. It might have appeared a mad proceeding, but there was very good reason in it. He knew that a Kaffir holds the cane at its thick end, and chews from the thin top, the consequence being that he ejects the chewed stuff at gradually lengthening intervals. He was satisfied that this particular *imphi*-chewer was going towards the kloof. He had, no doubt, plucked the cane from the field by the house.

He went back to the spot where he first discovered the fibre, and walked on slowly; for the intervals between were widening. He was so intent tracing
the line of route, that darkness came upon him before he had marked the shortening day; and he looked around to find himself halfway up one rim of the kloof, with the dark woods stretching down into the deep valley and up the further side. So narrow was the valley, that in the dim light it seemed as if the trees on one side mingled their foliage with that of those opposite. The last bit of sign he found was close to a large grey rock standing like a pillar out of the line of wood, and he was examining this when the sudden dying out of the light brought him to a sense of his position. The last sign was the butt end of the cane, bearing on it still the mark of teeth, and having yet a fair length unchewed. It had either been thrown aside in a hurry or dropped out of satiety. “I never knew a Kaffir yet who threw away a piece of juicy cane,” muttered Dale.

At any rate the clue was too important to lose. He cut a branch from a bush, sharpened the point, and stuck it in the ground. Then he himself sought shelter for the night behind an isolated bush some yards above the rock. Tired as he was, he could not sleep. Those dark woods below held secrets which the active brain would seize upon and magnify to the pain and worry of the wearied body. He closed his eyes tight, and covered his ears again and again, but always with the same result. The eyes, wide open would try to pierce the blackness, and the ears would be straining to catch uncanny sounds. Every second beat itself out in a painful throb of the brain, and the accumulated suffering was a very agony before half the enforced watch was done; yet he kept before him the vow he had made to himself to find Farney, though death were the measure of success. So may you have seen the over-tired swimmer fix his eye on the ship, whither he made his slow way with a cord which meant life to the despairing crew. No matter how the waves dashed him about, how his body ached through every nerve and sinew, how his heart laboured at each weary stroke, he kept his eyes fixed on the ship and regarded that alone. The waves might overcome the straining body before the task was done, but the steadfast will would never yield.

Dale soon had to bear another trial, one which put beyond him all hope of success in his task. A slight sound attracted his attention, and he rose on his elbows to listen. A pebble struck against a rock and rustled through the leaves; then a suppressed groan, wrung from some one in pain, came distinctly from behind the rock. He rose up and advanced softly, grasping his stick firmly with a resolve to strike hard. The moon had risen, and shone fitfully through rifts in heavy banks of cloud. One gleam fell on the grey rock, making it look like some whited figure, but there was no sign of life. The moon passed behind the clouds, and Dale paused in the darkness, listening intently. Presently he caught a slithering movement, made by something moving against a rock. This was followed by another low moan of pain, and in the stillness succeeding Dale looked up to the dark clouds to see when
another gleam would descend. In one inky mass of clouds there was a rent, through which the level beams struck, diffusing a soft light. As the mass moved on grandly nearer the moon, the light increased in brightness, and at last the beams slanted downwards and crept over the land. One fell at the base of the rock, played about the lichens halfway up, then moved to the top and shone steadily on a human head. In the shimmering light it seemed as though the head were resting on the rock.

Dale looked at this strange sight, quailed, and dropped his stick.

At the noise the head slowly turned. The face was white, and across the forehead was a long dark line. The moonbeams passed away, and Dale sank to his knees with his face buried in his hands. Some minutes he knelt, then looked up again. There was a soft light over stone and kloof and hill, but the face had gone. He rose to his feet.

“Farney!” he whispered, in a voice so strange it did not seem to be his. “Farney!” the voice grew louder. “Bossie—my brother bossie.” The voice rolled over the valley, but there came back no answer.

He sought behind the rock; there was nothing there but a precipice. He looked into the valley, but saw only the dark trees, and heard only the rustling of the leaves.

“And is this all? Is this to be the end?” He leaned against the stone, a prey to gloomy thoughts, believing Farney had appeared to him in death. “Shall I go back and tell them he cannot come again, and take his place? I could not. There would ever come a shadow between me and them. No; I will go on, though it must be to the very end, for in death alone can I find him. And they must wait, watching against hope, for his return. I alone have been the cause of all this pain.”

In remorse he passed the remainder of the night. What a thing is life to the man of half-moods! When he has it, he puts aside his nobler impulses for development in the future. When that future is contained in a few short hours, how vast and sterile appears his past, haunted by the shadowy ghosts of lost opportunities, and noble thoughts conceived but unfulfilled!

In the morning Dale continued his search, certain beyond all hope that it was for the dead and not the living. He looked again behind the rock, and found a narrow ledge slanting down to an overhanging rock lower down. No one would have taken this for a path, and he would have gone on had not his attention been attracted to some dark spots, which on nearer inspection proved to be blood. Far off on the smooth surface of the ledge he could see these spots, and began descending, holding to the rock above him with his hands. On reaching the overhanging rock he found a small cave, the floor of which was stained with blood. Here the ledge ended; but the intertwining roots of a creeper formed a natural ladder over the face of the krantz.
below, and Dale quickly reached the ground, finding himself once more in the silent kloof.

There was a beaten track, which led him presently to a stretch of loose stones, where it ended. Guided by the blood-spots, however, he still kept on, and eventually, after climbing down a large rock, found himself in the very path he had travelled on his first visit.

What was he to do when he reached the pool? He had some vague idea of laying in wait for those who haunted the kloof, but this was overshadowed by the conviction that he would never again retrace that path, but would find his course decided for him.

He now stood at the edge of the fall; at his foot were broad splashes of blood on the polished rock, and below was the dark pool with all its hidden mysteries. He shuddered as he looked down, and caught for support at the vine which still trailed downwards, and across to the rim of the pool. There was something clammy to his touch, and at intervals along the brown and knotted surface of the vine were dark patches. A sudden hope beat in his heart; his dull, despairing eyes brightened again.

“They may have carried him across,” he whispered. He looked down into the pool again, then traced the vine to its moorings on the other side. It was a terrible task he contemplated.

“Where others have gone, I can,” he muttered, and catching the vine in both hands, committed himself to that aerial and slender bridge. At first he descended almost perpendicularly, until the level of the lip of the pool was reached, when the vine stretched across almost level. He went hand over hand, looking up to the towering krantzes, and catching glimpses of the blue sky between the spreading branches. As he swung in mid-air from side to side, getting a greater momentum at each forward motion, it required the very last effort of his will to keep his eyes from turning to the gloomy depths of the pool below. The weight on his arms very soon grew painfully heavy. Slowly he gained on the wall of oozy rock before him, so slow that the distance did not seem to decrease. The weight of his body gradually dragged the vine down, thus increasing his difficulties, as instead of going along a level he had to draw himself up. He fixed his eyes on the wall, and strained every muscle to diminish the interval. A few more such sweeping swings as he made then would bring him to the goal.

Just then there came up a noise from below. At first it was the gentle whispering of water moving softly, then the water ran swiftly and gave forth a strange rushing sound. Dale closed his eyes to resist a mighty impulse to look down.

That same jeering, mocking laugh he had heard once before, made him look up with a start which nearly loosened his hold.
There, where the vine passed over the rock, was the strange occupant of
the kloof—the Ukutwasa. He stood on the very rim of the rock, his dark form
in silhouette against the background of trees. Around his knees was a ring
of hair; his waist was bound with a belt of skin, from which hung tails of the
blue monkey, while a necklet of teeth, bones, and pieces of stick encircled
his neck. On his forehead was a large ball, made of the long hair of the jack-
al. His left arm, held aloft, was encircled in the coils of a snake, whose head
was bent over, looking into the pool. In the right hand flashed the blade of
an open knife. He was an old man; his hair was white, and his skin wrin-
kled, but his eyes gleamed with a supernatural brightness. There was a look
of fierce delight in his face as he glared down upon Dale.

“I thought my day would end, before the sacrifice was made; but, white
man, you have come to me unbidden. Surely it is the Spirit himself has done
it. Once you stole through the woods, and were terrified. You fled shriek-
ing. I sought for you at the great hut, and lo! we found the lion’s whelp. We
brought him away, thinking to throw him to the Great Spirit; but he turned
upon us in his rage and slew my familiar, even the strong one of the woods.
In his death-agony he carried me here, where my body must remain, for my
strength has gone. It was bitter to think that I should die without satisfy-
ing the longing of the Spirit, even Ikanti, the dark one. I gnashed my teeth
when I thought there was no revenge; and now, see, you have come. For the
last time look up to the rocks and the trees, and the sky afar off; for now you
must die. The Spirit calls you!”

The voice rose louder, above the rapidly swelling noise from the water.
Dale looked down into the pool. The water was whirling round and round,
leaving a deepening funnel in the centre. It fascinated him, and he could
not withdraw his eyes. He felt the vine jar in his grasp, and knew that the
fiend above was cutting through the tough strands. He took one deep breath,
closed his feet together, and dropped in the very centre of the funnel. The
water whirled round and round, and with a wild scream rushed away.

The witch-doctor looked down with blazing eyes and heaving breast. The
fearful cry shook him to his very soul with a terror he could not master,
though it was familiar to his ears. A deep silence ensued, and the old man’s
erect form seemed to shrink. He put a trembling hand to his eyes, and felt
the eyeballs. He turned them to the sky.

“Dark!” he muttered; “all the light has gone. What is it?” He sank on to
the rock.

About the time when the waters closed over Dale’s head, Farney, looking
pale and tired, suddenly appeared before his mother and sister. They wept
over him as over one restored from the dead, and washed the blood from
a jagged wound along his head. But while their gentle hands were yet busy
about his wound, his head sank in sleep, and they laid him on his rough bed. There his mother sat, holding his hand, content so to sit through the long day.

Kate stole in now and again, then would wander away to the brow of the hill, to be the first to give the glad news to Dale. She had no fear about his return; no doubt about the future.

How glad he would be to hear; and how happy she would be to see his joy and share in it! Even when night came on, and still he did not come, she felt no doubt at all, but lit the candle and spoke in whispers to her mother, for Farney still slept. She told her secret, with many a pause and shy glance at the mother’s face, now gentle and calm—how John Dale had told her that he loved her, and how she first had not understood, then had been too shy to answer,—then how this strange disappearance of bossie had thrown a shadow across their path.

“But it will be all right now, mother, will it not? I wish he would come.”

“You have been a good child to me, Kitty,—little Kitty!” replied the mother softly, while she stroked the long wavy hair. “None can know of the sunshine you have shed in your old mother’s heart. No one shall take you from me but a prince.”

“There are no princes here, you dear proud mother who thinks her goose a swan!” and Kate, with tears on her cheek and laughter on her lips, threw her arms round her mother’s neck.

“Dale, is that you, Dale?” It was Farney’s voice. They ran to his room, and found him sitting up in his bed and looking round in a bewildered way.

“What is it, my boy?” asked his mother, placing her hand on his forehead.

“I heard Dale calling me,” he answered with a wan smile, then sank again to sleep.

Mrs. Purdy stayed a few minutes, then went into the centre room, where Kate stood pale and trembling.

“Oh! mother, I am sure something has happened.

“He is in God’s hands, my child, and He will bring him back.”

“I could not lose him, mother!” moaned Kitty, as the mother, with many caresses and words of hope led her into her room. For a long time the light burned in the window of the little house. Mrs. Purdy moved from room to room, now soothing her daughter, now sitting patiently by Farney as he tossed and moaned uneasily in his long sleep. At last they both were still in deep slumber, and Mrs. Purdy, sitting on the rough chair by her daughter’s bed, also slept.

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In the brightness of the early morning, with the dew on the grass all fresh, and a delightful softness in the air, Kate forgot her doubts; but not so her brother. He woke late—long beyond his time—and asked for Dale.

“He went to look for you, and may be back at any moment. See, Kitty is waiting for him now!” said Mrs. Purdy, pointing to the hill-top.

Farney went to the door, and looked up at the figure in white standing on the hill, the morning sun shining on her yellow hair. As they looked, a shadow passed over the hill, then slowly melted away, leaving Kate again in the bright light, with a golden cloud about her head.

“May the shadow on her heart pass away as quickly!” murmured the mother.

“I must look for Dale,” said Farney, with his eyes still on the white figure above. Then he told his story briefly:—That after he fired the shot and ran forward to close with the thieves, as he supposed they were, he had been stunned by a blow on the head. When he awoke, he found himself being carried along by two people, one being an old Kaffir, and the other a strange form he could not distinguish in the dim light. They did not stop until they reached the edge of the kloof, when, for the first time, he found the unknown was a huge baboon. This thing carried him down a precipice; and, his hands being free, he had felt for his knife, which he carried in his belt. On reaching the ground, he struggled with the creature, and, after receiving another wound on the leg from its long fangs, succeeded in thrusting the knife home. He recollected seeing the baboon, after that, snatch up the old kaffir and disappear; then he lost all consciousness until the next afternoon, when he awoke to find himself weak from loss of blood. He crept along to gather the dwarf aloe leaves, dark green and speckled with white spots. These he bound about his hurt, which was only a flesh-wound, and rested again until the moon rose. He climbed up the precipice with some difficulty, when he saw the figure of a man, the face in the shadow. He supposed now it was a man; but then—well, he was unnerved, and moved off quickly.

“I believe it was Dale, for I thought afterwards I heard him calling me. I don’t want to hear another cry like that; it was so full of despair. Then I was afraid, and did not stay to listen. It was only last night I heard the cry distinctly.”

When Kate heard the story, she declared she would join her brother in the search; and, with many misgivings, Mrs. Purdy saw her two children set off, Kate affirming that her presence was necessary to keep bossie from desperate adventures, and Farney declaring that he would bring his sister back safe. We need not follow them all the way, but join them as they approach the lip of the fatal pool.
The gloom of the kloof saddened, though it could not subdue their spirits. But as they neared the pool they paused in awe, as the swelling sounds of a dirge-like chant rose on the air, then died away. They reached the pool, and looked wonderingly around for any sign of life. Below was the still water; above were the rocks and trees.

The stillness was again broken by the solemn strain; and then they saw on the further side, crouching above the pool, the form of an old man, his black body, unnoticed before, among the dark rocks.

He was chanting in the melodious Kaffir tongue. At first the sounds came full and resounding, then rose to a wail. As they stood listening, they found that the old man was lamenting his blindness. He sorrowed because he could not see the trees and the rocks:—the great trees were only to him a murmur as their leaves rustled; the running water was a sound, and nothing more; while the still rocks, the blue sky, the stars, and the warm sun were gone, swallowed up by the night. Of these he sang, of the death that was approaching, and of the future of eternal darkness, when his spirit could creep in dark places, without light, for ever.

"O light," he wailed, with something like fear in his tones, "where art thou gone? where hast thou flown? I saw thee creep out of the sky and find out the hidden flower. They are but small things, O light. Creep into these old eyes once again! once again before I pass away for ever!"

He ceased, and turned his sightless eyes to the heavens.

Another voice, pure and sweet, quivered through the air, as though in answer. The singer was Kate, moved by some impulse she could not resist. She sang a simple Kaffir hymn, beginning, "God of the Light, Spirit of Love, lift these shadows from my eyes." It was a flood of light to the darkened soul of the dying heathen.

"What is that?" he whispered in thrilling tones. "Who calls to Inkosiyama?—the Bright One. See, it has opened up the spring in my heart, and the waters flow down my face. Speak, voice from the sky!"

"First tell me who you are?" said the voice.

"I am Ukutwasa, fiend of the Spirit; but I am old and blind, and he has left me here to die in hunger and thirst."

"There is but one Spirit, and He fills the heavens. Seek Him, and He will comfort you."

"Hark to those words! But oh! unseen One, whose words are like the sighing of the wind, I am not his man; He knows me not."

"To Him all things are known."

"Tell me this! Where shall I find Him when I cannot see?"
“Call to Him, and He will come.”

“Is it so! Do not mock the old with the false voice from an empty cavern, as one shouting receives back the same sound.”

“Firm as the rock beneath you is the truth I tell you. But how came you here?”

“See, I was carried across on the vine. It trails into the bottomless pool. I cut it, and by that act I was left here, while the white man fell and was swallowed.”

“It was Dale,” Farney said.

The wonderful light that had rested on Kate’s face died away. She gave a low cry, and would have sunk had not Farney caught her.

“What sound is that?” asked the Kaffir.

Farney answered sternly—

“It is the cry of anguish for the wrong you have wrought.”

“I know that voice. It is the roar of the young lion. My thoughts were bitter against you—they burned; but now that has gone. I would hear more of the words of peace.”

“More! Die where you are in darkness,” shouted Farney in anger.

“No,” said Kate, trying to control her voice, and feeling in her own pain a sorrow for the helpless man, placed beyond all hope of human relief. “Think on what I said to you, and your death will be in light, and not in darkness.”

“Your words flow into my heart like water into the dry earth.”

The old Kaffir remained silent for several minutes. Kate and Farney looked down into the fearful chasm, with clasped hands, then turned to go. The Kaffir heard their retreating steps, and turned his sightless eyes towards them.

“Stay!” he cried. They paused and turned, waiting for what he might say.

“Seek in the krantz below, where the great yellow-wood stands; there is a cave. There will you find the white man. Who must I call to speak again?”

“Inkosiyama: ask Him for help.”

“I will ask. Go in peace.”

As they retraced their steps, they heard again the swelling tones calling upon the great King, and magnifying His name with the beautiful simile drawn from nature.
Chapter VI

FARNEY KNEW well the large yellow-wood tree, with its gigantic trunk and wide-spreading branches. It grew below the pool, and not far from the Kareiga banks; so near in fact that at high tide the salt water flowed up the channel beneath its branches. When a boy, Farney had often waded up the little stream to find out where the water went to; for, after passing the great tree, it disappeared under a precipitous wall of rock which bridged the valley. There was a clear fissure down the centre of this natural bridge, and the rocks were contorted on either side as if by pressure. It appeared as though both sides of the narrow valley had been undermined and fallen together. At regular intervals along the face of the rock were white lines formed by layers of sea shells welded into the stone by the old time action of the waves.

Farney and Kate retraced their steps from the pool, and went quickly to the yellow-wood. A long time they searched up and down, scanning every inch of the krantz, searching behind huge water-worn boulders, and pushing aside the waving fronds of ferns growing thickly at the base of the rock, but all in vain; there was no sign of a cave.

Farney found several honey-nests of the black krantz bees in his minute search; but Kate noticed nothing but the blank wall of stone. He clambered up to one hole into which a constant stream of honey-laden bees were flying, and placed on the floor a handful of damp leaves with a piece of burning tinder thereunder. The dense smoke was drawn in, much to Farney’s satisfaction; but presently he noticed that none came out, and set to thinking.

“There must be another outlet to that hole, and out of it the smoke must be coming.” He scanned the face of the krantz, and presently the smoke sifted out through the central fissure, which was some yards to the right of the bee-hole.

“That’s queer,” muttered Farney. “There must be a hollow behind the krantz. The old Kaffir was right; but I’m hanged if I can see the way in.”

Farney’s reverie was broken up rather suddenly. The bees having recovered from the stupefying effect of the smoke, and being naturally fiery tempered, came out to find the foe. If Farney had not been looking for the cave, he would have noticed the signs of a coming attack. Scores of bees walked on the threshold of the hole, polished by innumerable feet, their tails slightly tilted, and their wings moving rapidly. This was their preliminary war-dance. Then they darted about in circles, emitting a defiant hum, and finally settled on Farney in a crowd. He remained perfectly quiet, hoping to satisfy the bees that he was no thing of life; but this time the ruse did not succeed. In about two seconds he scaled down the krantz, smarting from numerous barbed stings planted on his neck and face, while the victorious bees swarmed around the hole in a black cloud.
Farney was too disgusted to take any more interest in cave-hunting, and went back to the pool full of rage and pain, determined to get something definite from the witch-doctor. He had a plan of his own for getting at the truth, which differed from that pursued by Kate as force differs from love.

“I'll frighten him into confessing. Kaffirs don't understand sentiment;” and Farney touched the stock of the gun he carried.

He reached the pool, but on the further side could see nothing but the dark rock on which the old man had sat. He called out, but there came back no answer. Then he lifted his gun, and awoke the silence with hollow and long-continued reverberations. The ball struck against the rock opposite, and broke off a fragment which clattered into the pool. He listened long, and watched keenly, for any indication of life. The old oppressive stillness again rested over the kloof, and Farney at last turned away, convinced he had heard and seen the last of the black man. He tried on several days thereafter to discover the cave, but without success, and returned to his work in the field, having done what he could. Sometimes, when following the plough on the hill-side, he would suddenly stop and look away over the land to the wide sea and to the arching sky. Dale had become to him a memory somehow linked with the vastness of nature, and vague feelings about the future would stir within him, as he tried to follow his friend into the unknown.

Kate went about her garden listlessly. The disappearance of her lover had set up a barrier between the present and the past. On the one side was the joyousness of girlhood; on the other, a colourless routine stretching away through coming years. The difference was as marked as that between the near and far side of some mountain scenery: on the one side the land slowly rising in gentle undulations, bright in the sunshine, aglow with flowers and vocal with the songs of birds and running streams; on the other, a dreary stretch of plain, sterile and monotonous. When they met together in the evening, there was no merriment, as before there used to be. The mother learned to suffer again, without sign, when she watched the bright colour fading from the fair cheeks, and the large blue eyes fixed on vacancy.

One day Kate went, as usual, to her seat beneath the orange-tree, but when her mother sought her later on she had gone. Farney, working in the field, saw his mother coming towards him, walking quickly, and went to meet her.

“I cannot find Kate. I am sure she has gone to the kloof. Run: she is so weak.”

Farney set off over the rough ground at a speed which would have left many a trained runner behind. He had noticed the anxiety in his mother's face, and himself felt apprehensive. Afar off he soon saw a white speck moving slowly up the side of the kloof, and he redoubled his exertions. He
reached her just as she was standing by the grey rock, looking down at the narrow ledge, and touched her on the shoulder.

“Where are you going, Kitty?” he asked gently, as she turned her large eyes upon him. Her brows were slightly contracted, and her mouth was firmly set—the indications of a mind fixed on one purpose. She gave expression to it in her reply:

“I am going to look for him. There is only one way, and that is by the pool. Farney, he is waiting there for me, and I must not wait.”

“It is impossible. See how weak you are, poor little sister. Come back with me, and I will go myself into the pool.”

“Will you, Farney? Then you will bring him back to me, won’t you?” she said wistfully, while the large tears gathered in her eyes.

“Yes, little one,” he answered huskily.

She drew his head down and kissed him—the first kiss that touched his thin, stern lips for years, and a mist filled his eyes. Kate sighed, and leaned against her brother, with her face bent. He stroked the golden hair with his rough fingers for some seconds, then noticed how still she was. He lifted her head and saw that the eyes were closed and the face deathly white.

Farney gave a great cry, then lifted her up in his arms, and, with a feeling of fierce despair tugging at his heart, moved swiftly home, nor stopped until he had laid the still form in his mother’s arms. He went away outside, and burying his head in his arms, gave way to his grief.

“Why baas do like this?”

Farney felt a hand on his head and looked up.

“Leave me, Hendrik,” he said. “Kitty is dead.”

“Neh, baas, she is alife. Once befo’ I saw a jong missy look like dat, but not for so long was she dead.”

Farney got up, and went slowly to the house. How could she be alive, he thought, when she had been so still in his arms? He lingered long at the door before he ventured in, and then it was at his mother’s call. Kate was lying on her bed, with her eyes closed, but with a faint flush on her cheeks.

“She has been in a deep swoon, and is very weak.”

“Shall I go for the doctor, mother? There is one at Grahamstown.”

“It is not a doctor that can do her good, Farney. She is sorrowing for John, and his presence alone can give back her strength quickly.”

The sound of John’s name reached Kitty. Without opening her eyes, she smiled gently and whispered: “Farney will bring him to me!”
The mother looked up with a troubled expression. “She still thinks John is alive. Her mind must be set at rest on that, my boy, if possible.”

“Yes, mother, I will find out this time!”

“Hendrik is here; he may help you!”

Farney found the old Hottentot sitting against the wall of the house, with his withered brown hands clasped over his knees.

“What has brought you here, Hendrik?”

“Baas Currie sent me find out if all right heah. No Kaffirs been; no cows lost?”

“No. But we have had trouble, and you must help me.”

“Wot es it?”

“Baas Dale has gone into the kloof, and we cannot find him.”

“Ho! I said it. That was Ikanti,” replied the old man solemnly. “Baas!”

“Yes?”

The old man rose up and whispered in Farney’s ear.

“Massa Dale been taken into der pool!”

“I know it; and into the pool you and I must follow him.”

“Neh, baas, neh,” said Hendrik in alarm.

“You would not let me go alone?”

Hendrik covered his mouth with his hand, and would not answer.

“There is no water in the pool now, and the witch-doctor is dead: I heard him sing his death-song. There is nothing to fear.”

“Neh, baas, I cannot. I must go back just now.”

“Come in here!” Farney took the old man by the arm and led him into the room where Kate was. “Look! it is for her I ask you.”

Hendrik looked at the pale, still face of the young girl, and the look of stubbornness on his face gave way to an expression of something like pity. Farney led him out again.

“That girl was going to do what you are afraid of, Hendrik.”

“Poor leetle missy! she look now like the water-lily! poor leetle missy! And she was good, wunst, to der old Hottentot.”

He remained silent for some time, pondering.

“How you gwine get down dot pool, baas?”

Farney gave a sigh of relief: the old man had made up his mind to go. Farney unhitched from the waggon the long treck-tow of twisted hide, some ninety feet long, and secured a few of the rheims used for yoking the oxen;
then he supplied himself with tinder, candles, and food. Thus equipped, they started off, having a yoke of oxen to draw the treck-tow to the edge of the kloof.

When they entered the kloof, Hendrik, tough and accustomed to danger, was fearful of the shadows; but the exertion of dragging the heavy rheim through the wood somewhat diverted his attention from the gloomy surroundings. The silence was broken this time by the deep cooing of a spotted wood-pigeon calling its mate. Farney noted how melancholy was the pleading note, and wondered how nature even fashions the song of birds to their surroundings. The notes of those birds which haunt deep woods are always sad or harsh, without one trace of joyousness.

When they stood at last upon the edge of the pool, Farney had to steady the trembling form of the old man; but when the latter at last summoned courage to look down, and found no gleam from dark waters, he regained some share of his wonted coolness.

"Verdom!" he spluttered out defiantly, "dis old chap is no more 'fraid." He snatched his battered old smasher off his head and dashed it into the dark hole, then spat in. This was his way of preparing for a fight.

"That's right, Hendrik, now help me pull up the monkey-tow." They caught hold of the trailing vine, which reached apparently about halfway down the hole, and began hauling in its long length. When the end was reached they saw that it had been cut through. To the end, by means of one of the rheims, they fastened the long treck-tow, and lowered it down.

"We must take our chance, Hendrik, whether it touches the bottom. I will soon let you know!"

Farney meant to go down first, but Hendrik grasped the vine, and slipped over the lip of the pool, before he was ready. The Hottentot went down like a monkey, and Farney watched the brown object grow smaller and smaller, and finally disappear in the profound darkness. Presently a small voice, muffled and weird, came out of the mouth of the hole.

"Allemagtig, it is dark!"

Farney caught the tow in his hands, and bracing his feet against the rock, went down—down into the bowels of the earth. By the dark outline above him he could see that the hole was perfectly round, narrowing rather near the bottom. His feet at last touched rock, and he called out for Hendrik.

"Ek is heah, baas!" came a subdued answer. "Look seur, there is a star in the sky. Tell me how is it in de daytime we can see a star? 33 It is not right, seur? I tinks dat is der last sky we see!"

Farney looked up. The bit of blue seemed to rest far above on the rim of the krantz, and in the centre gleamed a fixed star, serene and pale. They
stood in silence, impressed by a feeling of awe and loneliness they could not master.

“This won’t do,” said Farney, shaking himself. “Strike the tinder.”

Hendrik sighed deeply and struck a spark. As he did so a current of damp air blew on their faces, accompanied by a sound like a hollow moan. Hendrik dropped the tinder, which spluttered in the water at his feet, and clutched Farney.

“Mein Gott! Wot is dot?”

Farney conquered a feeling of dread with an effort, but he remained silent. Once, twice, three times at regular intervals the damp air blew on them, followed by the same moaning sound.

“Well, we are not hurt, Hendrik. Where is the tinder?”

“It is loss—gone; und we is dood!”

“Not yet. Take the end of this rheim and stand there. There must be an opening out of this.”

Farney advanced cautiously, feeling with his hand on the wall. He had gone nearly halfway round when the current of air met him full in the face, and his hand moving on met with no resistance. By moving his hand up and down and from right to left, he discovered the outlet, some six feet wide and an unknown height.

“How many rheims have you got, Hendrik?”

“Free, baas!”

“Fasten them in one length to the other one we hold, and come here.”

Hendrik advanced.

“Now I will go in here, while you hold the end of the rheim. If it is all right, I will call you.”

Farney entered the outlet, feeling his way with both hand and foot. The rocks were smooth and slippery, and the darkness intense. He came at last to the end of the rheim without meeting any obstruction, and called to Hendrik. The same thing was repeated two or three times. The air was damp and heavy, and Farney felt a sudden dizziness. He leaned against the wall and closed his eyes, until the attack should go over. Hendrik, coming up, found the young baas motionless, and tried to rouse him.

“Baas, baas, wot is it?”

Farney stirred slightly. “Don’t bother; I’m going to sleep.”

“Allemagtig! dot must not be! Baas, wake up! Done leaf dis poor ole Hottentot by hisself. Bass! He sleeps like a drunk man. Hi, wot sal I do!”

Hendrik groaned and tore his hair in rage and fear.
“All right!—ek will sleep too.”

He closed his eyes, but this did not calm him.

“O Gott! verdom; wot make me come? Baas, here is Massr. Dale. Young missy call you—you heer eh? Wake up; coffee is ready.”

Hendrik swore and yelled at Farney, then shook him, and finally snatched him up in his wiry arms and stumbled along, half mad with fury born of fright. Splash! down went the pair full length into a pool of water. The shock roused Farney, and he scrambled out with Hendrik. They blundered on a few more steps, Farney still confused, when Hendrik shouted out in a perfect frenzy of excitement—

“Look! there is light.”

The words thrilled through Farney like an electric shock. He looked, and before him saw the round outline of the passage—a perfect rim against a pale light. They hurried forward with their eyes fixed on the heaven-sent radiance, and presently reached the end of the tunnel. It was some seconds before their eyes could bear even that gentle light, but then a wonderful scene opened up before them.

The soft light, pouring down mysteriously from some unknown quarter, fell on a long strip of white sand, and sank into deep calm pools of clear water, held within basins scooped out of the rock. Some of the rocks were of a delicate pink; others were of a greenish tint, given, as Farney wonderingly recognised, by the sea-lichen. They stepped out on to the ribbed sand and looked up. High above was an arched roof of rock, split here and there by fissures through which the welcome sunlight sifted. The sides of the grand cave were of sea-formed rock, wrought by the ceaseless action of the waves in bygone years, out of sand and innumerable shells and small pebbles. Farney had seen the same rocks on the beach, and had often marvelled at the action of the sea in forming barriers against itself. In some of the pools were strange sea-creatures—forms of shapeless leather; out of one dark pool, away back in the shadow, a large devil-fish33 lifted a long glistening arm, furnished with its horrible rows of cups, and coiled around Hendrik’s leg as he stood near looking up. He shrieked and jumped away, just as another arm stealthily broke the surface of the water. In other pools were pale anemones and rows of deep shelled oysters placidly growing fat. Turning to examine the mouth of the tunnel along which they had come, Farney noticed two upright posts on either side, with a heavy trap-door above, working in grooves. The trap-door was held in its place by a spar of rock fixed in a hole.

“See there, Hendrik! That explains the filling and emptying of the pool; and the cry we heard was made by the water escaping.”
“My!” said Hendrik, going up to examine the gates. “Des is sneezood.”

He reached up to the bolt, to see how it was fastened, and loosened it. The trap descended with a bang, and effectually closed the tunnel. The fall had evidently been too sudden, and the door defied Farney’s attempt to move it.

“You have shut us in now, Hendrik.”

“Dat is good. Dot dark way is too bad, and der witch-doctor, ef he made this place, nefer come by that road. Dere mus be onoder way out.”

“That must be. I never thought of that. Our work is not yet done, we must find Baas Dale before we look for a way out.”

“Must haf light. The sun was high op when we leaf, and we haf been long time on road. The sun just now goes under.”

That was so; the light was rapidly growing fainter, and objects a short distance off were already blurred. Farney looked around for a resting-place for the night, and selected a hummock of sand against the side. Hendrik searched about in one of the pools, keeping a keen watch against the silent approach of some lurking octopus, and presently placed a number of large oysters before Farney. They supped off these, and coiled up on the sand. In the silence which ensued they could hear the devil-fish bubbling in the pools, but they soon fell to sleep.

About the middle of the night, or thereabout, Farney was roused by a stifled cry, and leaped to his feet in a moment. There was a sound of somebody being dragged, followed by a gasp and horrified cry.

“Baas, the devil-fish! Quick, quick!”

Farney leaped forward, and, stooping down, grasped Hendrik by the arm; then he drew his knife and felt over the prostrate body. His fingers came in contact with a clammy tendril coiled round the old man’s body, and lower down others fastened round his legs. While he felt, there was a sickening touch of a clammy arm on his face. It was fearful in the dark, fighting against this hideous enemy, and he shuddered.

“Strike, baas, quick!” gasped Hendrik. “He has got me round the troat.”

Farney felt there was no time for cautiousness. He groped along the prostrate body, holding his knife between his teeth, and feeling now with the left hand then with the right. Every time his fingers touched the wet arms which held Hendrik a thrill of horror passed through him. He could feel that these arms were growing thicker as they neared the body of the hideous and unseen brute, and in vain he tried to pierce the darkness.

“At last!—what is that? A spark, a gleam from the creature’s human-like eyes.” He paused a moment, and then felt his left arm grasped as in a coil of steel. Quickly he took the knife from his mouth, and struck blow after blow,
madly and aimlessly. In his desperation he could not tell if the blows had failed or not; but Hendrik knew.

“Goot, baas; it is dood!”

They did not sleep any more, but stood against the rock waiting for the morning light. Their nerves however, were allowed no rest. Looking round, Farney noticed, away to the right, strange blue lights come and go, and drew Hendrik’s attention. These lights, like phosphorescent gleamings, played over white objects, which stood out from time to time under the more brilliant flashes.

“Spook!” muttered Hendrik, fearfully. “Yah, this place is bewitched; and we must die.”

“You said that before, and we are still alive. Wait till the light comes, and you will be strong again.”

Farney spoke firmly, but his mind was disturbed. No two men ever waited for the first gleam of the sun with such longing as these two.

At last, like a heaven-sent message of comfort, a sunbeam struggled through, and made a wavy bar against the rocks. The blackness gave way to grey, and out of the grey appeared the rugged forms of rocks, the still clear pools and white sands. At their feet, spread over the indented sand, were the long arms of the devil-fish; and at the brink of the nearest pool was the shapeless body, cut and slashed in every part. They drew their gaze from the creature still horrible in death, and looked to the spot where they had seen the phosphorescent lights. There against the wall were the white objects, and Farney walked down.

“Good heavens!” he cried, and stood still in amazement.

Against the wall were a long row of skeletons, some black with age, others still white, all in a sitting position on a ledge of the rock, with their bony feet on the sand, and their grinning heads upright. Strange to say, the old Hottentot had no fear of this dreadful array, but looked into their hollow eyes, and nodded his head as in salutation.

“These are the dead, women and men, caught by der witch-doctor, and trown into der pool to Ikanti. The Kaffir said so, und they are right. See! they have been fastened to the rocks by wire.”

Farney approached. Behind the figures was traced, on the smooth wall, the coils of a huge snake; and there were other drawings there of baboons and devil-fish, done in outline, but with wonderful skill. Farney shuddered to think that he too might have formed one in that grim row; and then he felt sick at heart as another thought succeeded—that in all probability Dale’s body was resting in some dark pool. He wished to heaven that he had nev-
er ventured on the search. Hendrik had gone off a short distance, and now returned.

“See here, baas!” said he, holding out some empty oyster-shells.

“This is no time for fooling,” replied Farney, wearily.

“It is no fooling. Dese here shells haf been opened not long ago. Who did open them? You?—no. The dead men?—no. Me?—no. Who den? Tell me dot, and say who’s fooling,—who den?”

The old fellow was actually excited. The light had certainly restored his courage. His little black eyes danced and sparkled in the weazened dried-up face. The excitement was contagious, and Farney immediately threw off his despondency. They walked along the sand, down the long vaulted cave, and soon marked the imprint of a deep footmark in the sand. At regular intervals this spoor was traced, deeper on one side than the other. Farney looked at Hendrik questioningly:

“He is going on his left foot only, eh?”

“Yah; he hops;” and suitting the word to the deed, Hendrik tucked up his right foot and hopped, leaving a similar impress. With increasing excitement they followed the solitary spoor, marked where the man had rested, and where from the sand on the rock he had climbed on to a ledge. Farney went first up this ledge. It led on and up, broadening as it advanced, and terminating in a shallow cave. On the floor was a bundle of dry grass, and a pale face of a sleeping man. In a moment Farney was down on his knees beside the sleeping form, the tears flowing down his cheek. It was Dale, indeed, but thin and white, with matted hair over his forehead and a look of pain in his drawn mouth.

Hendrik stole in softly to look, then rushed back to the sand, where he tossed his arms and danced wildly.

When Dale at last awoke, and saw, in the dim light of the cave, a form bending over him, he groaned.

“Leave me, friend; my time is short, and you can do then as you will with my body.”

“John Dale, do you not know me? I am Farney.”


A look of unutterable joy passed over the worn face, and with a smile on his lips he again closed his eyes. Farney sat there watching, dreading that he had come too late.

“Bossie,” said Dale, in low tones, “I would like to see the sun again before—you know, dear boy—before I go.”
“Yes,” said Farney, keeping back the sob that rose to his lips. “Rest a while, and I will be back soon.”

He went off, in a fever of anxiety, to search for a way out, and ran along the cave too hurriedly to notice.

“Jus’ look!” muttered Hendrik, in disgust. “He tink he can find tings like dot. He mus’ go slow—very slow and very careful. Ole witch-doctor very much sly.”

Hendrik examined every inch of the wall, but could see no way out, until, going up to the cave where Dale slept, he noticed that one side of the rock was polished by friction of soft bodies. The cave had a small roof or ledge, and, climbing on to this, he found a slit in the side of the rock, big enough to admit his body. Passing through, he found himself in another cave, lit up by a ray of light from above, and, with a chuckle of satisfaction, noticed a rough ladder of vine-tendrils reaching up. He climbed up, and found himself at last in the hollow of a large tree, and mounting to the forked branch, looked once again at the blue sky. He lost no time in making his way back to Farney, who had discovered nothing but a bees’ nest, which he had robbed of some thick, white, sealed combs, filled to the brim with amber honey. Dale, they found, had his right leg badly injured; but, with infinite patience and care, they contrived to lift him up into the warm sunlight.

Mrs. Purdy was right. It wanted only Dale’s presence to restore Kitty to her strength and beauty, and the light of love in her bright eyes won back life and happiness for Dale. No man has ever re-visited the hidden cavern. In a storm the great tree was shivered by lightning, and the secret opening blocked by the riven rocks.

THE END
Notes

1. Lower Albany — a region in the Eastern Cape province between the historic city of Grahamstown and the Indian Ocean.


3. Kareiga — the river rises west of Grahamstown; its mouth between Port Elizabeth and East London is an angler’s paradise.

4. kabblejauw — a large ocean cod-fish, a staple of colonial diet, often baked with leeks and noodles or tomatoes.

5. palmiet — a southern African rush (Prionium serratum) growing densely in marshes and rivers with long, sharp leaves from which hats used to be woven.

6. vley — a low, marshy meadow or bottomland, seasonally flooded.

7. devil’s kloof … Kaffirs — a kloof is a deep, usually wooded, ravine; “Kaffir” originally signified a Xhosa-speaking native, but the name came to be applied to any indigenous African.

8. krantz — rocky ridge or cliff.

9. yellowwood — a slow-growing, very tall and long-lived evergreen tree (Podocarpus henkelii); its soft, yellow timber was used in old colonial homesteads for flooring and furniture.

10. spoor — any vestige, such as droppings, hoofprints, scent, or broken plants showing the path taken by man or beast.

11. veldschoens — technical details of construction may vary, but they resemble the high-top Santee Sioux moccasins (without floral beadwork) of the American plains.

12. wattle and daub — an ancient method of constructing from wattles, interwoven branches that form a lattice, and daub, a mixture of clays, mud, animal dung, and grasses or straw; which when dry can be brightened and sealed with whitewash; the roof is often thatched.


14. Boer … stoep — a white Afrikaans-speaking farmer of Dutch descent sitting on a porch or veranda with steps at the front entrance: “On the eighth day God made tobacco and stoeps,” said old Oom Paul.

15. Gaika — a tribe of Xhosa mostly in Transkeian territory on the lower Kei River in the Eastern Cape who were repeatedly displaced by conflicts with the settlers: the War of the Axe (1846–1848), the Kaffir War under Sandili and other chiefs (1850–1853); and the Gaika-Galeka War (1877–1878), to name only a few.

16. nois-boom — most likely the Kiepersol (Cussonia paniculata or C. spicata), an evergreen “cabbage tree” of the high veld whose broad and thickly set leaves are like a cabbage, providing shade, shelter and good fodder for stock; its soft and light wood was used for brake blocks on the settlers’ wagons and its juicy, edible roots were chewed for moisture or mashed to treat indigestion, convulsions or malaria.

17. long sticks … fighting — skill at stick fighting was initially acquired by Xhosa herdboys who used two sticks, one to attack and one to defend; these sticks are not to be confused with the African knobkerrie.

18. mealies — Indian corn or maize, a staple food of South Africa.

19. Ruth — the biblical Book of Ruth details the tribulations of two widows, Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth, a Moabitess.

20. rheim-covered seat — or “reim”; a seat woven with pliable straps of rawhide.
21. buchu a herbal leaf (Barosma betulina) used tribally as a stimulant or for relief of convulsions or as an antibacterial and diuretic agent; an extract of leaves may also be applied to wounds.

22. piebald affection a pathological, schizoid condition.

23. Allemagtig literally “All-Powerful,” but as an Afrikaans exclamation: “good God!”

24. Hottentot the Khoi-Khoi and San peoples were in colonial terms called “Hottentots” (pastoral Khoi nomads who owned cattle and sheep) and “Bushmen” (foraging San hunter/gatherers who lived off the veld); their racial origins are the oldest among humankind.

25. hoek a corner space; hoekje a nook; on farms this was what the mudroom was called.

26. Korie Drift a river “drift” is a ford or crossing point, probably named here after kori bustards (Ardeotis kori) native to KwaZulu and the Cape coastal forests, one of the world’s heaviest flying birds; they rarely fly but stay on the ground foraging for seeds and lizards.

27. baas boss, master; a colonial form of respectful address by blacks to whites, currently surviving in South Africa as an ironic salutation only.

28. passop watch out!

29. concertina a smaller, lighter, simpler, hexagonally shaped accordion with bellows and buttons for keys on both ends.

30. ball ... slugs this hybrid firearm with one barrel for lead ball (distance) and another for scatter-shot (near) is no longer stocked by gun dealers.

31. knobkerrie a club with a lopsided knob, as cut from a tree’s trunk and fire-hardened, with an abutting tree branch comprising its shaft; used to club or to throw at wild game and enemies.

32. Bright One divinity; H. Rider Haggard’s description of Umkulunkulu (God) is the Inkosazana, Zulu Queen of Heaven, observed in lightning and fire. See Nada the Lily (London: Longmans, Green, 1892), 161–62. Ntsikana Gaba (c. 1760–1821) was among the first to compose hymns in the vernacular, re-Africanizing Christianity with indigenous songs, dances, and percussion. Glanville’s specific words are not found in any of the standard Xhosa hymnals of the four denominations that date back to the 1800s—Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican or Catholic, nor do any of my Xhosa-Zulu contacts recollect those words.

33. star nineteenth-century authors assumed Aristotle was correct about stars able to be seen from the bottom of a well; but regardless of the observer’s position, the daytime sky is generally too bright; looking exactly in the right spot, a viewer in daylight might descry Venus when at its brightest or Sirius possibly just after sunrise. A telescope with “go-to” software will show many more bright points of light in a dazzlingly blue sky.

34. devil-fish an octopus; called a devil-fish because formerly the octopus was associated with the krakken, a giant squid or sea monster of oceanic size.

35. sneezood sneezewood; a tough South African timber; its oils cause sneezing.