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# The Settler's Story of 1820

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ANN BYMS WILCOX

# The Settler's Story of 1820.

## CHAPTER I.

North of the great White Sea there lived a man, great of mind and great of stature. His sinews stood out in high relief as he moved, for he was great in strength, too.

The men who lived near envied his great strength, and because of that feared him greatly; but they never knew that he lacked one thing. One part of his life was a blank; he had no one to love, no one to love him, and because of this great longing for love, he was weak as a child.

The Great God Egnes, whom he worshipped, alone knew. He told of this sorrow only when he came to worship at the shrine of the Great God, and because the God was alone he understood. He knew what it was to sit in lonely greatness, in splendid solitude, and so he felt sorry for the great white man, and determined to assist him all he could.

For that purpose he made the maiden Hogo come to his shrine, but when she came, she saw only the Great God, and not the suppliant who knelt at his feet.

This did not please Egnes, so he caused a sickness to fall on the maiden, and she fainted at the feet of the big white man, who's name was Eric.

He rose, a bit benumbed by his long kneeling at the feet of the God, and looked round in surprise, to see a maiden lying prostrate beside him.

At first he feared to touch her, but summoned up courage at last, and lifted her up in his arms.

As he gazed on her dimpling beauty, life stirred within him, and he stood as one possessed, not daring to move, until she shivered slightly. Then he awoke to the fact that she was alive and in distress, so he carried her to the shade of a tree, and, laying her gently on the grass, went to the spring for water.

When he returned, she was already recovering, and trying to sit up. He supported her, giving her the water at the same time.

He had seen women in plenty, but never so close as this one. He watched her as one bewitched. The curls that almost hid her face, her delicate hand, the dainty way she held her cup and drank. He watched her as one watches a beautiful creature, watching the colour slowly return to her face and the brightness to her eyes. He felt as if he were watching one of the greatest marvels of the earth, and he was, for is not man the most wonderful creature, and woman the most beautiful. Beautiful in shape and colour. Where can you see such beauty as the blush of a lovely woman? The rush of colour under the white transparency of her skin, and the quick ebb away, leaving it as white as marble. Is there anywhere so great beauty in all the world?

Eric did not think he was bewitched, and could only gaze in confusion. All his senses seemed to have stopped suddenly, and life held only this little girl. "You are beautiful," he said, and she blushed again. Oh! and he flung his arms wide, scarcely able to hold himself in control.

She glanced at him in confusion and said, "You are strong."

"Yes, but I would rather be beautiful," he answered.

"No! no!" and she shook her head, her curls moving and touching his hand as she sat. Golden curls they were. One clung to his finger, and he stood looking at it as one bewitched. Cautiously and carefully, so as not to hurt her, he disengaged the curl, and when the contact was passed, he felt as one bereft, as if half of his life was gone; she seemed to have taken half of his power with her.

Her strength restored, she got up, thanked him and walked away, while he stood as one having no will, and watched her go, all his senses numb, his power of thought gone.

So did a woman bewitch Eric the great.

## CHAPTER II.

Far away down in the South lived the black man. The sun was hot and a white skin would burn, so God made the man with a black skin. They were heathens, but great warriors, these black men, and lived only for each day as it came.

The women worked in the fields, and dug and planted for the wherewithal to keep the men and children. The warriors, who should have gone out with bow and arrow, with spear and assegai, to kill game for the women, only sat gathered together in silent rings, while the Chief and his councillors discussed war and the spoils it would bring. Already they saw the victory theirs, and sharpened their weapons for the enemy they were to conquer.

Their women, carrying each a burden on the head, walked majestically past to the valley below, wearing no clothing but a girdle of plaited grass, fringed with coloured grasses.

Some carried children on their backs, some swaggered along alone, all talking interestedly, women-like, discussing the latest happenings among the men.

Kia, who led the procession down to the river bank, said that her man outstripped all other men. His hair, his long nails, his weapons, were food for argument.

The last but one took on a jeering manner; she was young and insolent.

Kia could wait till her man came, and she need not think that Kia was the only one who owned a big man; let her wait and see.

For answer, Kia stepped back as they neared the river bank, and grasping the offender by the neck and leg, gave her a good ducking and nearly drowned her. So Lisna had her lesson, a lesson which left her very sick indeed. The other women just sat and laughed, and some danced round the prostrate form of Lisna. So they sat and talked,

dipping their limbs into the running water, while the children played around in the mud at the edge of the water.

All wondered what the men meant to do. They knew that there was something afoot, but it was kept a secret by the warriors. They did not chance their plans leaking out; stranger things than this had happened before.

Kia was sure something great was to happen, and she promised to get it out of Lisna that very night, but she was not sure she would tell the rest of the women.

Lisna lay still, her heart burning to break out and tell what she knew, but Otney had said he would kill her if she did. Otney had told how the warriors had received word of a big tree coming over the water, and from that tree had landed men, women and children, all white and coloured like the flowers. These men and women were coming up into their country.

SHIPS OF  
COLOMATION

The warriors meant to waylay them, and bring them alive to the kraal, to show the women what a great catch they had, then, when they had played with these people, they could kill them. She would have told, only she was afraid of betraying Otney, so held her tongue.

Oh yes, Otney would kill her, she knew, but all the time she was just dying to tell; so she just looked wise, and said nothing. Kia noticed this and determined to get all out of Lisna. So she said to Lisna, "You wait," and Kia was so big and strong that Lisna was afraid, and stayed behind when the other women left. Kia went with them and returned later.

Lisna noticed that she had her sharp stick in her hand, and she shivered because Kia was strong. She got up to run, thinking Kia would kill her, but thud came the stick, and it stuck into the flesh of Lisna's thigh. She screamed and ran, drawing out the stick, eventually to fall on the sand faint from the loss of blood. Then Kia stood over her and beat her until the blood came, and then sat down beside her until she had recovered.

Kia then addressed her in stern tones.

"Now tell me what you know of the men. What they will?"

And Lisna, afraid for her life, told her. But she would

not tell who had confided in her, not even death could draw that from her. She would never betray Otney, so Kia had to be content, though she felt tempted to thrash it out of Lisna, but she was weary herself, so she left it at that.

Lisna got no sympathy for her wounds, because all the women knew that she had laughed at Kia, and they thought she deserved it. But Otney was uneasy. He guessed there was more than that to explain Kia's action, and he, being a wise man, set a watch on Kia. So when she drew Misni, her man, aside to speak, Otney was there also, to listen.

Kia said, "So you find women like flowers?"

Misni looked all round at the sky and at the trees. "Where?" he asked.

Kia said, "You ask me where, and you know."

"Show me, tell me," he answered.

"Yes, women like flowers," and she picked a pink orchid, and held it to him.

He took it and spun it round and round in his hand, nodding to it in a silly way. She saw that he was fooling her, so she snatched it away.

"Perhaps there will be flower men, too," she ventured.

"OH—e—e! is that what you want? Well, wait, wait!"

That was all, but it conveyed a lot to Otney, and he knew that Kia had not beaten Lisna for nothing. He knew, too, that he had not been betrayed, or Kia would have told, so he kept very quiet, determined still to watch.

## CHAPTER III.

They landed in a flurry of breakers and sea spray. The elders of their party keeping their spirits up, in a resignation won through great hardship. Their's was the great adventure; there was no turning back for them. Home, friends, were all given up for this. Most of them had children, and for the sake of these precious ones, they could keep themselves calm, and fight the battle with a double strength.

Mary Webb knew that if she gave way to her feeling and screamed her fright out, her husband would stay his herculean pull at the oar, and perhaps lose the boat and its precious burden, so she held her emotion in check until they reached the shore, when she laid down on the sand in utter exhaustion. Those terrible waves. They divided her from all she held as home; she could never face them again.

There were young people, too, in that brave band. Men strong in their youth, going in their great strength to open a new land. Eric Ford, a young giant, fair haired and blue-eyed, his sinews standing out as cords, carried a young girl through the breakers, holding her breast high. She was laughing and crying in turn, tearing at the hands of her bearer.

"Leave me, leave me; I want to die, I want to drown," she cried.

Here was no hysterical girl. Here was tragedy, and he knew. Eric had not gone through pain of heart and mind for nothing. He knew that she could not bear that he should hold her close as he did; could not give her body into his keeping. He was carrying fire with her in his arms, and she knew, and knowing, preferred the waves to him just then.

Where was her natural protector? He was in the boat to be carried ashore, too. Too ill to know where his wife

was; too ill to care. He had been ill on their long voyage; there was only the hope of the shore to save him.

So Eric had taken her up in his strong arms, deaf to her protest that the sick man should go first; deaf to her objections. He had just lifted her out. There was no time to wait, the huge breakers kept coming on and on, and this was the only way.

Oh! the ecstasy of holding her close in his arms, and to feel her fluttering as a bird against his great breast. He carried her up high and dry on to the sand dunes, and deposited her there. Taking out a flask, he forced her to swallow the burning fluid it contained, and she laid down quietly as if to sleep until he went, then she sprang up, all her control gone, wrung her hands and flung her head back in a cry, "Oh, God! God! why do you let such things be?"

Her inner feelings had been outraged. She knew that this man had no right to think of her as he did, and the knowledge burnt her like fire. He had simply haunted her during the voyage; a voyage fraught with misery for her. She and Jack had started out in such a great spirit. They were going to a new country, going to make good for always, no obstacle was to stand in their path. They had talked of their future for a long time.

Jack had been told of this golden land of Sunshine. It looked so beautiful and fairylike in the distance, the land of palms, and birds of wonderful plumage; the land of milk and honey. What glowing dreams they had had, and what great castles they had built. There was always to be sunshine in their lives, as in the sky.

Already a cloud had appeared. Jack had been sick all the voyage. At first it had appeared to be only the sickness of the sea, but it persisted until he grew so weak; and there were no dainties for a sick man. How could she nourish him on salt soups and salt meats, on dry biscuits? There was no milk, no eggs; nothing that could sustain his weakened stomach was to be had, so he had faded away, and was only a shadow of his former self, just a skeleton covered with skin. She had fought so for him, and all the time haunted by this man, who had never taken his eyes off her while she was in sight, who insisted on waiting on

her in an unobtrusive way, but such a persistent way. She felt a lamb beside a stricken mother, and the vulture waiting to take her away as soon as her protector was gone.

The nights were of agony when she could do so little to help Jack, when her mind wandered as well as his, and life looked so black. Now she had come to this. She was on shore safely, and Jack was still in the boat, rocking out in those awful waves. But Eric soon brought Jack's light figure, and laid him down beside her, performing the same duty of forcing brandy between his white lips.

So these people came to the land of their adoption, and it seemed to those women seated on the ground as if they had come to the end of everything. A dreary waste of sand was all they could see. Where they wanted a home, four walls and a shelter, there was only the burning Sun. They sat together, a hopeless little crowd. Not so the men; their's was the stern emigrant spirit, to do or die. They looked forward to the next experience; their's was only to conquer.

They knew that the intrepid soldier had been their forerunner, that there was some preparation where they were going. All day was spent in landing, first the men, then women and children, then next all their belongings and the stores with which to go forward. Over the dreary sands they tramped, and found on the other side, green hills and valleys, a running stream, and food provided. Ox waggons awaited them there, as they were to go inland, into the dark continent, across an almost trackless country.

After two days they were well away, coasting the bay first of all, then by degrees losing sight of the sea and entering a wooded country. A patrol escorted them, to guard them from Kaffirs, Hottentot raids, and from wild animals as well. God help the sick and weak on this journey, for they were jolted over the veldt, over stones, hillocks of grass, and through dry water courses, ever on and on, at a walking pace.

Jack began to pick up now he was on land; he became ravenously hungry, eating berries or anything he could find. Once, after a long halt and outspan in the heat of

the day, he and Ella came across the prickly pear they had passed during the day, and knowing them to be edible they sat down and had a good feed, enjoying it to the full, only to be surprised at the agony in the throat and tongue. They had swallowed thousands of the tiny hooked thorns; these stayed in the mouth and throat, and made it a burning itching mass of pricks. Their distress was evident as they came in sight of the waggons. Experienced drivers and leaders knew, and they annointed their mouths liberally with fat, which softened the thorns and enabled them to get away. Two very sick and sore people started again on the long journey that night, sadder but wiser, being taught now to roll the pear on the grass until the thorns were gone, and to split it on each side, and gingerly extract the juicy fruit from inside. So they jogged slowly on, this big cavalcade of vehicles, slow and sure. They crossed again and again the giant spoor of elephants, their passage marked by fallen trees and trampled grass.

To these town-born people the forest held untold horrors. They would cluster around huge fires at night, too scared to look away into the darkness, where often the deep growl of the South African leopard could be heard hunting his prey, or the scream of the jackal would make their blood run cold and their hair literally to stand on end.

Burnt past recognition, dirty, unwashed; unkempt, for they did not know the ways of this country; in thorough discomfot these brave souls struggled on, up, up. They seemed to be always mounting hills, or going through rivers, bumping over great boulders hidden under the water.

In places delayed for days beside a river in flood, then they would crowd together on one waggon, and be drawn through by numerous spans of oxen linked together.

But the beauty of the country appealed to them. They were constantly discovering new flowers, new birds, new insects, new ways of doing things, of provisioning themselves, as they were supplied with raw material which had to be made into bread or cakes, often by very amateur hands.

After breasting the hills for fourteen days, they came in sight of their goal, the place Col. Graham had settled for

their City. They were to be settled all over the country, but this was to be their centre.

Cupped in a hollow, the little settlement could be seen from all sides, with narrow streams running in all directions, the bush growing down into the deep ravines caused by the rivers when in flood. Imagine the joy of these poor outcasts to see again the welcome roof tree. True, they were only thatched buildings, some only huts. How they longed for the shelter of four walls again.

Jack, now quite recovered, walked jauntily beside Ella, singing as he went, Eric, too, carrying the biggest load, the gayest, the merriest day of all their long journey; here was a home at last! Their hearts uplifted at the thoughts of food, comfort, sleep, all that civilization meant to them.

Ella had grown more reconciled to Eric's attentions now that Jack was better. He carried for them, cooked, did all kind of small attentions to add to their comfort, and content for the present to be beside Ella, a great big doglike devotion, which touched her every now and then, and sometimes made Jack look up with suspicion.

Still he knew in his mind that Ella was always right, and as long as Eric answered this elder brother stunt he did not mind. So Eric walked beside her as they neared their destination. Tears were not far from any of them, the relief of finding something, someone living in this vast country touched them all. Eric stood and gazed on the scene before him. He was not much given to poetic feeling, but felt as if his soul had burst its chrysalis and would break into song. He had never seen such beauty before. It stretched out before him in green hills, green fields, running water, a beautiful scene, while Ella stood by, her face wet with tears. Surely their souls spoke to each other.

Jack was far in advance. Carried away by excitement he had forgotten everything, even Ella. But he had come to look on Eric as a faithful companion, and he knew that she would not be left alone.

So these two people experienced their first thrill, the first touch of the Divine. Eric stood so long that Ella sat down beside him. He stood, a grand figure, cap off and a stick over his shoulder with a bundle on the end containing their

day's rations. His great strength, symbolic of the herculean struggle to come, of the power and endurance this venture would require of them. God has given to big men big minds; they do not look on the ground, but straight ahead, so the little hillocks of life do not concern them. These they pass over unconsciously, only the big things afar attract them, their eyes are on the horizon waiting for the glory of the big thing to come. Sometimes a little thing drags them down, generally a woman, but there are men who can stoop and lift up. Such a man was Eric, in his rugged strength one to be envied.

Stooping down he said, "Are you tired, dear?" using the endearing name unconsciously.

Ella sprang up at once, alive to the danger.

"Where is Jack?" she asked. "Can you see him? Come, let us go."

He walked rapidly on. He slowly scratched his head. What had he done now? Surely nothing to give her offence. He could think of nothing. He had thought of her in such a reverent way, there could be nothing wrong, nothing to hurt her. Then the love of the whole world seemed to burst forth to him, seemed to surround them on all sides. It came as if a great stream had swallowed them up, and they were alone in the midst of a great glory, only he and Ella. Wave upon wave flowed around them, glittering with gold and gems, and spread and spread, until there was nothing left but the waves. He still thought that she sat at his feet, when with a start he awoke to reality.

She was gone, and there was only the glory of the sunset, with its setting of green and gold. With a great sigh of regret, almost a sob, he went on.

Ella had joined Jack by this time.

"Why did you hurry so, dear?" she asked.

"I forgot," he answered. "Now we shall sleep in a bed, and have our meals at a table again. Isn't it fine? Water, too. What a country!"

They were met and welcomed by that fine soldier, Colonel Graham, one of the noble army who had carved the path for the weaker to follow.

They felt like children home again, with their father to

take all their cares from them. The journey to them had been full of horror. They had sat around the fires at night shivering with fear, the fear of wild animals, of snakes, of spiders, and scorpions. This land seemed to be full of these creatures, but with dawn their fears would vanish, and they saw only the beauty of the dewy morning, with cobwebs glistening on the trees, and the great purple and orange spider became a thing of beauty. Then they were keen to sight the elephant or hippotami in the deep river beds.

But the night always returned, with all its horrors of prowling lions, and the growl of the tiger as he hunted along the rocky ridges. No wonder that houses, gardens, streets, and growing grass meant home to them.

Grave men lost their heads, and fairly galloped along, tossing their hats in the air. Young men and maidens danced and sang, while the patient mothers looked on from the waggon tents, where they sat surrounded by the children, some weeping, some laughing; anything to express the joy, the relief of home.

Jack and Ella were amongst the first to be welcomed by the grave weather-beaten soldiers. Hands were clasped; some even knelt and kissed the soldiers' hard hands. Such a day of rejoicing never had been; such a wagging of tongues, such meals, and the glorious sunshine over all.

## CHAPTER IV.

This was not their settlement. They had travelled out in parties under a nominal head, and each of these parties were sent to a different locality, with the land mapped out for each one. So the waggons waited for each party to repair to its own location; each day became a time of bustling activity as the parties moved off.

Jack and Ella went off to the valley of the Kareigha. They had to go again into the dreaded bush, over almost trackless country with a road cut into the side of the hills. Monkeys chattered along the route, and at night the deep growl of the leopard could be heard.

The spirits of the little band sank lower and lower, only Eric kept up. He knew no fear, and looked forward to the promised land. The fear of the Kaffir was always on them. Once a blanket was stolen out of the waggon while they slept, and this act of cunning quite upset the women, who went on in the greatest fear of a crafty foe.

Ella woke one night to see a band of naked men against the sky line and she gave the alarm, and every man leapt to his gun, but nothing happened.

Eric did not say much to Ella now, but she noticed he slept on her side of the waggon. The women slept inside the waggon tents, and the men on the ground below.

Ella used often to sit and watch them around the fire, and as it blazed up she could distinguish each face, and listen to the hum of their voices, which sounded muffled in the silence of the bush. They walked round tending the fire, making ash cakes or grilling small game that they had shot during the day, the red fire lighting up their faces and the surrounding bush, the oxen, lying tied to the yoke, blowing and sniffing occasionally. She was quietly watching one night, when she saw one man raise his head in a listening attitude, then take his gun and move away into the shadows,

then another, and another, until only Eric remained and he came to the end of the waggon, standing in the shadow close beside her. She knew at once that there was danger, and that he was there to protect her. She leant forward to whisper, "What is the matter? Where is Jack?"

He pointed silently into the bush.

"Is it Kaffirs?" she asked.

He only nodded. Then out of the darkness came the rending sound of a rifle shot, and she screamed with fright.

"Be still," Eric said, and held her down, for she was going to leap out of the waggon. The other women were awake by this time, and were sternly ordered to silence. The air was tense with horror, the white woman's horror of black men, for they imagined them to possess supernatural power.

Suddenly Ella saw that Eric was not there, but she saw Jack creeping silently forward. Like a flash a black figure darted in between, dug something into Jack, and seized the blanket Ella had around her, pulling it away as she fought for it. She saw blood then. Jack was lying silent out there, and she was fighting a savage for her life. She sent out a piercing scream for help, as the blanket slipped away, and she fell down beside Jack.

By this time the men had all gathered round, loading the guns silently. There were a few repeating rifles, though most had the old flint and steel gun, with the powder in a pan, lit by striking the flint on the steel, thus making a spark. One could imagine how long that would take; the noise and spark telling where the man was; it required some patience to wait for the explosions. Jack was bleeding to death from an assegai wound in the stomach and another man, named Amos, had a wound in the leg.

The little band drew together with silent scared faces, doing their best to staunch the wounds of the two men.

Ella had not noticed that Eric was absent, until someone said, "Are we all here? Where is Ford?"

Consternation reigned. It was bad enough to have two men badly wounded. They were surrounded by their friends, but what about the man somewhere away in the dark.

"We must go and look for him," someone said in a shaky

voice.

Ella sprang up, a grand figure in her excitement.

"Go, go!" she shouted. "Don't be cowards. They may be killing him."

They turned and went obediently, like men under orders. Eric was soon found, and came into the camp presently with the other men. He started in surprise when he saw the group gathered around Jack's prostrate form, his life fast ebbing away.

Ella was doing all she knew to hold him, but it was out of her power. Eric knelt down and tried to lift the dying man into an easier position, and in silence they watched his spirit depart as the dawn lightened the sky. The cold breeze which always accompanies the dawn made everyone feel eerie and unstrung.

Each one came forward to comfort Ella, but she would have none of their well-meant sympathy, and walked up and down in a dumb despair, trying to piece things together. At last her eyes lighted on Eric, who sat with his gun between his knees, tired and dejected. Like a person suddenly awakened from a dream, she walked over to him.

"You knew, you knew, you let them kill him! I hate you! I hate you! God will never forgive you. You wanted him to die, I know you did. Curse you! Curse you!"

Eric said never a word. He was too stricken to speak. In calmer moments he recognised that Ella was completely unstrung and scarcely knew what she was saying. But it cut him to the quick, for in his faithful way he had loved her, never intruding but always ready with his service of love, without any thought of reward. Just to be near her, just to touch her hand sometimes was all he had ever expected. Now, through no fault of his own, the way lay open, and he was stunned by the suddenness. He was not prepared, and now Ella had come across his path like a flame of fire, and pointed the finger of scorn at him. It was so unthought of, so sudden, that he quailed before it and met it in silence.

Then followed one of the saddest days of the expedition; to bury one of their number in a strange spot, in an un-

known land. Worst of all, to prevail on Ella to leave the spot. No one could move her, it seemed an herculean task. They looked to Eric, but he shook his head. Someone else must help for he could not.

The kindly minister succeeded at last, and walked away with her down the dusty road, while the Dutch drivers whipped up their teams.

Eric stayed behind to see that no one interfered with the grave. Had any kaffir come into his line of vision that day he would have received short shrift. He joined the party next day, and reported all quiet. He had taken a great risk, but thought it worth while if it comforted Ella.

They reached their settlement in safety. Waggon's were unloaded, and people and goods were dumped down on the veldt, the Dutchmen trekking away immediately, leaving the forlorn group of settlers to make their own arrangements.

The men soon set to work erecting tents, and each gathering together his own part of the goods. The women, a sad little group, waited patiently until all was ready. How lost without a roof tree a woman is; her world is all gone to pieces without four walls to hold her. But with cheery spirits, plenty of grit and good management, all were under canvas quite soon. Fires were made, and kettles boiling, and all was mirth and song, only Ella sat apart, dead to everything. There was no one to pitch her tent, no one to share it. She drew her cloak up over her head to shut out the sight and sound of everything, none so desolate as she.

But Eric was not idle; he soon had the tent up, and everything made comfortable inside. He sent Emily Price, a girl about Ella's age, to take her into the tent, with instructions to stay, if Ella did not object.

So she began her lonely life. Eric watched over her as a mother guards her child. Her food was prepared, water carried, fires made, and she never cared, never guessed. Life seemed ended to her; the tragedy of Jack's death had gone so deep she could not recover herself. Eric had found a little Hottentot girl to wait on her, and this child's quaint ways, a queer imitation of the white people, her broken English, helped to amuse Ella and lift her out of her dis-

tress, helped to give her a new view of life.

Eric, with infinite patience, kept out of the way, doing all for her, and effacing himself entirely. He knew she would gradually come back to everyday views of life, and then he could come forward and take his place in her life.

Everyone now set to work building, planting, digging; all willing workers, eager to make a living out of the virgin soil. But what a task? Their handicap was inexperience. As soon as the plants appeared above ground, they were choked out with a wild growth of grass and weeds, and when these were exterminated, came grubs which ate up everything. The mealies they planted, when in bearing, were stripped by the monkeys and baboons, which came right to the edge of the clearing. But they bravely fought on, under the greatest difficulty, a set back at every turn.

Sunday was their only day of recreation and rest; to sit in the shade of the trees and hold a simple service, the service of the Baptist community, whose simplicity is its charm. Some broke away at times, in a desperate feeling. There seemed no progress, but there were brave souls who held on, whose labour was given to God. These kept the work going on, though progress seemed slow, but it was there nevertheless.

Each family had a piece of ground allotted to them and their dwellings were placed together for safety. Then, like a thunderbolt, came the astounding news that a Kaffir raid was expected.

## CHAPTER V.

Kia stood out on the hills, looking towards the town. She was wrath because her lord had refused to listen to her, refused to allow her to assist. This was not woman's work, it was work for warriors. She had the mind and the will of a strong man. Why was she given a woman's body? She would let him see what stuff she was made of. So woman's place was at the fireside? Well, he should see. She could not assume warrior's trappings and warrior's weapons, but she was clever, and not afraid. She would get three women, and they would outwit the men. Yes, and prove they were as useful as men.

Kia knew of an old man who had been a witch-doctor. He had contracted some awful disease, and had taken to the hills. He lived in a cave, a day's journey away, but she would go. So she picked three women. Lisna was among them, and drawing them into the woods, she fairly frightened them into submission. She told them the Great Spirit of the White Wolf had come to her, and had told her how to conquer the white man. She had eaten fire for them, and had called the White Wolf up before them. He had ministered the leaf of the tree that grows white, and bound one to each brow for secrecy. Kia could not do without the White Wolf, so she had pressed him into her service.

He was a Kaffir who had been bewitched, and his skin had turned white, and to him belonged the white leaves of the forest. Sometimes a branch of a tree will only bear white leaves, peculiar cream waxen leaves, and these belong to the White Wolf. They are his sign of secrecy, and the Kaffir who has had one bound to his forehead must keep a still tongue for ever; nothing absolves him from this.

His fear of turning white keeps him, the horror of the White Wolf.

Kia took the three to the bottom of the hill, telling them to wait there, while she mounted on up to the cave of the old man. She had prepared the way, by leaving food for him outside the cave for the last ten days, so she knew he would be friendly. She did not enter the cave, but squatted down outside, just grounding her stick every second; a novel way of knocking where there is no door.

Presently the trees rustled. Looking up she saw Zinta. It was a sight to frighten anyone. His face was partially eaten away with leprosy, he had no fingers, no toes, and looked exactly like a half-decayed man.

Kia was brave and clever, so she did not move. After a long silence. "What does Kia want?"

Kia said, "I want medicine."

"What medicine?"

She explained, "Medicine for a witch doctor."

He made her swear to supply him with food for three moons, and he would give her what she wanted. She swore, and received a full outfit for a witch doctor. Teeth, tails, bones, beads, grass woven into a peculiar dress which covered her body. Then she demanded three such dresses for her attendants. She would come back for these.

So Kia emerged from the forest a full fledged Witch-doctor, with three attendants similarly arrayed. All three were in great fear, but there was no turning back now. It meant death for all of them. They would receive no mercy if they were discovered.

Kia set out now to do all a witch doctor could do. She danced, she swung herself round and round, and jumped up higher and higher, until she had worked up a perfect frenzy. When she was exhausted, the other three carried on. Then she would disappear in the hills, and stay there for a time, all to create a mystery. Then she began to work a new idea. She would rush into the midst of the warriors carrying a flaming cross, and cry "War, war; fight the white man, fight." At first she was a wonder, then they began to be superstitious and afraid when they saw the fiery cross borne aloft.

Her work so far accomplished, she would sit and harangue her hearers on the cowardice of sitting still, and

one night she surpassed herself and said "If your Chief won't lead you, I will." The chosen three fairly trembled in their skins at her audacity, but it won the way.

The warriors rose in a body, grounded their weapons, and shouted their war cry. She was astounded at her own success, but she must go forward. There was no looking back.

"When I bring the fiery cross, you follow," she shouted, and they answered "Yes."

"Wait till I come," and she was gone.

The Chief looked very glum. But he too was clever, and resolved to work with the Witch-doctor.

Hintza stood up fully prepared to lead his warriors. He was not to be displaced by this Witch-doctor; he was a wily old Chief. Seeing the wonderful hold this wild Witch-doctor had on his people, he would accept him too, and follow on, and so keep his position.

They gathered in a mighty throng, thousands upon thousands, each man responsible for his own outfit, his own weapons, each one eager to move on. They made a mighty army, working as one man with one mind.

Kia led with her chosen three. They danced in front of the warriors, working themselves up into a perfect frenzy, each in turn, so that two rested while one performed. So, reaching the little City, they halted on the surrounding hills.

Kia made her great mistake here. She attacked in the early morning. Had she attacked at night, there would have been no hope for the little garrison. In this way she gave them time to prepare, a fatal mistake, for they were badly beaten, and thousands of dead were left behind.

So Hintza led his defeated troops back, back, to the Fish River, and when they halted to think things over, behold the Witch-doctor and his attendants were not to be found. He and his attendants had disappeared into space.

They came across three women bathing in the pools of the river, and were surprised to see their own women so far afield.

"We were anxious," said Kia, "we wanted to see our men bring back the flower women—and men."

## CHAPTER VI.

As soon as the red flower of the Kaffir Boom opens, the native is coming to get the white man's blood, and make it run red too. After hasty consultation, the men decided to pack up and take the women and children to Grahams-town, till the danger was over. What a calamity, what to do with the household goods, what to take, and what to leave? Those precious heirlooms brought from home. They had to bury them in the ground, china, silver, books. The houses were securely locked, and the little cavalcade set out, one third of the men going with the women and children, the rest remaining to guard their treasures.

They reached the City safely. The Kaffirs attacked Grahamstown, and were beaten off with heavy losses. They had been led by a mad witch-doctor, who led them straight into the trap cleverly prepared for them, so the rivers ran red with blood, but it was the blood of the Kaffir.

With thankful hearts they returned to their homes. Everything was found safe and sound, excepting that an Ant Bear had gone through the buried treasures, spoiled the precious books and broken the china.

The lands under cultivation were some distance from the homesteads, so Pete Grainger, with his sons, went to see that all was well. Apparently all was quiet, so they returned, leaving their father busy damming up the water. When the supper bell was rung Pete did not appear. A search was at once made, and Pete's naked body was found, close to where they had left him. The Kaffirs had laid in wait until he was alone, then assailed him and stripped the body.

A thrill of horror goes through the little settlement, and they gather together in the largest house, where the men stand to attention all night. The women are all for going

back to the town ; any place of safety, what matters houses, lands, gardens, against precious life, they count as nothing.

Pete's wife sits in a corner rocking herself to and fro in an agony of despair ; her world is a blank too. Ella came forward, and, taking the stricken woman into her arms, comforted her as only she could have done. Are they not sisters in woe. The Kaffirs had murdered both their husbands and they are powerless to avenge them.

Like a voice from Heaven came the prayer of the pastor, whose soul, purified by the woe of these people, knew that only God could help. Like a healing balm, his words brought comfort and relief, and all was hushed in the silence of prayer.

With daylight came courage, the necessity of work, and the daily duties harden each heart, and act as a stimulant to the weary, and all go forward to another day's duty.

The soldiers come to clear the country, and they feel safe again.

## CHAPTER VII.

Little by little Ella had regained her balance, and grew to see and know all that Eric had done for her. In his quiet way he had constituted himself her protector and support, and as she began to realise this, to feel the shield of strength his loyalty was to her, she allowed her thoughts to dwell on him, and often acknowledged his services with a shy smile. When he was absent for days, hunting, or working, as he often was, she missed him and looked for his return. She had fallen into line as a teacher of the younger children, giving herself in this way a means of living.

George Bassett saw that she was passing fair, too, and began to meet her as she came from the school, which was held mostly in the open under a shady tree, as the small room provided was unbearably hot.

He would sit and wait until the shouts of breaking up school came, then go forward and help her to clear up. She enjoyed this in a youthful way, as all young people do, until Eric heard of it. He grew furious. It was one thing to wait for his reward, quite another to sit quietly by and let another man take what he desired. His pent up passion broke loose, and losing control of himself he whipped his boy, his dog, his horse, until fear of himself, of what he should do, and greatest fear of frightening Ella, he went away into the bush, his gun in the hollow of his arm. He walked mile after mile, entered sternly into the chase when game appeared, camped when he was weary or hungry, gradually wearing himself down, losing the fierce wish to punish, to kill.

A quiet chastened man walked into the little clearing that Sabbath morning. The mist lay white on the mountains around, birds sang and cocks crowed, all the small signs of civilization greeted him after a week in the wilds. The sound of a hymn came faintly to his ears; he lifted

his cap and followed the sound. It led him down to the river's brink, where the little congregation were assembled for service, the baptismal service.

The Pastor stood knee deep in the river, in his water-proof overalls, while each member of his flock came forward for their baptism. Taking them by the shoulders, he slowly lowered them into the running water, immersing head and all for a brief second. They emerged dripping, and were taken to the tent to change. Eric stood in amazement, for he had never seen this Baptismal rite before. Ella came forward, and stepped down into the water, in her white robes, her golden hair shining in the sun.

He leaned forward breathlessly, and saw her taken and immersed, and rise dripping with shining eyes and clasped hands, and walk out wrapped in the peace which passeth understanding. Tears were in his eyes as he stood and watched. He kept fascinated eyes on the tent till she came out. She walked as one guided straight to Eric, took his arm with a divine smile, and said:—

"Come, let us go home. We will make it *our* home." He bent and kissed her where she stood, and, cap in hand, raised his eyes to the blue skies above.

"Thank God, thank God," was all he said.

THE END.