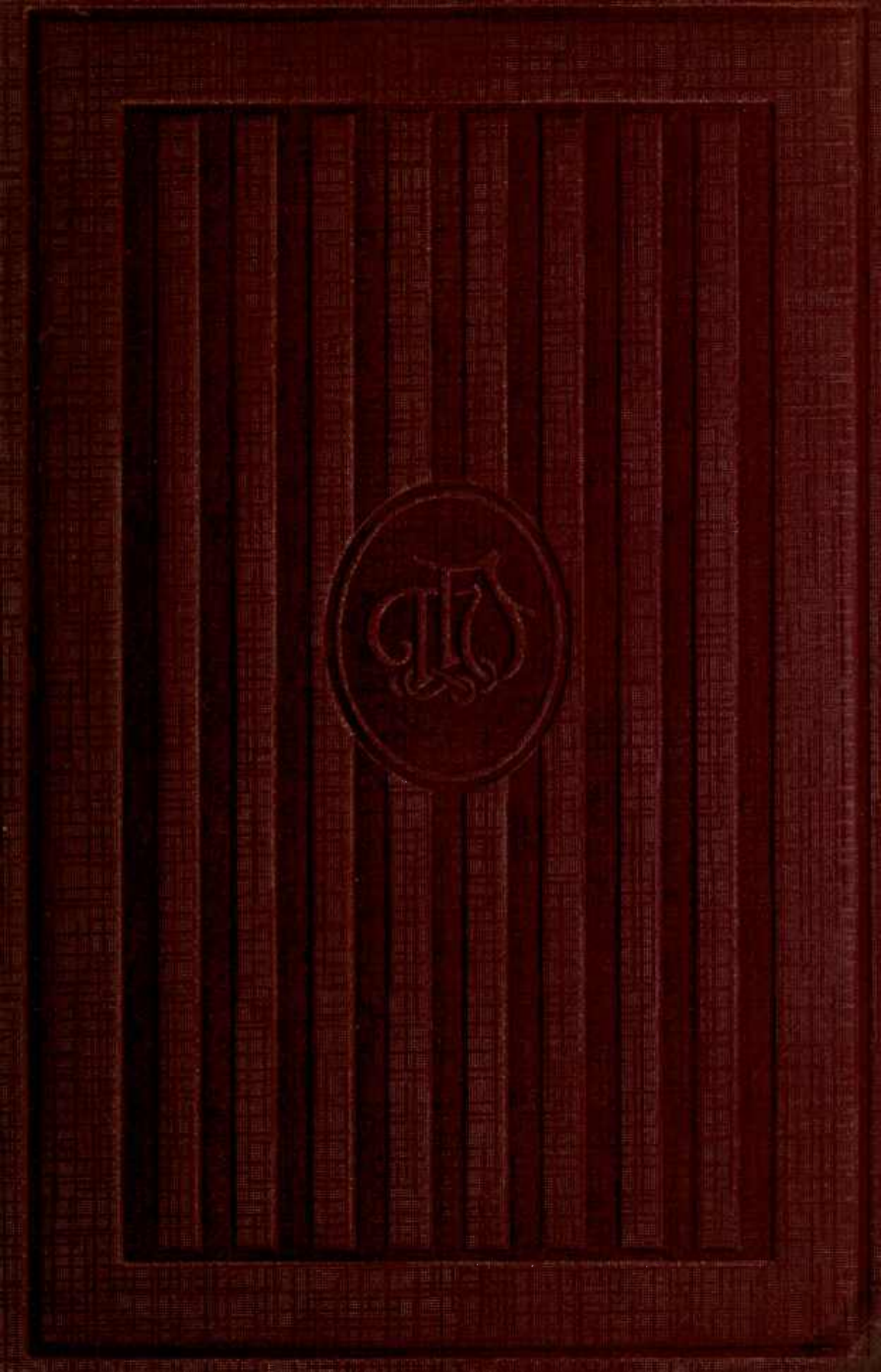

M'GLUSKY

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BEING A COMPILATION FROM THE DIARY OF TROOPER McWIDDY OF REMINGTON'S SCOUTS

BY

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McGLUSKY

CHAPTER I

HOW HE CAPTURED A COMMANDO

McGLUSKY was Australian by birth, Scots by descent, by religion, by thirst, thrift and enterprise. He was a wheelwright by trade, a wanderer by instinct, a fighting man by choice. No person had need to spoil for a fight if he dwelt in the same camp with him, and yet "Mac" was deeply religious in a way of his own. He had often been heard to remark that in his opinion the world was going to "the verra deevil for want o' a new reformation." He strongly favoured a Scotch Messiah, who would wander around the world with a Bible in one hand and a claymore in the other, preaching a dim Calvinistic creed.

He was not one of those folk who consider that the British race alone dwells within the circle of spiritual light, whilst all the rest of the world gnashes its teeth in outer darkness. McGlusky considered that of all the millions of mankind who rose with the sun and went to sleep with the shadows, nine-tenths were weaklings and hypocrites, miserable time-servers, who willingly bowed the knee to Baal. By Baal he meant anything or any one who might happen to be in power. It was an article of

faith with him that the world as a whole wanted purging, and he could find no religious sect that quite fitted in with his views. If he had been born a Mussulman he would have blossomed forth as a sort of Mad Mullah, preached a creed more or less orthodox, and in all human probability would have died at the head of a coffee-coloured mob of fanatics whilst charging a British square, for he was an utter stranger to fear.

He was a great reader. Nothing that was printed came amiss to him. He would devour a Sunday School tract or one of Conan Doyle's novels, and get up a controversy concerning either upon the faintest sort of provocation. But his favourite book was the Bible, about which he held views that would have caused him to be burnt by pious Roman Catholics, or hanged, drawn and quartered by zealous Protestants a few centuries back, had he lived in those merry days. He used to assert in most unapostolic language that it was not Judas who betrayed the world's Redeemer to the Jews—not Judas, but John. "It's only the man ye love that ever betrays ye," he used to assert, aggressively, "and it was John whom the Master loved, ye ken."

He was not by any means an educated man, this long, gaunt, brainy Scot, yet he knew the story of pretty nearly every great man whose life is at all familiar to moderns, and of them all he seemed to reverence Mahomet above all men, though even for him he had a very fair share of contempt. "He was a verra guid fechtin' man, but a puir daft craitur who couldna be content wi' ane wummin but must needs go spierin' aboot for mair, like ane o' the unregenerate sons o' Adam," was McGlusky's description of the founder of the faith of Islam.

He admired the grim religious and soldierly sides of Cromwell, but counted him lacking in ambition, and talent without ambition was meat without salt in

McGlusky's eyes. On the other hand, he looked upon the first Napoleon as a mighty soldier and statesman ruined by lack of religious principles. "That man micht hae swayed the warld, if he'd only had the sense tae lift the banner o' a new church, an' made himsel' the apostle o' a new releegion. What the warld wanted in his time, it wants noo, a releegion o' bluid an' airn."

When the war between the British and Dutch was talked about, "Mac" promptly threw up a comfortable Government job in South Australia, made his way down to Port Adelaide, and shipped as a fireman on board a steamer bound for Cape Town. He made no secret of his mission, either in port or upon the boat, in consequence whereof he managed to pick up pretty nearly as much hard fighting as even his belligerent soul yearned for, which caused the chief engineer to send for him for the purpose of remonstrating with him.

"Mac" duly obeyed orders, and appeared before his superior with one eye closed and ringed in deepest mourning colours. His nose seemed to have left its original location and spread itself, or been spread, half over his face. The rest of his countenance was possibly in a very similar plight, but as it was hidden by whiskers, no man could say for certain.

"Well," remarked the chief, "you are a disreputable-looking beast, if I ever saw one. I'm told you are always fightin', drunk or sober, and that you've pretty nearly crippled half the firemen on board, including big Hennessey, who has been cock o' the walk for the last four trips. Is this true?"

"Mac" picked up a plug of tobacco from the chief's table and bit it in half in an absent-minded manner, pushed the wedge he had bitten into his cheek with his thumb, and nodded solemnly in the affirmative.

The chief scowled at the dirty, sinewy, war-stricken

lump of humanity in front of him for a few seconds. Then he snapped out : " They tell me you work as well as you fight. Say, you unshorn heathen, do you fight out of quarrelsomeness or just for the sake of exercise ? "

The hairy face opened in the same place where the tobacco had disappeared, and the one word " Releegion " dropped out.

The chief stared aghast at that word, then broke into a tornado of abuse.

" I've had your sort before," he yelled. " I know you and all your cursed ways. Sea lawyers are bad enough, but a fightin' ragin' sea parson is worse than a hundred sea lawyers. Why can't you be content with your own brand of salvation, and let the rest of the world go to heaven or the other place at its own sweet will ? What is religion to you, anyway, you working beast, you ? "

" Mac " did not mind the harshness of the epithets hurled at him. He had travelled on too many steamships as fireman not to know that the hurling of abuse was one of a chief engineer's most dearly-cherished perquisites. He simply turned the tobacco in his cheek lovingly with his tongue and expectorated with unerring accuracy through the porthole, but the chief was not in any way misled by those signs of meekness. Had the barbarian in front of him gazed back with lowering brow, or hung his head sullenly, he would have known how to find a prescription to fit his complaint, but the assumed docility of the crank baffled him in one way, whilst it enlightened him in another, so he availed himself of all privileges, and sneered savagely, saying, " Have you looked in the glass this morning, you hairy-faced aboriginal ? Have you, eh ? "

" Mac " nodded and murmured that he had.

" Oh, you have, have you, and after seeing yourself, do you still think you are a proper sort of person to go

fooling with religious subjects? What, in the name of all that is blessed, can a fellow like you find to enjoy in religion?"

"Mac" had another shot at the porthole. Then winking with the one eye that was not quite closed at the chief, he said, "It's meat an' salt tae a mon like me, sir. It makes a gran' argyment."

"Yes," snarled the chief, "that's it, you lineal descendant of a border thief, that's just it, and the argument leads to a grand fight; but let me tell you, if you cripple any more of my firemen I'll lay you out with something harder than the Calvinistic doctrine, and, mon, I ken hoo hard that is, for I was brought up on it mysel'," and for once in his excitement the chief betrayed his own extraction by his accent. "What are you going to do in Africa, mon?" he continued more calmly.

"I'm goin' to study the releegion o' this Dutch President, Paul Kruger. He seems a verra strong sort o' mon, verra like ane o' the auld prophets. I'm thinkin' heill be a guid mon tae fecht under if it comes tae fechtin'."

"But, mon, you'll be fechtin' against the British if you do fight for him," said the chief hotly.

"Mac" drew himself up. He was on debatable ground, and his soul rejoiced.

"If the man draws the sword o' the Lord," he replied, "I'll be his buckler, nae maitter who the unregenerate may be, Briton or no Briton."

The chief groaned aloud in bitterness of spirit. "You misshapen piece of human skin," he growled, "you are just spoilin' for a fight, and if I was not chief engineer on the boat I'd accommodate you right quickly. You're not the only mon in the world that likes salt with his meat dae ye ken that now?"

So for a little space the two brawny men stood and glared at each other, the light of battle dawning upon their

rugged faces. The tinder was so dry that a spark would have fired it, and McGlusky would probably have found himself in possession of the hardest contract he had ever undertaken, for the chief engineer on the s.s. *Gaho* had been a mighty smiter of men in his wilder days. At that particular moment, however, Fate, disguised as a third engineer, appeared at the cabin door and the tension was broken.

"Get back to yer work," said the chief to McGlusky. "Go and eat British victuals, draw British pay, an' then if it's in ye, ma mon, go ashore and fight for the old Dutchman in Pretoria, ye spawn of a Hielan' border raiding, cattle-liftin', night robber."

"I'll fecht as ma conscience directs me, an' no be beholden tae you for advice regairdin' ma soul, sir," replied McGlusky, with dignity, as he moved with stately solemnity towards the door of the cabin, where he paused for a second or two with one foot on the doorsill and the other in the alleyway. "As for the remarks ye hae made concernin' ma forbears, I'd hae ye ken that if they were border raiders in the auld days, they put nae siller in their pouches by sellin' their ain folk tae the English, as yer ain did, Maister Jimmy McDargill, as the records of the bluidy Duke of Cumberland will prove up tae the hilt, Maister McDargill; and what's mair, sir, though I'm tongue-tied an' hand-bound towards ye on board this vessel, if ye care tae doot ma words to ma face, when we stand equal, mon tae mon, I'll be fu' o' joy tae gie ye ample opportunity as soon as we reach Cape Town an' I get ma discharge."

What the chief's reply to this eloquent appeal might have been no man knoweth, for the "third," who had not an atom of poetry in his composition, picked up a heavy sea-boot by the ears, and twirling it deftly round his head, brought the solid heel with a crash on the skull of McGlusky, causing that veteran disputant to measure his

length in the alleyway. It was a full week before McGlusky got rid of the singing noise in his ear caused by the impact of head and heel, and he always evinced what was for him a very high degree of respect for the "third."

"He has nae gift o' argyment," McGlusky was wont to remark, "and he's the dirtiest kind of fechter I've met in all ma wanderings, but he has a gift o' 'gettin' there,' that I'll no gainsay." And it was typical of the man that when one day a Kanaka sailor drew a knife on the "third" it was McGlusky who sent the dusky varlet into the scuppers with a blow of his fist that broke three ribs.

"You're a queer devil, Mac," said the "third." "I thought you owed me one for that bit of boot I gave you early in the voyage?"

"An' ye were no far wrang in yer reckonin', sir," replied "Mac." "I dae owe ye ane for that bit o' boot heel, an' maybe I'll be payin' the debt ane o' they fine days, but it goes against ma conscience tae see a mon drawin' a knife on his officer."

In due season the ship reached Cape Town and McGlusky at once took the train for Pretoria. When he arrived there he began making inquiries for the President, Paul Kruger, and after some slight bother managed to find out where the celebrated Boer lived. Having made this discovery, he armed himself with a great wooden pipe which he had made himself, and of which he was immensely proud, partly because it was his own handiwork, and partly because it would hold the best part of an ounce of tobacco when properly filled. Very few people ever offered that Scot-Australian the loan of their tobacco pouch the second time. Having equipped himself to his own satisfaction, he set out in the early dawn to hunt up his man, and sure enough he found the grim-faced old hunter-statesman sitting upon his

verandah in front of his unpretentious cottage, with a nigger servant at his elbow holding a cup of coffee which was guiltless of milk or sugar. On a stool adjacent to his other elbow a great, worn, soiled Bible, bound in roughly-tanned leather, rested. McGlusky took one fist from the pocket of his coarse sailor jacket, and, stepping coolly off the path on to the verandah saluted the Boer President.

Oom Paul nodded in reply to the greeting, nodded again towards a stool, then nodded to the nigger to get more coffee for the self-invited guest, and went on smoking and meditating with his chin upon his chest.

McGlusky remarked by way of breaking the ice, that it was a "gran' mornin' for a releegious mon to look into his own soul an' search oot the unclean spots."

Oom Paul did not answer. He only raised his eyes under his bony brows, as a bloodhound does when roused by a passing footstep, and looked hard at McGlusky.

The nigger brought the coffee. The Scot-Australian threw it down his throat, wiped his mouth upon the back of his right-hand coat-sleeve, and looked longingly towards Oom Paul's tobacco-jar.

The President saw the glance and pushed the jar towards the visitor. "Mac" pulled forth his pipe and filled it, causing a mighty shrinkage in the contents of the Boer's jar. The Leader of the Transvaal watched the stranger light up and begin puffing a great cloud of smoke from between his hairy lips. Then he motioned the nigger to shift the jar to a shelf out of reach of the human furnace that had suddenly arisen in his path, and a great silence fell upon the pair.

Each man sat rigidly still, sending clouds of smoke around the adjacent space, and looking solemnly at each other. So for a full half-hour they remained. Then Oom Paul laid down his pipe, uncovered his head, placing his

old, rusty silk hat carefully upon his knee, and took up his Bible reverently.

McGlusky did the same as far as his hat and pipe were concerned, and then, folding his hands like a child about to pray, he threw his head forward, and prepared to listen to the man whom he was half-inclined to look upon as a modern Messiah.

Oom Paul Kruger opened the good book reverently, found the passage he sought, and read aloud in the Taal. His voice was like the moaning of the sea in the ears of McGlusky, so strong was it, so deep, so hoarse, and yet so strangely vibrant. As he read, the Scot-Australian nodded his head in regular reverent cadences, though he did not understand a word he heard. He looked upon the coarse, hard, savagely strong face of the Dutch African, and he felt that he was in the presence of one of those men who believe in the power of an all-ordaining Providence above and beyond all things else on earth or in heaven.

When Oom Paul had finished reading he dropped simply upon his knees and prayed; and though McGlusky did not know in the least what the prayer was about, he dropped in a fervent "Amen" wherever he thought one would fit; and punctuated a few pauses with a shout of "Hallelujah!" When the prayer ceased, the President rose and replaced his hat upon his head, took up his pipe, and made as if to leave the verandah.

McGlusky put on his hat, picked up his pipe, and then held out his hand. The President took it and gave it a grip that left it almost as flat as a saddle flap, but McGlusky did not wince. He nodded stolidly as if it had been the sort of handshake he had been used to all his life before breakfast. Then he moved once more towards the tobacco-jar. A twinkle of amusement lit up the cold eyes of the Boer President. He looked from the cavernous

pipe to his beloved tobacco, reached out his hand, caught McGlusky by the collar of his coat, and apparently without effort lifted him clean off his feet and deposited him gently upon the side-walk. Then, tucking his tobacco-jar under his arm, he moved through the house door and was lost to view.

McGlusky looked after the vanishing figure in amazement. At last he, too, turned and moved off, muttering to himself, "Weel, weel, if that is nae a mon and a mon's son I hae never met ane. I dinna ken much about his releegious conveections, but if he draws the sword tae purge the warld o' its wickedness, I'm thinkin' he'll be a guid mon tae follow, an' I'm no sae sure there'll no be siller in it as much as grace. He's a carefu' body. Ane can tell that by the grip he keepit on his bit tobacco caddy."

* * * * *

During the day that followed, "Mac" ferreted round Pretoria and found a countryman who was in business as a builder and mender of wagons. This caused him considerable joy, especially as his compatriot was badly in need of skilled help. He promptly fixed up a job for himself, and set to work. Next to an argument on sacred topics, McGlusky loved work—good, hard, honest work. He never started the week with his eyes fixed upon pay-day, but threw every ounce of body and brain into his toil, which made him invaluable to his employers. The man who engaged him soon saw that he had secured a prize. He also saw that "Mac" was a man who would have to be humoured in regard to his conscientious scruples. After the day's work was over, "Mac" and his employer had a "crack" concerning Oom Paul Kruger and the ways of the country, the gist of which was that the Scot-Australian was advised if he wanted to do well in South Africa he must learn to talk the Taal and learn to ride and use a rifle. To which he had replied that con-

cerning the Taal he knew nothing, but would give all his spare time to the mastery of its mysteries ; but in regard to the handling of a horse or a rifle, he would bow to no man, Dutch or British, in South Africa.

"Ye see," he said, "ma releegious opeenions were always gettin' me intae trouble in the big Australian cities, so I took tae travellin' in ma youth frae ane back-block township to anither, followin' ma handicraft when work was plentiful, an' daein' anything else when it wasna. I maistly traivelled on horseback wi' a' ma belongin's on a packhorse, an' a verra pleasant an' independent life it was. Sometimes I was employed as smith an' wheelwright on a station, an' I generally added the duties o' carpenter an' painter tae the rest before I was there long. Sometimes, when I had done a' there was tae dae in that line, I just took a turn at roundin' up horses an' cattle, brandin' an' breakin' the animals. That taught me tae ride verra weel, for some of the Australian horses are deevils, an' when I took haud o' a horse I either tamed him or killed him. As to the rifle shootin', I learnt that when getting a living as a scalp-hunter among the kangaroos, an' I can tell ye that if a person can mak' sure o' hitting a blue kangaroo squatting among grey saltbush at eight hundred yards, he can shoot weel enough tae satisfy maist fechtin' men in this warld. It's nae use trying to mak' a livin' as a kangaroo hunter unless ye are sure, for the pay is too poor tae allow for waste o' ammunition. I've nae cause tae grumble at the pay. I did exceedin' weel at it mysel', but it was awfu' lonely work. It was like huntin' grey shadows through ghost-land."

"Well, then, McGlusky," said the employer, "if ye can shoot an' ride, I know ye can work an' smoke, and ken yer Bible pretty well. A' ye hae tae dae tae succeed here is tae learn tae talk and read the Taal. Gin ye can dae that, ma mon, ye'll be a' richt here. It's no a bad

country for a mon who kens hoo tae mind his ain business. I've lived under worse rule in my time in mair than ane country."

So McGlusky bent to his toil. He worked hard all day, and at night he studied the Taal. As soon as he got a smattering of the language, he went to lodge with a poor Boer family where no English was spoken. The Kaffir labourer in his workshop spoke nothing but Dutch, so that with his indomitable energy, patience and natural shrewdness and adaptability, it was not long before the enterprising fellow could speak the dialect of the country fluently. He kept away from his own countrymen as much as possible, so that nothing should interfere with his progress, though he confessed to his employer that his tongue fairly ached for a "crack" in the language of his lifetime. But he would not give way to his desires, and in due season he could pick up his Bible and declaim with the best of them.

* * * * *

After that first meeting with the President of the Transvaal, he did not attempt to push himself upon the great Boer, but every morning a little after dawn he would walk, pipe in mouth, past the President's cottage, give the quiet, lonely figure on the verandah a seafaring man's salute, receive Paul Kruger's nod of recognition, and pass on.

One morning, some time after he had mastered the language, he saluted as usual. The President drew his pipe from his mouth, and beckoned to him to advance. McGlusky obeyed the signal, walked to the old statesman's side, and waited. Oom Paul waved him to a chair. He took it. Then the Boer ordered coffee and tobacco precisely as he had done on that first morning. When the pipes were empty the President opened the Bible and handed it to McGlusky, saying in the Taal, "Read to me

and expound what you read." McGlusky's spirits rose. He read slowly and sonorously for a couple of verses. Then pointing with his rough forefinger to emphasize his speech, he expounded the Word, wrestling mightily with the truths which have puzzled the ages. Sometimes the Boer agreed with the views of the Scot, and wagged his vast head approvingly. Sometimes he differed from the expounder, and then he broke in rudely, roaring out his objections like a lion roaring across a rivulet at a rival.

McGlusky, not one whit abashed, roared back at him. On the common ground of Biblical research, the descendant of Scottish Covenanters felt himself to be as good a man as the descendant of the ancient Dutch Reformed Church. At last the difference of opinion became so acute that Oom Paul snatched his beloved book from his visitor's hands and shook his great hairy fist in his face McGlusky rose, pushed back his chair, and took a pull at the buckle of his belt. If Oom Paul Kruger had been ten years younger, there would have been a royal battle. As it was, he smiled, tucked his tobacco-jar under one arm, his Bible under the other, and left his opponent glaring into space. McGlusky had to choose between being late for work or losing his breakfast that morning, and he chose the latter. Yes, he did not seem to mind fasting, for all the forenoon he kept chuckling, "Ma certie, but it was a gran' argyment, a gran' argyment. I'd nae hae missed it for a week's wage."

A little later McGlusky joined the Dopper Church, and the flock rejoiced. That was in the early days of his conversion; a little later many of them mingled other things with their blessings, for the militant spirit was still in the blood of McGlusky, and he was prone to emphasize his "argyments" with his cast-iron fists, and some of the burghers were just as stubborn and just as intolerant as he was. It was his ambition to become an "expounder"

from the pulpit, and when at last his dream was realized, he used to preach some of the most extraordinary sermons that ever fell upon human ears.

He had not long attained the blissful pinnacle mentioned above when the war-cloud that had hung over the land broke, and the bloody deluge began. Most of McGlusky's congregation rejoiced at the prospect of war, saying, "Now we shall escape from the mad Scotchman." But they were mistaken. McGlusky said he would not prove a wolf in sheep's clothing. He would not forsake his flock in their hour of danger, but would ride on commando with them. Then they sent Hans Van Kootzieke, a strapping young Dutch minister, to him to tell him that such things could not be; but McGlusky called the Pridikant by a name which it is not lawful that a man shall use to a man, and the Pridikant, who knew not McGlusky, slapped his face with his open palm. And it is on record that it was sixteen weeks from that date before the Pridikant could walk without the aid of two crutches and a nigger.

The Commandant of the commando to which the Pridikant belonged had McGlusky dragged into his presence. He was a hard, harsh man, who believed that there was but one God, and Oom Paul Kruger was His prophet. Again, he hated any other nationality but his own, deeming the Dutch to be God's chosen people, and moreover he loved not McGlusky because of an argument he had with him earlier in the year, an argument which had cost him three teeth and a broken collar-bone. So when McGlusky came before him for trial he heard the evidence against the accused with great patience. He allowed every scrap of damning testimony that could be raked up to be freely stated, but when McGlusky would have spoken in his own defence the Commandant bade him hold his peace. When he wished to call witnesses in his defence,

he was sternly requested to state on his oath whether he doubted the purity and single-mindedness of the "Court." Whereupon McGlusky's religous training forsook him. The blood of the ancient Covenanters froze in his veins, and the blood of the border raiders, of which he owned about an equal portion, woke to life, and he and his guards became mixed in a whirlwind of flying arms, legs and feet, as he battled his way towards the Commandant. It was a mighty fight. Burghers smote him, back, front and flank, and McGlusky, now yelling a verse from a Psalm, now the chorus of a bawdy song, faced fiercely round wherever the blows fell thickest. When at last he did reach the Commandant, he dealt him a right-handed upward blow under the chin which almost lifted him out of his top-boots. That cooled the rest of the burghers for a bit, and they drew off, leaving McGlusky standing on the throne of justice, a deal platform covered with a cheap carpet. Half his whiskers were in the hands of the enemy, a great gash extending from his right eye to his right ear, dripped blood. His left eye was magnificent in its surrounding circle of blue, black, red and yellow colours. His clothes were torn into strips, and hung from the upper portion of his body like the shredded sails around a wrecked barque, and more than one crimson streak marked his muscular chest and flanks, proving that, though he had been busy, the burghers had not been idle.

The Scot-Australian faced round upon his foes like a bull beneath the goads. His head was up, his shoulders squared, his eyes glinting battle. Then he began to chant at the top of his voice, "Sweeping through the gates of the new Jerusalem." Grasping the chair of justice in both hands, he whirled it round his head and charged for the door. The chair was an ungainly weapon, but it was an effective one, and McGlusky's track

was strewn with human blossoms. But the odds were too great; burghers grappled him on both sides. They hung on to his legs, wreathed their arms around his neck and waist like wolves tearing down a stag. They got him down at last, and bound his limbs with green hide thongs. Then the Commandant sat in judgment upon him, sentencing him to be whipped with sjamboks.

So McGlusky was trailed forth and fastened to a wagon-wheel. Then they whom he had smitten smote him, until from the hair upon his neck to the band upon his trousers not an atom of cuticle remained. "Mac" did not wail or moan under that awful flaying. He simply "bit on the bullet" and did a lot of thinking. They untied him at last and bundled him into a cattle-truck with a lot of other folks, and amid jeers and laughter the Australian departed from Pretoria. Soon after he arrived in British territory, he saw some soldiers about to hoist a Union Jack. He pushed through them, caught the folds of the flag in his hands, and kissed the bunting passionately. The soldiers laughed, but when McGlusky bared his back and showed the awful scars, not half healed, which the sjamboks had made, they understood and did not laugh again.

"Mac" had lost a lot of his religious views, and it is doubtful if at that period he looked with love or reverence upon Oom Paul Kruger. He did not join the army, but he got possession of a rifle and a horse. No one ever knew exactly how those requisites for a fighting man got into his possession, but a Boer farmer in that locality used to tell, in an awesome whisper, how a wild man, whose head seemed all hair and whiskers, strode into his house, lifted his rifle and bandolier from the wall, then began to dance and sing. After which he had clubbed two niggers who grinned at him, and invited the farmer himself "tae coom outside and be lickit." The farmer said he had climbed

into the hayloft until the stranger left, and made no resistance even when he saw that the unknown had saddled his best riding hack. The Boer mentioned that from the careless manner in which his visitor handled the rifle he was afraid it might go off and injure somebody. Of course, it might not have been McGlusky who was referred to by the farmer, but the general inference pointed that way. No one on the British side seemed to want the wild-looking creature with the sombre fire in his grey eyes, but several times he came near being shot in mistake for a burgher. That did not worry him.

He made his way across the Free State fighting for his own hand, feeding himself as he went. Like a blood-hound seeking a lost scent, he ranged the whole country, seeking the man who had ordered his degradation and the men who had carried it into effect. He never boasted of what he would do when he did come across them, never made any blood-curdling vows. All he would say was that he had "an argyment" to settle with them.

One day at Senekal he was looking through a draft of prisoners that had been taken by Driscoll, and noticed a man who had been present when he was sjamboked in Pretoria. The deep, undying fire in his eyes grew deeper. He sat down by the prisoner and supplied him with tobacco. He pushed his flask of "dop" on the burgher, and made his heart merry, so that he talked, and McGlusky gleaned that the commando he sought was in the vicinity.

Two days later he rode out of camp and made his way to a farmhouse about six miles from Senekal. He found two vrous and a boy of about a dozen years in possession. The women scowled at him, asking him in the Taal what he wanted. McGlusky replied in broad Scotch, asking them for food and shelter. The women pretended they did not understand, though McGlusky knew they did

by the significant glances they exchanged. He made signs to them intimating that he was tired and hungry. Then, pointing to his horse, he limped about the room, conveying to the three watchers that the animal was lame. He had his own reasons for not letting the women know that he understood the Taal. After a little of this by-play, the boy intimated that he could talk a little English. The horse was stabled. McGlusky was fed, and then conducted into a bedroom to sleep, not, however, until the precocious boy had, as he considered, artfully elicited from him that he was an officer in the Imperial Yeomanry, who had lost his way travelling from Harrismith to Senekal with dispatches for General Rundle.

When McGlusky got into his bedroom he carefully bolted the door, threw himself on the bed, and smoked for a little while. Then he began to breathe heavily like a tired man sleeping, but all the time kept one half-closed eye upon the window. Nor did he have long to wait for the fruit of his scheming. One of the women came to the window with a watering-can and methodically moistened a couple of sad-looking geraniums that drooped in the sun. McGlusky slept like a cherub until her shadow left the window. Then he crept carefully off the bed and looked out just in time to see the boy galloping away on a useful-looking pony. He filled and smoked another pipe to give the young conspirator time to get away from the farm. Then he marched out into the kitchen, and spoke to the two vrous in the Taal, to their intense dismay and disgust. "Where has the boy gone?" he asked. They vowed that the boy was only out milking the cows, and offered to run and bring him in. McGlusky declined the offer. Going to the outer doors he locked them. Then, separating the women, he locked them carefully in separate rooms, taking care that the rooms chosen had no

windows facing outside. Then, after examining his rifle, he sat down to wait. An hour passed, then another, and the watcher was growing impatient when, looking through the kitchen window, he saw four burghers and the boy riding towards the house. His blood turned to wine when he recognized his ancient enemy, the Commandant of the Pretoria commando, and two of the burghers who had flogged him. He let them ride up to the very door of the farm and rein up their horses. Then he thrust the upper part of his body out of the window and covered the burghers with his rifle. The astounded veldtsmen sat staring at him like fools. One of them laughed sillily, for that grim picture framed in the window had scared the senses out of him.

"Drop your rifles, or I fire." The rifles clattered to the ground. "Throw up your hands above your heads, or I'll send lead into you."

Up went the four pairs of hands.

"Boy," continued the hard, rasping voice, "dae ye want a bullet in yer lug?"

The boy replied that he did not.

"Then get off yer pony and bring those four rifles tae me."

The boy did as he was ordered.

"Now," continued McGlusky, "go an' knee-halt those four horses an' yer own pony."

He spoke to the boy, but he never once took his eyes from the four figures in the saddle, and they never took their eyes off his forefinger, which played about the trigger of his rifle. The boy knee-halted the horses. Then McGlusky vaulted through the window and grinned in triumph.

"Ye're verra welcome, gentlemen," he said, with a laugh that was more like a snarl of a mastiff. "I dinna think ye ken hoo welcome ye are. I hae hunted half

ower Africa to meet ye. Dismount noo, ane at a time, an' remember, the mon who makes a mistake gettin' doon frae the saddle will never get into ane again."

The man on the far side dismounted first. McGlusky pointed the rifle at his head.

"Lie down on yer face an' put yer hands behind ye," he commanded. The burgher obeyed as if that had been a form of gymnastics he had been used to all his life.

"Tie his hands, an' see ye mak' a guid job o' it," was the next order to the boy; and the boy lost no time, for there was something in the face of the stranger that he had never seen in a human face before.

One by one the three men and the Commandant were trussed up like fowls. Then McGlusky dragged them to their feet and stood them with their backs to the wall. Then he stripped off his shirt, and turning his seamed and livid back so that their eyes could rest upon the wounds they had made, he chuckled and chortled like a thing demented.

"Dae ye ken aboot this?" he said to the burgher whose face was strange to him.

The man replied that he did not.

"It's weel for ye that ye dinna. I hae nae quarrel wi' ye, mon, an' when I leave here ye can go tae the de'il for onything I care; but these three devils ken aboot it, an' they hae tae answer for it."

"Boy," he said, "go tae my saddle an' bring me the sjambok ye will find hangin' on it."

When the Commandant saw the terrible rhinoceros hide whip in McGlusky's hand his nerve failed him. "It's against the rules of the British Army to flog prisoners," he shouted.

"I ken that as well as yersel', ma braw mon," was the placid reply. "An' that is one reason why I never joined

the British Army. It's no the business o' the British Army tae middle wi' private quarrels either, ma mon, an' this is just a wee bit o' private argyment between mysel' an' ye three Dutchmen. Ye had the best o' the argyment in Pretoria, but I'm no thinking ye'll find it turn oot that way this time."

Taking the Commandant by the neck, he dragged him towards a wagon and tied him to a wheel. Then he went back for the other two fellows, and tied them to the wagon. The other prisoner he left as he was, for he bore him no malice. Then he bared his muscular right arm, and took up the sjambok.

"Noo," he said, "dae ye ken hoo many lashes ye gied me in Pretoria?"

The Commandant did not answer.

"Perhaps ye didna trouble tae coont them. I'm thinkin' ye'll coont them this time. But, so's ye can remind me if I go over the number, I'll tell ye hoo many ye gied me, an' hoo many I'm goin' to gie ye. A hundred an' thirteen ye gied me. If ye had made it a hunner an' twenty, ye wad hae killed me, an' ye wad hae escaped the reckonin' o' this day. Noo count," and the sjambok rose and fell.

As McGlusky rode campwards in the starlight, he muttered in the depths of his whiskers, "It was a dirty argyment frae beginning tae en', but I'm thinkin' the last word was wi' me." And in all human probability it was, for he had not left many words in the Commandant.

CHAPTER II

HE FIGHTS DRISCOLL AND HOLDS OFF THE BOERS

McGLUSKY wasted no words in ceremonial farewell when he regained the British lines after the flogging he had given the Boer Commandant. He had never formally joined the army, having just attached himself as a sort of scout and freelance, so that now that it suited him to clear out he simply got hold of his packhorse, and with the guiding leash in one hand, his bridle-rein in the other, with his rifle over his shoulder, he rode off. And as he rode over the grassy veldt he let his soul loose in song. It was the first time he had sung since that morning when the Dutchmen had tied him to the wagon-wheel in Pretoria and smirched his manhood with a sjambok. Out of the tangled depths of his whiskers rolled his big, rough voice in a note of exultation—

Christian, dost thou see them,
On the holy ground,
How the troops of Midian
Prowl and prowl around?
Christian, up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss;
Smite them, smite them, smite them,
For the sake of Holy Cross.

Dan Driscoll, the scout, who was talking to one of his lieutenants, saw the singer ambling past his camp, and grinned sympathetically.

"I wonder what's up with McGlusky this morning, and where he is going to?" remarked the lieutenant.

"I'm not good at conundrums," was the Irish soldier's reply, "but judging by the noise the Scot is making and the strain of religion in his war-whoop, I expect he's been getting even with his enemies."

"Hello! McGlusky, you're merry this morning."

McGlusky pulled up his horse and glared back aggressively.

"For why should I na be merry? I didna ken the whole veldt belonged to ye, Maister O'Driscoll."

"O'Driscoll be d——d! Driscoll is my name, an' no one knows it betther than yourself, yer cantankerous Bible-punchin' Scotch crank," was the hot-lipped answer.

Possibly every one in the British Army except McGlusky knew that no one could make a surer cut to a quarrel than by tacking the "O" on to the scout's name. No one knew why, but every one knew it was so.

"Ye are verra free wi' yer tongue the morn, ma mon! Was it just for the sake o' insultin' a better mon than yersel' that ye interrupted me in ma singin'?"

"Singin'!" retorted Driscoll. "Do you call the unholy row ye were makin' singin'?" He threw a large supply of contempt into the question.

McGlusky leant as far as possible out of the saddle, a grim twinkle dawning in the corner of each eye.

"Singin' is what I called it, mon, and singin' it was, a joyful noise before the Lord, an' knowin' ye yersel', Mr. Driscoll, wi' the 'O' or without the 'O,' whichever pleases ye maist, let me say ye couldna do as weel, for I've heerd ye try, mon. Ma certie, if I couldna sing better than yersel' I'd no insult the Lord wi' a song, godly or ungodly."

"I wisht I was a trooper agin for tin minits, I'd punch a little dacency into you. Ye're the dirtiest tem-

pered beast I've ever met, but" (with a scornful shrug of the shoulders) "I suppose it's the way you Australian Protestants are bred."

The twinkle in McGlusky's eyes became a blaze.

"Dinna fash yersel' aboot the army, mon; A'm na a soldier masel', dinna greet about my releegion, ye unsaved Roman, an' if so be ye're thinkin' of fechtin', why, there's a gran' bit o' grass land just beyont the kopje, an' A'm gaen theer to off-saddle for an hoor."

"You're not a soldier? Thank the saints! Go on and wait for me beyant the kopje; that's outside the lines—ye won't have to wait an hour."

As the Scot-Australian rode off he muttered, "The blessed Roman, the unregenerate child o' scarlet sin, I'll show him hoo we are bred in Australia, I will, my certie, I will." Then once more his whiskers parted, and song bubbled forth—

> Christian, up and smite 'em,
> Counting gain but loss;
> Smite 'em, smite 'em, smite 'em,
> For the sake of Holy Cross.

When he rounded the kopje he dropped out of the saddle, knee-halted his horses, laid his carbine down, and pulling out his pipe began to smoke with the placidity of a child.

He had only just got his pipe nicely going, when the scout, riding at a hand gallop, swung his grey stallion round the rocky point.

"A fine specimen o' a man, a verra great pity he's a Roman. A'll hae salt wi' ma meat this time, A'm thinkin'," was McGlusky's mental comment.

Driscoll steadied his stallion with a twist of his forearm, and leapt lightly, for so big a man, to the grass. In twenty seconds he had knee-halted his horse, then

turning, he walked to a nice level patch of ground, tossed his khaki tunic and hat behind him, and began rolling up his sleeves.

McGlusky, who had been riding in his shirt sleeves, simply took off his old felt hat, turned the front rim downwards and inwards so that it should not flap in his eyes during the fight and jammed it on his head again. So they faced each other. Driscoll, with his black, curly hair clipped close to his grandly-shaped head, his dark Irish face agleam with Celtic passion, his clean-shaven jaws and great determined chin looking like the rock of the kopjes. McGlusky, all hair, eyebrows, and religious enthusiasm. Both stood well over six feet, both knew the business in front of them.

"I dinna care ta shake hands wi' a chiel o' the scarlet," began McGlusky.

"Shake hands with the devil, you ungodly hair-oil advertisement! Put your hands up, I'm going to hit," was the Irishman's answer, and McGlusky, nothing loth, threw himself into a fighting attitude, and the "conversation" began.

There was no feinting or fooling, no ringcraft or finessing. For a moment they poised themselves, each with left foot well advanced, heads up, left arms out in a line with the left breast, right arms thrown easily across the body. Then with tiger-like force and speed Driscoll sent his left on to McGlusky's cheekbone, raising a lump that a Boer scout could almost have hidden behind. Before he could get away, however, the Scot-Australian smashed his right hand under the Irishman's heart with such force that the three horses left off feeding, and looked round to see where the sound came from.

There was a moment's pause, then the pair with one accord braced themselves for the battle, and hit like kicking mules, not clumsy, clawing, scrambling hits such as

foreigners indulge in, but hard, clean shoulder-hitting. Every blow was above the belt, every effort made, though fierce, was manly. Gradually they got closer and closer together, as is the way with big men when they mean business. McGlusky passed his left hand over Driscoll's right shoulder and embraced the back of his head with his palm, then he drove a half-arm punch into the Irishman's face that would have made a mark on the face of a mountain. The Irishman was not slow to follow those tactics, whipping his left arm round the Scot-Australian's neck he uppercut him with the right in the stomach with a force that would have taken green hide off a gun carriage. Then they wrestled for a moment until McGlusky, giving his man his hip, sent him flying amongst the horses.

Having accomplished this feat, he walked to an ant-hill and sat down. He had had far too much experience at that business not to know that the man he had selected to "convert" would give him a terrible lot more work before the hour of grace arrived, so he husbanded his strength like a wise man.

Driscoll sat up after a moment's respite. "Wait a minute," he said; "I'll just take me spurs off; I would have thrown you if they hadn't been in my way."

McGlusky nodded his head approvingly. "Ye air a fair fechter, na dirty grabbin', clawin' Dutchman; it's a pity ye air a holy Roman."

The Irishman would have smiled if his mouth had not felt as if it had been drawn together with a bootlace. Instead of doing so he got up, and McGlusky, nothing loth, faced him.

There was just time for one keen glance on both sides, then a rush, and they came together like a pair of young bulls in the springtime. They hit with half-arm chopping blows, blows that ripped and cut, then they reeled

apart, and sent in long-armed, jarring punches with the full weight of their athletic bodies behind them, until the wonder was that human flesh and blood could stand it.

Closing up once more, they fought knee to knee, sending in rib-bending blows that would have sickened a transport mule. Then they clinched and wrestled. Once Driscoll back-heeled his foe and almost had him down; once McGlusky, with a quick movement, had wound both arms round the Irishman's waist, and, lifting him clear of the ground, was about to throw him, when a jolt on the side of the chin half-dazed him, and he had been forced to loose his hold.

They fought up the side of the kopje for a few yards, then down on to the open again. They were both immensely strong, both remarkably active for big men, and both were in the prime of life and in the pink of condition, and each loved a battle with all his soul. Neither would have entered a prize ring for a kingdom; either would have fought for a tag off a shoelace.

The struggle had taken them some distance from the kopje towards a rather deep donga without either of them being aware of it, when a beautiful left-handed drive straight from the shoulder, landing on McGlusky's chin, sent him heels upwards over the edge of the watercourse.

As the Scot-Australian disappeared, the Irishman heaved a mighty sigh of relief.

"Thank the saints!" he chortled. "I hope it ain't more than a mile deep."

Then he sank on his hands and knees to try and recover his wind and strength. His wind came back to him in about a minute, and he crawled to the edge, and called:

"Are ye damaged, McGlusky?"

"A'm scratchit a wee bit, but A'm noo hurtit. It's

nice soft gravel at the bottom, ye ken. Dinna fash, A'll be wi' ye the noo," was the cheerful response.

So Driscoll stretched himself out on the grass to prepare himself for the reopening of the seance.

"Nice soft gravel!" he groaned. "I suppose if the beast had fallen on road metal, he would have called it a wee bit peebly, but no' so bad conseederin'.

"I'm considerin' I'll have to part with me religion or me life before I'm through with this hairy apostle; may the saints have me in their keeping during the next round."

A few moments later McGlusky scrambled out of the donga on the opposite side. He sat on the edge for a second or two and spoke to his opponent.

"I couldna get a footholt on that side, an' there was na bush nor rock to get ma fingers on to; it's na sa deep, but it's a de'il o' a width. I'll just tak' a wee bit run an' joomp it. Ye'll gie me grace to get a fair grippit o' the turf wi' ma feet before ye hit, mon? A canna be fechtin' and flyin' at the same time, ye ken that well enoo'."

Without waiting for a reply, he walked about a dozen paces, then charged down on the donga, and took the great gap in the red soil with a flying bound that would have done credit to a hunter in his stride.

Driscoll saw him land with nearly a yard of grass to the good; then instinctively he raised his eyes like a good sportsman, to measure the leap from take-off to landing.

The next moment he was up and racing towards the spot where he had left his carbine.

McGlusky saw him go, saw him rush for his gun, and a wave of contempt ran over the battered features and buried itself in his whiskers.

"Weel, weel," he ejaculated, "A thocht he was a man after ma own heart, an' he's no but a dirty fechter after

all. Ma certie, the Psalmist wasna far wrong, the heart o' a man is full o' black sin an' deceit."

"What are you mouthin' there for, you hairy pagan? Do you want to be potted, or taken prisoner? Come on, or you'll find lead scratches deeper than gravel," yelled Driscoll.

As he spoke, the scout dropped on his knee and quickly emptied his carbine at a commando of Boers that had entered the ravine a thousand yards higher up.

McGlusky wheeled, and saw what his late opponent was firing at.

"It's a fair waste o' lead at this distance; why dinna ye haud yer fire till we could mak' sure o' hittin' someone. Powther an' lead cost money, ye ken, even if it is Government money."

"Because I want to warn the scouts. Do you think I want the Boers to get hold of these kopjes? Curse your argyments; come on, or I'll leave you."

At that instant McGlusky's saddle hack slewed round and began biting viciously at its flank as though something had stung it. A moment later the brute dropped.

The Boers had got the range and were firing steadily.

"Get up behind me, man. My horse can do double duty for a mile, anyway."

"I'll na be disputin' the qualities of yer horse, Maister Driscoll, but I can get gran' cover in the rocks on the kopjes, an' I ha' a matter of twa hunner cartridges wi' me. I feel in ma bowels that the Lord ha' called me to dispute wi' these d——d Dutchmen. Besides, ma horse which they ha' killed was worth a matter o' twal poons. Is it na written, 'an eye for an eye'?"

"Oh, Satan seize you if you won't come. I must go and warn the camp. Will you come?"

"I ha' said already that it is written an eye for——"

But Driscoll, with a gesture of despair, drove his heels into his stallion's flanks, and rode to warn the camp.

McGlusky had picked up his carbine and bandolier during his disquisition on the Mosaic Law. He now climbed amongst some loose boulders on the kopje, lit his pipe, adjusted the sight of his carbine to eight hundred yards, and waited.

He saw his packhorse go down with a broken leg, and he commenced to do arithmetic. "That's seven poons ten," he snarled; "seven poons ten and twal poons make nineteen poons ten shillin's. I'm thinkin' there'll be trouble the noo for the first mon that comes within eight hunner yards. It's fule's wark wastin' good cartridges on chance shots. I'll pick twa men ridin' good horses; maybe if I get the riders first I may get their beasties afterwards. An eye for an eye is good law all the warld over—besides, it's Scriptur'."

So McGlusky smoked and waited whilst the Boer marksmen searched the kopjes with bullets, seeking to find his hiding-place.

He did not know whether the commando had come with the intention of attacking the British camp or whether they had simply blundered on the khaki lines. All he knew was that they were in the open, riding yards apart, as their way was, whilst he was snug behind a rock with a weapon in his hands which he knew he could rely upon.

The absurdity of his attitude did not strike him at all. Samson had gone out to war armed only with the jaw-bone of an ass, and had slain his thousands. David the shepherd-boy, with a rude sling and a few pebbles, had easily vanquished the champion of Philistia arrayed in all his war panoply.

Those things were very near to McGlusky, and he felt that what Samson had done with a jaw-bone and David

had accomplished with a sling, he could do with a dandy Mauser carbine sighted up to eleven hundred yards.

The Boers were in no hurry to advance; the very silence chilled them. Suspicious as Red Indians they feared an ambush. They knew the country behind them was open; they did not know what lay in front, and did not care to risk the unknown. For all they knew, the kopjes might hold a thousand men, in which case they were certain of a slating if they attacked.

On the other hand, there was no hurry; if they did not fight that day they could do so on a later occasion.

At last the advance guard came within eight hundred yards. One fellow, riding a big black horse, took McGlusky's eye. He laid down his pipe, shifted a loose pebble from under his left elbow, picked a spot near the right lung, sighted carefully, and fired.

Then, shading his eyes with his hand, he whispered in his whiskers:

"A'm no thinkin' that cairtridge was waistit."

It was not. The Boer sprawled forward on his horse's neck, clutched at the mane, hung on for a second, and then tumbled to earth, his horse galloping wildly forward, for the burgher's spur had cut deep when the wounded man felt the shock of the bullet.

Wheeling like startled deer, the burghers rode in all directions, each man looking to himself; but the panic only lasted a moment.

Then the veldtsmen dropped out of their saddles and raked the kopje with rifle fire. Lying behind ant-hills they made the air hum with flying lead, until McGlusky was glad to lower his head and lie close.

"Ma certie," he chortled, as a bullet splashed to fragments, an inch from his ear. "Ma certie, but a

wee bit rock is no so bad aboot the head o' a mon at a time like the preesent. A'm na sa sure what the Psalmist would ha' said in a seemilar preedicament. The Scriptur's a gran' buk, but it wants revisin' in regard to modern war. Not that A'm complainin', ye ken," he said, speaking to his carbine, and stroking it caressingly; " but the warld badly wants reegeneratin', an' the gude buk wants re-writin' so's to be up to date, an' A'm na sa sure A'll not re-write it mysel' when I ha' a fit o' saving grace upon ma."

At that juncture he lifted his eyes above his own particular rock, and what he saw sent all the religion out of him and made the fighting blood of his border-thieving ancestors dance madly through his veins, hot and strong, as though the fierce Australian suns had boiled it in the brewing.

Thirty or forty Boers lying almost full length on their horses's backs, carrying their carbines in one hand, their bridle reins in the other, were charging the kopjes.

McGlusky burst into song, not a hymn or a psalm this time, but a wild indecent thing that had shocked the shearing-sheds of New South Wales and Queensland, when McGlusky was full of old rum.

And as he sang he shot, touching the trigger with a lightning touch, tossing back the breech bolt, jamming it home again, sweeping the barrel with the glance of a hawk, sending lead into the lines of the foe.

Little he cared then whether they saw him or not. It was a fight, and for the time being McGlusky's fighting soul had possession of him. He raised himself upon his knees, sprawled with his left arm well out in front of him, resting on the rock he had been hiding behind, his whiskers resting on his bare left arm, his carbine barrel reposing firmly in the hollow of his left hand. In that position, at any reasonable distance, McGlusky

could have put a bullet into the eye of a hare. He was not likely to miss the head of a man.

Nearly eight hundred yards the Boers had to ride over a lawn-like space; man after man went down. Some slid sideways and lay still, some pitched forward clutching the reins wildly and bringing their horses to grass with the shock of the jerk. Others sprang high up in the stirrups and pitched over the croup; McGlusky, making his own tune as he sang, polluted the air with his evil song, and shot the straighter the nearer the danger came to him. Then round the corner of the kopje where Driscoll the scout had ridden with his warning message, flashed a great grey stallion, foam-lathered and smoking, and at his heels a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, supported by Driscoll's scouts. In eight seconds the rifles were spitting and the guns were talking death. The Boers were riding for dear life, whilst on a projecting rock stood the wild-whiskered figure of McGlusky. His shearing-shed song was forgotten. A holy joy mingled with the bruises on his face as he chanted loud and high:

> Christian, up and smite 'em,
> Counting gain but loss;
> Smite 'em, smite 'em, smite 'em,
> For the sake of Holy Cross.

That evening McGlusky walked to the General's tent, and said:

"Sir, I'll be veera much obleeged to ye if ye'll gie me an order for nineteen pounds ten shillin', or else an order for twa horses leffit by the Boers, a big black gelding an' a piebald mare."

When the General told him he could take two pairs of horses if he wanted them, he replied with dignity:

"Na, na, sir, A'll simply ha' what is ma just due an'

na mair. An' noo, sir, A'm goin' into Basutoland to convert the heathen." Whereupon the General, who was not a pious man, threw up his hands, and cried, "God help the heathen!"

CHAPTER III

HOW McGLUSKY WENT TO BASUTOLAND

WHEN McGlusky heard the British General's prayer, "God help the heathen," he was a much scandalized man. "For why should ye be after speerin' into the will o' God, General?" he asked, in an aggrieved tone. "Is it na written 'Go ye forth into all the warld an' praach the Gospel?' It's all verra weel for a fechtin' mon like yersel', sir, to think o' naething but war, an' rumours o' war, but A'm no a fechter, A'm a mon o' peace, an' ha' no hankerin' after the ways o' bluidy men."

The General looked round upon his staff and saw that every man was grinning gloriously. The idea of that hairy savage, who seemed half blood and bruises, half fencing wire, as an apostle of peace was too much for their nerves, so they chuckled joyfully, and French, catching the infection, laughed until his ribs rattled.

McGlusky grew hot.

"A'm no a circus, do ye ken. A'm a mon wi' a mission. Gideon was a man wi' a mission, an', ma certie, he did more wi' a farmer's flail than most men would ha' done wi' a gun. Maybe, General, some o' the gentlemen wi' ye may doot ma abeelity ta keep the flag o' true reeleegion flying among the heathen. Maybe, because A'm not so spick an' span in ma dress, an'

dinna wear a wee bit fule glass in ma eye, A'm na fit to let light into the darkness o' the unsaved sons o' Ham. Maybe, sir, some o' your gentlemen think A'm a weakling, a bit o' grass to be blawed here an' theer by the winds o' advarsity. If so, sir——"

Here McGlusky paused and commenced to roll his tattered shirt sleeves up above the muscles of his long, lean right arm, whilst his hair and whiskers bristled like the hair on the hide of a he-goat about to charge.

"You need not disarrange your wardrobe, McGlusky; no one doubts your ability to keep the flag flying," answered the General, good-temperedly. "Tell me how you are going to Christianize the Basutos; do you talk their language?"

"Not as weel as A would like, sir, but ye ken A ha' a gift o' tongues. In ma youth I learned to talk Welsh, an' a mon who can talk that tongue can haud a argyment wi' the de'il himsel' in his own language, an' na ha' any the worst o' it on the score o' fearsome adjeectives. It's a gran' language, the Welsh, sir; when I was drivin' cattle in Australia an' na blasphemy on the part o' ma men would make the stubborn beasties face a dust-storm, ane verse from a Welsh hymn would send 'em chargin' through sun an' sand, an' na mon could stop them. A dinna wonder the Welsh are a trooblesome, quarrelsome set o' folk; men wi' such a language as that in their mooths couldna help fechtin' unless they were born cooards, an' the Welsh are na that."

"I'm afraid you are prejudiced, McGlusky," said French, with a smile. "I've heard a few very pretty Welsh love songs in my time."

"I dinna doot ye, General, I dinna doot ye; but it's a matter o' taste. Once in ma youth I went coortin' a squatter's daughter who had a great ear for

melody. There was another callant coortin' the lass at the same time, an' ane nicht he sat outside her window and sang some fule Italian song to her. I didna like to be beat, for I was young, ye ken, so I gaed along the next nicht an' sat on the stockyard fence and sang a Welsh patriotic song to her, which went like this," and McGlusky chirruped—

Os treis-iodd y gel'yn fy ngwlad dan ei droed,
Mae hen-iath y Cym-ry mor fyw ag er-ioed;
Ni luddiwyd yr a-wen gan erch-yll law brad,
Na thel-yn ber-sein-iol fy ngwlad.

"That's a sweet thing; it ought to have 'brought' the girl if anything would, McGlusky," sniggered a colonel of artillery.

"It didna then," snapped the Scot-Australian, "but it brought a tribe of blacks from the banks o' the River Murray, half a mile awa'. They told me they thought it was the battle song o' a hostile tribe, an' I had to lay three o' their warriors oot wi' a axe handle before they would think different."

"And the girl—what did she say, McGlusky?" asked the artillery colonel, sweetly.

"Dinna fash yersel' aboot the lassie. I'd ha' ye know, Colonel, that there are some things a lassie says in her tantrums which wise men do weel to forget—an'" (with a sigh) "this is ane o' them. An' noo, General, wi' yer leave I'll just pack up ma wee bit traps an' gang awa' to attend to the vineyard wheer the speerit ha' ca'ed me, for it's ma heritage; it's a howlin' wilderness the noo, a waefu' place where the heathen sit in darkness, but A wull pluck out the nettle an' the theestle an' dig between the vines an' water the groon wi' ma sweat, like a good husbandman, until when ma time cooms the Maister may gather me in an' say, 'Weel

done, McGlusky, ye ha' fou't a good fight; sit doon the noo wi' Daauid, an' Samson, an' Gideon, an' Joshua, an' a' the rest who struck Sautan an' his armies in the warld below.'"

"If you are going to convert the fighting Basutos with the strong hand, McGlusky, I'll wish you good-bye," sniggered the artillery colonel, "for I think you are likely to go to Gideon and Samson before the year is much older. If the Boers happen to rub me out and I meet you up above in such distinguished company, I hope you won't be too proud to know a common earth-worm like myself."

McGlusky glared at the speaker, for he liked not levity on such a topic.

"If we meet in the place ye speak aboot so irreleegiously, Colonel," he snarled, "it's ma firm opeenion ye'll be doin' verra little else except bletherin' for a cup of cauld watter; ye'll need na intreeductions fra' me. The life ye ha' led in Lunnon ha' made ye weel kent by the folk in charge o' the deemeenions where ye will be goin' ta unless ye repent before ye are ca'ed awa'." With this indignant protest, the apostle of peace marched off, and that camp knew him no more.

His journey towards the border of Basutoland was almost uneventful. He rode easily during the day and camped wherever the night found him. When the sun went down he just tossed his saddle off his back, took the pack from his transport horse, knee-halted the pair of them, gathered a little dry ox manure, and made his camp-fire. When his "billy" was boiled he made a cup of tea, for he was faithful to the favourite beverage of the Australian bush, and then he sat around in lonely grandeur, and ate his biscuit and biltong, and washed it down with tea guileless of milk or sugar, and strong enough to have tanned a green horsehide into

leather. After supper he sat and calmly cut wedges of strong black tobacco, and pounded the same between his palms until he had enough to last him through the night. When this was done it was his custom to fill his gigantic pipe, roll himself in his blankets, place his carefully loaded carbine adjacent to his hand, roll over on his stomach, and holding his Bible so that the light from his camp-fire fell upon the page, read until he was tired from the Old Testament.

His favourite female character was Ruth. He loved to picture himself in the place of Boaz, ordering his farm hands to drop sheaves so that the fair gleaner might find a good return for her labour without much exertion. He often confided to the glowing embers of his camp-fire the information that if he had been in the sandals of Boaz, Ruth would have found a husband much earlier than she did. For Jacob, the faithful, long-suffering lover, he had naught but contempt. "A puir, feckless weakling, who didna ken hoo ta mak' love as a mon should," was his verdict. When he read the passage which tells how "Jacob kissed Rachel the first time they met, then lifted up his voice and wept," McGlusky used to take the surrounding veldt into his confidence and declare Jacob was a "puir body; for why should the mon sit doon an' greet an' tear his claes; an' why," when Laban, the hard-hearted father of the damsel, refused to allow him to marry until he had served seven long years in bondage for the maid, "did he no rise up like a mon, gird a sword upon his thigh, throw his leg over a saddle, take the maid in front of him, ride hot foot for the border." So communing with his own soul, he would let the shadows creep in upon him, and sleep take charge of his turbulent spirit.

At last the hills of Basutoland drew near, and he began

to count his pilgrimage at an end. He struck the River Caledon, which, at that season of the year, was a frothing yellow torrent, surging along between steep banks. It was certain death to man and horse to attempt to cross anywhere except at well-known fords, and the Scot-Australian was in no particular hurry to lay down life's burden. Yet he had to cross the Caledon, because it was the boundary between the Orange Free state and native territory. So, swinging his horses' heads round, he followed the river on its downward course. He knew that the fords would be well guarded. On the Free State side white troops, either Boers or Britons, would be in possession; on the opposite side the Basuto warriors, well mounted, well armed with rifle and assegai. The black guards had no terrors for him, they belonged to the tribe he had made up his mind to convert to a creed of his own, the Creed of Gideon, or something very like it. If the British were in possession of the ford on the Free State bank all would be well, but if the Dutchmen held it, McGlusky foresaw trouble. Now and again he murmured plaintively his favourite hymn:

> Christian, up and smite 'em,
> Counting gain but loss;
> Smite 'em, smite 'em, smite 'em,
> For the sake of Holy Cross.

He never dreamt of turning aside from his purpose nor even of postponing it. Only once did he halt, and then he read a chapter from Isaiah, cleaned his rifle very carefully, and filled the magazine, minutely examining each cartridge before he slipped it with deft fingers into its resting-place, murmuring the while, "A'm a mon o' peace, praise God, an' na bluidy mon o' war seekin' glory at the cannon's mouth; but an

eye for an eye is good law an' good Scriptur'. If the Boers let me pass in peace, A'll go like a lamb ; if they send me any leed, A'll do my best to send leed to them, an' if opportunity offers, maybe A'll add a wee taste o' the butt as a warnin' to them to let lonely dawgs keep to the highway in future."

As he neared the spot where he knew the ford must be, he dismounted and walked between the pair of horses, so that no enemy could very well shoot him except from directly in front or behind. It was a boast of his that he never wasted either "siller" or opportunities. Those who had either drunk or fought with him were apt to agree on the points mentioned. At last he was sure of the ford. He saw the water rippling as it never fails to ripple in the shallows. He examined the banks and saw that a passage had been cut in the steep red clay cliffs on either side, but he could see no sign of either black warrior or white fighting man, yet instinct told him that both were there, hidden from view in the cuttings. The ground in front of him rose and fell in irregular waves, a few clumps of acacia trees lined the river bank. Here and there a ridge of rocks capped a low hill, small shelter enough for a novice, but sufficient for an experienced hunter like McGlusky. Tying his horses to an acacia bough, he took his rifle in his hands, and bending nearly double, skulked from ridge to ridge, from hollow to hollow, until he got within seventy-five yards of the pass, where he threw himself down behind a gentle rise, crowned with loose rocks and a few bushes, determined to do some thinking before he advanced any farther. He knew that he had not been seen by any one in the pass. As for the other side of the river he had not given it a thought, for he did not care whether the Basuto guards saw him or not, yet he was not a little bit sur-

prised when on turning his eyes in that direction he saw quite a little army of black men and women watching his stealthy and skilled advance with admiring eyes. They were so close to him on the opposite shore that he could almost have hurled a stone into their midst. He was so close that when he waved his hand and smiled he could plainly see the white line of their teeth between their black lips as they smiled back again. No people alive love a fight better than the Basutos, not even the Zulus, and that crowd guessed they were in for a good thing.

McGlusky did not look at them long; he was wise enough to know that the white men in the pass, either Boers or Britons, would soon know from the attitude of the natives that something worth inspection was going on upon the veldt, so he lay snug, with his rifle ready for instant use. It was well he did so, for in a little time a tall young Boer came to the mouth of the pass and looked carefully around him. He could see nothing except a lot of excited, grinning, gesticulating niggers on the opposite bank of the Caledon, and he was sufficiently versed in their habits to know they were not out there for his benefit. Had the young Dutchman known, as the niggers knew, that a rifle within a hundred yards of him was pointed right at his breast-bone, he would have felt even a keener interest in the scene. He looked all around him, then beckoned to some one in the pass. An instant later five other Boers joined him, and McGlusky saw the first-comer point to the niggers; then they all turned and swept the veldt with hunters' eyes. They saw nothing, for McGlusky was lying as close to earth as a hare on a frosty morning. The little group of Dutchmen held a hurried council of war, then the six of them, holding their rifles ready for instant shooting, advanced towards

McGlusky much as he had advanced towards them. When the Boers got within twenty yards the Scot-Australian threw up his rifle barrel, though he kept his head well under cover.

"Stand theer noo," he cried, "A'm na a mon o' bluidy deeds, but the first mon who moves gets a wee bit lead in his wammle." The burghers paused, and McGlusky was about to dictate terms, when the six rifles went up and six bullets buried themselves in the earth around his ears. True to his threat, the Briton sent "a wee bit lead into the wammle" of a burgher. The rest rushed off towards the pass, and McGlusky promptly realized that if only one of them got there before him his epitaph was written, for that one could hold the ford until help came and he would be surrounded. Leaping to his feet, he dashed after the burghers, uttering awesome yells in the Welsh tongue as he rushed on. Had he shouted a Scottish slogan it would have been bad enough, but a Welsh war-whoop is a fearsome sound. McGlusky had always been fleet of foot. Before the Boers reached the pass he was with them, his rifle clubbed. He lashed out to right and left and reduced the odds by two. One of the burghers, a mere lad, thinking that a regiment with bayonets was upon him, dropped his rifle and ran screaming for quarter far out on the veldt, the other two turned upon the hairy horror that had leapt upon them, and battled bravely, but soft farm-bred folk were no match for a man whose arms had swung an axe to clear a path through a hundred Australian forests.

Their pluck was of the stolid, stubborn kind; his was the ravening courage of the galled tiger. They smote at him; he leapt aside and lashed at them. Once they brought him to his knees, but he drove the butt of his rifle into the "wammle" of one, and spring-

ing upon the other gripped him by the hair of the head and beard of his chin, and tore his jaws asunder. When the Basutos saw that deed they threw up their arms, and roared aloud to the hills in wonder. McGlusky wasted no time ; picking a rifle from the hands of one of the Boers, for his own was shattered, he ran with all speed to his horses, mounted, and, driving the spurs home, dashed across the Caledon, and in this guise the apostle of peace entered into his vineyard. When the head chief saw the Scot-Australian upon his territory, he was not too pleased, because, with native astuteness, he had been making a rather good thing out of both white armies, selling horses to the British for very high prices, and purchasing flocks of sheep from Boers for next to nothing, the Boers thinking it wiser to sell their flocks to the natives than let them fall into the hands of the khaki raiders. This chief had fought against both British and Boer armies in his time, and loved neither. At the commencement of the war he had openly stated that he would allow no armed men of either side to remain upon his territory, so that McGlusky's welcome from the dusky ruler was none of the warmest. But the young warriors and damsels flocked around him, open-eyed admiration sitting upon their faces. McGlusky intimated his intention of remaining with the black natives, stating that he was not a soldier but a prophet of a new religion. The chief replied that he had had all he wanted in the way of missionaries, but the " prophet " assured him that he had not the faintest intention of removing.

" I ha' come tae praach the reeleegion o' the 'rifle,' an' praach it I will. Hec, man, but it's a gran' faith." Then and there he put all thoughts he could into the Basuto tongue, and helped his sermon out with bits of Dutch and odds and ends of English. Sounding

the clarion of the strange new faith, he lifted up a cross, but it was a cross fashioned out of a rifle and an assegai. The negroes clustered round him, their keen warrior faces aglow with excitement, their red tongues shining through their white teeth like blood on snow, their fierce eyes blazing, their superb figures quivering from head to heel; some leant upon their spears; others stood with nostrils expanded, clutching their rifles in their great black hands; others, with chests thrown wide, swayed to and fro with their battle-axes swinging as though ready for the onslaught. McGlusky painted the picture of a great black nation trained for war, trained as white men train. He outlined the conquest of Africa by such a nation, the sweeping away of cities and seaports, and the return of man to the soil. He told them how feuds between tribes could be stopped by means of his warlike cross, which would be a rallying sign for all true men. Then, with a fine contempt for all geographic distinctions, he marched his army in fancy through the length and breadth of Africa, through Egypt, Palestine, India, Asia, Russia, China and Persia. He sacked Moscow, St. Petersburg, Paris, Berlin, Pekin, Vienna and London each in turn, laying the cities in ruins, planting trees where palaces stood, making forests where slums abounded. The religion of the rifle was the religion which alone could bring people back to the warm breast of mother earth. The warriors did not understand one half what was said to them, but they understood enough to know that this new prophet held out a prospect of much war, and war to those wild fighters was the only game fit for a man—war and women and hunting meant bliss untrammelled to them.

They had enough poetry in their natures to see the picturesque side of that grim cross made of wood and

steel, and when McGlusky finished even the chief was impressed. He had heard something of those cities the white man spoke of, and he felt that to ride through them, laying them waste and plundering to his heart's content, would be just such a destiny as his soul yearned for. After the sermon he gave the Scot-Australian a large hut, walled round with a plaited grass wall. A warrior took the white man's horses and attended to them, and all the men drew away to talk over this new thing brought to their ears by the fighting white man whose prowess they had witnessed. The women and girls clustered round the hut rolling their jet black eyes at him, smiling as only a bashful Basuto maiden can smile, sucking in the upper lip, pushing out the lower, as a camp preacher pushes out the plate for soul offerings. McGlusky looked at them ; he saw the splendour of their arched breasts, the shapeliness of their arms and legs, the great breadth of chest, the slender beauty of their waists, the perfect stateliness of their poise. He saw the young voluptuous life in those daughters of Ham, saw it and groaned.

"Ma certie," he growled, "of a verra truth the de'il ha' placed ma in the midst of a great temptation. A'll ha' ta wrastle michtily in prayer the noo. The serpent in the Garden o' Eden wasna sa bad for puir human natur' as all they bonny black lasses. Ma certie, a pocket-handkerchef' would mak' a full-dress suit for a dozen o' them." Flapping his arms as though driving away hens, he cried, "Whist, wummin, gang awa' hame, ye air overpowerin' to th' eye o' a godly mon wi'oot yer claes on." As the damsels fled, laughing and chattering, McGlusky mused, "A'll put a rifle into the hand o' every mon o' this tribe, an' gird a claymore on to th' thigh o' every warrior, but A'm thinkin' A'll hae tae start a claes factory richt

awa' an' put kilts on the lasses, or ma mither willna aun ma. I dinna think Eve in the Garden o' Eden would ha' fallen to the wiles o' the serpent if Adam had made her pay more attention to her claes."

CHAPTER IV

HOW HE FARED IN HIS VINEYARD

DAWN had scarcely broken ere the Scot-Australian was astir. He took his blankets and hung them out to air. Then lighting his fire he cooked his simple morning meal and ate it, thanking God afterwards for all His mercies. Having washed up his few dishes, and placed them carefully away, he took his rifle and his long-barrelled, old-fashioned but deadly Colt revolver, cleaned them with scrupulous nicety, re-loaded both weapons, thrust the revolver into his belt, laid the rifle across his knees, charged his great rough-hewn pipe to the brim, drew his Bible from his jacket pocket, and read carefully from the sacred page for a full hour. This done, he laid the Bible by his side, and burying his face in his hands, prayed long and silently. Now and again a Basuto, man or maid, crept on tiptoe to the opening in the wall which surrounded the white man's hut, and seeing the silent figure, so strong yet so humble, crept away with eyes filled with wonder to report what was going on inside.

At last McGlusky was ready for his day's work. Taking his rifle in one hand, his Bible in the other, he stepped out into the open and looked around him. Little groups of negroes hung round each of the circular huts, basking in the early morning sunshine. The men were either

attending to their weapons, arguing with neighbours, or playing with the little naked children; whilst the women looked after the morning's work, pounding up mealies into flour in hollow stones, with short, heavy clubs made of wood and ringed with iron, or plucking and dressing fowls for future eating. Some were milking goats just in front of their huts. McGlusky watched them at their work, and began to soliloquize, as his way was.

"A verra fine people, but wi' na system or idea o' order. I'll hae ma wark cut oot to prepare the groun' for the gude seed."

He looked along the row of huts and saw in front of most of them a woman kneeling by a goat, with an earthen pot in one hand, while she milked with the other, a naked child in each instance hanging on to the goat by the horns to steady it during the milking process. The women were scolding and screaming, the goats plunging and butting, the children giggling and protesting; more milk was going on the ground than into the pots. Kids charged between the women and the children, trying to get at the streaming udders of their dams, adding their bleatings to the general din; dogs barked, and horses whinnied, whilst whole flocks of sheep charged the morning air with melody.

"It's a gran' sight to look upon. A feel like ane o' the patriarchs o' Israel—watchin' the people unspoiled by contamination wi' ceevilization. The slums o' cities couldna produce men an' wummin like these, an' it's ma firm conveection that nature never meant the seed o' Adam to dwell in toons shut up between rows o' hooses an' streets. If A could only get claes on the lasses A'd feel content."

At this juncture a splendidly-fashioned damsel of about seventeen summers came towards McGlusky, holding out a dish full of sweet goat's milk, warm from the

udder. The Scot-Australian let his eye rove over her, and blushed. He noted the perfect figure, the fearless poise of the head, the light, free stride, and he confessed to his whiskers that if he could only give the damsel a coat of white paint and put her in the kilt of a Highland soldier he would look no farther afield for a mate.

"A used to wonner what Abraham saw in Hagar to want the wummin, but noo A ken that colour is na deeper than a man could scratch wi' his finger-nail. What's awa' wi' ye, lassie ?"

The ebony beauty held out the milk, and being a lover of a fighter, ogled the Scot-Australian in a manner which made the "Prophet of Peace" consider that the world and the devil he might overcome, but the "flesh" would be a matter for much prayer and tribulation. "A'm thinkin' it's Sautan in a black suit," he muttered. "A'll lift ma eyes above temptation," and so saying, he threw his head up and gulped the milk down so rapidly that a third of it streamed into his beard. Then he pushed the empty vessel outwards in the lassie's direction, crying, "Gang awa', gang awa' ; dinna ye ken that the lust o' the eye breeds a lawless hand ?" McGlusky watched her go in silence, a frown wrinkling his rough visage into even rougher lines. Rude jests and open laughter greeted the girl as she tripped along the lines of huts ; sometimes she pouted, sometimes she laughed. When she laughed she threw her head back, and a gurgling sound came from her ripe, round throat, gradually rising higher and higher until the gurgling noise ended in a wild scream. Her thick lips grew thin as the mouth expanded, until the opening looked like a black velvet forage-cap edged with white and crimson.

"Ba ma conscience," whispered McGlusky to his

whiskers, "that's the best burial groun' for luncheon I ha' seen in all ma wanderings."

When she pouted, her dainty lips, black on the outside, red on the inner edges, looked like a section of a firehose cracked at the corners.

"Weel, weel," sighed the Scot-Australian, "I ha' seen some o' the wonners o' the deep, an' the meesteries o' natur' air not unknown to me, for I ha' been a wanderer fra ma youth up; but the mouth o' a nigger wench is the most awesome thing A ha' seen on land or watter. I wonner how they look when they cry."

By the time he had ceased wondering, the Basutos had finished breakfast, and were lolling about, eyeing him curiously. He raised his rifle high over his head, and lifted his open Bible, and began to chant—

Come to me, unsaved heathen,
  Hear the message I shall tell,
Follow me and find salvation,
  Come and fight the powers of hell;
Come with me and lift the rifle,
  Come with me and lift the spear,
Warriors and the sons of warriors,
  Come, or die like cattle here.

As he chanted McGlusky drew his knees up high in front of him, and pranced round like some old Scottish border chieftain of the last century prancing to the battle-music of the bagpipes. The blacks sprang up and ran eagerly to him, forming a great circle round him, and once again McGlusky preached the religion of the rifle until his audience was ripe for anything in the way of mischief. When he had them well in hand he pointed out their deficiencies.

"What is the use o' goin' ta war until ye ken weel what yer mission is? ye dinna ken it yet, ma laddies. First of a' ye ha' ta git the savin' power o' decency

inter ye, by puttin' claes on yer ain wummin. I'll mak' that ma first duty; then ye'll ha' ta git rifles an' ammuneetion. Ye ha' horses, an' ye can ride; but rifles an' ammuneetion tak' a' power o' siller. An' A'm told there is gold in the mountains o' Basutoland only waitin' the hand o' man ta lift it. We'll soon raise it an' buy rifles an' cairtridges, for A coom fra a land where gold diggin' is unnerstood as it is na unnerstood in any other part o' the wide warld."

No sooner had McGlusky touched upon the subject of gold digging in the native mountains than a change came over the Basuto warriors. The fire died out of their eager faces, and gave place to suspicion. They edged closer to one another and began to whisper; fierce looks were flashed towards him. One old greyhead stepped into the circle. A noble old ruin he looked, with his great horse's nose, his bony forehead, his spare but massive frame, upon which the skin hung like dead ivy on a shattered castle wall. He leant upon his battle-axe, and spoke slowly, as though he would grind every word he uttered into the hearts of his hearers.

"Warriors," he said, "when a white man finds gold in the land of the black man, he does not share it with the black man. He goes across the sea, and brings back many of his own colour, and for a season they dwell at peace with the black owner of the soil; then, after a time, they build a city, and call the land their own; they ask the black man to dig the gold from the soil for them, and pay him the wages that the men in their own land would not work for. Of the gold that comes from the soil the black man gets none, neither the chiefs nor the people. When a little while has passed, the white man makes an excuse for a quarrel, and brings his army with guns which kill faster than

locusts swarm in summer on the veldt, and they order the black man to fall back from the pleasant veldt where his kraals have always been, and they take the land and give it to their friends, who build farmhouses and put up fences, and hunt the black man and his wife and children from the soil where they were born.

"Then they fight amongst themselves, as we see them doing now, to see who shall own what both have stolen. I have seen this, warriors, in many parts of our country. I have seen the blacks fall before the fast-firing guns of the whites as locusts fall when the rain-storm comes, and now this man comes to us and talks with a long tongue and a smooth tongue. He is a great fighter, we have seen him fight; if it were not for that I should say let the women stone him to death; but because he is a fighter and a warrior let us give him his horses and a guard to cross the Caledon; let us place him upon the veldt on the other side of the river and stand between him and his enemies, the Boers, until he has an hour's start, then let him go as he came. He fought his way here, let him fight his way back again, or die as a man dies. But let him not touch gold in the soil of Basutoland, or we shall have a white man's town standing where our kraals now stand before our full-grown maidens are mothers, and we and our children will be homeless and landless. Do you remember, warriors, how the old missionary who lies buried under the cliff by the river once told us that long ago the white men made for themselves a golden calf, and called it their god, and worshipped it? I have not forgotten, and I know that the golden calf is the god of nearly all the white men on earth to-day."

"Ma certie," quoth McGlusky, "ye air na sa verra far wrang. The golden calf is the god of ceevilization, an' it's that verra idol A'm wantin' ye to fecht against."

"Why don't you get white men to do your fighting?" asked the veteran.

"Ye air walkin' in deep watters, noo, ma frien'. It's a question that a fule could ask in one breath an' a wise man find hard to answer in an hoor; but dinna fash yersel' aboot the matter the noo," he added diplomatically. "Goold is na the only means o' barter. I see mony thousand sheep runnin' wild and unshorn. We'll tak' the wool off the backs o' the beasties an' exchange it to the Portuguese on the Delagoa Bay railway line for rifles and cairtridgees, an' when that is done I'll see if more can't be raised for the good work. Coom wi' me an' I'll show ye hoo to shear sheep."

The warriors followed him slowly and without enthusiasm. That reference to gold mines had nearly cost the "Apostle of Peace" his vineyard, for the Basutos, as all men know, had sworn a vow that no white folk should ever dig for gold in their territory; for bitter experience had taught the blacks that the golden calf is still the god of the whole white world, and the faintest reference to mining roused both their suspicions and their hostility. McGlusky knew that he had made a false step by approaching the forbidden subject so rashly and so hastily.

He knew that it would take but little provocation to make them take his life, yet he threw up his head with the old defiant action, and went about his task with boundless energy, ordering the men and women about as though he had been a priest and a ruler over them for a lifetime. When a warrior glared at him, McGlusky glared back with so fierce a look that the stoutest quailed before him. In regard to sheep he was an expert. Not for nothing had he been the "ringer" of half the shearing-sheds in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. He could shear a sheep with any man

living, and wash and classify the wool afterwards—a much more important task. His one great difficulty was the want of shears. He explained what he required to the natives, though none of the men seemed inclined to help him, but the maiden who had given him the draught of milk in the morning helped him out of his quandary by going to a hut and bringing forth two pairs of shears and a whetstone, probably stolen from some Boer farm amongst other loot. McGlusky thanked her curtly enough, though in his heart he was grateful. He had made a rough pen by utilizing a small cattle kraal. His shearing floor was a great tarpaulin pegged out on a level piece of ground. Carefully he made his arrangements, because he meant to impress the warriors with his prowess as a workman just as he had done as a fighter. He had seen the Boer farmers trying to shear sheep, and knew the easy-going fashion of the Dutchmen, who made a day's work out of ten sheep, and he made up his mind to lower all his own Australian records, just to show that an apostle could be both a worker and a warrior.

All day long he toiled, making a "race" for his sheep, fixing up his pens so that he should always have a sheep ready to his hand, making tar-brushes and tar-pots for his helpers, now wheedling, now bullying, but always getting his own way in the end. He soon saw that he would get no active help from the men, so turned his attention to the women, and by means of skilful flattery enlisted six lasses upon his side, chief of whom was the milkmaiden. These he instructed in their various duties. Two were to act as woolpickers, and gather the wool as it was shorn and pack it neatly, so that it should not blow about and become lost or soiled. One was to act as "tar girl," to dab with healing tar the wounds made by the ripping shears, for the flies and the dust would be bad for gaping wounds. Another was to keep his pen

full of sheep so that no time might be wasted, the other two were to look after the sheep in the kraal, and keep the mischievous boys from worrying the already half-wild animals. The sun was just sinking when McGlusky's preparations were complete, so he dismissed his helpers for the day and promised them a good time for to-morrow. He made himself a supper of goat's flesh and boiled mealies ; then when the moon rose beautiful and serene, gilding the mountains near and far with the glory of the Creator, he arose and went forth, and again the people flocked around him in a dense circle.

The old warrior who had turned upon him so bitterly in the morning was in the front rank leaning upon a broad-bladed stabbing assegai. McGlusky strode towards him and plucked the weapon from his hand. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, five hundred weapons were poised in mighty hands ready to strike him dead. McGlusky did not even waver. He took the assegai and bound it crosswise to the barrel of his rifle with a green hide thong, then beckoning the old warrior to him, he thrust the rude cross into the veteran's hands and cried in a voice that made the mountains echo:

" Haud it high, mon ; haud it high ! "

The veteran lifted the cross of wood and steel above his head with one sinewy hand.

McGlusky leapt to the front rank again, snatched a battle-axe from the hands of the chief's son, and thrust the weapon into the bony fist of the old cross-bearer.

" Noo," he cried, with his clarion voice, " noo haud it, an' defend it, fecht for it, die for it ; a warrior's death in this warld, an' wings in the next."

The black figure straightened like tempered steel. Burying his right heel in the soft turf, throwing his left leg well forward so that the naked toes gripped the grass, the warrior child of a Basuto father and a Zulu

mother, who had fought against both Boer and Briton, and against a score of native tribes in his time, swung his battle-axe aloft, and shouted his battle-cry, and from that moment McGlusky had one unswerving convert ready to follow him to the end of the world, and hold his standard high in the forefront of the battle, as our forefathers loved to do in the days when Harold ruled England.

The moon rose higher and higher, gilding the black rocks with silver, touching the coarse grass with beauty, softening the rude shrubs that lined the mountain sides with touches of tenderest light and shade. McGlusky had dived into his hut, now he stood forth by the side of his standard-bearer ; in his hands he held a weird-looking instrument such as no Basuto had ever seen before : it was a Scottish bagpipe. For a while he waited, then raising the instrument he made music, not soft, soothing harmony, but a wild riot of sound that flooded the mountain gorges, now screaming like an eyrie full of eagles, or pulsing like the throb of the footfalls of marching men. The warriors caught their breath and hissed it out again through their expanding nostrils. McGlusky warmed to his task, the bagpipes crooned low, like women wailing round ruined homes and battle-stricken dead. Then sound was torn, and wrenched, and ripped asunder until the night winds carried shrieks and wailing near and far. The women huddled closer to the warriors, the children cowered near men who trembled. McGlusky did not pause, but, spreading his whiskers to the breeze, sent a blast of triumph, a wild, fierce, exultant note, pealing amongst the crags and cliffs, until the men of war around him felt their veins fill with fire ; warrior looked to warrior with eyes of flame, teeth set hard, lips agape, heads thrown back, throats and chests filling, expanding, bursting. Then steel clashed on steel as they swung

their battle-axes and assegais, the earth shook with the noise of their trampling feet as they beat time to the mad music of the pipes. The Scot-Australian marched round the circle of living flesh and blood ; now he leaped high in the air, and twirled himself round and round as he leaped ; anon he swagged and swayed from side to side like a man demented, drunken with the sounds he created ; but the grim Basuto stood like a graven image in the centre of the circle, and held the cross of wood and steel on high. A straying cloud drifted over the face of the moon, darkness for a moment veiled the earth ; McGlusky snatched the cross from the Basuto's hand, and without a word passed in silence into his hut.

As soon as the natives had dispersed he drew towards him three red blankets he had purchased from the chief, and with strong twine and a packing needle commenced to make six crimson kilts for his female helpers. As he worked he talked to himself, as is the way with men who have lived much alone.

" A ha' come inta ma vineyard and ha' found it chokit wi' theestles an' rank weeds o' ignorance, but A will clear the groun' before A dee. A ha' preechit ta them the reeleegion o' the rifle, and ha' taught them the deelights o' harmony, an' noo I'll teach them the deelights o' decency. It is written, ' If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out ' ; but, ma certie, the offence is no wi' the eye. I canna keep ma chin in the cloods fra morn till nicht. Maybe, when the other lasses see the claes on ma han'maidens they'll foller the leaders o' fashion, an' a ceevilized mon will then be able to walk abroad wi'out perilin' his immortal soul. Who kens but if I can get the lasses to wear kilts A ma get the men to wear breeks ; but A ha' ma doots."

It was late before he finished his tailoring, but he was

up and out before cock-crow in the morning ready for the shearing, all his nerves on the tingle, for to him work was a fine thing. He despised an idle man almost as much as he despised a coward or an Atheist. As he once remarked to O'Gorman, of Blatewith Sheep Station:

"A sluggard, ye ken, is scarcely warth savin' either in this warld or the next. There is some hope for a sinner who puts his heart into his sins, but a sluggard is too idle ta sin weel or repent wi' proper eenergy; a sluggard is ane o' they men who sit on a fence an' pray for rain whilst their cattle die o' thirst, instead o' pullin' off their shirts an' sinkin' a well to look for water."

Whatever else McGlusky was, he was no sluggard. Long before the Basutos, who are early risers, were moving, he had looked carefully over his shearing preparations, cooked and eaten his morning meal, plunged his head and neck into a pool of cool river water, read his morning psalm, and smoked his morning pipe.

His hour came at last. The natives began to loll around outside their huts to catch the first rays of the warm red sun as he swept grandly out of the east.

It was then that the Scot-Australian, tucking his six scarlet kilts under his arm, went in search of his lasses. He gave one to the milkmaid, and that frolicsome beauty promptly popped it over her head and let it rest upon her shoulders like an opera cloak, and then swaggered off to show her newly-found treasure to her envious clanswomen. McGlusky explained as delicately as he could that it was not a cloak but a kilt, keeping his chin pointed towards the mountain-tops during his expostulations.

"A wee bit beads aroon the neck is all veera weel, lassie, but ye'll look gran' in the red garments o' wumminhood aroon yer waists. Pull the kilt on lest the ungodly

mon makes a scoff o' yer prophet an' teachers. Dinna mak' the rough road harder for ma, lassie ; it's michty rocky th' noo."

The girls at last consented to put on "the robes of decency," and the apostle's heart swelled with pride. Stepping on to his shearing floor he stripped to the waist, his kilted squad fell into their appointed places. The milkmaid seized a sheep in the pen by the near hind leg, and with a quick jerk landed the struggling animal at the white man's feet. Then McGlusky buried his great, bony, sun-tanned left fist in the wool, lifted the sheep up as though it were a toy, straddled it with his legs, and commenced to shear as he had never shorn in all his life ; the steel blades ran in under the fleece and lay along the skin ; the fleece rolled off over his left forearm in a yellow wave until, with a deft movement, he tossed it neatly at full length on the floor behind him in a beautiful unbroken wave of wool. Only an expert could do that, a shearer amongst shearers. The novice hacks and drags the wool off in ugly junks, and strews it round himself in disorderly piles, but the "ringer" of half the best sheds in Australia was not likely to be a dirty workman.

When he let the shorn sheep go, and sent it scrambling off with a light kick from the side of his boot, there wasn't an uneven line on the quivering body, nor a piece of wool a quarter of an inch long about it anywhere.

If he had been a Boer he would have filled his pipe, called for coffee, and had an argument concerning wool, sheep, shears and the rise and fall in the price of mutton before he tackled another, but that was not McGlusky's way. As soon as he finished the one he called briskly :

"Quick, lassie, dinna gae to sleep in yer new claes. Ye ought to hae anither beastie ready to ma fist."

Another "beastie" was soon on hand, and McGlusky,

now warm to his work, made the wool fly. The sheep did not struggle in his practised grip ; if they did, the pressure of his knees took the wind and the fight out of them. He worked on and on, never pausing to rest or chatter ; the click of the shears as he flashed the whetstone along the blades, the shoss, shoss, shoss of the steel as it bit through the wool, was almost the only sound made ; the big muscles in his arms and back, the sinews along ribs and neck, ran along the skin worked by the electricity that was generating within him. The sweat gathered on his wrinkled forehead, ran down his face into his beard, and dripped from his whiskers to the floor ; it burst through the pores of his sun-tanned hide and bathed his hairy chest and back, streaming down his body unchecked until the waistband of his trousers was sodden with the dew drawn from his body. Now and again he straightened his figure, threw out his arms with a quick, strong jerk, looked round on the gaping negroes and grinned, and the wool rose in a pile around him. Higher and higher it rose, until he stood in a forest of fleeces. One of his helpers brought him a cup of Kaffir beer. He tasted it, spat it out, and hurled the vessel far from him.

"It's the curse o' ceevilization ! it's liquid hell ! it's the devil's broth ! Dinna gi' it ta me ; it slays the soul as weel as the body o' a mon. Gie ma milk, sweet an' fresh fra the body o' a coo or a goat, if ye ha' it ; if not, gi' me watter."

They gave him milk hot from the udder of a goat, and he worked on. They brought him food ; he snatched a handful and ate it standing, shears in hand, for it was in his blood to show the blacks what a man of the Anglo-Saxon breed could do when roused. Sometimes, as he toiled with fierce fury, the shears ripped through wool and skin and flesh ; then he called for "tar," and dabbed the bleeding wound before freeing the animal ; but this did

not happen often. He worked until his whiskers lay soft and sodden on his chest, until the blood surged into his head, making his ears ring with strange noises, until his back ached with an intolerable pain, and the muscles in his long, lean thighs were trembling with weakness, and his thumbs almost refused to move; right-handed and left-handed he had shorn from sunrise until twilight met the night, toiling as few navvies ever toil, for shearer's work is a man's work when records are broken, and McGlusky broke a record that day.

"Twa hunner an' twal," he muttered, as he staggered to his hut—"twa hunner an' twal, an' all clean shor', clear enoo to please old Jimmy Tyson hissel' if he had to pass 'em and pay for the shearin'."

Into his hut he reeled, wrapped his blankets around him, and threw himself, boots and all, face downwards on the earthen floor, and slept the sleep that the shearer knoweth; whilst outside the Basutos clustered together, and said one to the other, "What manner of man is this that has come amongst us? No man fights as he fights, no man talks as he talks, nor works as he works, and only the devils in the mountains at storm time make such music as he makes."

"Oai," cried the women, "it is not music he makes; oai, it is the spirits of all the men he has slain in battle he keeps in a little bag, and lets out to cry for their slayer."

"Oai," cried the old warrior, "oai, he is a man, and I am his standard-bearer; but I would rather fight my own father than listen to his music. When he blows into the little bag and squeezes it with his arm, I smell blood. I see huts blazing red against the sky. I see women and children chained together, and men lying with heads cleft open. I see the angels gathering to the banquet of the slain, and my spirit becomes water."

"Oai," cried the girls, "when he makes music we do not know whether to run towards the young men or to turn from them. Sometimes we laugh, sometimes we cry, but always our eyes seek for a warrior, a fighter, a champion, when he blows into his devil's skin, and hits it with his elbow. When we slept we used to dream of flowers; now we shall dream of men. Oai, oai, oai! when will he play to us again?"

CHAPTER V

HE FIGHTS A MIGHTY WARRIOR

ON the second day of shearing the Basutos showed a more conciliatory spirit. The "Apostle's" splendid performance had impressed them, and they wanted to see if he could repeat it. It was scarcely daylight, and the cold mist hung heavy on the hills when the "man of peace" took the floor for his second act. He was stiff and sore from the previous day's tremendous exertions, but he did not shirk his task on that account. Taking things easily at the commencement, he gradually worked off his stiffness, and began to lay into his work in a manner which made the niggers click their tongues against their palates.

"He is a man's son, this white fellow," said the chief to one of his councillors. "Most of the other whites who have come to our country have been too lazy to look after their own horses. All they would do was to sit around and trade, cheating us out of our mealies, our horses, and the skins we have to get by long hunting in the mountains. When they were tired of doing that they made too free with young girls of our people. They were boasters and liars, but this is a man's son whether he is working or fighting." So McGlusky toiled on, but a cloud was gathering over his head, though he did not know it. The milkmaiden, who was his best worker,

was the innocent cause of the trouble. Before the arrival of the Scot-Australian she had had a lover, a grand specimen of a savage, tall, broad, hawk-faced and fiery. He had been away on outpost duty along the banks of the Caledon when the white man arrived at the village. When he saw the damsel of his choice working for the white man, his wrath was very great.

"What is that thing she wears?" he asked contemptuously of a comrade, pointing to the kilt McGlusky had made.

"It is a thing the white man has given her to wear, so that she shall be able to stand before men and not be ashamed," was the unctuous reply.

"Her mother never wore one of those things, nor my mother, and they stood unashamed before better men than this white spawn." The negro warrior spoke contemptuously, for he deemed McGlusky a mere clod, a working white. He went to the edge of the shearing floor, and called to the damsel jeeringly:

"Ho, ho! Art thou crooked of limb that thou hidest thyself in a red bag?"

The damsel tossed her head and went on with her task.

"Thou misshapen thing!" cried the young man. "The dogs bark at thee! Thou art sport for the children!"

The girl quitted her work, and big tears began to chase each other down her cheeks. She had been the belle of the tribe, and such jeers hurt her,

"Do not cry," continued the lover; "it is not thy fault that thy hips are like the hips of a cow. Thou doest well to cover them from the eyes of men. Who would marry a wife who would give him crippled children—little twisted legs, with humps between their shoulders and heads all on one side?"

The girl began to untie the girdle of her kilt.

"Na, na, lassie," said McGlusky, soothingly, "dinna da that. Haud tae yer claes. If that mon meddles wi' ye much mair, I'll mak' him wear breeks, if I ha' to gie him ma own, an' face a cold warld in ma sark."

As he spoke, he patted the sobbing girl on the shoulder in a fatherly manner, and beamed upon her with all his eyes. That patting and those glances were like fire to dry grass. The negro bounded on to the shearing floor, as full of fight as a trapped panther. The men clapped their hands and laughed, the women huddled down and cried shrilly to the men to give fair play. The children jammed their heads between the naked legs of their elders and whooped to one another. The old grizzled cross-bearer stepped solemnly out of the ring of living ebony and planted himself behind the "Apostle," his great knotted, twisted hands leaning strongly on the handle of his battle-axe. McGlusky gave him a nod and a smile, which made the old warrior throw his head back and send forth a strange, wild, defiant cry, half battle-call, half death-cry. There was no mistaking his meaning; he was there, loyal to his champion to the death. The picture was an impressive one. The Scot-Australian, bare to the waist excepting his hat, was up to his knees in wool. Three yards away from him the superb savage, naked from head to toe except for a ring around his skull and a band around his waist an inch wide, which carried a sporran in front. Between them the girl. Neither man was armed.

"You are a dog," said the warrior.

"You are a leear an' the spawn o' a leear. A dinna want ta cast rafleections upon yer mither, ye son o' a pig."

McGlusky's religion was leaving him, as it generally did when he smelt a fight, and in its place came the spirit of his Hieland forbear, Red McGlusky, who sacked

Glendarrock when James I. was King, and carried the sheriff's fair daughter home with him on his saddle-bow, in spite of the fact that he had spouse of his own in Loch Nor, and in spite of the fact that he knew that five hundred spears would follow in quest of the sheriff's daughter. For some reason unknown a Basuto fighting man has a pronounced objection to a pig as an ancestor. You may call his mother a cow, and he will be mildly indignant, call his father a "bull," and he offers you his snuff-box and considers you are trying to compliment him. Tell him he has the heart and the heels of a horse, and he asks you to stay and lunch with him; tell him his ancestry goes back to pig, and he won't be satisfied until he has lunched off you. McGlusky knew this, and had chosen the epithet of malice aforethought. The Basuto gnashed his teeth and ran to the ring of men and tried to snatch an axe or an assegai; but the fighting men were good sportsmen. They would not let an armed man loose upon an unarmed one; the warrior had sought the conflict, and they meant it to be as fair as possible. In height the men were about equal, in weight the negro had the best of it by fully a score of pounds. On his native heath a Scot does not run to flesh; in Australia, under a burning sun, sleeping in the open nine months out of twelve, he runs mostly to fencing wire—electric fencing wire at that.

"Chiefs an' tribesmen," cried McGlusky. "Ye ken weel hoo this trooble ha' coom ta pass; it is na ma seekin'. This young buck thinks the earth and the fullness thereof belong ta him. I ha' talked ta ye consarnin' the deelights o' deecency. I ha' put claes on the damsel who is with me the noo, an' this young mon wants ta tak' them awa' an' mak' ma teachin' of na accoont. Noo hear ma. I'll fecht him bare-handed or wi' ony weapons o' war ye ma' choose. If I win I'll mak' him

wear breeks ; if I lose I'll go through the warld as Adam went through Eden. I'll na wear so much as a necktie this side o' the grave, an' that means that I'll niver look on the face o' Janet McGlusky, ma mither, who dwells in the city o' churches in Australia, agin in this warld." The warriors applauded the white man's challenge, and the chief, who had no notion of losing so good a shearer if he could help it, solemnly asserted that the two men should fight as they stood. The red-kilted girls cleared the wool from the shearing floor, and then squatted in the front row to watch the fight. Scorning to have any advantage, McGlusky took off his boots and gave them to the milkmaiden to hold. As he did so, she whispered, " Beware of thine eyes, white man ; when he fights he always puts his thumbs into his enemy's eyes if he can, and leaves his foe sightless."

" Is that so ? " answered the Scot ; " then if I leave him not thumbless may I niver wear breeks agin."

The two men faced each other, treading lightly and warily, like cats on a housetop. McGlusky let go his left fist with fearful force at the head, putting all his body behind the blow. The negro dropped quickly to one knee, and clutching his enemy round the middle, rose up with him and ran three or four paces, then he dashed McGlusky to the ground with such force that the india-rubber body of the bushman bounced a foot from the floor.

" Ma certie," groaned the Scot, " twa falls like that an' it's gude-bye ta ma breeks."

Had he been a novice he would have striven to rise and meet his foe, but the veteran was crafty, and learned in the strategy of such rude warfare, so he lay still, knowing that by so doing his enemy would have to stoop over him to take a fresh grip, and by so doing expose himself in a posture where he would be at a dis-

advantage, for a stooping man has little strength. The Basuto fell into the trap. With a whoop that made the mountains ring he leapt forward and stooped to wreathe his hands around the Scottish throat. McGlusky was lying upon his back. As the black man stooped he caught him by the ears, the great ears that flanked the face like saddle flaps, and gave them a fearful wrench. The black pulled backwards with all his might, dragging the Scot to his knees; in another moment he was on his feet, the maddest, wildest white man that ever stood under the African sun. He rushed, and the savage kicked him in the "wammle" with his hard, horny, bare foot; then McGlusky opened his mouth and emitted a sound compared to which a Hieland pibroch is as a child cooing beside its cot. The negro, moving as swiftly as an ostrich, kicked him again in the same place. McGlusky doubled up for a moment; an expression of awful pain flashed across his face; he turned and ran. With a roar of triumph the big black bounded after him, lured by that stratagem which is older than the hills, both with men and armies. The Scot turned in his tracks like a flash, his right arm and shoulder went forward with volcanic force, the bony fist landed on the big flat nose, and the men on both sides of the ring felt the blood fall on their faces as though it had come from the clouds. The black fell as though the arch of heaven had fallen upon him. "A'm na sure, A wouldna like ta be positeeve," said McGlusky, addressing the crowd, "but A'm thinkin' the mon that wants to rub noses wi' him in the future will ha' ta go behind his back ta do it." The negro sat up after a while, presenting an awful spectacle, and the Scot could have gone in and finished him; but that was not his way, for the thing he most loathed in life was what he termed a "durty fechter."

"Do ye feel the speerit promptin' ye ta haud oot the han' o' peace ta a fellow mon?" he asked, after a while. For answer the Basuto clambered up and rushed upon him. McGlusky hit him off first with one hand, then with the other; but he would not be denied, and at last, getting to close quarters, he grappled his man. Tough as the Scot was, that awful grip made him wince, for his ribs were talking to one another under the strain of the black arms that curled around them. McGlusky rained blows on neck, ribs, jaw and spine until he began to feel dizzy, the blood began to choke in his throat, his lungs hurt as though a knife's blade lay between them, noises sounded in his head, he began to hear sheep-bells, cattle-bells, fire-bells, church-bells, and every other kind of bell except luncheon-bells. He left off punching and gripped the black throat. He might as well have tried to choke a drain-pipe. Then he took the black head in his arms and did all that in him lay to separate it from the crouching trunk, but in vain. The faces of the crowd around him began to rise towards the skies, the skies seemed to come down to the faces, then they all became indistinct, a blurred mass. He could not tell the men from the mountains. He felt cold all down his spine, yet the arms around him grew tighter, the blood seemed to rise higher in his throat. He put his hands palm outwards to the ebony face to push it from him, and his thumbs came in contact with the protruding eyes. Like a flash the words of the black damsel came to him, "Beware, white man; he always tries to get his thumbs into the eyes of his enemies." McGlusky's thumbs closed in the eyes of the Basuto, whilst his fingers clutched the ears.

The black stood the pressure for a moment or two, then his arms unwound themselves and a great rush

of air filled McGlusky's lungs. His strength came back to him. He flung himself like a maddened mastiff on the black; this time he got a body grip, and the pair went down. Over and over they rolled, wrenching, pulling, tearing at each other's throats, trying by main force to crack the bones in each other's arms, until a dexterous twist put the negro on the top of the white man. He had torn the muscles of the Scot's arms and the flesh on his shoulders with his teeth. Now he tried to bury his thumbs in the eyes, but McGlusky gripped him then in a fatal grasp. Holding both the thumbs in the full of his two fists, he bent them back until the men around the ring heard the bones crack and break, and the Basuto was beaten. But it was a barren victory, for as McGlusky rose to fulfil his threat and make the vanquished warrior wear breeks. he saw that nothing was left to him but the waistband and a few buttons; his nether garments had been torn to shreds in the fierce fight for peace.

"Quick, lassie!" he cried to the milkmaid; "if ye ha' any love fa ma as a mon, or veneeration fa ma as a prophet, lend ma your kilt, leest I be shamed by the hathen. By ma beard, lassie, Adam didn't leave Eden wi' a much smaller wardrobe than A'm standin' in the noo. There's na dignity about a mon, prophet or no prophet, wi'out his breeks. Gi' ma the kilt, and I'll get ma bagpipes an' make a joyful noise before the Lord, on account of His meercies this day."

Ten minutes later, robed in a red kilt, with his white, hairy legs bare to the breeze, he was dancing a Highland reel to his own piping, whilst the milkmaiden sat in a bath of snow-white wool and chanted his praises to the smiling assembly. As he danced, the white man vaunted his own prowess, for modesty was not his greatest virtue. "Look on me, warriors! A'm

McGlusky, the fechter, the rider, the hunter, the shearer o' sheep, an' the tamer o' cattle! A'm McGlusky the prophet, the wrastler, the leader o' armies, the deelight o' the wummin. A am the rifle o' the Lord, the chosen oot o' ten thousand! A am sent inta the warld ta sweep oot the dark corners, ta lower tha pride o' the prood, an' raise up the humble. A will put lean saints inta the seats o' fat bishops, an' knock the bottom oot o' every whisky mill from Dan to Beersheba. Oai, for the reeleegion o' the rifle! Oai!"

And all the men cried, "Oai, oai, for the religion of the rifle and McGlusky the prophet!"

Then once again he took up the bagpipes, and made sweet, low, soothing melody like the voices of a mob of cows in pain moaning for water, whilst a little way back from where he stood an old crone knelt by the side of the wounded Basuto, and tried to mend his broken thumbs with bandages and splinters of slate. When the drunken frenzy of fighting had passed away from the Scot, he went into his hut and hung his head in shame.

"A'm a weak vessel," he moaned—"a weak, crackit vessel, and no' fit to carry the gude seed inta the vineyard. A'm no fit to carry acorns ta a hog. A leear an' a braggit A am, a prood, vain mon, cockit up wi' vain thoughts because A ha' whippit ane o' the unregeenerate in the sicht o' sinful men." Then he began to meditate upon the fight. "Oh, ho!" he chuckled, "but it was a gran' blow that ane on the nose o' the nigger. A can feel the joy o' it yet tinglin' along ma arm an' doon ma spine. A wadna gie saxpence in siller for all the nose he'll ha' ta wipe in the morn."

At that moment a shadow fell across his doorway, and a second later the milkmaid followed the shadow.

She had a tar-pot in one hand, a tar-brush in the other.

"What's awa' noo, lassie?" cried the "Apostle." "Dinna stan' theer in the licht o' the door, like a hathen statue in a Roman city. Black ye air, black but comely, oh ma beloved! as Solomon said in ane o' his songs, an' A dinna think A'm any wiser than Solomon; but dinna stan' wheer the sunlight shines full upon ye; remember if A am a prophet A am also a mon, a weak, wayward mon wi' seven de'ils promptin' me to carnal vanities all the days o' my life. So stan' in the shadow, and tell me what's awa' wi' ye."

The damsel pointed to the wounds on his arms, neck and shoulders caused by the teeth of the Basuto.

"The teeth of a man are worse than the teeth of a panther," she said; "a man's teeth poison. I have seen many such—nothing to a strong man at first, but after a night's sleep comes a pain that shoots from the wound like hot spear points. A white edge gathers round the red wound, and the flesh rots. Then the poison spreads into the blood, the pain is never still; it flies along the bones, scraping like the teeth of foxes; it twists among the sinews like eels among the rushes; it tears at the joints like a wolf, old and fangless, tearing at dying men. The bravest dread it, the strongest cannot shake it off, so I have come to wash your wounds with water and drop tar into the sore spots."

McGlusky nodded his head approvingly, and the maiden bathed his torn flesh with hot water, and then dabbed tar on thickly, on the same principle that the Scot tarred sheep wounded in shearing. As the damsel went about her labour of love, McGlusky followed her movements with his eyes, all the time soliloquizing—"Black, but comely, straighter than a young cedar is my beloved. I wonner what ma mither,

Janet McGlusky, wife o' deacon McGlusky, o' the little Bethel in Holy Adelaide, city o' churches, would say to a dauchter-in-law, black but comely. Weel, weel, after a' the skin is na the noblest part o' wummin, ony more than the cover is the best part o' a buk. If the damsel is chaste, who am A that A should find faut wi' the colour God in His wisdom ha' made her hide. What name do they ca' ye by, ma girl ? "

The damsel, who had loitered far longer over her task of dressing his wounds than was at all necessary, replied shyly:

"Salwageee-r-holl."

"H'm," commented the Scot-Australian. "H'm, it's a fine, full-soundin' handle to a body, but it's na sa handy as it micht be, eespeecially if a mon wanted anything in a hurry. Salwageee-r-holl McGlusky doesna seem ta fit as weel as it micht da. A'm thinkin' A'll shorten it a bit an' ca' her Holl McGlusky, it soonds maist as gude as Ginny McGlusky. Lassie, wad ye like to be the wife o' a prophet ? "

The lassie stubbed her toe into the dirt floor and giggled.

The Scot-Australian repeated his question, and the damsel replied that she would.

"Then," said McGlusky, "ye may sit on ma knee an' conseeder the matter settled." There was no poetry about the man, but there was a certain lopsided sense of justice. "What do ye da in the way o' marryin' an' givin' in marriage ? " he asked, when "Holl" in her slim attire was perched on his kilted knee.

"You give my father cattle, and my father say to you, 'Take her, may she bear you many sons.' "

"It's veera simple, veera preemative, an' veera plain. I give your father a coo an' he gives me his dauchter ; it's a fair exchange."

"Holl" pouted. "A lame girl is worth two cows, a fine girl is worth five cows; but my father, who is a councillor and a headman, wants ten cows and two horses for me."

"Ten coos and twa horses!" roared McGlusky. "Ten coos an' twa horses! Oot wi' ye; oot an' gang ta the de'il. Do ye think I ha' been fechtin' an' travellin' all ma life to save up a bit o' siller to throw all that gear in the lap o' a hathen fa the sake o' a wummin? Oot, A say, an' dinna coom speerin' roun' the morn for the kilt, for A'll na throw pearls before swine."

So the damsel fled, and promptly made her peace with the broken-thumbed Basuto, who had many cattle and a higher estimate of the value of a woman than the white man had. As for McGlusky, he paced the floor of his hut in wrath far into the night, growling.

"Ten coos and twa horses! Na, na, ma buckies, I dinna waste ma gear in that fule fashion. Twa coos for a lame lassie! Weel, weel, A'll think aboot it; maybe a lame ane would be best, she wad no be wanderin' aboot gossipin'! A dinna like to be mean or parseemoneeous, but twa coos is all a mon should spend at ane time in luxuries."

CHAPTER VI

HOW HE TURNS TRADER

IN order to show his fine contempt for the milkmaid, McGlusky proceeded on the following day to make violent love to the lame daughter of a native trader, and in so doing had the good fortune to elicit the fact that the trader had in his possession a large quantity of shears, which had been looted from a Boer store in one of the villages taken by the British. The nigger trader had a son who was a camp follower of the army, partly for the sake of adventure, partly to wipe off an old score he had against the Dutchmen, and partly in the hope of picking up unconsidered trifles. McGlusky's roving eye was not slow to note that a good many other things in the possession of the black trader were of a sort that might very well have been looted. Leaving the man of business, he made his way to the chief and informed him of his discovery, adding, "Two hunner pairs o' shears are lyin' idle in yer ain village; put the shears in the han's o' the idlers, see that yer orders air obeyed, an' we'll soon have wool enough to commence to barter wi' the little yellow men on Delagoa Bay railway line."

The chief saw at once that there was wisdom in the words of the "Apostle" and money in his schemes. So the order went forth that all the sheep ranging

the hills and valleys near and far should be brought in and shorn.

McGlusky did not shear any more ; he walked round and bossed the show, encouraging, storming, cuffing as occasion demanded. The Basutos were phenomenally apt pupils, strong, lithe and quick, and the Scot-Australian knew how to handle them perfectly. Coming across a particularly lazy young fellow of fine physique, who seemed to have no use for mutton unless it was cooked, he took him by the arm and led him gently from the shearing floor and set him to brush flies off a slumbering hog. The young fellow objected furiously, demanding to be allowed to go back and work with others.

" Na, na," answered McGlusky ; " ye air too weakly for such wark. Gie me a mon for a mon's wark, an' a wummin far a wummin's wark, an' a fule for a fule's wark ; so stay ye theer an' fan the flies."

Shouts of laughter greeted this mode of punishment, and none of the others cared to risk a similar fate. If he was harsh in his punishments, McGlusky was free with praise where it was well deserved. A good workman he would take into the centre of the floor and shout, " Look at this young bull, strong as a horse, ye ken. Look at his chest ; he will be a lion before he dies. Look at his eyes, lassie ; he has a hawk's eye, a hunter's eye, the eye o' a warkman. When he seeks a wife, run to his arms ; he will be the father of many sons, an' all of them will be workers and fechters."

No man living loves flattery as a Basuto loves it ; vanity is his weak point, an ever-open joint in his armour, and the praise of the white champion was very dear to them. So McGlusky flourished for a season, and the sheep were shorn in their thousands, and wealth greater than he had ever known was within

the reach of the chief, who clave to the Scot-Australian as Jonathan clave to David. The weeks had rolled away as the shearing progressed, slipping by with marvellous swiftness. Each morning the "Apostle" preached a short sermon, whilst at night he chanted Psalms, played the bagpipes, and told Biblical stories in a way of his own. The glorious beauty of the Psalm was somewhat mutilated by his uncouth rendering, but the stories lost none of their wonders. He told of Samson, of Daniel in the lions' den, of Judas the traitor, of David and his fight with Philistia's champion, of Gideon with his flail. The negroes believed every word with childlike faith, though they wondered exceedingly concerning Daniel, for many of them had hunted, and been hunted by lions, and knew what the greatest of the great carnivora were capable of when roused. When he bade the tribesmen dance, they danced; when he told them to sing, they sang; when he lifted the cross and commanded them to kneel, they knelt, just as the dervishes of the Soudan knelt at the order of the Mad Mullah, and for very much the same reason. One day, however, he came in contact with popular opinion. He had noticed that the Basutos were very fond of a fermented liquor which their women made, and when under its influence lost many of their best qualities. When sober they were merry enough and willing workers, but when half intoxicated they became truculent ruffians, unfit either to fight or work properly. McGlusky was superintending the washing and drying of the shorn wool, having utilized the flowing waters of the river Caledon for the purpose of washing, when he observed a number of men allowing the wool to float away on the current. Such wanton waste aroused his wrath.

"Ye drunken, lazy spawn o' Sautan," he roared;

"A doote veera much if ma meenistrations ha' done ye ower much gude."

At this juncture a big, stout man who was standing with his arms full of wool on the bank at a point where the current ran swirling at a great rate, looked over his shoulders with a half-drunken, insolent laugh, and the next moment he tossed the wool he held on to the breast of the rushing water. Without a word McGlusky sprang upon him, and catching him round the middle, swung him off his feet and tossed him over the bank after the wool he had wasted. The drunken man sunk like a lump of granite.

"I ha' gotten rid o' ane black sheep," said the Scot to his whiskers, "an' noo for the storm." He had not long to wait for it; the negroes who had been drinking swarmed round him; fortunately, their arms were in their kraals, or the Apostle would have found a tomb in his vineyard. As they came at him, he muttered, "Peter smote at the ear o' ane o' the scorners in the garden; why should A no da the same?" Suiting the action to his thought, he swung his big right fist on to the ear of the first man that came within hitting distance with such force that the half-drunken man went over the bank into the river. But the rest swarmed in upon him; he did all that one man might do, but the effort was in vain, and the Apostle was finally hurled with considerable emphasis into the turbulent waters of the Caledon. He could swim like any saurian, and soon had his head above water. As he rose, the crowd on the bank picked up pieces of rock to hurl at him, whereupon he promptly dived, and coming up under the shelter of the overhanging bank, swam gently down with the current for about a mile, when, thinking he had gone far enough for all practical purposes, he struck out into mid-stream and scanned the banks for a chance

to land once more in his vineyard, for it had never entered into his mind to forsake his flock. His opportunity came at last. He saw an acacia tree, whose drooping boughs hung down to the water's edge. Clutching a stout limb, he drew himself upwards, and soon landed on the soil of his adoption. Wringing the water out of his shirt and kilt, he made his way back swiftly to the village, just in time to find that his old cross-bearer had raised the grim standard, manufactured out of an ancient elephant gun and an assegai, and had called the faithful around it. A splendid lot of men they were, all the sober men of the tribe arrayed against the drinking element. Both sides were armed to the teeth and meant business, but the chief standing between them had kept them from actual blows. As McGlusky stood unobserved between the huts, he heard the leader of the enemy shout derisively:

"Where is your white leader? Where is your prophet? Ho, ho! He has gone to feed the fishes."

"Ye leear," was the Scot-Australian's laconic comment, under his breath. He sprang into his hut, threw his bandolier over his shoulder, picked up his carbine, hung it on his forearm, and then with infinite tenderness raised his bagpipes and marched out.

"Your white man is at the bottom of the river. Go and call him to come and fight for you!" jeered the orator of the other side.

"He will come again," answered the old cross-bearer, confidently. "Such as he do not die by the hands of such as thou."

"Ho, ho, ho," laughed the orator.

At that instant McGlusky let the bagpipes go in a wailing howl that would have made a pack of hyenas claim him as kin. Then, swelling out his chest, he marched with solemn dignity into the arena, parading

up and down between the combatants. A great shout went up from his own men; terror-stricken silence fell upon the foe. McGlusky played love tunes, sweet, gentle notes like a cow bellowing for her calf over a thorn hedge. He touched another key, and stirred the blood with the fever of battle. Again he changed the note until the young lambs hard by on the hillsides skipped in the sunshine. Then, without warning, he dropped the bagpipes, clubbed his rifle, and rushed on the rebels, and his men followed him. It was a grand victory for the temperance army; they slated the thirsty ones along the valleys, they thrashed them along the hillside, neither did they spare them upon the mountain-tops. Many men were slain that day, and all who were not slain were quickly converted to the principles of teetotalism. McGlusky adopted a simple formula with the men on the vanquished side. He called each man before him and said, "Will ye be a watter drinker henceforth, or be butted under the ear wi' an axe the noo?" To a man they forsook their drinking habits on the spot, and entered the army of temperance, whereupon McGlusky shed tears of joy, because of the light that had dawned upon their darkness. Long before the white "Apostle" had arrived amongst them there had been two factions in the Basuto nation, the drinkers and the abstainers, and sooner or later the battle-axe would have settled the feud, so that the "Apostle's" advent had only precipitated a foregone conclusion.

"I'll purge the land o' its ineequeeties," chanted the reformer next day. "I'll ha' the temples o' Baal hewn down an' all that pertains thereto destroyed," whereby he meant that he would destroy every hut where liquor had been manufactured, and every vessel that had been used in its manufacture or its storage,

and he fulfilled his purpose relentlessly. He caused the huts to be burnt to the ground, and the earthenware vessels to be brought to the foot of a mountain and then broken into small pieces. So did McGlusky commence to pluck the weeds that choked his vineyard, and peace reigned therein for a season. After the battle of Joubert's Kloof was fought between the Boers and British, a little way out in the Free State, not far from where McGlusky was located, news reached him that the Boers had buried about two hundred rifles and a lot of ammunition before they surrendered, meaning to return and dig them up when occasion should offer. When he heard that item of information, he took his bagpipes and went up on a lonely mountain and played softly to himself by way of straightening out his thoughts.

"Twa hunner gude rifles buried deep in the soil," he soliloquized. "If A had 'em A could start on ma pilgrimage wi' a fair prospect o' comin' out on top. A dinna want to interfere in the strife between Briton and Boer, but A maun ha' those rifles."

Just then a beautiful silver jackal appeared about ninety yards from where he sat. He picked up his carbine and tried a snap-shot, missing the pretty creature by a hair's-breadth. The jackal streaked away like a flash of silver in the direction of the place where the Boer rifles lay buried. McGlusky leaped to his feet with a joyous shout, and fondled his musical instrument ecstatically.

"It's a sign," he cried, "a sign. Who said the day o' meericales had passed? A came up here to meeditate an' seek counsel o' the Lord concerning those Dutch rifles, an' the Lord in His mercy sends this beastie as a sign ta me to go an' tak' the rifles. First of a' I fire at the beastie an' miss him at ninety yeards, which shows the finger o' Providence must ha' been behind the animal.

Then when I miss him the creature runs direct towards the spot where the rifles are lyin' waitin' for an owner. It's veera plain ta me that the Lord means me to go an' take the guns."

McGlusky was like a lot of other prophets—he read the signs according to his wants. If the jackal, after being fired at, had run in a direction that led away from the buried rifles, he would doubtless have construed it into a sign that the Lord meant him to take the firearms from the place where they lay some spot in Basutoland. As it was, he considered he had had a sign, and he acted upon it.

That night he and two hundred warriors swam the Caledon and marched to the spot they knew of, and by starlight dug up the rifles and all the ammunition De la Rey had planted. As they trooped back the warriors crowed with glee, for the adventure was after their hearts' desire. Having got an armed guard that he could rely upon, the Scot-Australian determined to take the wool to a market where it would command a good price and a ready market, and the chief fell in with those views. So they mustered three hundred trek oxen; the wool was done up into convenient bales and packed on the backs of the oxen. McGlusky and his band mounted their horses. The old cross-bearer with his quaint symbol of a new religion marched ten paces to the front. The signal was given, and the "Apostle of Peace," armed to the teeth, rode off to barter wool for weapons of war and to meet with many adventures on the way.

His first trouble was with a roving band of Swazi fighting men, who, because they outnumbered the "Apostle's" little army, determined to take toll of them. McGlusky spoke them fairly, saying how he sought to do no man a wrong, but only to sell his goods in the best market for the best price. The Swazis, who looked upon

civility as a sign of weakness, demanded as a right a certain amount of ammunition from the Basutos. At this McGlusky, who saw that he would have to fight, asked for a truce until the morning, promising on his word as a man to send them all the ammunition they wanted in the morning.

"How is this?" asked the old cross-bearer, when the envoys had left. "How is this that you promise to send these Swazi dogs all the ammunition they require in the morning? Are we children or women that we should give up what is ours to these sons of pigs? It is not thus that we expected thee to answer them."

"Nevertheless, I have answered them so, and my word I will keep; I swear it on the cross. As for thee and thy fellows, do as I command thee, and ask not the reasons from a prophet."

"If thou wert to tell us to fight, we would not ask thee for reasons," grumbled the veteran.

"And who has told thee, thou stiff-necked old hard-shell, that thou shalt not fight?"

"Thou hast said with thine own mouth that thou wilt send them our ammunition," was the surly answer.

"So I will, fool; send it to them from the muzzles of our rifles; more than the Swazi thieves will care to receive."

"Oai, oai, oai," chortled the cross-bearer; "now I see thy meaning; thou canst see in the dark farther than we can see in the daylight; thou art indeed a prophet."

"A am that, an' ane of the best," was McGlusky's smug reply. "Go thou now; tell the headman to draw his oxen up on the top of that little hill, where the water from the stream flows from the high hill a mile away, for we must not laager where there is no water, neither must we laager in low ground where our camp may be

rushed. Tell him to form his cattle in a circle, so that when the bales of wool are unloaded they will form a rampart behind which we can hide on all sides and shoot down the Swazis when they rush. Earth makes a good breastwork, so does timber; but bales of wool are better than either. No bullet that was ever fired from a rifle can pierce through a bale of wool. Our horses and our cattle must lie in the little basin that lies like a cup in the top of the hill. As for our standard, see to it that it is posted where the enemy can see it, for it is not a thing that must be hid when the enemy are looking towards us."

The camp was pitched according to the orders of the "Apostle," the horses and cattle were watered and the men made a good evening meal. Then McGlusky himself went the rounds, placing sentinels at given points, for though he had a firm faith in the God of Battles, McGlusky did not believe in trusting anything to chance, and he had a decided objection to having his camp rushed during the night.

"The Swazi never fight at night," said one young warrior, rather sulkily, when he was put on sentry duty.

"Is that so?" remarked McGlusky. "That means that you have never known him to fight at night-time; therefore be doubly cautious and watchful, for it is what you have never known that you have most to dread when you are on the warpath."

CHAPTER VII

THE LILY O' THE VALLEY

THE escort, working as only instinctive fighting men can work, soon had a rampart of wool bales around their camp. In the centre of the laager McGlusky built a pile four bales high, and on top of this he fixed the cross. The old standard-bearer wanted to stand there and hold his cross above his head, but the common sense of the white man prevented the sacrifice.

"Dinna thraw yer life away, mon ; it's a feckless thing for a chiel to do ; besides, if ye air shot yer blood will run doon into the bales an' spoil ma wool. Reeleegion is reeleegion, ma mon, but beesness is beesness."

The standard-bearer shook his head sullenly ; he would not forsake the cross while there was life in him. He did not understand what it represented. He only saw as through a glass darkly, but he clung with magnificent tenacity to what he could see. Wrapping his coarse blanket round his shoulders, he took his axe by the haft and threw himself at full length at the foot of the cross, just where its shadows fell, on the hard earth, looking like a huge boarhound.

As McGlusky looked down at the silent figure he soliloquized : "A'm thinkin' if the Swazis rush me camp and get as far as the cross there'll be a good many things spoilt besides wool."

At dawn his men were stirring, and as the Scot-Australian looked at them he knew they would put up a fight worthy even of a new religion. Their eyes, always bright, were blazing now; their big nostrils closed and expanded like the nostrils of horses when they sniff a forest fire; their thick lips were drawn back from their white teeth, until the red gums showed clear above the spotless ivory. They had oiled themselves from head to foot, and the muscles ran like silver wire stretched taut beneath the glistening skin. Each warrior was armed with an axe, a stabbing assegai, two throwing assegais and a rifle. The Swazis, tall, fine men, picked warriors to a man, marched carelessly forward to demand the fulfilment of the white man's promise. When they saw the ramparts they were puzzled.

"The white man has broken faith," said the leader; "he is going to fight." Halting his men, he dug his heels into his pony's flanks and shot forward, galloping right up to within a stone's throw of the breastwork.

"Are you there, white man?" he called.

"A'm in the veeceenity, nigger," was the Scot-Australian's curt answer.

"You have deceived us, white man."

"Veera likely A ha' done so; it was ma inteention."

"Why did you lie to me like a coward, or a woman?"

"It wasna leein', it was tactics," grinned McGlusky.

"You lied like a coward," reiterated the Swazi.

"Na, na," answered the Scot-Australian, "if you had foond oot before A had my eentreenchments made, it wad ha' been leein', but as ye didna da that, it was tactics."

"Will you give us the cartridges you promised, white man?"

"Haud on, mon: A didna say A'd gie ye my ammuneetion. A said A'd send ye all ye'd require, an', ma certie,

if ye don't ca' yer men off oot o' rifle range, A'll send ye lead enough to satisfy a Christian, let alone a black-hided barbarian. Gang awa' an' study the deeference between leein' and tactics ; ye'll maybe find the lesson o' great value in the future."

The Basutos laughed joyously at the craft of their leader, appreciating at its full value his lesson in "tactics" ; but the Swazis were boiling with wrath. As soon as their leader rejoined them and explained matters, they laid themselves flat on their ponies' backs and charged with desperate valour. On they rode down the slopes of the hill where they had been standing, like a torrent they swept over the little valley which was covered with tussocks of grass, up the hillside they rushed with superb bravery, and all the time McGlusky's men knelt coolly behind the wool bales and fired steadily. They were not good shots, neither were they trained to volley-firing, but they were beautifully steady, obeying every command of the hairy white man as though the voice of a god fell upon their ears. The Swazis possessed a wild discipline of their own, riding in open order, as many of them had ridden in former times on Boer laagers. They faced death like men. Their men and their horses fell thickly, but the remainder did not flinch, they did not pause. Ney's wonderful cavalry at Waterloo, charging right up to the bayonets of the British squares, did not display a more fiery valour. Some had their horses shot under them right up against the woollen ramparts, the riders sprang from the ground as their ponies fell, and, gripping their stabbing assegais midway between butt and blade, leaped on to the wool bales, grabbed the rifles by the muzzles, and stabbed downwards through throat and chest, sending the flat, broad, heavy steel far on through heart and lungs, whooping their wild war-cry as they struck

home, and taking their own death-wounds a moment later in splendid silence. Others, riding grandly, rushed on through the leaden storm, and driving their game little chargers at the ramparts cleared everything in front of them. Landing in the laager they charged here and there, stabbing swiftly on the off and the near side with marvellous dexterity. Once or twice the invaders swept down upon the "cross," but the old man met each rush with the splendid savagery of his breed. He seldom struck first at a man, nearly always he jumped forward to meet the charging pony, and dropping to one knee cut with unerring skill at the forelegs of the horse, landing with his axe midway between fetlock and knee-joint, cracking the bone like a dry bough, and so bringing horse and rider to earth, from which neither ever rose. After each encounter he turned with a wild, hoarse bellow and waved his gory weapon towards the emblem of peace and goodwill, sprinkling it with the blood of man and beast. The Swazis were beaten; they found out what a smaller force, handled by a man who knew what he wanted and saw what he wanted done, could do. Twenty of their number fell into the hands of the Basutos, who wanted to slaughter them at the foot of the cross as a thankoffering for victory, but McGlusky would have no cold bloodshed.

"Kill!" he cried; "kill a' ye can in honest fecht, but dinna slaughter when the lust o' battle ha' passed away, for the mon who kills a captive is a cooard, an' will die a dog's death hissel', whether he be white mon or black mon, Christian or Pagan."

A look of strange exultation flashed across his rugged face.

"I ha' killed my foes in fair fecht; in the open wi' weapons in their hands. I wad kill ma eneemies ta-day if they stood in battle against me, but never shall any mon, black or white, ca' ma a butcher. These men air

oor captives, fallen ta our bow and spear. Let us tak' them ta the cross an' swear them inta the new nation, an' mak' them soldiers o' the army o' the new reeleegion, the reeleegion o' the rifle."

The impulsive Africans caught at the new doctrine with childlike eagerness. They swarmed around the vanquished Swazis, and thrust weapons in their hands, and made them freemen there and then. They carried them in triumph to the cross, and McGlusky swore them into the new faith, and so gained a few recruits to his strange little army. The men he had thus recruited made up in numbers for those of his own who had been killed or disabled, and in a short time were amongst the most fanatical and devoted of his followers. So the Scot-Australian marched across the country, fighting when he had to fight, adopting what he termed "tactics" when he could, losing some men in every encounter, but picking up others to fill their places. When he had a chance to trade, he traded, sowing with one hand, gaining with two, for he counted it a shame to his manhood to be outwitted in a trade, and it is only fair to him to remark that on that score he seldom had cause to blush. When he fought with a tribe and conquered, he captured all their flocks and herds, and promptly traded them away to some other party for skins, ivory and other articles of value, so that when at last he blundered into Portuguese territory he had not only a nice little army of seasoned and picked men, well equipped, but he had his caravans of beasts laden with wool and a goodly army of oxen loaded with the products of the fertile African soil. His advent caused quite a flutter; special war correspondents got hold of the news and promptly cabled all over the world that a great native rising had taken place with the intention of reconquering the soil from the Portuguese. Troops were sent up from Delagoa Bay with the greatest

speed possible. Women who lived in isolated places drew their children to them of an evening and huddled round the fire, dreading the rush of an impi. All sorts of wild rumours were in the air. Some said a negro army in the pay of the British had crossed the border in order to wreck the Portuguese railways and smash the Portuguese seaport to prevent the Boers from landing supplies there. Others were just as emphatic that it was a tribe in the pay of the Boers, who were bent upon reducing the country to a state of desolation because the port had been closed to them as a doorway for supplies from Europe. Oom Paul Kruger was said to be leading the natives in person, he having fixed up an agreement with the leading tribesmen to divide Africa between the Dutch and the black races, all others to be swept into the sea or trampled into the soil. There was a lot of rivalry amongst the correspondents concerning this matter; each man vowed that he, and he only, knew the real leader and his dire intentions. One darkly hinted that Lloyd George had forsaken the classic shades of St. Stephen's and bidden farewell to the mountains and the glens of Wales, and was leading a barbarian horde so that he might complicate matters for Mr. Chamberlain, his watchword in all things being "Not for Joe." All the correspondents were agreed that there was a white man at the head of affairs, but no two of them could agree concerning his identity. One day all the newspapers of Britain and Europe were positive that it was a great Boer prophet and fanatic, either Kruger, Botha, Steyn, or De Wet. The next they were just as certain that the leader was a Britisher. Winston Churchill, who had escaped by a feat of splendid daring from a Boer laager, was supposed to be the new crusader, and was credited with an intention to rival the deeds of Attila by overrunning the world. Even

Campbell-Bannerman figured in the list of heroes. McGlusky's little band grew hourly (on paper) until it became a vast black cloud overshadowing Africa. These ruthless warriors were the theme which filled the Continental Press with awful tales of rapine, plunder and murder. A shriek went up to heaven against the agents of Britain who "made a wilderness and called it peace." Good but sadly misguided women met in Holland, Brussels, in Paris and in Berlin to draw up petitions to be presented to the Queen of England asking that the ravishers might be held in check; and during the whole time McGlusky and his little band of traders laagered peacefully near a small town, through which the train containing women and children passed daily, unmolested and undelayed. A Portuguese dignitary rode out and demanded of the Scot-Australian what his business might be, whereupon the Scot drew him out of earshot of his fellows and unfolded his mission.

The Portuguese shook his head violently at first. He was a man of honour, a gentleman, a soldier, a diplomat, and a hundred other things besides. He could not touch trade. He would sell no arms, no ammunition. He despised gold; his soul soared above it. To all of which McGlusky listened patiently, and then commenced again:

"Ye ha' a lot o' rifles an' ammuneetion here, I ken that well enoo', and A ken ye dinna know just what to do wi' all o' them. They were brought inta your territory by Boer agents, who want ta slip 'em across the border as soon as possible, but the British spies ken weel where those things air, an' if ye allow them ta cross your borders, ye'll maybe find a British man-o'-war poundin' your seaport to blazes ane o' these fine days."

"You seem to know a very great deal about Boer management," replied the high functionary testily.

"A do, mon," was the unctuous reply. "A was a preedeekant o' the Dutch Church in Pretoria before the war, an' not bin a daft fule, an' havin' eyes an' ears which the Lord in His weesdom gied ta me, A ken some o' the doin's o' you Portuguese gentlemen."

"You were a spy, then?"

"A was naething o' that kind."

"What do you call it except spying?"

"Tactics," said McGlusky, and he grinned abominably in the face of the functionary.

The yellow gentleman shrugged his gold-laced shoulders violently, and made remarks about "tactics" that will not bear printing.

"You tell me," he growled, "that if I allow those things to cross the border I may find a British gunboat blowing our port to pieces, and I tell you that if I don't allow them to cross our borders I may have a Boer commando rushing into our territory and destroying everything they can lay hands upon."

McGlusky stroked his whiskers thoughtfully.

"Ye air between twa millstones," he said; "ye must e'en risk ane o' them fallin' on top o' ye."

"What would you do in the same circumstances?" asked the official.

"Choose the lightest ane," said the Scot promptly. "Ye ha' played wi' the de'il, ye must bide the taste o' the brimstone the noo."

"What do you suggest?"

"Tactics." Once again the worried official made unprintable remarks about "tactics."

"Look here, ma mon, I'll tell ye the use o' tactics in a seetuation like the present. Ye ha' a thoosan' rifles an' a lot o' ammuneetion that came over from Germany in the steamship *Dettenburg*. Tell me where I can lay ma

hands on them an' I'll loot the lot, an' so free ye from an awkward preedicament.

"In return for your goodness ta me I'll mak' ye a present o' ma goods an' chattels. When I ha' got away wi' my loot ye can gather an army an' pursue me. I'll be far enough away by the time ye ha' got your troops into marchin' order, whereby ye can get much credit from your Government for drivin' back a hostile army. Ye can put ma fechtin' strength doon at ten thoosan'. Ye can mak' yerself richt wi' both Boer and Briton, and ye can put siller in yer pouch. What mair can the heart o' man desire? That's 'tactics.'"

"How can I explain your presence here to the Boer commandants?"

"Tell them no lees; tell them this, an' it's the truth, mon; tell them that A came here to trade awa' ma goods for three five-head batteries for crushing quartz in some goold mines A ken aboot in British territory."

"You want three 'five-head batteries' for quartz crushing?"

"A do."

"I can sell them to you if you have the money."

"Siller and goold I ha' none, but I ha' wool, an' ivory, an' skins."

"That will do as well," was the curt reply.

So the deal was fixed up, and McGlusky packed his quartz mills in sections on the backs of his oxen, and having transferred all his goods to the storehouse of a very religious Scotsman whom the Portuguese official had appointed as "go-between," he made his way, led by his saintly countryman, to the place where the rifles were stored. On the way to the spot he had a grand dispute on theological topics with the Scot, who proved to be a master disputant. So close and so fierce did the dispute become that McGlusky, who always hankered for salt

with his meat, wanted to settle it with his shirt off on a piece of level turf, but the other Scot scoffed at him for a son of Belial and a man of blood. Whereat McGlusky looked at him scornfully, saying, "A dinna need to ask whether ye coom fra the Hielan's or the Lowlan's, Maister Donald Crow; I ken ye were a Lowlan' mon when A saw ye at Deevine service last Sawbath."

"Ye did, did ye, mon," was the mild reply, "and hoo did ye tell that?"

"A had ma eye on ye, Maister Donald Crow, an' A saw hoo much ye put in the plate when the deacon was gain' roon for the offeerin's to the Lord. A put in saxpence masel', bein' o' Hielan' stock, but ye on'y put in a ha'penny, Maister Crow. Dinna deny it, mon, A saw ye do it, an' a lood clatter an' noise ye made wi' the coin, stirring up what was in the offeerin' box wi' yer thumb, to deeceeive the congregation o' the Lord inta beleevin' ye had put in na less than half-a-croon."

Donald Crow hung his head in shame. "It was ma lucky ha'penny," he said, "the ane I broucht oot o' Scotlan' twal years agon, an' the mon who gets it will ha' good fortune."

McGlusky sniffed, for he knew full well the difference in the social position of a man who gave "saxpince" in one whirlwind of generosity and the man who contributed a paltry ha'penny. When they arrived at the place where the rifles were stored, McGlusky wasted no time. He went to work on the wooden building and broke down the doors, for that was part of his understanding with the Portuguese official. His men worked like tigers, for they knew that they had a dangerous task on hand. Case after case of ammunition was strapped on to the backs of mules and horses with the speed which comes only of long practice in such work. Package after package of rifles was hoisted on to the backs of oxen. Then the

place was fired and the caravan moved off. McGlusky was the last man to move. As he was about to mount his horse, Deacon Crow laid his hand upon his arm.

"What's awa' wi 'ye ? " asked the Scot-Australian.

"A am a man o' humble an' contrite heart," snuffled the deacon, "an' ye air a mon bo'n ta do great deeds in this warl'. Shall we na ha' a word o' prayer before we part, for the sake o' the blood we both carry an' the land we coom fra ? "

So McGlusky bared his head, and the deacon prayed a beautiful prayer full of brotherly love and sweetness—just such a prayer as might have left the lips of a broken-hearted Covenanter in the Scottish hills in the days of the persecutions.

At the finish the Scot-Australian said:

"Ye ha' great gifts, deacon, great gifts. The Lord ha' gi'en to me the power o' smitin', but ye ha' the power o' prayer michtily deveeloped. A'm prood to ca' ye a countrymon."

"A am a humble an' a contrite mon," replied the deacon meekly. "A dinna fash myself aboot warldly gear or warldly glory; A keep mysel' oot o' the path o' great men as a lily o' the valley keeps awa' fra the tops o' mountains, but if A can serve ye at any time, Meester McGlusky, I'll be prood. If at any time ye may want a pom-pom gun to assist ye in yer wark, coom to me an' A will show ye where ane lies, an' more ammuneetion for it than nine oxen could carry."

McGlusky's eyes began to bulge out of his head.

"A pom-pom gun an' more ammuneetion than nine oxen can carry ! Mon, do ye ken where it is the noo ? "

"A do," was the deacon's laconic reply.

"Tell me, mon, an' I'll gie ye ma whole heart."

"A wad like to ha' yer heart, Meester McGlusky, but A want siller, an' more siller than A'm thinkin' ye possess."

"Hoo much?" was the hot answer.

"Hoo much ha' ye got?"

"Twa hunner poonds in English goold."

"I'll tak' it."

"Wheer is the pom-pom?"

"Where is the siller?"

McGlusky went to his pack-horse and drew the money from his saddle-bag. "Noo, mon, where is the pom-pom?"

Then began a fierce haggle. McGlusky wanted the gun before he parted with his money; the deacon wanted the money before he parted with his secret.

"I'll gie half doon," said McGlusky.

"I'll no tak' it. A've told ye a'ready that the gun lies ten mile from here on your way over our borders. I'll tell ye na more wi'oot siller."

"Come wi' ma and get it. I'll pay as soon as A see the gun."

The deacon grinned.

"Na, na, it canna be," he said; "the Boers would ken a' aboot it in a couple o' hoors, and I wad be a dead mon; their spies swarm all over the country. A did wrong to mention it. A only spoke of it ta you because ye were o' my own blood. A am no a fechter, A am a lily o' the valley, the mountain tops air no for me, an' men like me. Let us have ane more prayer an' part in peace wi' a clasp o' the hand an' a gude wish, as becomes brither Scots."

"Na, it maun be as you say, deacon; tak' the siller, it's ma all, an' tell me where the pom-pom lies hid."

So the deacon took the gold with many a backward and sideward glance, as one who fears the eyes of spies. Then he whispered the directions into McGlusky's ear and fled.

Very rapidly McGlusky crossed that ten miles of space. He found the little church nestling away at the foot of

a mountain, to which he had been directed, and he found the green mound, with the cluster of bushes on top at the right-hand side of the church, and he set his men to dig for the cellar beneath, and found it. But instead of a pom-pom and ammunition nestling there he found nothing but dampness and mildew, and the coffin of a priest who had died there years before.

Then McGlusky forgot the teachings of his youth, forgot that his father was a deacon in the city of Adelaide in far-off Australia, forgot the commandment which saith thou shalt not swear, and he cursed the deacon and all his works, even the deacon's eyes and his mother and father he spared not.

"Twa hunner poonds," he moaned, "twa hunner in guid goold. I'll kick the wammle oot o' him if A ever see him again. He was a lily o' the valley, a humble and a contrite mon. Oh, ma certie, I'll mak' a lily o' the valley oot o' him ; it's enough to mak' a mon lose faith in Proveedence."

CHAPTER VIII

HE STARTS MINING

OF McGlusky's struggles, hardships and dangers whilst fighting his way back to Basutoland, what need is there to talk ? Is it not written on the map of Africa ? Shall I waste space and the patience of men by detailing his meeting with the white man who called himself "The Voice of Rhodes the Dictator" ? Let it suffice that I say that such an one met the Scot-Australian and his little band in a tangled forest, and said, "So far you have come, but no farther can you go." To which the hairy-faced white man had made answer :

"You do not speak like a mon remembering a mon's leemeetations o' weesdom, or a mon's leemeetations o' power. Who the de'il is Rhodes that he should lay his hand on the map of Africa and say, 'By this path or this highway ye may travel, or by that highway or that path ye may not go' ? A'm thinkin' Rhodes didna' make Africa, though Africa made Rhodes, as it ha' made many a better mon before him." To which the strange white man made answer, playing nervously the while with the trigger of his carbine, as he sat on his little grey pony under the shadow of a big tree, "Did you ever see a better man than Rhodes ?"

And McGlusky had sworn with a big oath saying, "Ay, that I have. Five thoosan' better men. They breed better men than he in every village in Australia—the

smith at his forge, the carpenter at his bench, the gay lad at his wark in the factory, the farmer owerlookin' his farm, the hired hand at the plough. A look on them as better men than this mon o' millions who, if half what is told be true, colours his goold in human blood."

The stranger half-lifted his carbine, when out of the shadow slipped a long, gaunt, white-haired warrior, with axe poised for slaying, and stood at his knee. McGlusky looked round and saw that the Cross had no protector. The eyes of the two white men met, and the Scot-Australian smiled. "Ye pin yer faith to Cecil Rhodes," he said; "A pin mine ta reeleegion."

"Do you know," said the stranger, "that I can raise up a hundred men to every one you possess by lifting my hand, not mere savages, but fellows led by white men, and equipped with rifles and quick-firing guns?"

Without a word McGlusky drove his spurs into his horse's flanks, and ranging up alongside the white man he plucked him out of the saddle as a boy plucks a pear when it is hardly ripe on the bough. The man struggled, but the hand on his neck was living granite. A rifle cracked somewhere away in the shadow, and a whistling piece of lead cut a breezy furrow through McGlusky's whiskers. Then the Basutos who were nearest ran forward, took cover, and sent volley after volley into the bush around them, whilst the "Apostle of Peace" simply cantered out of range with his prisoner.

"You will suffer for this some day," said the prisoner sullenly, as McGlusky bound his hands behind him with raw hide thongs, and then ran the thongs down to the ankles and tied them so that the man could not walk two paces without toppling head over heels.

"Veera likely, veera likely," was the smiling reply. "In the meantime A'm thinkin' it's yersel' who is doin' most o' the sufferin'."

"Do you think a thing like you can cross Rhodes's path and not be crushed, you unwashed fool?" sneered the stranger, writhing in his bonds. McGlusky flushed red-hot under the taunt.

"If it were na fa yer han's bein' tied, A'd kick ye inta yon prickly pear bush, ye mangy jackal! Rhodes may be a leeon. A dinna ken ower much concernin' him, but he keeps packs o' jackals to do his dirty work, an' ye air ane o' them!"

"What do you mean to do with me, anyway? Kill me, eh?"

"Maybe yes, maybe no," was the "Apostle's" sweet answer. "A will just tak' ye along wi' me for a while until A coom inta the outer edges of the Basuto mountains, then maybe I'll set ye free; but if your fellows gie me ower much trouble, I'll hang ye ta the limb o' a tree as A would hang a dog."

"The law will call that murder, no matter what you may call it, you hook-nosed Philistine."

"The law!" scoffed McGlusky; "a fat lot you an' such as you care for law when once you are outside the circle o' the law. You do what you like, and no one living knows what happens. If a white mon comes across your path, an' his objects don't fit in wi' your schemes, you rub him oot. Then you tell the foolish correspondents o' English newspapers a tale when you meet them, saying that such and such a tribe o' niggers have been guilty of robbery and murder, and the correspondents write up a tale which causes the religious societies to send oot missionaries ta convert the heathen; and the heathen, who do not understand the missionaries, knock them on the head, and then there is a little war. After which the capitalist (who is the friend of the missionary) comes along and pegs out the country, and the whole thing is settled nicely. The nigger is killed

off by the fighting whites until only a remnant of him is left, and then what is left of him is made into a Christian and a slave."

"You are a liar," said the white man, sitting quietly in his bonds.

"Am A ?" answered McGlusky. "You say A am a leear. Go and ask of the tribes who once dwelt in the country you now call Rhodesia. See what they have to say concernin' the way they were converted to Christianity; see what they have to say aboot the gentle lessons they received aboot their souls, an' aboot the lessons o' Calvary. They heard the Wurd o' God from the mouths o' rifles, and they accepted conversion from the mouth o' Gatling guns. A'm thinkin', ma mon, that Christ would ha' preached a different doctrine, but perhaps your leader may be a better an' a bigger mon than the Mon who shook the Judean hills wi' the glory o' His teachin'."

"You're as mad as a hatter," said the prisoner. "No person in his sane senses talks about Christ. Christ died nearly two thousand years ago. We only use His name to scare foolish people to church. No one believes in Christ to-day as a living power, no one thinks of Christ as a factor in his life's work."

"Ye are a leear, an' the son o' a leear, an' a leear's blood runs in your veins," said McGlusky. "Christ lives to-day as He lived yesterday an' twa thoosand years ago. Christ will live when you an' such spawn as you are forgotten. The only thing aboot the Christ which is forgotten is the sweet charity o' His teachings; an', ma certie, mon, I'll cut yer bonds an' set ye free if ye will fecht me, to prove the sweet love of the Maister, for A'm a follower o' the meek an' lowly One, and A glory in doin' His sarvice."

"Why don't you go to America and start a new Zion,

call yourself a healer of sickness by the laying on of hands, and all the rest of the cant, you snivelling humbug? You're out for what money you can make, just as much as I am."

At this imputation McGlusky fairly danced with passion ungovernable. He called the prisoner many names, none of which would have been suitable for a flower show, which caused the bound man to chuckle merrily, for he knew he had sent a shaft through the joints of McGlusky's harness.

"Look here, old whiskers," he sneered, "I don't think there's much money in Africa just now either for you or me. Think over the American dodge; it's workable and there's dollars in it. Take me as a partner. You be the prophet, and go about doing the Isaiah business, damn everybody up hill and down dale, and I'll sing them solos and look after the money. I've a good voice, and you have just the right appearance for a modern Messiah. You look part horse thief, part fool and part poet; it's just the real jam. Like to hear me sing, eh, before you consider the partnership? Well, just to please you, my pearl, here goes," and lifting up a tenor voice so pure and strong that even his captor stood enraptured, he sang "The Holy City." When he reached the words—

Hushed were the glad Hosannas the little children sang,
The sun grew dark with mystery, the morn was cold and chill,
As the shadow of a cross arose upon a lonely hill.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hark, how the angels sing,
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to your King!

the "Apostle of Peace" could restrain himself no longer. Pushing his old felt hat far back upon his head, thrusting one hand into his breeches pocket, and holding his other arm bare to the shoulder well out in front of him, he joined in the grandest of modern sacred songs, his chin pointing towards the skies, his feet beating time to the melody.

The prisoner watched him with eyes that danced with mirth unspeakable. When the melody ceased he turned upon the singer with envy written large all over his face.

"By ma soul, mon, but ye ha' a great gift. The Lord ha' been veera marciful ta ye, inasmuch as He ha' gied ye great talents. Ta some it is ordained that they shall be fechters an' expounders o' the Word, ta ithers it is given to be strong in prayer, but to few is it given to be a sweet-voiced songster like yersel'."

"Start a Gospel mill, and take me in business with you," chirruped the gifted one irreligiously.

"Dinna scoff, mon—dinna scoff. The laughter of a fule is but the crackling of thorns under a pot. Remember, mon, that an act once set loose goes on creatin' and recreatin' other acts which the mon who did the act little kens aboot. His act may be a little sin, but the last act which is born of his first act may be a great crime, an' God will hold him as responsible for the last act as for the first."

"That's a nice creed. I suppose that's what the ancients meant by the doctrine of the father's sin being visited on the heads of the children even unto the third and fourth generation."

"Why not?" asked McGlusky. "Why not? Is it na part o' the plan?"

"I don't believe a word of it. I believe a man commits what you cranks call a sin, which is another name for a breach of natural law, and having broken the law he suffers for it in his own person, in some way directly or indirectly, as surely as moon and tides know each other; but don't think the fourth and fifth generation business will hold water. If it does, then in simple justice your God ought to visit the virtues of the mothers on the great-grandchildren in an equal proportion."

"Mon," said McGlusky, solemnly rising and cutting the stranger's bonds, " gang awa'. A will no meddle wi' ye because A see the hand o' Proveedence is upon ye the noo; ye carry a dead soul inside ye. A pity ye from the bottom o' ma heart. You air worse off than the Chinamen, for they do believe in their wooden idols. A dead soul is an awful burden. I'll wrastle in prayer for ye the nicht; but noo clear oot, for A'd as lief ha' the de'il himself in my camp."

The stranger looked very hard, very steadily, at the weird figure in front of him. " I thought you were a fraud, McGlusky; now I see you are only a crank."

Then he went out of the Scot-Australian's life much as he had come into it. McGlusky pursued his way into Basutoland unmolested; but the memory of the man he had met in the shades of the African forest abode with him for many a year. When the " Apostle of Peace " marched into the chief's village he received a mixed welcome. He had been away so long that the suspicion had arisen that he never intended to return. When the tribesmen saw him come back with a band four times as strong as the one he had taken they failed to understand it at all. The homecoming was not devoid of dignity. First and foremost marched McGlusky playing " Lochaber no more " on his pipes. Behind him rode a warrior who led McGlusky's big black horse, the same he had captured from the Boers the day he and Driscoll the scout had the fight with bare hands on the hillside behind the British camp. Just in the rear of the led charger stalked the old cross-bearer, axe on one shoulder, cross on the other; behind him, in single file, came the oxen loaded with the quartz-crushing machines; behind them the mules and horses bearing the packages of rifles and cases of ammunition. On each side of the beasts of burden rode a line of well-mounted, well-armed, supremely confident

fighting men; at the rear rode a troop of picked warriors, nine abreast and twenty deep. Far away on each flank scouts rode in pairs to act as screening parties to the convoy, to give warning of the approach of an enemy, and, if need be, engage them until the convoy could close up like a shut concertina, and the escort form a barrier of rifles around them. On the right and left front, well away from the main body, moving in open order, moved the forty best men in McGlusky's command, twenty on each front. Their business was to explore every inch of ground in advance of the convoy to prevent an ambush. They had to ride fearlessly into dark ravines, explore timbered country, climb kopjes, and hold them when necessary. It was they who selected each camping-ground for the night, and, having selected it, they had to ride off to hold every place of vantage in the vicinity until the confusion of unpacking the animals for the night was over, so that no watchful foe might spring upon the caravan in the midst of the muddle and confusion incidental to camping.

So careful had McGlusky been in such matters that no attack had been successfully made, though a good many futile efforts had been attempted. In this order of march the "Apostle of Peace" entered the principal village of the Basutos amidst intense but suppressed excitement. The chief was at first most ungracious to his white ally, demanding to know by what right so many armed men had been brought into his territory; but when McGlusky, with consummate craft, ordered his men to "pile arms," and then fall away and look after the cattle like ordinary herdsmen, the chief was somewhat mollified.

"The arms, chief, are thine; the men are thine, too, if you need them; if not, let them go as they came, in peace; but these rifles are as nothing to the others which I have brought in exhange for thy wool. Shall I bid

the men unpack the beasts, so that thou and thine may take the spoil ? "

"And the horses and mules and oxen, whose are they ?" demanded the chief, with an envious glance.

"The oxen are thine, chief ; the mules are also thine. All that I have brought with me is thine except the horses the men ride ; they are their own. With the strong hand they took them, with the strong hand they held them, and only a stronger hand shall take them from them."

"And thine own share of the spoil, what is it ? "

McGlusky pointed to the cross. "There is my share, that and the horse I ride and the rifle I carry, all of which I brought hither, as thou knowest, chief, when I came to thee first from the British lines."

At this the savage was satisfied.

"It is good," he cried ; "let each man keep his own horse and his own arms, the rest we will divide. Open the things that I may see them ; it is a tale almost too good to be true."

"All that I have told to thee is true, and yet I have told thee only half the truth, chief. There are machines here which will make the Basutos the richest and most powerful nation on earth, if they but cling close to the cross and obey."

A great fever took hold of the chief ; his jet-black face turned pale greenish-black, his lips thinned out like the lips of a snarling dog, his big, prominent eyes seemed to start from under the full, thick lids, his fingers indented themselves in the flesh of McGlusky's arm and shoulder. "Guns," he whispered—"cannon, English or Boer, pom-poms or field-guns ? "

At the mention of pom-poms, McGlusky thought of that gentle soul, that "Lily of the Valley," his prayerful brother-Scot, who had annexed his two hundred pounds, and given him nothing in return but theology, and a

gentle curse that would have done credit to any bullock driver in Australia rippled amidst the whiskers of the "Apostle of Peace."

"Na, na, chief, they air not guns." Then seeing the look of intense annoyance and disappointment that flashed across the strong fighting face of his interlocutor, he said, "But let me whisper a secret in thy lug, mon." The chief bent his woolly head, and McGlusky told him in rapid language that the machines he had were worth many guns. "Once let ma get them to work, an' we'll ha' all the guns we want. Why, mon, do as A tell thee, an' in less than ten years I'll place a cannon on every hill-top o' any importance in all Basutoland, so that an army twenty times stronger than the British army now fighting the Boers would be swept away like the dry grass by fire. Aye," continued McGlusky, now almost as excited as the chief, "on every mountain height a gun, behind every rock a rifle, an' in every valley a cross. We'll make the Basuto mountains wi' their eempregnable passes an' rough slopes the stronghold of the new reeleegion, the reeleegion o' the rifle, against all the warld o' infidels an' unbelievers."

As the chief looked at the store of rifles and cartridges the white man had brought him his heart opened. "You must not go unrewarded," he cried. "All others are rejoicing except thee, O white man. Ask of me a gift, and if my arm is long enough I will reach out and get it for thee."

At that moment McGlusky's eyes fell upon the superb form of the "milkmaid."

She was leaning with one hand on the shoulder of the young man whose thumbs the white man had broken in the fight on the shearing-shed floor.

"Is she married to that pagan yet?" he asked, jerking his head towards the damsel.

"Not yet," answered the chief.

"Then if thy arm is long enough, reach out and get her and give her to me."

"If my arm were not long enough for that, it were short indeed."

Beckoning the damsel to him, he placed her hands in those of the Scot-Australian, and that afternoon the betrothal ceremony took place.

CHAPTER IX

HE WORSHIPS THE GOLDEN CALF

IT was in McGlusky's mind to marry and commence an establishment of his own before commencing mining operations, but the chief objected. He wanted to see those wonderful machines at work which were to make him the richest chief in Africa. The Scot-Australian had won the confidence of the entire tribe by his gift of rifles and cartridges, so that they were now as eager to help him with his gold-digging as they had previously been opposed to the scheme. A concession to a white man they would not give on any terms, but they had no objection to working the gold themselves for their own benefit. So, much against his will, the white man had to defer his matrimonial designs for a season. Once when out hunting in the mountains he had stumbled across a quartz reef which cropped out of the ground to a height of several feet. True to his instincts as an Australian prospector, he had knocked several pieces off the "cap" of the reef, and had taken them back to the camp with him, and "dollied" them, pounding the rock to flour. He had washed the powdered stuff in clean river water as only an expert prospector can wash a "prospect," and had found it worth about one ounce and a half to the ton, and from that moment he had made up his mind that sooner or later he would work that reef, either with or without the sanction of the chief.

The reef cropped up on the top of a high hill, ran down its side into the valley, crossed the valley, and ran half-way up a hill on the other side of the valley. A beautiful little stream of water commenced just below the outcrop, so that McGlusky knew that great wealth lay in front of him, providing he could get permission to work the ground. He had known from the moment he had set foot in Basutoland that the country was highly auriferous. He had detected the presence of cinnabar before he had been there a week, so that he knew he should never be short of quicksilver for amalgamating purposes. There were diamonds there as well as gold. McGlusky knew that, because he had observed the women digging the red clay which ran in narrow seams in the mountain clefts, and he had observed how carefully they ran their fingers through the greasy crimson earth when they got home with it. He knew that they used the clay to ornament themselves with its colour and that the warriors did the same; but he could not understand what they searched for so carefully until he saw one of the women lift a small oval stone which looked like a pebble from a fistful of clay and put it in her mouth. He watched her intently and saw that she sucked the pebble quite clean, then held it up to the light between her finger and thumb. And then the Scot-Australian had whispered to his own soul:

"Diamonds! as A'm a livin' mon—diamonds! an' the heathen dinna ken their value; of a veerity this is a rich an' a goodly vineyard ta which the Lord ha' called me."

He had wisely pretended not to know anything about the diamonds, because he knew that every Basuto in the country knew the true history of Kimberley, and was not likely to encourage white men to come diamond-hunting in this territory. Some day Englishmen will know the

inner history of Kimberley, and then the whole land will blush from coast to coast, for it is one of the most sordid stories the world has known ; a story of lying, cheating and unmitigated fraud.

McGlusky knew something of that tale. He had heard it from the lips of black men and white, and therefore he kept his knowledge of Basutoland diamonds to himself.

The chief had held counsel with the three or four elders before he had granted the Scot-Australian permission to work the gold reef even for the good of the tribe. Long and seriously they had debated the matter, being fully aware of the danger of allowing the search for metals to commence.

" Let this man commence the search, let him find the gold, and let him put up the machines to crush the rock and show us how to work them, and then an assegai in the back of the neck and a hole in the ground for him," said one man, who had been a workman in Johannesburg mines.

" There is wisdom in that," answered the chief ; " no one will miss him, he belongs neither to the British army nor the Boers. He has come here to make use of us, we will make use of him ; then, as you say, an assegai in the back of the neck and a hole in the ground. Should the British ever ask for him, we will say the Boers came and took him. If the Boers come and demand him at our hands, we will say with many tears that the British sent armed men and took him with the strong hand. None will ever know where the dog lies."

So it was that McGlusky obtained permission to work the gold reef concerning which he knew. It had been in his mind at one time to sink a shaft on the reef, and test it to some considerable depth, but he gave up that plan and decided that he would first of all strip the reef from end to end as far as it outcropped, and crush the rock.

For this purpose he demanded two hundred young men from the chief, and with these he marched into the mountains, and, having located his valley, started on his daring enterprise.

One hundred men he put to work on each of the reefs with such rude tools as they had at their command. Picks were plentiful, for the natives used them in their farm work, but most of the other requisites for mining were absent. Yet even with the tools at their disposal the men made good headway with the work, for the reef was cracked and riven in many places by Nature's hand. The Scot-Australian fitted up a forge for himself, and there he toiled from early morning until late at night, sweating, swearing, preaching, praying, as only such a crank could work and pray, swear and sweat. On Sundays he ceased from all labour, and his men trooped off to the village, where they told many and wonderful stories concerning the white man.

At first McGlusky made his workers simply break the rock and throw it on one side, but as time progressed he made them carry it into the valley, where another band of labourers broke it as they would break road metal, and then he made them stack it in large square "paddocks" near the head of the stream, for it was there that he intended to erect his batteries on a piece of rising ground which gave him a good fall for his "tailings" when the batteries should start work in earnest.

Days rolled into weeks, and weeks into months, as the year unwrapped itself, until the time was right for the erection of the batteries. They were only little "five-head stampers," which were to be driven by horse-power, but the greatest mill-owner in Johannesburg never felt such a thrill of pride as the Scot-Australian when he first attached the two Basuto ponies to the pole in the "whim," and set his first battery in motion; he felt that he had

attempted the seemingly impossible and had succeeded, and that is a thing few men do in this world. It was springtime when the little battery, which looked like a child's toy in the shadow of the mighty hills, first began to clatter and wake the echoes, and partly because it was spring, and partly because he was weary of his loneliness, McGlusky's thoughts turned towards the damsel the chief had promised him in native wedlock.

"A'm thinkin'," he soliloquized one beautiful Sabbath morning, "A'm thinkin' that if Jacob won Rebecca by simply mindin' sheep an' kine, A'm entitled to ma lass by this time, for minin's waefu' hard wark if a mon throws his speerit inta it, so I'll just gang doon to the village an' remind the chief of his promise. A'm beginnin' to think that pagan is a better hand at makin' a promise than he is at fulfillin' it."

So throwing his leg over his horse's back and twisting his carbine under his arm, he rode off to claim his reward. The common people received him well enough on his arrival, but the chief affected to be displeased that the white man had left his work without giving him notice of his intention to do so.

"This is the veera first time I ha' quitted the spot since A commenced minin'," retorted McGlusky hotly, "an' A didna ken A had to ask permission fra any mon, white or black. I ha' coom for the wummin ye promised ma. Will ye gie her to ma the noo?"

"Take any maiden," replied the chief carelessly. "One woman is as good as another woman."

"I'll ha' the ane ye gied ta me or I'll ha' none at all," answered the Scot-Australian stubbornly. "Where is she the noo?"

The chief nodded towards a crowd of women who were standing a little distance off, chattering as only a crowd of Africans can chatter. So McGlusky, giving his hat an

extra jaunty twist, and twirling his beard so that he might, if possible, look as young as he once had been, stepped towards the women with a swagger that would have done credit to a young policeman in his first uniform, and asked them where he would find the damsel. There was a great deal of giggling and nudging as his request fell on the ears of the crowd. McGlusky threw himself into an insinuating posture and tried to look gallant. This was the signal for more tittering and giggling.

"She's shy, A'm thinkin'," was the Scot-Australian's thought. "A will no hurry the maid. Black or white it's a way they ha' when it is a question o' matreemony. A only hope she be as shy after the honeymoon as she seems ta be the noo."

There was a little more hustling and a lot more giggling, and the ranks opened, and a fine, big, matronly young woman was pushed into view. McGlusky looked at her. The face was the face of his milkmaid, but the form was not.

A look of blank astonishment gathered amongst the hair on the white man's face. Then a most unapostolic expression came from the very centre of his beard.

"Ye air marreed, A hope, mam ?" he said sarcastically.

The woman told him volubly that she was.

"It's weel for yer good name that ye air, A'm thinkin'. Did ye marry the mon who had the fecht wi' me on the wool floor ?"

The woman replied that that was the man she had wedded.

"Then tell him fra me that A bear him na malice, but as for the chief who ha' made a fule o' me an' broucht me ta shame before the wummin, A'll ha' a word wi' him, the leein' pagan !"

Suiting the action to the threat, McGlusky strode to

the chief's hut, and confronted that worthy with blood in his eye. Many and picturesque were the names he applied to the chief, most of them Biblical, but few of them complimentary. It was probably fortunate for the angry Scot-Australian that the Basuto did not understand the full significance of the titles hurled at him; had he done so the "Apostle's" career might have been cut short, though it is doubtful if the Basuto would have lived to boast of the deed.

"Ye ha' played me false once, chief," stormed McGlusky, in parting; "but dinna think A am the mon ta sit quiet under sic treatment. By ma soul, mon, I'll put yer heart in ma boots an' draw it oot through the lace-holes beefore I ha' done wi' ye, if ye try to fule me again."

With this grim threat on his lips he stalked out of the chief's kraal, and mounting his horse rode off to the mine again, singing in a fierce strident voice his usual hymn when roused—

> Christian, up and smite 'em,
> Counting gain but loss.

When he reached the mine he just buckled into his work with redoubled vigour. His little battery cracked away merrily, until he got up the second set of stamps, and the third followed the second in due season. From dawn till dark he stormed around, now praying for deliverance from deadly sin, now cursing like a freshwater pilot stranded on a mud-bank. He was blacksmith, engineer, amalgamator, mine manager, assayer, all in his own proper person, and he made the niggers under him work as they had never worked in all their lives before. Every now and again, on an average of once a fortnight, he scraped the amalgam off the plates and stowed it away until he was ready to smelt it and extract the pure gold. When he got his first bar, which he ran off into a clay mould,

the chief wanted to take it down to the village to mind it, but McGlusky stood firm, declining to allow the metal to depart out of his possession. Then for the first time the chief used threats, whereupon McGlusky simply picked up his carbine and slipped a clip of cartridges into the handy little weapon and bade the negro do his worst. Then the negro, seeing that threats would avail him nothing, tried to wheedle the gold out of the Scot ; it was very evident to McGlusky that the chief wanted the gold without letting his people know that he had it, and the "Apostle" played the game accordingly.

"Let us ca' all the warriors together," he said, "and hand the goold ower ta them that they may divide it among them even as I divided the cattle an' the rifles I got from the Portuguese."

But the chief would not have it that way.

"Let the gold remain with the white man," he said sententiously ; "when it is time then I will come for it."

After that he tried hard to coax the secret of the quartz mills out of the "Apostle," but McGlusky, who knew that knowledge was power, declined all overtures, and so the chief had to allow things to proceed.

Bar by bar the gold mounted up in the "Apostle's" hut, and as the gold increased his religious fervour decreased. He left off preaching to the people, left off telling them at night-time the wonderful Scripture stories with which he had been wont to thrill them. Yet every night the old cross-bearer came and planted his cross in front of his hut and lay down in its shadow, a silent reproach to the Apostle. Inside the hut McGlusky sat hour after hour with the bars of gold around him. He got into the habit of talking to the inanimate yellow slabs as if they understood him. He weighed them in his hands dotingly, or ran his rough palms over them caressingly, and when he slept they were packed neatly under him. The gold

demoralized him; he became almost unbearably rough and domineering in his manner towards the savage workmen. Gradually his speech altered; he did not quote Scripture as aforetime, but when he wanted to express himself he quoted the ruddy-hued expletives of the Australian bullock-driver. He left off singing hymns, and a psalm no longer found a home in his mouth. He seldom sang at all, but when he did it was the chorus of some wild bacchanalian song learnt in other days in the drinking shanties in the camps of the splitters and sawyers, or in the way back shearing sheds.

He was a hard man to get along with in those days. A yellow devil was tugging at his heart-strings and whispering evil into his soul. He had always, even as a boy, been greedy of money. The other youngsters used to say, "If McGlusky captures saxpence he makes it a prisoner for life," and the boys were not so far wrong. Yet when he took up religion he took it up, not for the sake of gain, but because he felt that a man without religion was like a horse without eyes. He wanted to convert the world, to set all mankind right, and he really felt that he was just the correct person to do it. He had always prided himself upon his scrupulous honesty, and upon the unbendable certainty of his plighted word, and yet as he heaped the Basuto gold around him in his little hut he began to plot and plan how he could best get away with it.

Many and intricate were the plans he formed to defraud the men who trusted him implicitly. He knew well that nearly every fighting man in the nation looked upon him as a person above and beyond suspicion, though he was also well aware that the chief and one or two of his counsellors would not be sorry to see the last of him, providing they could learn the secret of the batteries. The very devotion of his admirers was one of the greatest drawbacks

to his plans of escape. A whisper had passed around that the chief was hostile to the "White Prophet," and his admirers, fearing that evil might come to him, would not let him stir a yard without an unobtrusive but effectual bodyguard. That he contemplated robbing and deserting them never entered the savage mind. Had he not been tried and found faithful? Every promise he had made them he had kept, and they firmly believed that he would fulfil all his other promises, and lead them to the conquest of the whole of Africa, and those other lands where the white people dwelt beyond the great rivers.

Had McGlusky been faithful to himself, true to the religion he had preached so earnestly at the beginning, he might have done great and terrible things and become a figure in the history of the world, even as Attila and Mahomet became figures, for he had the nucleus of an army of fanatics in the faithful band of the Basutos who looked up to him as one sent from the god of battles to lead them. But there was a small side, a petty side, to the man's nature, a mean strain in his blood, and the dull yellow bars of gold searching him out with the magic eye of evil which gold has carried through all time found his weakness and transformed the "Apostle" of a new religion into a mere bandit, a common robber.

Then came a night when the mountains sang to mountains the song of the storm. A great blackness settled on the land almost before the sun had sunk in his western shroud. The wind yelled along the valleys, wailed up the hills, gibbered and moaned along the mountain passes, lashing the streams as with whips until the waters were white with foam. Lightning in crimson darts shot in and out amongst the dense black clouds, or spread across the whole surface of the heavens as far as mortal eye could reach in sheets of violet flame. Thunder rumbled afar like war guns heard in the distance; then volley after

volley of sound came rolling closer and closer until mountain spoke to mountain in echoes that seemed as though they would never cease. Trees split by the lightning or torn up by the wind fell headlong to earth; gravel and small pebbles cut through the air in every direction; it was a night for prayer, for self-communing, for penitence.

Yet on that night McGlusky was not praying; all the devil within him was lashed to life by the storm. He drew his saddle and pack-saddle into the centre of the hut and prepared them for the reception of the Basuto gold. When he had made his arrangements he went to the kraal where his big black charger crouched with lowered head and tail turned towards the storm. Slipping the bridle over the horse's head he looked around for the piebald packhorse, but had to wait until the lightning came before he could see where the cowed beast stood trembling. Having secured his horses he dragged them by main force, or magnetic force, to his hut, saddled them both, and then bar by bar brought out the gold and loaded the pack and filled his saddle-bags. It was a long task, but it was finished at last. No one had stirred during his operations; all the negroes were cowering in their huts. Even the old cross-bearer seemed for once to have forsaken his post; so thought the "Apostle of Peace," until when turning his horses' heads to lead them away from the hut, a sheet of lightning more lasting than any that had preceded it showed him the cross lying prone on the ground and at its base a man. McGlusky crept to the motionless figure and reached out his hand in the darkness which followed the flash. His hand wandered over the old man's chest, rested a moment where the beating of the heart should have been felt, and found only stillness.

Then a great shame came upon the Scot-Australian, a

shame that words could never depict. He laid his rifle down beside the dead man and buried his face in his hands and wept. An hour passed, and yet McGlusky did not move. The storm died gradually away ; a great stillness took possession of the mountains. Another hour passed. The clouds rolled themselves up like a scroll and passed away ; stars, pale blue eyes of angels, shone down upon the world ; the moon came up, sweet, glorious, serene. McGlusky looked into the old warrior's dead face, and saw right across his brow the track of the lightning, which having struck the cross had travelled down and killed the watchman lying below it.

" Ye lived like a mon an' ye died like a mon ! Thank God, ye never kenned how mean a dog was the white man ye trusted ! "

Then, rising to his feet, he gave a great shout—the battle-call of the Basutos.

Out poured the warriors to that stirring cry, with their weapons in their hands ; they made a circle round him, and waited for him to speak. He told them everything; told how the yellow devil had tempted him ; and how he fell, told of his packing of the stolen gold, and the finding of the dead cross-bearer. Then one by one he took the bars of gold from his horses' backs and cast them at their feet, and without another word mounted the black horse and rode away out of his vineyard. Taking nothing but his rifle and his horses, he crossed the Caledon into the Free State, and stood once more in the theatre of war, and Basutoland knew him no more.

CHAPTER X

HE TAKES SALT WI' HIS MEAT

IT was characteristic of McGlusky that he should feel deeply humiliated by his own failure. A kind of grim contempt took possession of his soul; contempt of his vanity, his weakness, his want of backbone. Had he at that moment drifted on to one of the drinking shanties which are so common on Australian back-block tracks he would in all probability have tethered his horses to a verandah post, and then called for rum. He would have steeped his brain and body in the devilish liquid to drown his thoughts, pawning his horses, his rifle, his very blankets to get the liquor. He would have quarrelled with every one who came near the place, and so obtained all the fighting he yearned for, for the Australian back-block teamster and bush worker is a person who requires but little provocation to commence a fight, but needs a terrible lot of stopping when once he has laid his shirt aside. He will, as a rule, battle until thrashed into a state of insensibility, when he is carried by spectators to a shady spot under his wagon, where he lies with his cattle dog licking his bruised and beaten face until he recovers consciousness. Then he rises, staggers to the bar, gulps down a glass of raw rum, and straightway renews the struggle. Of such doings McGlusky knew much, but luckily South Africa owns none of the hell-houses that disfigure the Australian bush, therefore he

had to ride and meditate. At last he pulled his horses up, dropped out of the saddle, went down on his knees, and prayed. A characteristic prayer it was, too.

"Ma God," he cried, in bitterness of spirit, his ragged soul fluttering in tatters on his tongue; "Ma God, a thocht A was marble, but A find A am only mud. A weakling an' a cooard A ha' proved in the day o' ma trial; dinna thraw me aside, ma God, like an auld wife's cloot. Gie ma ane more chance to prove A am a mon, an' a mon's son. A ha' been cockit up wi' vain pride an' lust o' flesh. A thocht A was goin' ta turn the warld upside doon wi' ma michtiness. A tried to wrastle wi' the de'il wi'oot Thy help, an' the de'il, wha ha' na love for a Scotsman, ha' squeezed ma doon into ma boots, an' drawn ma oot agin through the lace-holes. Gie ma grace, gie ma humeelity. A wanted to be a captain o' the hosts; let ma be a preevate in Thy army, an' I'll do ma best ta knock tha corners off the ungodly. Warld wi'oot end. Amen."

That prayer soothed him to some extent, though it did not restore the whole of his self-respect. His spirit was bruised, and so was his business instinct. When he felt in his pouch for his money, and remembered that he had parted with that to his countryman in Portuguese territory, he could have dismounted and put ashes on his head.

"If A ever meet wi' that 'Lily o' the Valley' may the Lord forget ma in ma day o' advarseety if A dinna pin his ears teegither behind his head! Wae is me, but A thocht he was a mon o' gude parts, an' he was naething but ane o' Sautan's scouts, a fause Scot, an' a vessel full o' dirty deceit! If A meet that mon in a kirk, or in a baudy hoose, A will knock twa hunner poons an' twa hunner per cent. interest oot o' him if I ha' ta flay him alive ta get it!"

From farm to farm he rode, helping himself to what he needed, but taking nothing that he did not actually require. One day he rode into a Boer farmyard, and saw about a hundred horses picketed here, there, and everywhere, whilst the troopers to whom they belonged were scattered all over the place. No sentries were posted, no scouts thrown out, no guard on duty. The farmhouse sat right at the foot of a steep kopje. A dozen good marksmen on the top, hidden behind the rocks, could have cut the troops to pieces without any loss to themselves.

"A'm thinking," mused the Scot-Australian, "that a mon wi' hair on the ootside o' his head an' something na quite so useful on the inside o' it is in charge o' those troops. This is hoo they manufacture those 'regrettable inceedents' A read aboot in the London papers."

He rode up to the verandah, and, dropping easily out of the saddle, strolled into the parlour of the farmhouse. Three young men in khaki were there having a good time. One was playing "Soldiers of the Queen" on the piano, and all were singing lustily. Their carbines were thrown carelessly on the table just inside the parlour door. A couple of young Boer women, nicely dressed, sat upon a sofa and tried to look as if they liked it. McGlusky took in the whole scene with a glance, then stepping rapidly into the room, he passed between the three young officers standing at the piano and the table upon which their carbines lay. He did not speak a word, but simply stood there with his carbine ready for shooting. The girls saw him, and, mistaking the roughly-dressed man with the bearded face for a countryman of their own, cried out gleefully and clapped their hands. The officers wheeled at the sound, the song came to a sudden stop, the music jarred into discord under the fingers of the pianist. The man on the near side clapped his hand on to the butt of

his revolver; McGlusky, working his carbine from his hip, as all old hands do at close quarters, brought the muzzle into a line with that soldier's chest.

"Han's up," he said, sternly, "or maybe ye'll be singin' in Paradeese in less than twa seconds!"

The officers threw their hands up, they could do nothing else; at the faintest movement the bearded ruffian in front of them could have sent lead into their heads. They looked lovingly towards their carbines, but the uncouth figure of the invader was between them and their weapons; they were trapped like rats, and they knew it. They did not dream that he was alone, they thought he was a leader of a commando, and that the farm was surrounded. The girls looked into the faces of the Britishers and laughed aloud.

'Tis the soldiers of the Queen, my lads,
Who've been, my lads,
Who've seen, my lads,
In the fight for England's glory, lads,
When we've had to show them what we mean!

sang one of the damsels, rising and making a profound curtsey in the direction of the discomfited warriors. The blood rushed into the fair faces of the youngsters, for they felt their position keenly. They looked ugly, but kept their mouths shut, for they were gentlemen, though they had made asses of themselves.

"Whose commando do you belong to, sir?" asked the other girl.

McGlusky straightened his back and pushed out his untrimmed beard. "Queen Victoria's," was the laconic response.

The officers gave a startled cry; the girls shrank back abashed. The Scot-Australian wheeled round, picked up the three carbines from the table, and walking to the soldiers, thrust their weapons into their eager hands.

"What the devil do you mean by such conduct, sir? Who the deuce are you, anyhow?" spluttered the man at the piano. "You jolly well ought to be shot."

"Ye needna crow aboot shootin', my young cockerel," was the harsh retort. "Ye didna ha' much chance to do any shootin' ten seconds back. Ye asked ma who A am —well, did ye ever see Lord Kitchener?"

The officer grinned.

"You don't mean to try and palm yourself off on us as Lord Kitchener, do you?"

"Na, A dinna want ta da that. A'm no Kitchener, but"—with a long pause and a significant glance—"maybe A'm ane o' his eyes. Ye ken he has a good many."

The three looked at each other.

"That means we will be reported to Kitchener for this fool's trick of to-day, and he'll break us as sure as blazes. It'll make nice reading for the folks at home, won't it?" said the pianist. "I wish I'd been shot in that scrap yesterday."

"I'd sooner be shot," put in one of the others.

The third fellow said nothing, but McGlusky saw that he fidgeted restlessly with the breech bolt of his carbine.

"Look here, gentlemen," said McGlusky, "ye air young; ye ha' made a bad mistake in the matter o' neglectin' yer dooty. An' as ye ha' said, if Lord Kitchener hears o' it, he'll ha' no mercy on ye, but send ye hame in deesgrace; but A'm thinkin' ye'll be veera hard up for something ta do wi' your time if ye tell him."

"Won't you report us?" asked the three, speaking as one man.

"A'm no a spy," was the dignified answer. "Gang awa' an' put some pickets on the top o' the kopje to prevent any Boers from creepin' up on the far side an' snipin' you an' your men; throw oot half a dozen scouts on your front an' flanks, wi' orders ta keep their eyes an'

ears open, for I ha' crossed the fresh track o' a Boer commando since noon the day, an' ye may bet your souls' salvation they ken ye air here weel enoo, and may attack ye the nicht. Ye mus'na think, as so many o' ye do, that the Boer is a cooard, for he is na ; he'll fecht in his own guid time, when it suits him ta fecht. If the enemy rushes yer camp under cover o' the darkness after th' warnin' A ha' gied ye, why, ye deserve ta be shot, that's a'. Just ane more word o' adveece, though A'm no much o' a talker. Remember the advantage is all wi' the attacking force in a night rush when once they get inside the lines. The attacking force knows what it is going ta do, an' generally does it, whilst the camp that is rushed is a' at sixes an' sevens."

"I don't know who the deuce you are or what you are," said the senior officer, heartily ; "but, by gad, sir, you're a brick ; you've given us a lesson and a warning. No more piano picnicking for me this campaign."

He held out his hand, which McGlusky shook with a clasp that nearly took the lad's breath away, and the three men in khaki vanished, carbine in hand, through the doorway, and in a few seconds the non-coms of that Yeoman crowd were being jacketed in the hottest of hot language for not having posted their sentries. In an incredibly short space of time the junior officer of the three, with fifteen men behind him, was climbing the kopje, whilst a sergeant with a squad of men cantered out of the farmyard on to the veldt, where they scattered to right and left, with orders to fire at anything they saw or heard moving after sundown, and then gallop in and raise the camp.

"A Boer commando pretty near a thousand strong is in the neighbourhood," quoth the sergeant, drawing freely upon his imagination, ere he scattered his outposts. "That hairy-faced beggar who came through our lines

a while ago brought the news. He's the head of Kitchener's intelligence department, and never makes a mistake ; so no loafing, or you will be bagged before you know it."

Inside the farmhouse McGlusky was having a bad time. The two damsels gave him many fierce glances, and not dreaming that he could talk their language, they ventilated their opinion of him in language that roused his wrath. He bottled his temper, however, and let them snarl away to their hearts' content. Even when they called him names in Dutch which would have aroused the spleen of a Kaffir, he pretended not to understand, and began to pay them clumsy compliments. If he did not pass a pleasant hour with them, it was at least not an unprofitable time. He had a great deal of home-baked bread and biltong, washed down with first-class coffee, and then, after washing himself and trimming his beard with a huge pair of housewife scissors, he strolled out and picked up the officer in charge of the troop.

" You haven't been fooling with the piano, I hope ? " remarked that young gentleman, rather sheepishly, as the Scot-Australian joined him.

McGlusky snorted disdainfully. " A puir, crazy, soulless thing like a pianner isna ta ma liking, sir. A canna understan' hoo ony mon wi' a ear for harmony could waste time tin-tamming wi' such a machin'. If ye'd like a leetle harmony when beseeness is ower, why, A'd be happy to gie ye a skirl o' ma pipes, but not noo. I ha' been keepin' ma lug open in the hoose. Ye didna ken A speak the Boer taal as weel as the Boers themselves."

" No," was the astonished answer, " do you ? By jingo, what a ripping good guide you would be for us if you had nothing better in view. I never dreamt you could speak their confounded gibberish."

"Neither did they," grinned McGlusky. "If they had they would ha' put a cleft stick between their teeth."

"The women have been talking, then?"

"Did ye ever ken a wummin that could help it?" asked the other ungallantly. "When twa wummin get together wi' a secret they must clatter aboot it, just as a hen clatters when she lays an egg. If there is only one wummin in a secret, she'll talk to hersel'. Dinna ye ever trust yer secrets to a wummin, young mon."

"Those women at the farm have a secret then, have they?"

"They had a secret, young mon, but it's ma secret the noo, an' that's why A'm oot here wi' ye this minit. Ye may thank Providence A cam' here, for the Boers under De la Rey air going to attack ye here the nicht at ten o'clock."

"That means an attack in force, and I'm only a hundred and twenty strong. I have orders to hold this place, but I'll send a couple of gallopers off at once to ask for assistance at headquarters."

"If ye'll tak' adveece, ye'll do naething o' the kind. Every inch o' green between here an' headquarters will be watched, so that a rabbit couldna pass alive."

"What do you advise, then?"

"Ye ha' one gun."

The young officer blushed, for it was standing in front of the farmhouse.

"Wait until it is dark, an' then haul that gun on top o' the kopje. Don't da it in daylight, or the Boers will ken where it is, an' will pour lead on it when they try to rush the camp; let your men lie aboot as they air now till nicht sets in, then let them tak' their boots off an' swarm up the kopje an' lie snug behind the rocks. Tak' all the ammuneetion ye ha' got up wi' ye, and tak' all the drinkin' watter ye can lay han's on wi' ye; then when the rush

comes, ye can mak' a gran' fecht o' it an' hold the kopje against all the Dutchmen in Africa until this time to-morrow nicht; by that time help will be wi' ye, or on the way to ye, for some o' the scouts air sure ta hear your guns an' report to headquarters."

"It will be a devil of a job to get the gun up the kopje in the dark; she's a twelve-pound field gun."

"If she's a hunner an' feefty poun' siege gun, she's got ta go up," was the emphatic answer. "The Boers tak' their guns up kopje an' tak' 'em doon agin in the dark; what a Dutchman can da, ma certie, a Breetisher ought ta be able ta da too."

"What about our horses; we can't take them on the kopje with us, and if we leave them the Boers will stampede the lot?"

"A've thocht o' that, ma lad. Let every mon carry his saddle to the kopje; as for the horses, we'll ha' ta run some reesks wi' them, we'll lead 'em down the donga close ta the kopje as soon as it is dark. Give 'em watter first, then fill their nosebags an' put 'em on, then we'll ha' ta peg each horse doon, that's a'; after that we'll ha' ta drive the Boers off 'em wi' our rifles, if we can; an', ma certie, A'm thinkin' the mon who cooms near ma twa horses will be ower fond o' salt wi' his meat. A may tell ye, young mon, that A ha' naething left in all this world in the shape o' warldly gear but those twa horses, ma rifle, an' ma pipes, an' the mon who tries ta rob a Scotsman o' his last bawbee must be veera ignorant o' Scotsmen or veera tired o' his mortal life. Do ye like ma plans?"

"I like them splendidly; I'll just tell my officers, and then we'll wait for darkness and commence to get ready."

"An' in the meantime I'll catch the hens an' lock 'em in ane o' the rooms that has na window, for fear o' accident."

"The hens; what the devil do we want with hens?" was the puzzled rejoinder.

"To keep them fra cluckin' tae loud."

"Well, by jingo, you must be fond of feathers."

It was McGlusky's turn to chuckle now.

"It is na feathers, young mon, it's peetecoats."

"Oh, the women! Oh, hang it all, we can't meddle with them, you know; we fellows don't make war on women."

"A'm not goin' ta mak' war on 'em, but A'm goin' ta tak' fine care they don't mak' war on us."

"You won't be rough with them. You know they are women, and we are soldiers, and——"

The Scot-Australian gave his ragged shirt sleeve so fierce a twitch upwards, and flashed so savage a glance at the other fellow, that he began to stammer apologies at once.

"No harm, old chap; don't take offence. I didn't mean it in that way, but I'm a clumsy beggar with my tongue. Wouldn't hurt your feelings for the world."

"I'll da by them, sir," was the severe reply, "as A should expect a gentleman ta da by ma ain mither if she took a hand in a war game—na mair, na less. If hens try ta crow like cockerels, they must expect ta ha' their cackles cut. Don't you despise hens, young mon; they can da a lot mair in this world besides hatch eggs Hoot, lad, ye dinna ken ye air alive yet!"

The soldier went about his business, and McGlusky went about his self-imposed task. He found the Boer women, not only the two damsels but the old vrou, very far from willing to submit to be locked up in the one room of the house that had no window. They "cackled" considerably, as he ungallantly put it, but when he broke in upon their talk in the broadest of Boer taal, and told

them of all that he had overheard from their own lips they were scared into silence.

"Ye broke bread wi' the British officers," he said vehemently. "You sat below the salt with them, and all the time ye were planning their death, an' noo ye ca' it an indeegnity that we propose ta lock ye in a room till your friends come ta tak ye away the nicht. Ye ca'ed ma the offspring o' Judas an' the direct descendant o' Barabbas the robber, but A'm na sa sure that ye air no the lineal descendants o' Jezebel. A dinna blame your men-folk for fechtin' if they think they ha' a chance ta win in the game. A dinna blame ye for what ye ha' done, or what ye would do if ye could ta help your ain men, but A da blame ye for squealin' when ye air caught in the act o' warkin' devilment. Ye ha' meddled wi' mud, ye maun e'en put up wi' dirty fingers."

So the women were carefully locked up, and then all the Kaffirs about the place, male and female, were rounded up and bound hand and foot, and locked in the stable. The house-dogs were taken up on top of the kopje, because McGlusky knew that as soon as they smelt their masters approaching they would give tongue in a welcome bark. The gun was hauled into position, a thick blanket was spread across the muzzle so that the enemy could not see the flash when it was fired, the horses were pegged down in the dongas, and the little British force sat down to wait for events to develop themselves. At about ten o'clock there was a feeble effort made from the open country in front of the farm by a few Boers. The British scouts galloped in, dismounted, let their horses run free, whilst they climbed into the kopje with their comrades.

"That's only a sham attack," whispered McGlusky to the commanding officer; "the real attack will come from the other side. They mean ta scale on to this kopje,

and then shoot us doon like cattle. They dinna ken that we air in possession here; it weel be a surprise for them when they da find oot."

All at once the house-dogs began to sniff the breezes, then they uttered delighted whimpers.

"Choke the daugs, some o' ye," came the Scot-Australian's stern orders; "the commando is comin'."

Strong hands gripped the poor brutes by the throat, and more than one knife was busy in the darkness. Everything on the top of the kopje was terribly still, not a man moved, not an order was given, the troopers simply lay behind the rocks with their rifles pointed downwards into the darkness. Out on the veldt something appeared; it was like a cloud, blacker, thicker than the surrounding blackness. It came nearer and nearer; the watchers on the kopje could now plainly hear the hoof-beat of marching horses, the click of hoofs, the ring of stirrup striking stirrup, the rattle of bits as horses snapped at horses in anger; then the clatter of hoofs as the foremost line left the grass and struck the kopje's base. Plainly they heard the low order to halt, for the whole commando was not fifty yards below them.

"Air ye ready?" whispered McGlusky.

"Steady, men; wait for the word; then fire together, and as fast as you can afterwards," whispered the officer.

The word passed from lip to lip. A second of deadly stillness, and McGlusky's carbine bit in on the stillness of the night with its whiplike whirr; every rifle on the kopje spoke a moment later. A wild yell broke from the closely-packed Dutch ranks, shrieks from men and boys hard hit, savage cries from men unhurt, horses stricken out of the darkness screamed hoarsely and fell kicking and struggling.

"Pour it into 'em, men!" roared the British officers.

The rifles sent a lashing hail of lead at pistol range into

the surprised foe ; the cannon on the crest of the hill smashed its hideous message amongst men and horses. The Dutchmen made a frantic effort to rally ; it was heroic madness, foredoomed to failure. The braggarts of Europe who have talked so long and so loudly of what they would do should have been there that night to see how the farmers of the veldt could die.

As McGlusky said next morning, when the sun shone down on the charnel house, " It was a sicht to mak' a nation's eyes run tears, and a nation's heart swell wi' pride. Tears for the death of so many brave men ; pride for the way they died."

CHAPTER XI

HE BECOMES A REMOUNT OFFICER

AFTER the battle at the Boer farm the young officers badly wanted McGlusky to remain with the Yeomanry Corps to act as guide, interpreter, and general adviser, but he would not. The sea was calling him, and he felt bound to answer the call, as all men do who have the itch in their blood.

"A'm just dying," he said, "for a sniff o' clean saut watter, an' A'm goin' ta gae doon ta the coast an' get it. Maybe I'll gang on board ane o' the ships there, an' try ma luck in blue watter once agen, or mayhap I'll get a job on the docks. A can turn ma hand ta maist anything in the shape o' honest wark. Ye ken A'm o' Scots descent, an' a Scotsmon is na ashamed o' warkin' for a livin'. A ken mony drunkin' Scotsmon an' mony a leein' Scotsmon, but I ha' na met a lazy Scotsmon in ma travels. A am na afraid o' na bein' able ta find a job ta suit me. A can drive a donkey engine, or A can clean watches; A can lump coal, or A can drive niggers; A'm what ye ca' a handy mon."

"Look here, McGlusky, if you won't stay with us," said the commanding officer, "let me give you a letter of introduction to the remount officer at Durban. You might as well go there as anywhere else, and a letter from me may be useful to you. The remount officer is a friend of mine."

"Is your freend like the rest o' the remount officers?" asked McGlusky.

"Oh, yes," was the laughing answer, "I don't think he differs much from the usual crowd."

"Does he ken a horse from a coo if the coo has its horns cut?"

"Yes, of course he does."

"Then," replied McGlusky, dryly, "he is na like the rest of the remount officers A ken."

"Look here, my man," drawled a little lieutenant, "you are a jolly good fighter and all that sort of thing, but you are a devilish cheeky chap. I'd put you in the clink for an hour or two if I were in command."

He was a very haughty young man and a very intolerant young man, who never by chance forgot that he carried a commission. His father, like a good many more, had made a fortune manufacturing pills, warranted to cure all the ills flesh is heir to, and his father's brothers had made a pile selling a special brand of whisky, no better, no worse, than other whisky, but amazingly well advertised. On the strength of his money and an Oxford education, the little bounder gave himself no end of airs.

"Oh, shut up, Juggins," responded the commanding officer; "don't make an ass of yourself. Most of us would be in clink now—a Boer clink—if our friend here had not come along to warn us of our danger."

Then turning towards McGlusky, whose eyes had shown unmistakable signs of fight at the mention of the "clink," he said, "Don't fight him for his cheek; he's hardly up to your weight, you know."

He laughed as he spoke, for he was a clever, good-hearted fellow.

McGlusky eyed the glorified descendant of the derelict pill-maker scornfully for a moment.

"Fecht wi' him," he said slowly; "fecht wi' a puir body like that? Dinna fash yersel', sir. A dinna gang after his sort wi' ma fisties or wi' a gun. A ha' bagged bigger an' better game wi' a sma'-tooth comb."

With this contemptuous word still hot upon his tongue, the Scot-Australian mounted his horse and made the best of his way down to Durban. He sold his piebald hack in order to have a little ready money in his pocket, but the big black charger he would not part with.

In Durban he met Jock O'Neil, an Australian athlete who was engaged in business there, and the pair of Scots had a time that will live in the memory of the good citizens of that place for many a year to come, for they painted the pretty little watering-place pink. It was Jock O'Neil who took McGlusky round in the frisky rickshaws, slyly getting strong waters into him a nip at a time until he insisted on going back to his hotel for his bagpipes, and then, lying well back in his rickshaw and making the nigger who drew it prance to the tune of the pipes, he "did" the whole of Durban in a style which no man has attempted to imitate.

It was Jock O'Neil, himself a mighty cricketer, who tempted McGlusky to handle the willow whilst "Jock" bowled, just to show Durban, as "Jock" explained, how Australians play the game. The third ball coming off the pitch like a flash of lightning carried away about half of McGlusky's kneecap, and all Durban got upon its roof to watch a big man with whiskers pursuing a little man who ran with the fear of death before his eyes, and laughter bubbling out of his parted lips, up one street and down another. It was Jock O'Neil who took McGlusky across the bay to the dainty little restaurant at the foot of the cliff, and filled him with oysters and bottled beer, and then bet him a sovereign he could not swim the bay; and it was "Jock" who, gurgling with devilment,

slipped round and told an over-officious coastguard that he believed a Boer prisoner was escaping by swimming to the mainland. And it was "Jock" who for two days afterwards lived on the top of his lodging-house, and had his meals sent up to him in a basket, whilst an Irish coastguard with a badly-battered face prowled about asking lovingly concerning his whereabouts. It was "Jock" who, knowing that the annual gathering of the tribe of Israel was to take place at a lovely little hostel six or eight miles out of Durban, induced McGlusky to believe that the gathering was simply a demonstration organized to do him honour; and then, half-filling McGlusky with rum, made him make a speech condemnatory of the children of Israel and all their works.

Of what followed let the records of the Jewish cemetery speak.

It was Jock O'Neil, king of devilment, but whitest of white men, who brought McGlusky news of a job that would suit him. A transport had arrived loaded with remounts, and men were wanted who understood handling of horses.

So the Scot-Australian presented himself at headquarters and asked for work. A lordly young gentleman in khaki, who carried himself like a pasha, met the bushman with a stony stare, and listened to his blunt request with that aggravating affectation of superiority which is nearly always a fool's trade-mark, no matter where or under what circumstances it is met with. He must have cost some one a lot of money before he was turned out for active service. Gloves of a shade to match his uniform, a tiny, slender cane for his right hand, a big pair of spurs of the very fiercest pattern, a gold-rimmed monocle, a silver cigarette case for his left hand, a beautiful new leather belt with shoulder-straps attached, crossed by the straps of a splendid pair of field-glasses, a big revolver

sitting on his hip like a bulldog on a bag of bones. Under his tunic he wore a cholera belt around his waist, and a small square pad consisting of flowers of sulphur sat neatly between his blade-bones to keep off chills from the liver, a fever pad warranted to keep off anything except creditors was sewn on to his shirt right over the heart, whilst a portable photograph camera was slung on the hip opposite the revolver, flanked by a nickel-plated water-bottle. McGlusky told Jock O'Neil later on that when he saw that young man he thought he had run into a portable boarding-house with a patent medicine bureau attached.

"What experience have you had?" asked the young man wearily.

"A ha' shipped a gude few thousan' horses an' cattle in ma time," replied the Scot-Australian shortly.

"For civilians, I suppose?"

"They were ceevil enoo'. A did ma wark, an' A got ma money. A didna want any mair."

"You do not comprehend my meaning. Did you ever have any military training for this kind of—er—work?"

"Na; A confess A nevir did, but A can have a horse oot o' a ship or A can dump a horse inta a ship wi' ony man breathin'."

"Yes, yes, my man, but you have never had any military drill; you do not know the military method."

"A dinna."

The son of war sighed again wearily.

"I suppose I'll have to take you," he said. "There are so few white men available. But I'll have to drill the military method into you." Then, balancing himself on the top step of the flight of stairs that led from the street to the verandah, whilst McGlusky stood below, he asked, "Now, my man, do you know what you ought to do, supposing I was a—er—refractory horse, and

would not go down these steps when wanted to ? What would you do ? "

" What would A do ? A'd tak' som' o' the harness off a ye first, then A'd tak' ye by the forelock an' lead yer doon ; if ye wouldna be led A'd gie ye ma toe in yer ribs, an' A'm thinkin' the ribs 'd gang doon if the rest o' ye didna——"

" Simply barbarous ; no method, no system, no conception of the governing principles of routine. Now listen to me, and I'll explain the military way of doing such things. If you were a—er—horse and I wanted to get you down these steps, I would order a sergeant to tell a corporal to command one of the men to bring me a piece of cloth from the Army supply depôt. When it arrived, I should proceed to blindfold you, then I should fix up your near foreleg, by doubling the knee-joint back so that the inside of the coronet rested against the large metatarsal bone, then I should place a strap around the large pastern bone and the cannon bone, and so secure the limb. Are you following me, my good fellow ? "

" A am, if it's strappin' oop that beastie's foreleg ye mean, but A'd do it in half th' time wi' ma belt."

Taking no notice of the irrelevant remark, the armour-plated youth proceeded : " Having blind-folded you and fixed up your foreleg, I should take the bridle or halter in my left hand, and gently swish your unstrapped foreleg behind the knee-joint with my cane until you allowed me to lead you down the plank ; if you failed to respond to those measures I should order a sling to be fixed and suspended under the floor of your chest and another under your flanks and so project you down the incline. That is the difference between system and want of system. I hope I have made the difference quite plain ? "

" Ye ha' sir," answered McGlusky gravely, " an' A noo ken hoo it is that Lord Kitchener always complains that

a' the horses that reach him air too auld for acteeve service before they reach the front."

The horses were shipped in relays from the liner to a military tug, and the tug ran up to the wharf, where the remount officer was fretting and fuming in extreme wrath, for a telegraphic message had come from the Commander-in-Chief at the front commanding that not a moment should be wasted, as he badly required horses. The remount officer had requisitioned a squad of "Tommies." As the horses were ranged near the landing-place he commanded each man to take a wisp of hay in his right hand and a halter in his left. The "Tommies" did as they were ordered.

"Now, men, 'tention; hold the hay well out in front of the horses with the right hand, take up the slack of the halter with your left—march."

The "Tommies" marched, but the horses did not. "Halt," shouted the remount officer; "fall back to your horses, you idiots, let 'em smell the hay."

The "Tommies" fell back; they would have fallen overboard if told to do so. The horses smelt the hay, and most of them yawned. They were a draft of London cab-horses, and knew more than they were credited with knowing.

"Walk 'em round the deck briskly, men; briskly. What the devil are you fooling about for; give 'em a quick turn and rush 'em up the plank."

The "Tommies" stepped out briskly, and the first man rushed up the plank; but the steed drew back suddenly, jerked the halter out of the man's hand, and then, strolling to the side of the tug, looked over into the water in a meditative way.

The officer stormed at the unlucky soldier. "What do you mean by letting go of the halter; are you an insubordinate dog, or only a fool?"

The man wanted to say that the horse at the other end of the halter had had something to do with it; but he dared not, because he did not want a month in the "clink."

"Blindfold 'em, and back 'em up the plank," was the next order.

The first horse that was backed to the gangway sat down on his haunches and went to sleep, whilst a couple of sweating "Tommies" jerked his head this way and that, and the remount genius capered about on the wharf and found new names for his men.

A knot of grinning firemen stood round the deck, black with coal dust and greasy with sweat and engine oil. A group of civilians gathered on the wharf and began to take snapshots of the scene with their eternal cameras.

A fresh horse was backed on to the plank; he went up a few feet, and then, slewing round, slid off into the sea between the tug and the wharf, where he got jammed against the piles and died. The remount officer sat down on a truss of hay and undid his cholera-belt so that he might curse fluently. Jerry Brannigan, an Irish horse-dealer, strolled over to McGlusky, who was a patient spectator of the scene, and Jerry, at once recognizing in the Scot-Australian a man accustomed to the handling of horses, said, sotto voce:

"Did ye ivver see the loikes av this outsoide the covers av a sthory book."

"A neever did, nor inseede a story-book."

"It's the way av the British Ahrmy. I'll bet fifty that you an' me 'ud land them mokes insoide two hours, ar ate 'em. Phwat the divil is he goin' to do now?"

The officer had risen from the truss of hay.

"Don't fool with those horses any longer, you squad of dunderheads!" he called wearily. "Rig up a derrick and fix slings—Benjamin's patent slings, mind. I'll

have no other. We'll have to pay a commission for the use of the patent, but we've wasted half a day now, and have done nothing. Sergeant-Major ! "

" Yes, sir."

" Get those slings fixed by the time I come back from lunch. Do you hear ? "

" Yes, sir."

At this juncture one of the horses, having been let loose by the soldier in charge, strolled quietly up the gangway on the wharf, where it stood, cocking first one ear, then the other in a most amusing fashion, after which it whinnied derisively and strolled back again. A great shout of laughter went up from the civilians and firemen, but the " Tommies," catching their officer's eye fixed on them, did their laughing inwardly.

" The only thing that phwants a sling in these parts is that bran' new officer chap," remarked Jerry Brannigan to McGlusky.

The patent slings were duly rigged up ; the remount gentleman returned to the scene of his labours after lunch ; a quadruped was slung and hoisted clear of the deck ; but then it was found that the " Benjamin " patent sling would not work unless accompanied by the " Judah " patent derrick, for which a royalty would also have to be paid by the patient British taxpayer.

" Telegraph round to Port Elizabeth for a ' Judah ' patent derrick," was the remount gentleman's stern order.

Then he wired to Kitchener : " Can't land horses at present ; unsurmountable difficulties ; taking every possible precaution to prevent accidents ; using ' Benjamin and Judah ' patent landing tackle."

The Commander-in-Chief replied : " Benjamin and Judah be ——" (Here the telegram was undecipherable.) " Hand horses over to some ganger of wharf labourers

who will use brains; if horses not landed to-night will court-martial you."

McGlusky happened to pass the remount officer just after the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief's telegram.

The officer beckoned the Scot-Australian towards him.

"You want work?"

"A do."

"Well, I have just received an important communication from headquarters which will occupy all my attention for some time to come. I can't be bothered with a trivial matter like the landing of horses. Will you take on that job and get them ashore before morning?"

"A wull if ye mak' it a payin' job. A will na dae it for naething," was the cautious reply.

"How much per head do you want to land the whole shipload?"

"A'll land the beasties an' truck 'em in the railway yard for a poon a head, a' pay for every beastie A damage."

"A pound a head is a stiff price, my man."

"Not much more than the royalties on Benjamin and Judah's patent slinging tackle wad coom ta," was the sly retort.

The remount gentleman blushed; then said loftily: "Go ahead with the job; the exigencies of war admit of no compromise with business."

McGlusky moved off well pleased with himself, for he knew he was in for a harvest, one of those delightful pickings of which there had been so many during the war. He hustled round until he found Jerry Brannigan, for he knew that he could not do the job single-handed. Jerry was very willing to join issue with him, and the pair, picking up a lump of a nigger who was well known to the Irishman as a willing worker, went in and took possession.

"What shall we do with the slings and the derrick?" asked the Sergeant-Major.

"Ate 'em for all I care," answered the Irishman. "I wisht ye cud ate Judah and Benjamin as well; faith, the poor av Oireland have ter pay taxes ter keep those fat thieves who live on the folly av a foolish gineration."

McGlusky strode over to one of the horses and grabbed hold of the halter, and then, half-wheeling, he administered a sharp kick in the dining-room department. There was no need to tell that horse that an unofficial personage had charge of him, the brute knew it instantly, and, without further coaxing, shuffled across the deck and faced the landing plank. McGlusky gave the halter to the nigger.

"When A heave, mon, ye pull," was his laconic command. Then slipping along the animal's flank, he ran his hand under his belly and drew the tail between the hind legs. Having got this leverage for his two hands, he lay back suddenly with all his might, the nigger gave a jerk with the halter, Jerry Brannigan, who had been standing by to assist, raised a fireman's shovel over his head and brought the flat of it down on the animal's quarters with a sounding thump; the horse shot forward up the plank, across the wharf and into the railway truck with half a dozen scrambling leaps, and the mob of civilians roared their approbation of the tradesmanlike manner in which the trick was accomplished.

Jerry Brannigan darted at another horse. McGlusky took up the shovel. Working, raging, swearing, hauling, sweating, pushing all through the night, the Scot, the Irishman and the nigger worked, until at dawn the train moved off from Durban Station, bound for the front with that shipload of horses, and in due time Kitchener got his remounts. But the men who rode that draft never could understand why it was that their horses always tried to bolt when they saw a shovel; perhaps they

would have done so if they had seen the disembarking of the draft.

So it came to pass that McGlusky was offered a commission as a remount officer, and accepted the same, which led to the establishment of a private hospital in Durban. Jock O'Neil took the Scot-Australian under his wing, because "Jock" was a Scot-Australian himself, a neat, dapper well-dressed chap always, to whom McGlusky's appearance was an eyesore and a nightmare. It was "Jock" who took his countryman to a Turkish bath, a thing he was loth to patronize because he had somehow jumbled it up in his mind with Turkish harems. When Mac had done his sweating in the sulphur room and the hot-air room, he considered that he had had all the Turkish bath he wanted, but the negro attendant pointed out to him that he had to lie down on a slab and be scrubbed and massaged.

"Mon," said Mac, solemnly, "where do ye think A come fra, that ye dinna think A can wash masel'? A ha' done ma ain washin' ever since ma mither used to tub me every Saturday nicht when A was a wee bit laddie; an' A'm na likely to let ony mon handle ma in ma ripe manhood. A wud think shame ta da it."

Then that nigger, not knowing McGlusky, did an unwise thing. Thinking to settle the argument as he had done many a time with simple country folk before the war, he picked up a pail of ice-cold water, and at a nod from Jock O'Neil threw it over the Scot-Australian's steaming body.

McGlusky gasped, and drew in his breath as if a bullock whip had fallen across his naked loins; the nigger doubled up convulsed with laughter; whilst Jock O'Neil, who knew McGlusky, fled and hid in the sulphur room for half an hour. When he came out McGlusky had dressed himself and left the premises, but a surgeon and two

assistants were busy on the nigger with a stomach-pump, trying to get some of the soap out of him which McGlusky in his wrath had stuffed into him. How much soap the indignant Scot-Australian really did force down the nigger's throat no one ever knew, but it must have been a considerable amount, because for months afterwards when he saw the hairy one he used to foam at the mouth.

CHAPTER XII

McGLUSKY FIGHTS THE PLAGUE

THERE was a season of dullness after a while at Durban. No transports arrived there with horses, and dullness was bad for McGlusky. As long as there was work to do, and plenty of it, he kept out of trouble, because he loved work ; but when idleness fell upon him he drifted into deep waters. His besetting sin was whisky or any other fluid with a bite in it. When toiling early and late he never wanted it, never looked for it, seldom tasted it ; but when the hours hung heavily on his hands he would drift around the hotels and pick up friends. A "nip" with one would be followed by a "nip" with another, all in the way of friendship. He never intended to take more than he could carry like a gentleman, but the poison worked upon him insidiously, and as the whisky soaked in his religion oozed out, and he finally became a ramping raging devil. One evening he was just about as full as he could be without being drunk, and started to deliver a political speech to some friends at a street corner. A negro constable, in all the glory of helmet, blue coat, knickerbockers, minus either boots or stockings, as the way is with negro policemen in Africa, came upon the scene, and full of his own importance, and the dignity of authority, clutched McGlusky by the arm and bade him "Move on."

Had he been sober, the Scot-Australian would have

resented the touch of a black man's hand upon his person as an insult in the first degree. Being nearly drunk, he slewed round, grasped the black by the nape of the neck and the slack of his knickerbockers, bent the woolly head down until the negro was about the height and shape of a goat, and then rammed his head against the iron lamp-post. The black officer of the law coiled up, and lay where he coiled. McGlusky stalked off a few paces, then, turning to the citizens of Durban there assembled, said, with a majestic wave of his hand:

"Gennelmen, if A ha' dameeged the lamp-post ta any extent, ye can send that bill inta me, an' A wull pay it."

There were several other policemen standing round, but they did not interfere, because, when roused by drink, the Scot-Australian looked such a truculent ruffian that few officials, white or black, cared to molest him. And yet the man had his good points. A little while after that incident the plague broke out in the native quarters, and the boldest shrank from contamination, for in eleven cases out of a dozen disease meant death. The coloured minister remained outside the nigger location and prayed with extreme fervour for the recovery of his flock, but, like a lot of white "shepherds" who love their ease, he did very little to aid them.

McGlusky went to him one fine morning, and said, "Oot mon, A'm na sayin' a ward agin prayer, for prayer is a gran' gift, but the mon who warks when he should be prayin' and prays when he should be warkin', is like a fish wi'oot fins. Gang doon ta the location the noo an' attend ta the sick bodies; ye can put in a word for the sick souls at the same time, ye ken."

But the sable shepherd would not. He replied that he intended to remain where he was and bow his spirit before the Lord until his groanings reached from Dan to Beersheba.

"A'm no acquaint wi' either Dan or Beersheba," retorted McGlusky, "but as ma soul leeveth, mon, A'd veera mooch like ta hit ye just ance in the wammle, for A'm thinkin' ye air a whited sepulchre painted black ta fit the climate. A have seen mony like ye in ma travels; ta the de'il wi' ye and yer groanings. Ye air like Elder McMurtough, who cam' ta Australia fra Edinboro', who was always snivellin' an' cryin' an' prayin' for rain in summer, and howlin' an' groanin' for the Lord ta send him an umbrelly an' a mackintosh in winter. Ye air na a finger-post on the highway ta heaven, ye black spawn o' Sautan; ye air a mile-post on the road ta hell. As weel look for feathers on fish as for gude warks fra a hypocreete."

The dusky saint only rolled up his eyes and groaned, so with a snort of disgust the Scot-Australian left him and proceeded to the military headquarters, where he met the very foppish young gentleman who acted as chief remount officer.

"Sir," quoth McGlusky, "da ye ken that tha plague is spreadin' an' that soon it will be goin' up in tha trooks wi' th' cattle and food stuff ta the front, for naething carries the plague like tha rats, an', ma certie, theer air mair rats to the square yard in Durban than ye cud find ta the square mile anywheer else. If ance the plague gets amang tha nigger drivers o' transports at tha front, Lord Kitchener won't be able ta stop a blue funk settin' in; every blessed black mon will desert."

"Desert, will they?" grinned the officer; "desert after they have signed on with Kitchener? I don't think they will try that long. Man, do you know Kitchener?"

"I dinna ken him veera weel."

"I thought you did not. I tell you, McGlusky, that after they have once roused him they will sooner face ten

plagues and a—a—a tune on your infernal bagpipes than buck up against Kitchener."

"Ye seem to be michty scared o' him yersel'."

"Scared of him, man; why, he only looked at me the last time we met, and I felt for a month afterwards as if my clothes did not fit me."

"Weel, then, if A were you, sir, A'd tak' precious gude care that tha plague did not spread from this end to his fechtin' line, an' spread it will if ye dinna buck in and fecht wi' it. Bubonic plague is na a thing that can be laid doon by readin' the reegulations ta it. A saw it ance in India when A was shippin' horses for tha army remoonts fra New South Wales, an' a dour thing it was. The gamest nigger will funk in the face o' a plague."

"What do you suggest, man? I'm willing to do what I can; but what can I do?"

"Give me full powers o' action. A will just gang doon to the location wi' ma traps an' live theer for a while. A will put the sick by themsel's an' keep 'em by themsel's. A will fumigate tha huts, mak' 'em clean 'em, sweep 'em, an' wash 'em wi' lime. A will clean up all tha dirt an' rubbish an' mak' a sweet place o' 't, an' fecht wi' the plague day an' nicht. A will bury the dead in quicklime, an' beat the laws o' decency an' cleanliness inta their livers wi' a schambok. Gie me full powers to act, an' leave the rest ta me, sir."

The remount officer fought the matter out for a while.

"Look here," he said, "I think you're a jolly good chap in your own way, don't you know, but I really can't allow you to do this sort of thing by yourself. It's a beastly dangerous job, I can see that, and I can't give precedence to you or any other fellah, you know, at a time like this. I'm senior officer down here, you know, and there is no medical officer of any kind, so I'll tell you what we'll do. If you will work under me, I'll—ah—just hand the

remount business over to my subordinate and we'll go and do this beastly job together."

"A wud hand the remount job over ta Jerry Brannigan, the ganger, if A was you, sir. Jerry 'd eat a horse whilst your subordinate was puttin' a bridle on ta it."

The remount officer sighed. "I can't, my dear fellah; you don't know what a deuce of a shindy there would be if I did. I've the Army regulations to consider. You see, they were framed by Churchill, and are as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians."

"Framed by Winston, were they? A thocht that youngster had too much sense ta frame such rubbish, though A did see him escapin' fra a Boer laager in company wi' a vulture that he tamed; a fine wild vulture, ye ken, that used ta gang away three times a day an' capture food for him an' bring it back an' feed him wi' it, just as the ravens fed Elisha."

"It wasn't Winston Churchill that framed the Army regulations, but John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, and they haven't been broken or meddled with from that day to this. But that's a very interesting story about Winston and the vulture; are you sure it wasn't a 'kite'?"

"Saw it masel', sir," said McGlusky, solemnly. "A wonder Winston didna say something aboot it."

"He would not mention it; he's a shy boy. Why, McGlusky, the world would never have known that he escaped from a Boer laager, only one of those imbeciles belonging to the Press got hold of it and made it public, and then young Churchill had to own up. Was there a tale attached to the vulture, McGlusky?"

McGlusky grinned, dipped his forefinger and thumb into the officer's tobacco pouch and nearly emptied it. Having deposited the salvage in the hollow of his cheek, he grinned a knowing grin and remarked:

"A tale!—aye, mon, there was a tale to that vulture. Maybe I will tell ye that ta pass the time when we air in the nigger location; it wud mak' a gran' story for a buk, though, mark ye, sir, A'm na ane of those who wud speak ill o' the boy's gifts. A ha' an opeenion he will be Prime Meenister o' England before Chamberlain, young as he is."

"Don't talk politics, my dear fellow. We are soldiers, you know, and you should not speak concerning things you know nothing about."

McGlusky saw a chance for an argument.

"Dinna ken naething aboot poleetics; ye say that aboot ma? Da ye na ken we ha' payment o' members in Australia, an' ye ken that a mon o' Scots descent always kens something aboot anything that has bawbees in it? Why, mon, A mean to be President o' United Independent Australia before A dee."

Next to a tune on Mac's bagpipes, the officer dreaded an argument from the same source, so he wisely turned tail and fled to prepare for his trip to the plague-infested nigger location.

Left to his own devices, the Scot-Australian set about preparing for the work in front of him with the energy that was natural to him. He requisitioned half a dozen wagons and their teams, and loaded them with foodstuffs for the sick and all the disinfectants he could lay hands upon in Durban. Of ordinary lime and quicklime he got a good quantity; then, taking his carbine over his shoulder and strapping his Colt revolver on to his hip, he made his way out to the plague-infested spots. He had purposely selected teams of bullocks in preference to horses or mules because he had made up his mind that no animal that entered the location should leave it alive, for, like most bushmen, he firmly believed that horses, mules and cattle carry infectious

disease about with them for months. His idea was to slaughter the oxen as occasion might require for food for the blacks, and to utterly destroy the wagons by fire. When he reached the camp, which consisted of a large number of circular huts built of clay and roofed with thatch, he received a hostile demonstration.

The negroes evidently thought that he had come to them to interfere with their methods of coping with one of the foulest diseases known to medical science, and they did not mean to allow him to do so. They began by hooting, then, emboldened by his quiet demeanour, they hurled clods of dirt and small sticks at the white man.

He did not move a muscle. He had fixed his wagons up one behind the other, tying the leading strings of the oxen to the tail of the wagon in front in each case, so that he needed no drivers to help him.

At last one man bolder than the rest threw a stone which took McGlusky neatly on the elbow-joint of the left arm, hitting that precise spot which schoolboys call the "funny-bone."

Nearly every man living knows the sensation caused by a sharp blow on the "funny-bone"; those who don't can easily find out. With a word that David never used, even when Saul pelted him with javelins, the Scot-Australian drew his revolver, and as the nigger turned to flee he planted a bullet in a spot that, though well-cushioned with flesh, seemed to carry a "funny-bone" of some sort, for the nigger filled the air with cries that made McGlusky smile. At this juncture the remount officer rode into the native location. He had thrown off his uniform, and was dressed in white drill, which made him a most conspicuous figure in that strange assembly. A shower of stones greeted him. Turning quietly in his saddle, he deliberately picked

up his eye-glass, screwed it in his eye, and then glared at the angry mob of niggers. Clods of dirt, old meat tins, and all sorts of refuse came hurtling through the air towards him. "You mutinous beggahs," he growled, then he got off his horse, walked right into the howling mob, and began to lay about him with his riding whip; McGlusky expected every moment to see him killed.

The insolence born of a white skin triumphed, for the niggers fled before the whip, though there was scarcely a man in the crowd who, given an assegai to fight with, could not have beaten the soldier had he been armed with a sabre, for he was of weedy physique and they were finely developed savages. As soon as something like order was restored, the pair of Anglo-Saxons set about unyoking the oxen and fixing up a camp for themselves. This done, they held a conference, and determined to see how many people really were ill of the plague. From hut to hut they went, and found things in a deplorably dirty state everywhere; but it was a long time before they succeeded in finding a plague patient. The first they came across was in a hut which had the door closed tightly. Not only was it shut fast, but every crevice by which a breath of air could enter was carefully stuffed with rags. The only tiny window in the place was battened up, and the cracks which might have admitted a mouthful of life-giving ozone were stuffed with clay and pieces of straw. It was a reeking hot day outside, but inside the hut it was simply baking. As the door flew open to the energetic pressure of the Scot-Australian's muscular shoulder a wave of perfume rolled out strong enough to have checked a cavalry charge.

"Get back, mon," cried McGlusky to the officer. "It's teemptin' Proveedence ta face the perfume o'

ane o' these huts until it ha' thinned off a bit. Phew! it's thicker than an Australian dust-storm, an' they air thick enoo' ta scare a camel."

"Don't know anything about dust-storms," panted the officer; "but this beats a London fog in the heart of November. Shouldn't like to have to drive a cab through it."

So they stood one on each side of the door of the hut, and let the vile vapour pour out, whilst inside, three or four old crones, who acted as medicos to the patient, made doleful wailings. They had a tobacco cave in the centre of the floor of the hut, and each in turn took a pull at it, choking, spitting and coughing as they swallowed the powerful fumes and let them play down amidst their lungs. There are a good many kinds of so-called tobacco in the world, but for strength, pungency and vileness of odour there is none to match the green tobacco which the Kaffirs keep exclusively for their own use. A plug of it in a man's pocket makes him smell like a guano island after a thunderstorm. What a guano island under those circumstances can smell like even Dante could not describe.

On a bed composed of old rags, gathered from the dust-heaps of Durban, lay the patient in the last throes of the awful disease. Hardened sinner as he was, McGlusky turned pale in that pest-house, whilst the young officer, who had never probably slept out of a feather-bed in his life, simply lay against the wall and gasped. Picking up an axe, the Scot-Australian battered the window open; then he set to work to knock a hole through the opposite side of the hut to create a draught.

"Let me do something, man, to help," panted the officer.

"Gang ootside an' quiet those fules who are howling," was the terse answer.

"I won't do anything of the kind. I know you are only saying that to get me to clear out and leave you to this job, and I'll see you hanged first; we'll share and share alike."

The boy (he wasn't much more) was rising to the occasion, as so many of the dandies did in time of real peril.

"Well, if ye will na da that, just tak' these old she-deevils by the neck an' pack 'em oot o' tha hut."

The officer made an effort to shift one of the crones, though his very gorge rose in revolt, for she smelt like a disinterred corpse. The hag resisted with extreme violence, finally putting her teeth through the fleshy part of his wrist.

McGlusky looked round with a scowl. The sweat was pouring down his ugly face in streams, for the clay of the wall was hard and thick, and the axe an awkward tool for such work.

"Dinna stand on ceremony wi' the auld ——" (McGlusky used a name which is properly only applicable to a female of the pig species). "Da ye think, ma mon, ye air trainin' for the Queen's Drawing Room? Ha' ye no a tae ta yer boot?"

At that moment the head of the axe came off, as the head of a nigger's axe always will come off when a white man wants to use it, and the heavy lump of steel, flying backwards, caught the Scot-Australian across the bridge of the nose. The air had been thick before that event occurred, but it was simply sulphurous for the next few seconds. The officer turned his back to hide his laughter, and even the hags began to cackle. That was more than Mac could stand.

"Oot, oot, ye haverin' de'ils," he shouted, and applying the toe of his boot to the one that had bitten the soldier, he sent the old beldame through the door-

way like a football. The rest of them did not wait for a hint of the same kind; like a flock of frightened fowls they fluttered out of the hut.

It was McGlusky's intention to use that part of the location as a sick ward, so after a few hurried words together, the pair slipped a soldier's blanket under the diseased wretch, and one taking the head, the other the feet, they carried him into the open air. The blessed relief to the open air was unspeakable to both the Britons, but looking into the young fellow's face McGlusky saw how the work was telling upon him.

"Ye air a game body," he said, in his rough way, "game as a de'il's cockerel, but A'm thinkin' ye air ower young for sic work."

"Go to the deuce and stop crying," was the short answer. "I've commenced, and I'm going to see it through."

So once more they faced the job, stripped to their trousers and singlets they cleared the hut out; the filthy rags that had been the patient's bed were piled in a heap and burnt, the floor was slept up as clean as human hands could sweep it, and then disinfectants were strewn around.

Whilst this was going on the pair went to another hut, where a patient lay, and commenced to batter in the door. This was the signal for a hostile demonstration. A mob of natives, armed with assegais, advanced upon the two whites. McGlusky handed his revolver to his ally, and unslung his carbine.

"A dinna want ta shoot," he said, "but it's na these fules alane we ha' ta conseeder; it's all the people in Natal, an' oor army at the front. A will speak to them softly, an' try ta reason wi' them first, but if that does na stop them, A will show them something in the way o' shootin' that will surprise them."

So he spoke to them softly—according to his lights.

"Ye heathen spawn, da ye na ha' sinse enoo' to see that we air coom to save ye from evil? Ye ha' broucht the disease upon ye by ye're ain dirt an' laziness; it's a veesetation from above, an' ye richtly deserve it a', an' a bit mair thrown in. Ye ha' less brains than a flock o' geese, an' A ha' ma doots if ye air warth the trouble o' savin', but we air goin' ta da it. Dinna coom foolin' roun' wi' ye's bit spears or A will shoot the whiskers off some o' ye"—which was a vain boast, for there was not a single set of whiskers amongst them.

One of the ringleaders raised his assegai; as he did so the officer fixed his eternal eyeglass under his left eyebrow, and taking a snap shot with his revolver, put a pellet through the muscle of the upraised arm. The crowd swayed inwards with a wicked undulating movement, which the Scot-Australian knew meant mischief.

"We maun shoot to kill," he said sternly, "or we'll be cold pie in two seconds."

He shot to kill, picking out the ringleaders with unerring certainty, and the soldier aided him royally. After that there was peace, none of the blacks dared to interfere, hut after hut was cleared and fumigated, patient after patient was isolated, until not a "case" was missing.

Then the two tired men changed their clothes, washed themselves out in the pure air, fumigated themselves and each other as best they knew how, and having eaten a good meal lay down under the stars in their blankets, and slept the sleep of men who made empires. At cockcrow they were astir once more; they rounded up the natives and set them to work to clean up the camp; every bit of rag and other rubbish was burnt, every old tin was buried, many of the foulest of the

huts were burnt down and utterly destroyed, every stitch of clothing in the whole camp was burnt in one grand pile.

Then McGlusky, who could be crafty when it suited him to be so, said to the headman of the village, "A wad like to buy a gude cattle daug, if ye hae ane in the place."

"What in the name of all that is sensible do you want with one of these curs?" asked the soldier.

"Ye ken it's only tactics A'm practising," was the suave reply. "There's aboot twa hunner curs in this village, an' every ane o' them is likely ta carry the plague inta Durban. A am goin' ta shoot tha lot, every blessed ane o' them, but dae ye no see that if A telt 'em that, A'd not get more than a dozen shots altogether, for a Kaffir mongrel knows more than any daug that ever wore hair."

At the bidding of the headman, the Kaffirs brought their mongrels forward in leash.

"Put 'em doon in a row," said the cute Scot, with a yawn. "A will walk along and choose the ane A will pay for later.

"Noo, mon, ye start at ane end o' the row, an' A'll start at tha ither. It's a dirty job, but it must be done."

And done it was. A trench was dug, the dogs were thrown in and covered with lime, the trenches were filled, and the work of the whites was over, except the watching and waiting, and the burying of the niggers who died; but the plague was stamped out in that part so effectively that few white folk in Durban know to this day how McGlusky and the boy officer saved them from the fearsome scourge. The youngster did not even get the D.S.O., but men have got knighthoods for less.

CHAPTER XIII

McGLUSKY TAKES CHARGE OF A CATTLE CAMP

AFTER disinfecting the nigger camp near Durban, McGlusky had, of course, to disinfect himself, and this he did as he did pretty nearly everything else—namely, in a way entirely his own. He had a good-sized boat fitted up with provisions, clothes, and shooting tackle. One rifle, a gift from the remount officer, was a superb weapon, built specially for big game shooting by Gibbs, of Bristol—a ·461-bore, which carried a slightly hollowed bullet. McGlusky had seen it and hankered for it, so, as the remount officer saw no possibility of having any sport for a year or two, he gave it to the Scot-Australian as a reminder of the days spent in the nigger location. A big supply of biscuits, tinned meats, tea, coffee, tobacco and other necessaries were also placed in the boat by McGlusky's orders, though he did not go near it himself, for in some things he was a careful soul. This done, he requested that a nigger whom he had selected as his companion should receive orders to row the boat some little distance down the bay and stand-to off the coast about a quarter of a mile. This having been done to his satisfaction, he walked down to the beach, stripped as naked as the day he was born, and having cast his clothes into the surf, he himself plunged into the warm, blue water and

swam off to his boat. Having reached the little craft and climbed on board, he dressed himself in a new suit of khaki; then, taking the tiller ropes, and putting his big pipe into his mouth, he ordered the nigger to pull along the coast in the direction of Port Elizabeth. The black man bent his back to the task, and pulled along leisurely. He was not an ordinary nigger. McGlusky had selected him because he was famous for his knowledge of big game in that part of the world, for it had dawned upon the Scot-Australian that the best way to purify himself from all microbes connected with plague was to drift in an open boat along the coast, landing each night to sleep on the beach, and then, when a favourable spot was reached, to push a bit inland and have some sport. "Fresh air an' gude sweet saut watter is a gift the gude God gied us," he had remarked to the remount officer, "an' A'm goin' ta mak' use o' it; ye ken veera weel A need it."

So it came to pass that he found himself loafing about the shark-infested coast that lies between Port Elizabeth and dainty Durban. The nigger was a good sort as niggers go. When he was in the company of Dutch farmers, many of whom live in that vicinity, he was the greatest Dutchman of them all; when in an English camp he was pro-British to the backbone. He had been converted to nearly every known brand of Christianity in his time, and had taken presents from all creeds on his conversion. He was a member of the Kaffir Mission, of the Dutch Reformed Church, also of the Roman Catholic League. The Scotch Mission had been embraced by him, and the professors of the Mussulman creed had not found him backward when seeking converts. He had an india-rubber conscience, and an appetite to match;

but as a hunter and a leader of hunting parties he had no equal in those parts, whilst his personal courage was one of the proverbs of the people, white or black. To this henchman of his McGlusky had taken a keen liking, and as the boat drifted through the blue water he talked to him upon many topics. He explained his new religion, the religion of the rifle, to the black; and that worthy, with tears in his eyes, declared that it was the very brand of salvation which he had been vainly seeking with which to solace his soul.

"Na, na," remarked the Scot-Australian shrewdly, "A dinna theenk ye air the sort o' mon that martyrs air made oot o'. Ye air sic a de'il o' a mon ta change. Reeleegion is na your strong suit. A wud as soon think o' droppin' anchor in a cream jug as o' pinnin' ma faith to the likes o' you, mon. A ken veera weel whilke way ye wud gae if it suited ye."

Seeing that the topic was not likely to prove profitable, the dark gentleman, who was many removes from a fool, shifted the conversation, telling the white man the history of many of the great black heroes who at one time or another had ruled over Africa in other ages, whilst McGlusky outlined some of England's mighty dead for the African's benefit. He told of Cromwell, that colossal figure of freedom, who towers over all heads in English history as a mountain towers over molehills. McGlusky's Cromwell was a quaint personage, a mixture of Lord Kitchener and General Booth, with a dash of the first Napoleon thrown in. In McGlusky's hands, Cromwell was one day kicking with spurred boot some "bluidy lang-haired Cavalier" from Naseby battlefield into the river Eye, and the next "hitting a keeng in the wammle on the red fields o' Dunbar," filling in his evenings teaching his Ironsides how to sing psalms and groom horses.

So the time passed, and the coast grew wilder and wilder; every night they landed, ran the boat high up on the beach; built themselves a fire, and made themselves at home, until one evening they came to the mouth of a little river which emptied itself into the ocean. When McGlusky saw it he wanted to know something concerning it.

"Is it a gude reever, or a wee bit o' watter na worth conseedering?" he asked.

To which the Kaffir answered that it was nothing, not a river at all, but only a drainage.

"A mountain weeps," he said, in his picturesque way. "A mountain weeps, and the tears run into the sea."

"How far inland is the mountain?"

The Kaffir did not know, but he did know that in the thick timber which lay between the coast and the mountain there were plenty of elephants to be had for the shooting, and plenty of leopards and vilderbeast as well. On the receipt of that news McGlusky bade the black bend to his oars, whilst he, with a deft tug at the tiller ropes, swung the boat's head up the river. That night they camped a good way inland in the tangled wilderness of the woods, and the negro, who was a charming companion, in order to make the time pass more pleasantly, told the white man gruesome stories concerning every kind of poisonous serpent known to those parts, of which, according to his account, there were many. Now, if there was one thing in the world that McGlusky really feared and loathed it was a serpent of any kind. He had an instinctive dread of reptiles, and would not knowingly go near one for a king's ransom.

"Oot, ma mon," he cried, at last, "if ye air na leein', this part o' the warld is as fu' o' snakes as it is o' mis-

keetees, an', by ma soul, they air thick enoo' hereabouts. A'm afeard ta breathe in the camp for fear o' bein' chokit wi' the bluidsuckin' de'ils, an' noo ye mak' me afeard ta move hand or fute in the dark for fear o' touchin' ane kind o' serpent or anither. A'm thinkin' A wull sleep in tha boat; A dinna want a cobra for a bed-fellow."

The negro could not understand how so great a fighter should have so great a fear of "vermin," for the black never fully comprehends a white man's shuddering dread of reptiles. That night, and pretty nearly every night he slept ashore, McGlusky built a complete ring of fire around his camping ground, and even then he was haunted in his dreams by pythons and cobras. The fifth day after the pair had entered the river the Scot-Australian was walking along an open glade, which was bounded on one side by a dense cane swamp, and on the other by a thick patch of jungle. He was carrying his rifle carelessly under his right arm, his eternal pipe was between his teeth, and he was wondering whether he had been led astray by his black guide, for he had seen nothing of elephants so far.

"A dinna theenk theer is sic a thing as an elephant in this part o' Africa, unless maybe it is in a circus," he said aloud, when, looking suddenly to his left hand, he beheld a great slate-coloured head, two big ivory tusks, a long trunk, and two small wicked eyes facing him from a wall of cane not fifty feet away. No one who knew him would have called McGlusky a coward, yet when he saw that massive head, those terrible tusks, and the fierce, vengeful eyes of the vast lord of the jungle, he suddenly lost a lot of interest in hunting, because it dawned upon him that it was on the cards that he might be the "hunted" before the day was out, and there is a considerable difference in

the two aspects of the chase. He had never seen a wild elephant before, and at that moment he would have sold his view to any one else for a very moderate price.

"A'm theenkin' A dinna want those twa ivory tusks verra badly," he muttered, as he began to sidle off towards a healthy-looking tree on his right. "It was ma heelth A cam' oot for, not for ivory, an', ma certie, this doesna seem too healthy aboot here. If A manage ta get inta the tree A will gie the grey de'il a bit o' lead in the lug for the frecht he ha' gied ma."

As if the elephant fully understood the Scots dialect, or at any rate his intentions, he charged without warning, just hurling himself forward like a great grey cloud. So sudden and so fierce was his onset, so noiseless—for his immense feet sank into the cushion of grass that lay on the earth—that the white man had little time to do any thinking or planning. But the danger, the challenge of the charge, roused the fighting instinct of the Scot-Australian. He lifted his rifle with the swift motion of the practised hunter, and sighted with the unflinching eye of a bold man. He fired full at the chest, for so the nigger had told him to fire at a charging elephant. Just as he touched the trigger the great beast swerved, and the bullet crashed into the near shoulder, the hollow bullet flattening out and tearing a great hole as it crashed through the bone. The shock and the loss of the use of the foreleg brought the brute headlong to the grass, and McGlusky, with blazing eyes and deft fingers, sent another bullet square at the forehead, but the lead glanced off, and the next moment, with a whistle like a steam tug's signal to a stranded steamer, the creature was bounding down upon him on three legs.

McGlusky leapt aside just in time to save his life,

but the long, nervous trunk swept his rifle from his grasp, and then began a foot-race that will be handed down in the annals of the McGlusky family from generation to generation. The Scot made a dash at full speed for the nearest tree, but the elephant, blundering along on three legs, was too quick for him, and he could feel the extended trunk brushing against his back before he covered two-thirds of the distance. He wheeled as a hare wheels under the muzzles of the dogs, and sprinted off towards another tree. The grey monster swerved also, and came on again, but the trick had given McGlusky a few yards advantage; and he needed them, for in spite of the maimed leg trailing in the grass the elephant got over the ground like an avalanche.

Once in his roving life the Scot-Australian had matched himself for £100 a side over three distances against McGarrigal, the champion sprinter of Australia, when the wily McGarrigal was touring the back country as a local preacher, and McGlusky had won the stake and a big wager beside. Speaking of his race with the lame elephant in Durban later on, McGlusky said:

"A had ta run veera hard to beat McCarrigal. A thocht at the time A cudna ha run harder to save ma life, but as ma soul leeveth, when A saw that elephant reachin' fer ma wi' his trunk, A didna run—A flew! A cud ha' gied McGarrigal twal yards in a hunner that day, an' he was the only mon A ever saw who cud brak 'even time' every time he pulled a shoe on."

All over the place the elephant coursed McGlusky, down the glade, up the glade, like a sheep-dog hunting a rabbit. In vain the white man tried every wile he knew, the grey monster kept sternly at him. Once

the long curved tusks were so close to him that he could have sat down upon them if he had wanted to, but as he said himself, "A wasna an ambeetious mon, an' didna want ta sit on ivory." The branch of a tree a good way from the ground was the one thing in the world he yearned to sit on just then.

It was a mad race, silent, desperate, terrible. McGlusky's whiskers stood out in front of him, his head was thrown far back, his mouth was agape, sweat poured down his brow and over his cheeks in streams, his hands were clenched in front of his chest, his elbows glued to his sides, and as he ran he prayed, "Lord, gin A get oot o' this A wull promeese never to hurt any more elephants, not if A meet 'em in a zoo."

At that moment a rifle spoke from the edge of the forest, and the great beast, with a sob that McGlusky thought was merely an elephant's way of saying grace before meals, went plunging head first into the deep grass. McGlusky did not hear his nigger helper's rifle, he rushed on, reached a tree, and shinned up it with the speed of a monkey, nor did he stop climbing until he reached the topmost boughs. When at last he looked below and saw the great beast lying dead in the glade, with the grinning nigger sitting upon its head, he came down from his perch, and tried to convince the black man that he had merely been on top of the tree to admire the scenery. When the nigger slyly remarked that his white companion was a mighty runner, McGlusky answered:

"A fast run, mon, in sweet fresh air, is tha veera best way to clear tha lungs o' a mon from infeectious microbes, an' ye ken weel that I cam' oot inta tha wilderness ta free ma lungs fra all sic microbes; besides, A didna want ta fire twa shots inta a wounded beastie; an' besides, A wanted ta find oot hoo fast sic a big brute

deevil cud travel on three legs. A mon should always keep his een open in the cause o' science."

The nigger chuckled, for he had his own ideas concerning the Scot-Australian's efforts in the cause of science. The laughter enraged the white man to such an extent that he gripped the black by the two ears, and dragged his head forward, then he planted his knee in the black man's "wammle," forcing the body outwards until his ears stretched like flaps of india-rubber, and the dusky hunter howled loud and long for mercy.

"Gang hame the noo, ye black deevil," stormed McGlusky, flinging the negro from him. "Gang hame, an' if A hear sic a thing as a wheesper consarnin' a foot-race wi' a beastie when we get back to Durban, A wull pull yer ears ower yer head an' tie yer tongue in a knot wi' yer ears."

So it came about that McGlusky landed once more in Durban and took with him a pair of splendid tusks, which he gave without comment to his friend the remount officer. He said nothing concerning his exploits, but it was noticeable in later days that whenever he got more rum than was good for him, he always tried to climb a lamp-post, under the impression that he was pursued by elephants. He confided to Jock O'Neil that whereas of old time when he had been drinking heavily he had always fancied himself chased by snakes, he now saw nothing but three-legged elephants when the liquor had him in its clutches.

So whenever the astute "Jock," a man of infinite resource himself, found McGlusky gibbering from a lamp-post, he used to go through a pantomimic elephant hunt, whilst the drunkard up above watched him with maudlin admiration until "Jock" would assure him the last elephant was dead, when he would descend and allow his countryman to lead him home.

One day when he was playing "pin-pool" in the billiard-room of his hotel, he received an urgent call from the remount officer, who told him that he had decided to send him on to the officer at the cattle depôt, who badly wanted a good man to "pass" the beef for the army at the front. Glad of the chance to be once more in action, the Scot-Australian climbed into his train and was very soon in the midst of grime and dirt, the rush and the bustle of a "beef" camp. The "beef" location was in the elbow of a river where some fair feed could be obtained for the cattle. Military tents were scattered here and there to shelter the guard. The railway station was a weary-looking little tin hut, which looked like an oven and felt like a hob stone in Hades. All around this dismal abode the soil had been churned into white dust by the hoofs of innumerable cattle, and when the wind blew the salt white dust on to the sweating body of a military man fresh out from England, that warrior seldom found his vocabulary sufficiently well stocked to allow him to ventilate his opinion concerning the country and the climate.

The dust, the stench, the heat, the flies were simply awful, and men who were new to the business, as all the military men were, suffered dreadfully. They dressed for their work just as they dressed for military business, and so added to their sufferings five hundred per cent. Their food was wretchedly cooked, the water they had to drink was bad, the hours they worked were double what a man should attempt in such a climate, and the result was chaos. The niggers, who had been used to the strict but wise rule of the Boers and British farmers, soon knew that the military men knew nothing about handling niggers, and they just loafed away their time and let the sweating, swearing "Tommies" do their work, though they were drawing double

the pay the "Tommies" drew, and were getting double the rations the "Tommies" got.

Before McGlusky had been ten minutes in the presence of the Brigadier-General who commanded the camp, the soldier knew he had got a treasure. He had heard much concerning the Scot-Australian, and his advent was a godsend to the worn-out man of war.

"I believe you understand cattle and cattle camps, Mr. McGlusky" he remarked, as he pushed his cigar-case towards the hairy one.

"A beeleeve A do," was the modest answer.

"Well, thank God some one has arrived who does," was the hearty reply, "for I'm sure I don't, and there is not an officer under me who knows a steer from a stack of hay."

A group of niggers, who should have been clearing up the awful dirt of the camp, but instead were sunning themselves and catching flies for wagers, caught Mac's eye. He walked across to them, and gave an order in sharp, quick tones.

The niggers looked at him insolently, and one, speaking to the others in Dutch, made an offensive remark reflecting upon McGlusky's mother. Snatching a sjambok from the fellow's hand, the Scot-Australian set about him in a manner which convinced that dusky one that this was a "baas" who could not be trifled with. Then, shedding his coat and shirt, whip in hand, McGlusky stalked through the dust and grime and filth of the place, and flayed every nigger who refused to do his bidding. He formed a body of police, and arming them with sjamboks, sent them round to enforce his orders, so that before dusk of the first day the niggers were earning their pay. He drafted the cattle into handy little mobs, so that they could be placed upon trains without any trouble. He told off

squads of men whose duty it was to receive all the lean cattle, and take them away where the famished brutes could get both food and water. He put other men on to receive fat stock from the contractors, and yet another squad to dispatch good beef to the front. He scarcely seemed to eat, drink, or sleep, but he smoked a terrible lot, and when he was well pleased with himself and his men he sang psalms and dropped dainty little Scripture texts all over the place; but when he was out of humour through the laziness of his helpers, then he sent the untrimmed language of the shearing sheds about in unadulterated strength. Apart from the regular contractors there were many small dealers who sold stock to the army, and those men gave McGlusky an awful lot of trouble, for they were full of guile, and their ways were simple. As a rule, these gentry worked in bands, and they caused McGlusky's spirit to grow heavy within him. One day, as he was untrucking some animals that had been sold to the army, he heard the niggers shout, "Here's Ole Jerusalem again." Then they roared with laughter, for the African is a great lover of a bit of sharp practice. McGlusky pushed his way through their ranks, and saw a blue ox with white bands running down its flanks. As soon as the ox was let go it strolled across to the feeding lines, and commenced to help itself in a very placid and homely manner.

"A wud bet ma boots that animal ha' been here mair than ance before," remarked McGlusky.

"More than once!" remarked a nigger guard, "why, baas, he knows every camp in the British lines. When Baas Buller was fighting here in Natal, he was sold for meat to nearly every division in the army. Then he got shipped round to Cape Colony, and went up in the trucks and took part in all the manœuvres there. He

was sold for beef to pretty nearly every regiment between Pretoria and Cape Town, and then he got sent down here to have a change. The "Tommies" were beginning to know him, and this is the tenth time we have had him. He has been ear-marked, hoof-marked and horn-marked. He has been branded until his hide looks like a sand-bank after rain, and the soldiers say, baas, he knows the bugle call better than they do."

At that moment the Brigadier-General came along with a civilian, who was saying:

"Dinna theenk A wad da a dishonest thing, sir. A'm honest if I am humble. A would no da sic a thing as steal a bundle o' forage, let alone a beastie. Ye air a great mon, General, and A am on'y a Lily o' the Valley, a mon born ta keep in a humble sphere."

"That's the man who sold 'Ole Jerusalem' to the army," grinned the nigger.

Leaping through the dust with a great shout of joy, McGlusky faced the new-comer, and at once put his hands into a fighting attitude. The Brigadier drew back. It was none of his circus.

"A'm no a fechter. A'm a mon o' sinful an' a contrite heart, a mon o' good warks. I, h—l!"

Through the dust the Lily o' the Valley had recognized McGlusky, and with that irreverent utterance upon his lips he had turned and fled.

He knew what he might expect from a Scotsman from whom he had taken "twa hunner poons"; and all that he expected he got, full measure, heaped up and running over. And when he had paid McGlusky the "twa hunner poons" he had stolen from him, and a bit over for interest, the Scot-Australian kicked him with his heavy boots beyond the precincts of the cattle camp, and then went back and shot the blue-striped "coo" as a warning to other dealers.

CHAPTER XIV

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S VULTURE

"A'M na certain aboot ma dates, so A will na gie ye chapter an' varse; but it was a gran' sicht, a veera gran' sicht. A cud see the han' o' Proveedence in it a'. Let ma pictur' tha scene. First of a' ye ken there was the young mon Winston Charchill standin' alane on the open veldt; the cloods weer hangin' low an' black an' sullen, like a frown on the face o' the Almichty. Far awa' in the west the black cloods were torn an' rent asunder as though the de'il had made oop his mind ta look doon on the warl', for ye ken the de'il is na unnergroon as some folk in their eegnorance eemagine. He's just oop in heaven doin' sentry go in front o' the gates o' Paradeese waitin' ta claim his ain. An' A tell ye, ma frien's, it is na a 'lonely furrer' he'll be fallerin', though theer air some who air na angels who seem michty fond o' that kind o' travellin'. But A wull na discoorse on de'ils the noo, but gie ye the story o' Winston Charchill. Just wheer tha clouds weer rent an' torn asunder, the sinking sun, bluidy red and angry, glowered doon like tha crimson flame fra a Boer hoose shootin' through the reek o' smoke. Ye ken what A mean, for ye ha' watched mony a good hoose an' hame burnt fra doorstep ta roof-tree here in Africa. Ye ha' seen 'em, an' A ha' seen

'em, 'beacon fires on the hills o' leeberty' they ha' proved ta be too, ma maisters, for though A love a fecht an' like salt wi' ma meat as weel as ony mon, A dinna think the burnin' o' hames is mon's wark, not fechtin' mon's wark. A may say, noo, A wouldna burn a mon's hame whilst he was in the field fechtin' again ma if they wad mak' ma a belted earl for doin' it.

"A thocht farm burnin' was deevil's wark until A learned it was politeecian's wark. Ma ain forbears when they were fechtin' for Kirk an' Covenant in Scotland had the same experience, an' A tell ye we Scots ha' no forgot it yet, an' the Boers will na forget it in a thoosan' year—but A'm digressin'. Ye ken A'm a teetoteler the noo, an' watter mak's ma tongue as loose as an auld wife's shoon. A said the sun was sinkin' in the bluidy cloud o' crimson glory, an' the veldt land lay bare an' brown for mony a mile, for the grass hadna grown on the soil sin the Breetish troops burnt it a' ta stop the Boer commandos fra feedin' their horse flesh. Everything looked flat an' barren an' blasted by the breath o' war. There was no kopje in sight as far as mon's eye cud see, but on'y that young mon, Winston Charchill, and he filled the whole scenery. There was na need for any mountains, or rivers, or forests when that young mon was around; na need for the gran' masterpieces o' the Creator. Winston was theer, an' the wark o' the Creator was complete. The great architect couldna ha' improved on that. He was dressit in kahkee which wasna as new as it micht ha' been, for the young mon had just escapit fra a Boer laager. Ye ken he had been a preesner in the han's of the enemy. A mon's paart he played before he surrendered, for he foucht wi' a whole commando o' Boers single-handed when they tried ta tak' an armoured train preesner, though what

the de'il they wad a done wi' it oot on the veldt A cannot tell.

"A braw fecht be put oop before he surrendered ta the enemy, for he's a brave chiel, ye ken. An' it was on'y the weight o' numbers that made him surrender; an' after the enemy got him they cudna keep him —anyway, they didna ha' him lang. A ha' been told that his guard was a veera releegious mon, ane o' those Dutchmen who wud rather stay in laager and pray for the independence o' his country than gang oot an' fecht for it; an' ane nicht he read a chapter from the Book of Reevelations which telt aboot a dream, in which John saw the Heavens open, an' mony great an' wonnerful things happen. An' that nicht A'm telt that Winston Charchill had a dream. He dreamt he was in a Boer prison an' he opened the door wi' a golden key an' escaped an' got ta England, and the Hoose o' Commons opened its doors ta him, and a big strong fellow named 'Demos' carried him in an' told him that if he played the game he'd be Prime Minister o' England before he died. An' A for ane theenk that part o' the dream wull come true, for he ha' more brains than any Englishman o' his age A ever met.

"An' Winston Charchill told his Boer guard consarnin' that dream, an' asked him what he thocht o' it. An' the Boer said he'd give him his private opeenion' after he had seen the golden key. An' Winston, who was wide awake even when he was dreamin', found him gold enoo' to mak' a key; an' that nicht Charchill's bonds were loosed, an' he got off inta the veldt, an' his heart an' his head saved him from bein' retaken. Dinna theenk A'm belittlin' the mon, for A wad scorn ta da it, though A'm not on his side o' the wall in poleetics. Oot on the lonely veldt he had ta wrastle wi' destiny,

an' destiny floors nineteen men oot o' twenty, but the odd mon flies high. It cam' aboot at last that destiny had the young mon on the hip, an' he cried oot in vary bitterness o' speerit: 'Why was A born o' woman ta be wasted in this wilderness? A am hungry an' A am athirst. Wae is ma, the birds o' the air ha' coom ta devour ma. Oot, oot, ye grey deevil! Dinna come ta the feast, for the lunch is na ready yet.'

"This he said ta a vulture that had come fra the cloods ta settle on an ant-hill near him; an' the vulture had a yard o' meat in its beak, an' it hoppit off the ant-hill an' deposited the meat at the feet o' the young mon, and then tucked its head under its wing an' went ta sleep, an' the young man pickit up the meat an' foond it was a yard, or maybe a yard an' a-half, o' best Boer biltong; an' he rose up an' gave thanks, an' he ate the biltong an' was michtily refreshed thereby. An' he walked on, an' all that nicht he marched towards freedom led by the vulture, for the bird flew in a straight line in front o' the young mon. An' in the mornin' he said, 'Now I know I shall surely ha' ta fast this day'; but he was conseederin' wi'oot consultin' his vulture, for at breakfast time the bird flew over a hill down into a valley, an' the young mon followed an' saw a Boer farm-house.

"Then he cursed that vulture because he thocht that it had led him into the hands o' the Philistines, but the vulture knew its beesness, for when the Boers saw a mon in khaki advancin' upon their hoose they thocht the Breetish Army was advancin' upon them, an' they rose up an' fled, an' the young mon went doon and fell upon the victuals until he was filled, an' the broken victuals he gave to the vulture, which had followed him as far as the stoep, which is Dutch for verandah. Then he looked through the house for a

keepsake ta remind him o' his meeraculous salvation. He foond a packet o' uncut diamonds an' a bundle o' banknotes, but he wadna touch them, because it is agen the tradeetions o' a Breetish soldier ta loot fra the enemy; but a lock o' a child's hair an' a Dutch Bible he thocht might da him na harm. If he had been ane o' those buyers o' army horses or a dealer in cattle, ye ken, things micht ha' been different, but na feehtin' soldier o' Britain ever yet soiled his hands in loot—at least, not if a nigger was handy ta carry it. An' when he had gotten a' the keepsakes he needed he went upon his way rejoicin', an' his vulture went wi' him.

"Three meals a day that bird broucht frae the bosom o' the wilderness for the descendant o' the michty hoose o' Marlborough, an' A'm na so sartain it didna fetch him hot shavin' water an' soap in the mornin's, for A telt ye Proveedence ha' marked the young mon oot for great warks, and when the gods gie a thing to a mon they dinna give grudgingly, but they gie wi' both fists."

"Do you mean to say you believe that story, McGlusky?" asked an officer, contemptuously, for the Scot-Australian had been entertaining a group of soldiers under the verandah of a little railway station.

"Beelieve it!" was the hot reply, "A da. A believe it a'. Didna A see him oot on the veldt masel', an' did he na show ma a han'full o' vulture feathers ta prove it?"

"If I showed you a horseshoe, would you believe I was a horse, Mac?" asked a jovial telegraph clerk.

"Nay, mon, A wadna, for by your blether A ken weel ye air an ass."

The laugh went against the telegraph operator, a brawny ex-soldier, who at once proceeded to lose his temper and become abusive.

McGlusky looked very hard at the man, and then he said, "Ma freen, A dinna want ta fecht, but theer's ane ta gang on wi'," and he stretched his opponent out with a straight left-handed drive between the eyes.

After that there was peace; no one made any rude remarks, because no one wanted to hurt the Scot-Australian's feelings, and Mac for his part would rather have held a camp service than make a fight.

It was a beautiful Sabbath afternoon, the air was full of a holy calm except when one of the "Tommies," amongst a group of about a dozen who were playing pitch and toss for coppers close by, had a streak of extra bad luck. Then the calm was broken by language that no man ever learned in a Board School.

Just outside the gambling ring a little group of "Tommies" were matching two dogs to fight, and wagers were freely made in plugs of tobacco, which had something more than a mere money value, for tobacco was an article hard to come by either lawfully or unlawfully. As soon as the fight began McGlusky at once strolled across to look at it; not that he liked cruelty, but because there was something in his nature that made a fight very dear indeed to his soul. He would have turned aside any day to watch two sparrows fight over a breadcrumb. He mostly had a wager on a fight if he could get any one to bet with, and he nearly always lost his money, because something within him invariably made him champion the "little 'un" or the "weak 'un" in a mill.

On this occasion he pinned his faith and put his tobacco on the smallest of the pair of combatants, a weedy-looking creature that had as many breeds in its blood as it had hairs on its body, and, as usual, he lost his bets, because the mongrel was outclassed

in weight, size, strength and speed; but he did not repine, because, though the mongrel lost the battle, the creature put up a good fight. One of the soldiers who had backed the mongrel for the sake of the odds kicked the defeated animal in the ribs as it crouched dejectedly, licking its wounds, at the Scot-Australian's feet.

"Mon," ejaculated McGlusky, "mon, A'm thinkin' a soldier's uniform was wastit when it was gied to ye. A'm thinkin' ye air the kind o' cowardly deevil who wad throw up his han's wi'oot a fecht if a Dutchman ca'ed ye ta surrender. The warl' is fu' o' men like ye who always kick a dog when he's doon. A dinna want ta be hard on yer mither, ma mon, but A tell ye she must ha' had a puir opeenion o' the warl' when she brought sic a cooardly deevil inta it."

The soldier made no verbal reply, but slipping off his belt he brought the buckle with a back-handed swing under McGlusky's ear, and the Scot-Australian went down on top of the mongrel whose cause he had espoused; and it was well on towards evening before he was able to rise. In the meantime the soldier had returned to have his afternoon nap, and to dream of home and the Sabbath school where he had learnt love's lessons in his youth. Soldiers at the front always dream of home and mother and the cherubic days of their childhood (in print), though their waking fancy fondly turns to bitter beer, and the fond but foolish servant girl who finds the spending money.

"I hope you won't create a scene in the camp by fighting with a private soldier, McGlusky," said the Camp Commandant. "Of course, I'll punish the fellow if you desire it, though you had no business to interfere with him, seeing you are not a soldier in the regular way yourself. If you meet him outside the lines at any

time, why, I suppose it is your own business, though it's infra dig. to fight with a private, you know."

"A dinna ken who infra dig. may be," retorted the Scot-Australian; "A dinna keer what it may be. A soldier's a mon, is he na?"

"Yes, I—ah—suppose he is in a sense."

"Weel, then, A will fecht wi' him an' A wull thump tha heart oot o' him if I leeve. Not fecht wi' him because he's a preevate? Ma certie, A wad fecht wi' him if he was a general, an' A wull kick the troosers off him if he will na fecht wi' me as soon as I get near the loon! A wad ha' ye know, sir, that in Australia we dinna judge a mon by his class, nor by his rank, nor by the siller in his pooch; we judge him by what he does; we drink wi' him, or we fecht wi' him, and we gang ta church wi' him, be he laird or lout. An' by ma soul, mon, A wull let na mon open ma heid wi' the buckle o' his belt an' not gie him full measure in return for the deed. A wull eat dirt first." Then he got mad and began to prance around and chant: "Shall the heathen rage, shall the people imagine a vain thing? Who are the kings of the earth that they shall not be smitten hip and thigh? A am a mon o' peace, a child o' sunshine and flowery pathways, but if A dinna gie the ungodly mon ane ta gang on wi', may A peerish like a hog on the hills o' Judah. Selah, selah, selah!"

That night the officer mentioned the matter at mess, and the general consensus of opinion was that things would have to take their course, because the Scot-Australian was far too useful to be dispensed with. A Colonel who had been in Egypt said that McGlusky reminded him very forcibly of a mad Mullah, with his mixture of religious and fighting fervour. "Just the sort of irresponsible brute, you know, that charges right up to the bayonets of a British square and breaks it, don't you

know. If the creature would shave and dress properly, and look like a reasonable being, we might—ah—do something with the—ah—person—but he actually—ah—makes me shudder when I see him—ah. We must do something with him, he is so confoundedly useful. He is the only scout worth having now with our column He's the only reliable man with us who knows the Boer language, and he's practically the only chap in the place who can be depended upon to get us a supply of horses without robbing us right and left, so we'll have to keep the fellow, though what we are to do with him at present, I don't—ah—see."

"Why not make him a Press censor?" asked a Major.

"Well, you see—ah—that is a job we—ah—mostly save for fellahs—ah—who have no stomach for fighting—ah—fellahs of good family, don't you know, who—ah—want all the éclat of war and none of its dangers—ah. Couldn't give it to a common chap like this, you know."

"Oh," answered the Major, "make the beggah a Press censor; he can't do any harm to any one except the newspaper chaps, and they don't count. He'll be quite a change for them after the other sort."

"Do the Press censor fellahs, who never go into action, get the medals the same as officers who run all the risks of a campaign?" asked a subaltern.

"Do they get the medals? Of course they do," sneered the Major. "What the deuce else do you think the Johnnies come out for? They never fight, never by any chance go into the firing line, but they get the medals, and hand down a lying record for future generations to swallow. Served their country faithfully and well in time of storm and stress," sneered the Major—"served themselves and their political ends."

"I must protest, Major, I really must protest against such—ah—sweeping charges. Such confounded Radical statements, you know, are not suitable—ah—for the mess-table of officers and gentlemen. Don't you know that most of the class of Press censors you refer to, sir, are either lords—ah—or will be lords later on, and I vow, sir, your remarks are silly, sir, absolutely silly. Why should a lord or a prospective lord run the risks of war when he can get medals without doing so?"

So in the fulness of time McGlusky was duly made into a Press censor, and a weariness to his soul he found the position.

"I wull try an' live oop to ma poseetion," he remarked to the Colonel when he received his notification of office. "It wull be a gran' chance ta purify the Press, and, ma certie, it needs it."

He had a long talk with his friend Jock O'Neil, who had joined the division as a Volunteer telegraph clerk, and Jock advised him to dress like a Christian and behave like a nineteenth century personage, so McGlusky had his beard trimmed, and his hat of quaint make he carefully stowed away. He arrayed himself in a complete military suit, wore a helmet, and at Jock O'Neil's earnest solicitations sported an eye-glass.

"You look grand, Mac, simply grand," cried Jock, with honest enthusiasm, when he met his friend in all his new war paint—helmet, eye-glass and all complete.

"A dinna ken hoo A luk, Jock," was the grim retort; "but, Jock, ma mon, A feel like a fule wi' this bit of glass stuck in ma een. Ye ken, Jock, A ha' to keep me eye shut ta keep the dom glass in ma face. When A open ma een the glass fa's oot. But, Jock, mon, A wull put oop wi' it for the sak' o' the chance it gies ma to play the game fair. A mean to gie these Press Johnnies a free han' ta tell the truth, tha whole truth, an' naething

but the truth. An' may the Lord ha' mercy on the mon who lees!"

"I'd like to see how the experiment pans out, McGlusky; but I'm afraid, from what I know of newspaper men, that the shock of meeting the naked truth will pretty nearly kill them all, especially the amateurs, who have been pitchforked into the job."

"A dinna believe ye, Jock," answered McGlusky, fiercely. "Ye ha' become depraved, Jock, wi' sendin' hame dispatches consarnin' veectories which ha' never happened an' defeats which ha' been doctored inta strategic movements. A fear ye air not the mon ye aince were, Jock, lad, or ye wudna ha' sic a bad opeenion o' human natur'."

Jock, who had a head level enough to play billiards on, only grinned. "Well, Mac, go ahead, and let's see how the new system will pan out. I hope it will come up to expectations."

For full three days the Scot-Australian was happy. The correspondents came to him with messages, and he passed them nearly all with a lordly graciousness that nearly shook the hair off the scribes. There was nothing of any importance on, no fighting, no casualties, just the usual "piffle" which newspaper men send in dull seasons to earn their "screws." Then there came a change. On the fourth morning a man dashed up to McGlusky, his spurs were red with hard riding, his horse was nearly dead beat. He thrust a message of pretty near a thousand words into the new Censor's hands, and McGlusky read how a British General had made a strategic move towards a Boer position. He read that the Boers, thinking the manœuvre was a real attack, had concentrated their forces with marvellous agility and given battle. Then the British General with masterly skill drew off from the field and allowed the wily enemy to show his full

strength. Then followed a vivid bit of pen-work, portraying the way our guns slaughtered the Boers. There was not much else in the message except praise for the General whose masterly manœuvres laid the plans of the farmer forces bare.

"It's a gran' message," said the newly-appointed Censor, dryly, "a gran' message. Did ye see the fecht yersel', ma mon?"

"No, I got the straight tip from the Chief of Staff after the row."

"Did he tell ye hoo mony British soldiers were killed and wounded?"

"Oh, well, you see, I didn't ask. What's the use of funking the public at home; they'll know all that soon enough."

"Did the Boers tak' ony o' oor men preeseners?"

"About four hundred."

"Four hundred preeseners! A dinna see that ye ha' mentioned it in yer telegram. Four hunner preeseners! As ma soul leeveth, A wad ha' a word wi' some o' them if A was in Keetchener's place. Did the Boers tak' any guns?"

"Well, they have temporary possession of two big guns and a pom-pom."

McGlusky bounded to his feet, a flush of wrath and shame on his bronzed cheeks.

"Teemporey possession o' twa big guns an' ane little 'un, four hunner preeseners, an' the Lord kens hoo mony dead an' wounded; an', mon, ye wad say naething aboot it at a' ta the people at hame. A wad gie ye a kick in the wammle if A cud lower masel' ta dirt ma shoon wi' sic a mon as yerself. Ye talk o' funkin' the people at hame wi' bad news; ma certie, it's the lees, the cauld-blooded lees that ha' gone hame that is 'funkin'' the people; it's the cauld-blooded lees that will brak the speerit

o' oor nation in the end an' close this war in a shamefu' defeat for the Breetish arms if things are not altered. Oot, ye deevil wi' the soul o' a coo ; gang awa' an' find oot the truth, the whole truth, an' send it hame ta England ; tell na mair lees aboot the strategy o' generals ; tell na mair lees aboot drawin' the Boers fra their cover ; tell the warl' that a general ha' blunner'd like a fule ; tell the nation a' there is ta tell, an' lay the grisly, ghastly story o' incompetence before the eyes o' oor countrymen, an' A tell ye the nation will rise in a' its micht an' fecht as it hasna fau't yet. Rouse the Viking strain in the bluid of the people ; rouse the old speerit that carried oor flag triumphant ower a thoosan' red fields o' war ; rouse it as it was roosed when we sent the Frenchmen skirling like whippit daugs from Waterloo ; rouse it as it was roosed when oor gallant breed swept the Russians up the bluidy heights o' Inkerman at the point o' the bayonet ; rouse it, ye spawn o' a city music-hall ; roose it as it was roosed when the men o' Englan' swept the Spaniards fra the English coasts to the Baltic Sea an' broke the back o' Spain ance an' for aye ; roose it, ye misbegotten leein' deevil, wi' the clarion tongue o' truth. Dinna kill the Viking strain wi' sickly lees ; dinna clog the bluid o' Englan' wi' fause reports ; rise oop big an' great, like the war meenstrels o' old time, an' touch the great heart o' England, or by ma father's soul A will kick the breeks off ye an' shame ye before the wummin."

CHAPTER XV

"LORD, LET MA LINGER HERE"

McGLUSKY was in trouble. He had been insulted by a dude in khaki, and had resented the insult by using language that few men had ever had the temerity to use towards a "fop of office," and the dandy in question, because he had neither the instincts of a gentleman nor the spirit of a soldier, caused the Scot-Australian to be placed in the "clink" by an armed guard. It was a Scots guard that had arrested him, a band of big, brawny, kilted men who knew a good deal concerning the methods to be adopted when arresting a man likely to give serious trouble. Many a time they had gathered in a comrade who had broken loose in old Edinburgh town under the combined influences of love and whisky. Many a stern tussle they had had under those circumstances, but never had they met with a foe so desperately earnest as the long, ungainly Scot-Australian.

They had come upon him inside a Kaffir kraal; the place was about thirty yards square, surrounded upon all sides by a stone wall five feet high.

"Coom oot, man, an' surrender; dinna gie trouble like a fule," said the sergeant in charge of the guard, eyeing McGlusky sternly as he sat on a big flat rock, in his shirt-sleeves, smoking his huge wooden pipe.

"Hoo mony o' ye air there?" asked the Scot-Australian.

"Ten o' us, ma buckie, though A'm thinkin' ane o' us wad be enough for the job." He did not know McGlusky.

"A ken ye weel," was the scornful reply; "A ken ye weel, ye air the puir bodies who air keppit oot o' the firin' line ta da the dirty wark o' the camps. Ye air the 'Jocks' the Boers ca' wummin because ye'll na stan' an' fecht like men. Gran' runners ye air, oop hill or doon hill; dinna fash yersel's, A wull nae hurt ye, ye puir softies, A wull spare ye ta be playthings for tha wummin in Scotlan'."

"If ye weer na' a prisoner, mon, A'd tweest tha sousie tongue oot o' yer jaws," was the sergeant's savage retort. McGlusky grinned. He knew the non-com. and his men belonged to one of the best, if not the best, fighting regiments in the British Army, but he wanted to raise an argument.

"A braw talker ye air," he sneered, "a gran' fechter wi' yer mooth. Ye air like Samson o' Holy Writ, ye ha' slain yer thoosan' wi' a jawbone."

"A wad gie ane o' the stripes off ma arm to ha' ten minutes at ye wi' ma fisties," foamed the sergeant.

"Braw words, braw words. A ken ye weel, ye air on'y fit ta march ta the soond of the pipes through a Boer village when nane but lasses and wummin air in it. A ken all aboot you, ma buckie, ye love to gie yer kilts a skirl to show yer muscle ta the wummin. A ha' seen ye da it, but the wummin on'y laugh ye ta scorn, for their men-folk ha' telt them hoo ye run in a fecht, an' how ye ha' na shame in yer runnin', carin' na a bit what becomes o' yer kilts as lang as ye can get oot o' rifle range. Ye air a scoff an' a by-ward amang the heathen. A wadna wear a kilt mysel' in Africa for fear o' being treated as a leddy by the Boers."

"Saundy Douglas," said the sergeant, his voice hoarse and low with passion, "Saundy Douglas, A canna deal

wi' this spawn o' a cloot-washin' Lowlan' b——; but, Saundy ye air a preevit. A'm goin' awa' the noo, for A feel bad in ma eenseede, an' A wull leave him ta ye. Fecht him if he wull fecht; an' if he wull na fecht gie him a taste o' yer belt, for he ha' insulted the reegeement an' every mon who wears a kilt."

In due season the sergeant retired from the scene, and Sandy Douglas, a deep-chested, rather bow-legged young Scot took it upon himself to adminster corporal punishment for the honour of the regiment.

"Ye air veera guide wi' yer jaw," he remarked "Noo coom an' let's see if ye air gude wi' yer fisties."

Most Scotsmen can fight, though very few of them ever enter the prize ring. Sandy Douglas had won some notoriety because he was such a good man with his hands, and whenever the Highland Brigade camped near an Irish regiment he generally found something for his hands to do, and did it with all his might, for an Irish regiment on the march is a thing that no man need pass who is hungry for trouble. Sandy used to stroll near their bivouac, and whistle a few bars of "The Battle of Boyne Water," and the rest was easy. McGlusky rose meekly, and said never a word. Sandy put his hands up and danced around.

"Air ye startin' a leddies' dancin' skule?" asked the Scot-Australian. "Ye are nane too pretty wi' yer bandy legs," he continued.

Sandy swung his right hand viciously for the india-rubber ribs of the tall, lathy bushman. McGlusky stepped back, and the soldier's blow fell short. Such force had he put into the blow that when he missed he swung half-round and almost off his feet. Before he could right himself and gain his balance McGlusky landed him one under the ear with his left hand that sent him many yards away face downwards in the

cattle dirt that littered the kraal. When he sat up he was half-blinded by the dirt into which he had rammed his head. McGlusky strolled over to him and looked down upon the dazed soldier, commiseratingly.

"Wipe yer een wi' yer petticaat, little lass," he cried, banteringly. "Dinna weep. Ye did wrang to tak' to sojerin'. Sellin' haddicks in the Coogate was mair in yer line o' beesness."

At that Sandy sprang to his feet and renewed the battle, but he was out-classed, out-generalled, out-reached and out-fought. Only once in all his stirring life had McGlusky been fairly and honestly beaten in a fight to a finish, and that was when he had run against Frank P. Slavin, the heavy-weight champion of Australia. Slavin at that time was training with Peter Newton to fight Jack Burke, the Irish boxer, and McGlusky, who even then liked salt with his meat, sought Slavin out and forced an argument, which resulted in the pair adjourning to an adjacent paddock, where the argument reached finality. McGlusky got all the salt he wanted with his meat on that occasion, but Slavin was wont to declare to his friends in after years that his battle with Jack Burke was mere child's play compared to an impromptu turn up he had with a hairy savage, who first of all forced him into a religious argument, and then fought him to prove the soundness of his doctrine. When Sandy Douglas had had all he wanted in the way of physical exercise, McGlusky, who knew well that most of the Scotch soldiers were Presbyterians, began to hold forth in a most contemptuous strain concerning members of that persuasion, not that he really disliked the Presbyterians in his heart, but because it opened up argumentative ground; and he was in a humour to have picked a quarrel with Gabriel if he could have found an opportunity to do so. "A puir, cantin', hypocreetical lot o' bodies the

Presbyterians air, as I ken weel," he ejaculated. "Fause loons wi' na real backbone, they wad no fecht for the Covenant in the days o' oor forbears; but when the fechtin' was done wi' an' leeberty o' conscience was the preevelege o' all men, then they cam' to the front wi' th'r idolateery an' snivellin'. Oh, A ken 'em weel; all the warl' kens 'em. Not gude enoo' for Paradeese, not bad enoo' for blazes, they air on'y fit ta hop about on the ash-heap o' Hades."

Whereupon the guard fell upon him, and gave him salt with his meat. It was just what he had been yearning for, but they left him little cause to yearn. He wrought mightily, but the men he had goaded into the fray were no clawing, scratching foreigners; they knew how to hit and when to hit, and they spared him not. In the thick of the fight the sergeant returned, having got rid of the pain in his "eenseede," and as he leant on the wall and watched the unequal strife with kindling cheek and blazing eyes, he heard the hairy pagan singing in jerky gasps—

> Lord, let ma linger here,
> For this is bliss.

At last, bruised from head to hip, bleeding in a score of places, with his ribs almost punched in and his head punched half off, the Scot-Australian lay a gasping wreck, as soundly thrashed a specimen of humanity as ever picked a quarrel and got what he sought.

"Hoo da ye like a Scots conversion, ma mon?" chuckled the sergeant; "da ye find it ta yer likin'?"

McGlusky wiped the flowing blood from his eyes with the back of his rugged right fist, and, glaring upwards, answered, with a note of pride in his voice:

"A dinna ha' any fau't ta find wi' a Scots conversion. A grippit hold o' a Scots thustle wi' baith han's, an' as ma soul leeveth A foon' it th' same auld prickly deevil

o' a thing it ha' been fra the beginnin'. If A was thinkin' o' startin' a new reeleegion A wad mak' ye ten o' ma aposteeles."

So it came to pass that McGlusky was haled before the court-martial. When the General saw the grim, grisly figure, with blood and bruises all over him, he said sternly:

"What's all this, sergeant-major? What does it all mean? Did the prisoner resist with violence?"

"Na, na, sir," was the kindly reply, "the preesener cam' like a lamb, an' A wad say, sir, that A wad sooner ha' him in my reegeement than ony mon A ha' seen this ten year past. He wad mak' a gran' piper, sir."

General Hector Macdonald first looked at the Scot-Australian, then at the guard, and a grim laugh broke from his throat.

"Cam' like a lamb, did he, sergeant? A Scots lamb, A'm thinkin'." Then, turning to McGlusky, he said, "Mon, ye luk as if ye cud push a bayonet wi' the best o' us."

For a full half-minute the Scot-Australian looked square into the eyes of the man whom all Australian adventurers loved for his simple manliness. Then he said, in his gruff way, without a lowering of the eyelid—

"A ha' been a mon o' peace fra ma youth up, an aposteel o' love an' humility, an' A ha' na bowels for fechtin', Sir Hector. A love a quiet life, an' all my paths air peace."

Whereat all the guard, including Sandy Douglas, grinned until their sun-tanned faces almost cracked, and the General shuffled some papers on his camp table as an excuse to hide his features. The officers who were to form the court-martial assembled, and McGlusky was charged with having been guilty of grossly insulting behaviour towards an officer on active service.

"How do you plead?" asked the General.

"A'm guilteey an' A'm na guilteey," was the composed reply.

"Guilty and not guilty. Why, man, you can't be both."

"A am, sir."

"The deuce you are. Just explain yourself, will you?"

"Well, sir, A am guilteey o' havin' ca'ed the mon seeveral names which his god-father an' god-mother never gied him. A am guilteey o' tellin' him he was na the sort o' mon that goes unner fire when he cud go unner a rat hole ta hide. A am guilteey o' tellin' him he ought ta blush until his face peeled if he ever pinned a war medal ta his jacket, seein' he was na the mon to take his share o' reesks wi' the men who did fecht. But, sir, A am na guilteey seein' A only spoke to him as A did in self-defence, an' that, ye ken, is the preeveelege o' a freeborn Scot all the warl' ower."

"Come, sir," said the General, "let us hear your version of the whole affair."

"Weel, weel, A didna think ye'd be fashin' yerself ower sic a matter, sir, but sin' ye ask ma A wull tell ye a' about it. A was for the whole week actin' as Press censor, ye ken, an' A was an officer an' a gentleman for the time bein', ye ken. Ane day as A was sittin' in ma tent tryin' ta fix a bit fule eyeglass in ma een, who shud walk in but Teddy McIndoe an' Jimmy Fagan, twa lads A had warked wi', and fought wi', an' travelled wi' in Australia, an' China, an' Egypt—twa plain lads, ye ken, General, who had simply coom ta Africa wi' a conteengent ta fecht the Boers for the glory o' the Breetish Empire an' five bob a day an' their traveelin' eexpeenses. A'm nane sa sartin' they wudna ha' come ta Africa ta da the fechtin' if there had been na glory, but A'm pretty confeedent they wadna ha' come if there had been na five

shillin's a day an' eextras, for ye ken they know the value o' a bit o' siller ta put in the pooch as weel as the next mon. A was real glad ta see them an' ha' a crack aboot auld times, an' A gied them ma tobacco pooch, an' ma whusky jar, an' we had a gran' crack for an hoor or twa, an' while we were talkin' an officer cam' ta ma tent an' saw ma two cronies, and when they had left me he said, 'McGlusky, da ye no ken ye air an officer an' consequently a gentleman ?' 'A da that,' A says, 'an' what o' it ?'

"'Ye air na fit for the poseetion,' he says; 'ye ha' lowered tha deegnity of the seervice,' he says, 'by drinkin' wi' twa common fellahs o' the baser sort, twa preevits, twa common soldiers.'

"'They ha' baith been unner fire,' A says; 'baith o' them ha' freesh woun's on their bodies this minit, woun's on'y half healed, woun's gained in battle, woun's in tha front o' their bodies,' A says, 'and besides that A ken them weel, and ane o' them saved ma life in a hoor o' desperate need. Wud ye ha' ma turn ma back on them because A ha' risen twa steps from the ranks masel' ?' 'A wud,' he says, 'A wud; an' A want ye ta know that sic company is na fit for an officer an' a gentleman.'

"'A niver heerd,' A said, 'that any officer or gentleman objeected ta their company in tha hoor o' battle, though A ha' heard some fechtin' officers, not medal-huntin', silver-plated dandies, but real fechters, say that twa braver lads never drew the breath o' life in the hoor o' danger than ma twa freens the preevits, who ha' jest left ma coompany.'

"'It's na a question o' bravery, McGlusky,' he said, 'it's na a queestion o' eefeeciency, it's na a queestion o' ane comrade stickin' ta anither comrade; it's a queestion o' keepin' up tha deegnity o' the service, it's a queestion o' leevin' up ta aristicratic ideals. Ye canna touch pitch

an' not be defiled. An officer's an officer, McGlusky, an' ye maun remember it or gang oot into tha ranks again.'

"'An officer's an officer,' A said; 'an' what is a preevit? Is he a daug? Am A ta fergit A owe ma life to a mon? Am A ta turn up ma nose at a comrade? Am A ta throw scorn an' contempt on ma Queen's uniform because a preevit is on tha eenside o' it? A wull see ye dommed first; A wull na insult either the uniform or the mon who wears it, an', ma certie, A wull tell ye this the noo, the preevit's uniform on ma twa freens covers better men an' better sojers that yer ain, though ye may ha', for all A ken, the bluid o' a hunner earls in yer veins. If ye wad gang oot inta tha field an shed a drop o' that almichty blue bluid A wad think a heap mair o' ye than A do the noo.'"

"What did he say to that?" asked the General.

"Wull, A dinna reemeember his exact words, sir, but A da know that he said A was na fit for ma poseetion because A had na soul ta deestinguish between a common fechtin' fellah an' a mon o' quality. An' A said A did deestinguish beetween them. An' when it came ta laying doon life for the flag A wad sooner ha' ane common fellah who would da it than ten men o' quality who wadna; an' A wad sooner ha' ain mon who rose fra the ranks an' knew his business than feefty men who only played at sojerin' in peace time, an wanted ta be leaders an' not warkers in war time. A told him that if A was Prime Minister o' England for six months A wud democratise the army o' Great Britain, an' make every mon who wanted ta be a soldier go inta the ranks, an' fecht his way up foot by foot, inch by inch, peer's son or King's son, or King's brother. Laird or loon, A wud show na favours; they should a' march in line till ane proved himsel' a better mon than his neighbour, an' then the best

mon should step oot o' the line, whether he was born a ploughman or a peer, an' naething should be between him an' the topmost place in tha army. Then he miscalled ma, an' telt ma A was a wolf in sheep's clothin' ; an' A said, 'Mon, ye may be richt an' ye may be wrang, but A'm na an ass in leeon's hide ' ; an' he said, 'Ye air na fit for th' gran' poseetion ye haud ; ye air na fit ta associate wi' men o' gentle bluid. Ye maun be shiftit oot o' it, for ye are proven guilteey o' having associated wi' common fellahs who air not fit ta live wi' officers.' 'On'y fit ta gang oot an' die wi' un,' A said. 'Weel, ye maun gang to the de'il ; A wull na be an ingrate ta please all the dandies in the Breetish army.' "

Then a strange thing came to pass. After the General had heard McGlusky to the end, he rose, and said sternly :

" All that you have said has been duly noted, and the evidence before the Court proves that you have spoken the truth. You have been guilty, sir, of a crime—a grave crime. You have been convicted of being grateful to a private soldier, and that, sir, is no common offence, let me assure you. I am now, sir, addressing you as an officer of the British army, and as an officer I must reprimand you most severely for your breach of the rules and regulations that govern the service. That, sir, is my duty as an officer ; but as a man and a soldier let me say here's my hand, and I wish from my soul there were a few more like you."

McGlusky gripped the hand that was outstretched towards him, and held it for a moment in a grip that the other knew for a man's grip. Then the cantankerous side of his nature cropped up.

" A'm thankfu' tae ye, General," he replied. " Veera grateful, ye ken, but A wud ha' liked ye ta ha' inveestagated the matter before decidin' for or against me. Ye ha'

takken ma bare word on a matter o' some importeence an' A dinna feel satisfied."

The General smiled.

"Don't flatter yourself, McGlusky," he replied. "Your bare word has not been taken in this matter. I heard of the affair almost as soon as it happened, and made all inquiries that could be made on the spot, and I knew when you had given your evidence that you had spoken the simple truth. Besides, I knew somewhat concerning you, my lad. Now go, and the next time I see you I hope it will be in the uniform of the Black Watch ; but, for pity's sake, don't fall out with your comrades on religious subjects. Get into heaven through your own window, McGlusky, but don't break another man's head if he won't travel the same line of march to glory that you have marked out for yourself."

"Sir Hechthor," said the Scot-Australian, solemnly, "A ken ye air a gran' soldier, A wad foller ye ta hell if ye led a chairge wi' fixed bayonets, an' A wad dee for ye or dee wi' ye, but A wull na foller ye nor ony mon leevin' ta heaven if sa be A didna see eye to eye wi' ye in matters consarnin' ma immortal soul. Ye were broucht oop in the Presbyterian faith, an' A haud in ma mind that the doctrine o' that sect is na the true . . ."

But the General, gathering up his papers, fled from the tent, for McGlusky's theological eccentricities were well known to all men in those parts, and where a matter of conscience was involved he would talk as straight to a Commander-in-Chief as to a common soldier of the line. After his discharge from custody McGlusky walked away with the guard not as a prisoner, but as a comrade, for it was characteristic of the clan that they should bear no malice for the blows stricken in fair fight.

"A didna theenk," remarked Sandy Douglas, "that they bred mon like ye ootside o' Scotlan'. Why

McGlusky, ye air the leevin' double of Elder McGuinness, the skulemaister o' the veelage o' Glen Innes. A peace-lovin' soul is the Elder, prachin' love an' concord an' gude will in kirk o' Sawbath, an' fechtin' wi' every livin' soul that crosses his path a' the week. Sic a peace-lovin' soul is the Elder that na soldier dare gang to coort a lass in that veelage sin' his ain seester Janet gied barth to a bairn wi'oot gangin' thro' the seeramony o' meerage. The bairn was a lass, an' the Elder took it an' nourished it, but na soldier dare gang theer sin', for the Elder fechts like a deevil. An' wi' him, when he mects a mon o' oor reegiment, it's a blow first an' a ward o' savin' grace afterwards."

"Perhaps," remarked McGlusky, slyly, "perhaps he thoucht thebairn was the dauchter o' the reegiment. A ha' heeard that tha regiment air Socialeests in many things."

For a little time the Scot-Australian attached himself to the Brigade as a sort of food supply agent, and during his term of office the "Jocks" went short of nothing in the way of eatables, and there was no picking and stealing allowed. Boer farms held only by women were not entered and searched for loot under pretence of searching for hidden arms and ammunition. Valuable oil paintings by old Dutch masters were not cut from their frames and taken away under the thin pretence that there might be State documents hidden behind the canvas. Old silver plate of great antiquity, and priceless china, old even when the Huguenots were young, were not looted and shipped to England as spoils of war whilst that untutored Scot-Australian had charge of the roving bands who harried the land and made desolation desolate. For the Scots, though the sternest of soldiers in action, were too manly to degenerate into land pirates and plunderers of peaceful homesteads. They did not make war on women or on hen-roosts.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SICK DRAFT

A SICK draft had to be taken down from the front, and McGlusky was asked if he would see them through. This was done partly because the officer in charge of the division to which the draft belonged knew well that there would be no provision made for the sick men *en route* to the coast, and partly because he knew that McGlusky would get the men all they required even if he had to steal it from the General. The Scot-Australian accepted the offer of the position with alacrity, and at once commenced to make things lively for himself and for any one who happened to own a good Cape cart. The depôt for the sick was about forty miles from the railway line, and as soon as McGlusky had had a look at his draft, he knew that very few of them were fit to march even by five-mile stages to the station. Most of the draft were ill with a kind of low fever brought on by unceasing wear and tear and bad food. For months the division had been practically starved through the red tape tactics adopted by those in authority, whilst the last nine weeks of the route had been accomplished on quarter rations, which consisted of two dog biscuits per day and nothing else—no meat, no vegetables, no tobacco, no liquor, no coffee, no tea—just two dog

biscuits and nothing else. On this they had marched like machines and fought like heroes, proving themselves to be as good as any men living, in spite of their paltry pay and poor prospects. Sleeping in wet blankets at night, marching under a burning sun at noonday on such miserable food, had cracked the men up; they were listless, worn out, and dispirited; three months by the seaside on good wholesome soft food would set most of them up again—McGlusky saw that at a glance—providing the last ounce was not taken out of them by senseless marching. After he had looked at the draft, he rode back to the spot where the division was camped, and as he cantered through the lines he noted that scores of Cape carts drawn by first-rate teams were kept merely for the purpose of conveying cuffs and collars for officers. Pretty nearly everything that was superfluous in McGlusky's eyes, he dubbed "cuffs an' collars." "A'm thinkin'," he murmured, "A'm thinkin' that sic carts wud help ma sick men veera nicely, an' dom leetle use air they to the feather-bed duffers who air claimin' them noo; toothbrushes an' carpet slippers air veera weel in their places, but in war time they should be left at hame wi' the wummin. A wull see what Lord Kitchener wull say aboot it."

Having made up his mind upon this point, he went with characteristic bluntness to the man of "ice and iron" himself, and Kitchener heard him patiently in his grim, silent way, right to the end; then he said, "Well, McGlusky, what is it you want from me?"

"A want an order fra you, sir, to commandeer every Cape cart A can lay ma han's on, sir," was the prompt reply.

Kitchener smiled that granite smile of his and wrote the order, and McGlusky, because his heart was in

his work, let no time go by in idle dreaming. Taking a dozen good men with him, he rode along the lines and took the carts with their teams, but not without protest. Angry officers buzzed about his ears like bees in swarming-time ; many a hearty curse was tossed into his teeth, but he heeded it not. "Gang awa', ma bold sonnie," he would cry to a wrathful officer, "gang awa' an' tell Kitchener ye will na ha' yer carts taken ; A ha' his order to da what A am daein', an' ye ken weel ye air all bluntin' yer teeth on steel ; ye dinna dare bark at him, ma buckies, an' ye ken it weel, an' A ken it too."

"But look here, my good fellow," cried one, haughtily, "I want my cart. Why, it's full of horns, the best collection of bucks' horns ever taken in Africa. I have collected them from the very pick of a hundred farmhouses we have burnt. I wouldn't take five thousands sovs. for them."

"A ken naething aboot the bucks' horns, mon; A dinna want them."

"But if you take my Dutch wagon I shall have to leave the trophies on the veldt. See here, I'll give you a tenner to let my wagon alone. I want to astonish the Johnnies at home with those horns."

McGlusky turned to his second in command and spoke in his harsh manner. "Tak' those horns oot o' the wagon," he cried ; "tak' the dam toys oot an' throw them doon ; dinna fash yersel' aboot this blatherin' body; if he gets in yer way, mon, throw them on him." Then turning savagely on the owner of the wagon, he snarled, "Ye wad gie me a tenner, wad ye ?—a tenner ta betray ma trust. Dae ye think A am a loosy moneylender ta dae sic a thing ? The wagon will carry four o' the sick draft in comfort ta the railway line, an', ma certie, carry them it will."

The officer cursed the Scot, but the dread of Kitchener's personality was upon them all, and none hindered McGlusky. Cart after cart was taken, and the contents thrown out upon the ground in picturesque piles. Pictures taken from well-to-do homesteads, old silver, quaint old-world china, fur rugs, photographers' appliances without end. "Weel, weel," said the Scot-Australian, as he rode from one pile of lumber to the other, "a body wud think this was a picnic party got up for the purpose o' lettin' a lot o' amateur photographers ha' a gude time in Africa at the expense o' the Breetish people. A ken mony an officer who disna know hoo ta ride or shoot, but A ha' no met mony who do na know hoo ta tak' a photograph. A veera fine seesteem o' self-advertisin' it is, too. The Major tak's a portrait o' the Colonel on Monday, when the Colonel is pointin' wi' his finger to a kopje. The Colonel looks fierce an' gran', jest as a Colonel should look in action. On Tuesday the Colonel tak's a snapshot o' the Major standin' on an ant-hill wi' his arms folded, whilst the Tommies sight for six hunner yards at Boers who air twa miles awa', an' the Colonel writes under the portrait, 'Major Bung under fire.' The Captain tak's the Lieutenant, an' the Lieutenant tak's the Sergeant-Major, and then lends the Sergeant-Major his camera, an' the Sergeant-Major is too old a campaigner no ta tak' a heroic picture o' the Lieutenant.

"Weel, weel, fechtin' doesna seem ta enter too largely into the duties o' these fechtin' men fra Piccadilly." So it came to pass after all that Mac got his Cape carts and Dutch wagonettes, and duly piled the sick draft into them, and then trekked off to the railway as happy as a king. He had no adventures worth talking about; only once did he meet with Boers as he trekked towards his destination. It happened about sundown

one day. Mac, who was riding at the head of his caravan, pipe in mouth, carbine on thigh, saw about a hundred men in grey clothes, with large, loose brown slouch hats on their heads, gallop from between two kopjes and cross his path only about four hundred yards in advance of him. In a moment they were out of the saddle and down behind ant-hills, slipping their carbines forward as they dropped into position. "Boers, by the A'michty," was the Scot-Australian's laconic remark. Then, puffing coolly at his pipe, he gathered the reins of his bridle in his left hand, and holding his right palm outwards high over his head, he rode at a hand gallop right to the centre of the Boer rifles. Commandant De la Rey, who was in charge of the Boers, stepped out of his line, and, speaking rather contemptuously, said, "So you fellows surrender, do you?"

McGlusky flushed red even through his whiskers at the implied taunt.

"Dinna hurry yer cattle to market, Commandant. A wad gie ye a fecht wi' a' ma heart if A had sound men wi' ma, but the poor de'ils unner ma orders air no but a sick draft goin' doon to get a taste o' sweet saut watter."

"A sick draft, is it?" said the Boer Commandant in a disappointed tone, "that's bad. I rather fancied it was a swell convoy. Why are you carrying a rifle if you are in charge of a sick draft, sir?"

"Weel, ye ken A wad feel rather lonely wi'oot ma rifle."

"Medical officer, I suppose?"

"Na, na; just a knockabout han', ye ken; ane week A am a preevit scoot, the next A am in command o' a conteengent o' good fechters, an' the next A am what God A'michty mak's ma. I ha' been a meesionary, an' A ha' been a publican, an' A am in

chairge of a sick draft the noo; but," he added in his most kindly and insinuating fashion, "if any mon among yer commando wad like ta try his hand wi' me, mon to mon, A wad conseeder masel' honoured ta obleege him."

Commandant De la Rey looked at his man with a laugh running through his eye.

"Am I to take that as a challenge to the whole of my commando?" he asked courteously.

McGlusky drew himself up in the saddle as straight as a lance.

"Ye ma da that, sir; an' what is mair, ye ma tak' it as a challenge ta the whole Boer nation. A wull fecht any Boer born o' wummin either wi' ma bare han's or wi' a reefle."

"A bigger task, my friend, than you imagine," was the quiet response; "I'll just have a look at this sick draft of yours, and if the men are ill, why, you may go in peace; if they are not sick, you and yours will pay dear for your treachery." Then beckoning a couple of his burghers to him, De la Rey said, "I am going to look at this convoy, which this officer says is full of sick men. Keep him a close prisoner until I return; if you see any sign of foul play, shoot him through the head." Then, turning to the Scot-Australian, he said sharply and sternly, "Put down your weapons, sir, and dismount."

McGlusky passed his carbine to one of the Boers and his revolver to another, and slipping out of the saddle stood with the reins thrown over his shoulders between his captors. The two guards did not speak to him; they simply shot back the bolts of their Mausers and dropped a clip of cartridges in and slid the bolts back with a sharp click that riflemen know so well; whilst De la Rey, who looked what he was, every inch a

man and a fighter, rode over and inspected the convoy. In five minutes he was back again. "All right," he said cheerily, "they are a sick lot. Wonderful lot of fellows your Tommies are; it's a pity they should be killed in such a war as this. They are good chaps, too good to be pawns in such a game. Now for your challenge, sir; you can go on with it or withdraw it, just as you please."

"A wull gang on wi' it, sir, if ye ha' na objection. A said A wull fecht, and A wull fecht, though A am a mon o' peace."

"Very well," answered De la Rey, now fairly grinning with delight. "I meant to give my men a rest for an hour or two here and let the horses pick a bit, and I will do so; perhaps I can find a man after your own heart, and I fancy you are one who likes fighting for its own sake."

"A like salt wi' ma meat," answered the Scot-Australian laconically.

"Well," retorted De la Rey, "I'm very much mistaken if you don't get it this time," and he passed the word along his lines for one Eli Jaggus. A tall man slouched out of the lines and came to the Commandant—a man an inch and a half higher from the ground than McGlusky, but so narrow across the shoulders that he looked as if he had been a short man drawn through a gun-barrel and lengthened out.

"A gude sound crack i' the ribs will kill him," was McGlusky's mental comment.

The Commandant told his henchman of the Briton's boast. Without a word Eli wriggled out of his coat and shirt. He did not seem to take his garments off as other mortals do, but just shook himself free from them and advanced towards McGlusky, who stood awaiting him with his shirt sleeves rolled up to the elbows.

The rest of the commando crowded round, laughing and joking in high glee, whilst the sick Tommies in the Cape carts and wagonettes stood up and watched the fun. A space about thirty feet square was kept clear, and in this the two gladiators stood ready to connect. Eli did not put himself into a boxing attitude ; he simply thrust his two arms out in front of himself at full length and sidled forward like a vast ungainly crab, and it was at this juncture that McGlusky noted the enormous length of arm his adversary possessed ; the Boers noted the Scot-Briton's amazement, and stamped their feet and choked with merriment. "Mac" dived in under the two long arms and banged his man on the ribs. He tried again a moment later, but the long-armed Boer sidled quickly out of danger like a crab suddenly startled. The funniest thing to the Scot-Australian was in his inability to fathom his strange opponent's intentions ; for so far the Boer had made no attempt to strike a blow, neither had he attempted to wrestle and break the Briton up. He simply advanced with his great arms extended, whilst his fingers worked convulsively. "Mac" tried to hit him in the face with his heavy left, but could not reach the impassive Dutch face. He tried again to crack the lean ribs, but the crab action took the Dutchman out of danger. McGlusky got mad, and rushed to close quarters. As he did so the two hands of the Dutchman closed upon his whiskers on each side of his face, just below the ears ; the next moment McGlusky was fairly lifted off his feet and shaken as if he were an old carpet-bag that wanted shaking. Whether he wanted shaking or not he got it, until every tooth in his head rattled and the water ran out of his eyes and down his nose in streams, nor did the shaking cease until the two handfuls of hair on his face came out by the roots. Oh, then he was

a joyful sight! He bounded back out of range of the octopus-like arms of the Boer, and tore his shirt off and took his belt up two holes; then he bored in, and hit Eli under the heart and banged him across the kidneys, chanting as he smote—

When Angels watched their flocks by night.

But Eli broke in on the hymn by catching him once more by the beard with both hands, then McGlusky was jerked forward on to his knees. He vainly made a grab at Eli's lean legs, but the crab action took the Boer well out of range and that next moment the Scot was jerked to his feet. He swung his fist for the Boer's head, but his arm was not long enough; then his head was jerked first to the right hand then to the left, with a force that ought to have broken a mule's neck. In vain the Scot made frantic dabs with his fists at the lantern face of his foe; he could not reach it by a foot. "Mon," he roared, "dae ye ca' this fechtin'?"

Eli said never a word, but rattled the Briton's head about until the wonder was it did not part company with his neck, and all the time McGlusky failed to get in a blow. At last he freed himself with a desperate wrench, not, however, without leaving two handfuls of whiskers in the long lean claws of the enemy. By this time the Scot was a fit subject for any lunacy commission that ever sat in judgment. He leapt at his foe like a wild beast, and gripping him by the wrists tried his best to break the arms that had tortured him, but the Boer was stronger than he was. Failing in his attempt, he dashed in under the two great claws, and did all that in him lay to stave the lean ribs in and was partially successful, for he broke two ribs on the left side, and was busy on a third when Eli once more

obtained his favourite hold. This time he had two handfuls of hair that grew well down on the throat of McGlusky, and having secured his grip he yanked the Scot off his feet on to his left side, then up again, then off his feet on to his right side. Once again he tossed him up, and straightening, dragged him backwards until the hair came out, and when the hair came out the hide came with it. After that Mac tried every wile he was master of to get the Boer to strike a blow so that he might mix the blows with him, but Eli would not. He stuck to his own methods, until at last, nearly plucked, and choked with blood and dirt, McGlusky fell fainting, and the sick Tommies gathered him in and nursed him for the best part of an hour, bathing, his swollen and distorted face with streaming water. When at last he came to his senses, and knew that he had been beaten in single combat by a Dutchman, his language was something to be remembered by all who heard it; even the Tommies wilted before the storm. "A am a shamed mon," he howled; "shamed by a loosy loon who cudna hit a hole in a poon o' butter. A wull na be able ta luk a mon in the face again. A wull ha' ta spend the rest o' my days amang the wummin, a puir feckless thing, on'y fit ta cackle amang hens."

All at once an idea came to him, and he burst forth into song, not the song of the shearing sheds, but a Byronic air:

> The Assyrian cam' doon lik' a wolf on the fold,
> His cohorts all gleamin' wi' purple and gold.

The Boers, eating their midday meal of biltong, rusks, and coffee, heard that wild chant, and they said to one another that the "rooinek" had gone mad with pain; and Eli, listening to the bellowing, gave thanks to God for his victory. But McGlusky was not mad. He called

a Tommy to him and bade him get scissors and a razor ; and when the soldier brought the tools, the Scot bade him cut away every remnant of hair from head and face, and then shave him as bald as a baby. It was an awful task for the Tommy, for Mac's face was swollen and torn like a garden plot that schoolboys had been ravishing by moonlight ; but it was done at last ; and when it was done the Scot-Australian, without waiting for a bath, stepped forth and faced the Boers. A wild burst of merriment greeted him. He looked like a game-cock plucked of its feathers, or a singed eagle.

" He's come for some more, Eli," shouted the younger members of the commando. " You will have to pull his ears or his head off to satisfy him."

Eli rose and faced the tattered ruin in front of him. McGlusky rushed, and Eli instinctively clawed for his old grip, but the material was not there ; the bald head and bare face slipped through his fingers, and the next moment a swift, sharp, heavy upward punch under the chin lifted him off his feet and deposited him a couple of yards away amongst some saddles. He rose and came back stolidly, and again sought to get a purchase for his fingers on the hard oval skull, or square-jawed face, but again he missed his hold, and a tremendous blow full on the broken ribs sent him to the cheek of the veldt. He sat there for a long time and did some thinking, whilst the now wildly excited Tommies waved their helmets and cheered vociferously, for it was patent to every one that under the altered circumstances there was to be no picnic for Eli. The Boers, leaning upon their handy little Mausers, laughed as merrily as the Tommies, and offered their champion all sorts of advice—advice which was much easier to give than to act upon, for McGlusky was burning to avenge his former defeat, and made good use of his gifts. Four or five times

in rapid succession he knocked Eli prone upon the veldt, until at last the long thin man raised himself painfully and sat himself down upon a saddle. "When air ye goin' to continue the fecht, mon ?" asked Mac. "A wull wait yer conveeneeance, seein' ye aince waitit min'."

"When am I going to continue the fight ?" replied Eli solemnly.

"Aye, mon, when ?"

"When your hair has grown," was the stolid reply; "until then shall we call it a draw ?" and he rose wearily, for his broken ribs were doing him no good, and held out his hand. "A draw, 'rooinek,' and the honours are with you."

"If it must be a draw, it maun be," was the Scot's mournful reply. "An', ma certie, if the honours air wi' ma, ma whiskers air wi' you. Mon, ye pluckit ma like a fowl."

A little while later, when the commando of Boers rode off to resume hostilities against the British, and the "sick draft" recommenced its laborious trek, no stranger witnessing the parting would have conceived the idea that they represented two hostile armies in the field, for the badinage on both sides was hearty and jovial. Some of the Boers, as they rode past the Cape carts, inquired in tones pregnant with laughter whether the Tommies intended to keep McGlusky on a chain. Whilst the Tommies, chaffing freely with the very men they had been fighting with for a couple of years, asked the Boers what they intended to do with Eli the barber when the war ended. So the episode passed, and McGlusky had time to think and let his whiskers grow. At the railway station, which he reached without further adventure, he was told that no provision was available for his men; no arrangements had been made for their transport to the coast. The station was loaded with food-stuffs

consigned to various Generals at the front. Some of it had been there for months, and, judging by appearances, would be there for months to come. McGlusky asked for permission to broach some of the cargo on the trucks. The officer in charge declined to give it.

"Ma A ask why ye wull na gie ma a permit to tak' food for ma sick draft?" asked the Scot frigidly.

"I have no orders to give it to you, and I don't give a biscuit without an order," was the short reply.

"What am A ta da, then?"

"Don't know at all. I have nothing to do with you, you know. My orders are to look after the station, keep the enemy off, and forward things as they are wired for."

"Very good, sir," replied the Scot stiffly. "A wull tak' all the reesponseebeelity o' ma ain actions"; and forthwith he turned to, with three or four niggers, and helped himself to what he required.

"You've got a pretty cool cheek, don't you know, sir," stormed the officer in charge. "I've a beastly good mind to put you under arrest and send you on to headquarters. I would, too, in half a minute, only I should then have all your confounded sick draft on my hands, and I'm overworked and undermanned as it is, but I'll make a report and send it on to Kitchener."

"A wad if A was you, sir"; and then seeing an opening for a gorgeous piece of bluff, he said, "Tell Lord Keetchener that Major-General McGlusky tuk what he wanted for the sick draft accordin' ta instructions received fra headquarters."

"Major-General McGlusky!" gasped the officer. "I beg your pardon, sir; I did not know your rank. I may say, sir, I never heard your name before."

"Did ye na?" was the complacent retort; "wull, if ye care ta da it, just wire that message direct to Lord Keetchener an' tell him ye never heard o' ma name before.

A flatter masel' it wull na help ye ta promotion, but," he added with blighting sarcasm, " maybe ye air as high up in the service as ye care ta be ; maybe ye air no seekin' for promotion."

" Will you give me a receipt for what you have taken, sir, and a written statement that you acted under Lord Kitchener's orders ? "

" A wull " ; and he did, and signed it as large as life, " McGlusky, Major-General, *et temporara.*"

" *Et temporara,*" read the officer ; " I—er—I hardly understand *et temporara ;* what's—er—that, sir ? "

" Latin," was the defiant answer. " Latin, sir, an' good enough Latin, too, sir, for a soldier."

" Oh—er—ah—yes, of course, sir, quite satisfactory Latin." Then, as McGlusky swaggered off, the officer muttered—" ' *Et temporara.*' Well, I'm damned ; I'll bet this chap is one of those beastly Colonials who don't know a Latin grammar from a load of hay."

CHAPTER XVII

THE LADY IN HOLLAND

McGLUSKY had got his sick draft down to the coast. He had regaled them for a week on stout and oysters, and entered the cost of the same in his accounts as fodder. He had won the undying love of his "draft" by so doing; but Jock O'Neil, who had returned to Durban, took him seriously to task over the matter. "Look here, man," said Jock earnestly, "don't you know that if this gets to the ears of the authorities there will be big trouble for you?"

"Ta hell wi' the authorities," was the emphatic answer. "A ha' done na wrong, Jock; A ha' put na siller inta ma own pooch. A gied the men the best things A cud get ta put 'em on their legs again, an' mak' 'em fit ta fecht their country's enemies, an' A called it 'fodder' in ma report; an' fodder it was, an' real gude fodder, too. If A had gied a champagne supper to a lot o' dudes an' had put it inta the bill as horse feed, A cud unnerstan' it being wrang; an', by ma soul, Jock, A ha' knowed more than one mon ta da that in South Africa."

Jock shut one eye and whistled. "Go slow, old chap," he said, "or you will have half the army on top of you in no time. You mustn't say these things even if you think 'em. Why, man, they'd break a General for an after-dinner speech if he ran against 'em too hard, and you're not a General, not by a long chalk."

McGlusky sniffed. "A am a mon," he said, "an' God A'michty made men, but a fule o' a War Office can mak' a General. A wull tell ye, mon Jock, A ha' known all sorts o' tom-fule stuff to be purchased for some men in the Breetish Army. Champagne, which A wadna gie a saxpence a pint for masel', for A dinna conseeder it ta be a mon's drink at a', but puir belly-gripin' muck, it's just naught else but ginger pop, wi' a dash a hell in it; A wad get mair comfort oot o' a bottle o' whusky than oot o' a tank fu' o' champagne, but every mon to his taste A say. A ha' seen plenty o' that rubbish sent ta the front labelled as 'eye lotion'—michty fine 'eye lotion' it was for them that like the stuff. A drank fower pint bottles o' it ane nicht for ta wash doon ma bully beef an' biscuits, an' A had sic a pain in ma wammle the morn A cudna sit in ma saddle, an' ma head was sic a size ma hat wadna sit on the top o' it. Theer were other things beside champagne sent up under false preteences, Jock. Cameras for amateur picture-takers went up marked 'urgent an' immediate' as special medical comforts, prime hams an' cases o' *pâté de foie gras*, whatever the blazes that last may be, were sent up in special trains, labelled 'surgical instruments.' A remember a sargint in a Cockney regiment opening one o' these cases ta see if he cud find a bit o' lint an' a drap of carbolic oil ta dress a wound, an' he ran aginst a fine prime ham. There was a ticket on the ham which said, 'To be handled wi' care,' an' that Cockney sargint laughed when he saw it. 'A wull handle it wi' care,' he said. 'A michty fine surgical instrument it is. A am thinkin',' he sez, 'that the officer this was intended for will need a surgical instrument ta get it oot o' me,' and with that he took the ham by the shank wi' one hand an' by the butt wi' the other, an' bit a hole in the middle o' it, taking cloth an' all in the bite, for he had been fastin' for eighteen hours. He had just finished

his meal an' tucked the ham bone inside his tunic when who should come riding up but one o' his officers. 'Have you—er—seen a—er—case of surgical instruments about heah, sergeant?' he said.

"'I did, sir,' says the sergeant, 'an' I opened it, sir, because the major sent me doun to look for some lint an' carbolic.'

"'Is this it?' asked the officer.

"'It is, sir. When I opened it I found that some fool-headed civilian had packed the case with hams instead of surgical instruments.'

"'There's one gone, you scoundrel,' shouted the officer; 'you've been broaching the stores, sir; you deserve to be shot, by Gad. What have you done wi' it?'

"The non-com. stood stiff an' soldier-like. Sendin' his hand up to the salute, he replied, 'Beg pardon, sir; when I saw it was a 'am an' not a surgical instrument, I gave it to my 'orse.'

"'Your horse, you fool. A nice tale to tell me; why, a horse won't eat hams.'

"'Beg pardon, sir, a henglish 'orse won't,' said the sergeant, 'but this hannimal ain't a 'orse, sir, 'e's a hargentine, an' 'e'll eat 'orseshoes if there ain't anythink else handy.'"

McGlusky chuckled over the reminiscence and then picked up the thread of his story. "Don't you worry about me, Jock. A ha' done naethin' A am ashamed o'."

"Very well," laughed Jock, "you made your own bed and you will have to lie in it; but why in the world didn't you say in your report what you had done?"

"Man," was the solemn reply—"man, A ha' been in the Breetish Army in the field too long noo ta da that; ye ken A ha' been makin' a study o' tactics."

"That's 'tactics,' is it?" queried Jock.

"It is, ma freend, just the same gran' sort o' tactics as oor Generals use when they are drawing cordons round De Wet, or when they are makin' big Boer 'drives.' When they report to the Breetish public they don't say that all the Boers were on the outside of the cordon when it closed, or that no Boers were at the end of the wonnerful drives. They go in for tactics, an' jeest say that the cordon closed an' the drive finished, an' leave the rest ta the eemageenation o' the Breetish public an' the Breetish Press, an' that's tactics, the essence o' tactics, an' A recommend it ta ye, Jock. Ye will find it verra useful in everyday life. Never tell a lee, Jock, mon, but don't waste the truth if ye can help it; it's veera preecious."

So Jock, being a shrewd man as well as a good comrade, let the matter drop, and calling a nigger bade him bring a rickshaw, and together the pair of friends took a drive. The nigger who was pulling the rickshaw was a special man whom Jock employed regularly, a fine powerful Kaffir, who could trot along on a level road and do his six miles an hour in comfort; but McGlusky, who could never let "well" alone, because it was not in his nature to be satisfied with any thing in heaven or earth, being one of those men who would want to burnish the stars if he could reach them, suggested to Jock that another nigger should be engaged and harnessed in front of the man in the shafts. "A wad like to drive 'em tandem," he said meekly. "Ye see ta the harness, Jock, lad, an' A wull fill ma pockets full o' peebles ta pelt at ta leader ta keep him up ta his wark, ye ken." It was some time before the team got a start, and when they did, the nigger in the lead, considering that he had a licence to play pranks, began to jump and prance about in imitation of a colt; whereat McGlusky, who could throw a pebble with unerring accuracy, a trick he had learned when bullock-driving in his native Australia, dropped a piece of rock sharply on the almost

naked buttocks of the Kaffir, causing him to buck in earnest. So to quieten him McGlusky dropped what he termed a "peeble" on the opposite buttock, making the Kaffir jump almost out of his hide; after that he turned sulky and refused to budge. A crowd gathered round laughing and chaffing, so McGlusky promptly dismounted from the rickshaw, and taking the sulky leader by the ear trotted him down the street for half a mile, and then promised him the noblest hiding he had ever dreamed of if he sulked again. After that there was peace; for the grip of that horny fist on his ear convinced the Kaffir that the white man was not one of those he could trifle with. Jock took his friend out to an hotel a few miles from Durban city, a place that was in itself a dream of beauty, a combination of art and nature rarely met with. It was the great fashionable resort of Durbanites, a place where good wines, good music, and good meals abounded. McGlusky was charmed; his rugged nature opened and expanded like a peach blossom in the sun under the combined influence of the scene and the kindly courtesy of the host and hostess. He was full of calm delight, leaning over the ivy-dressed balcony watching some people getting ready for a game of tennis. "It's a puir game for a mon to play at," he remarked, "a puir daft kind o' a game, wi' na spice o' danger or deefuculty in it at a', just the richt kind o' a pastime for daft bodies who air shut up in ane o' those assylums, but they da fill in the scenery beautiful."

He was quite taken up with the men who were playing, noticing their elegant silk shirts and flannel trousers and white kid shoes, for the Durban dandy is a dandy of the first water, but at last he began to look at the ladies. Some were in muslin, others in dainty picture dresses, all were pretty, merry, and charming. All at once the Scot-Australian laid

his great hand on his friend's arm and gripped it as though he had grasped the tiller of a launch in a driving gale. "Look theer, Jock, theer, mon," he said in his quick, rough way, pointing towards one of the ladies who had just joined the players. Jock looked and saw a tall female figure dressed in plain unadorned holland. He could not see her face because she had her back towards him, but the figure was superb, tall and strong, but full of winsome lines. She had no hat on, and her fair hair was coiled simply at the back of her head. As Jock looked at her she was standing with her racquet clasped in her two hands behind her. The whole of her face was not visible, but just enough of one cheek and the side of her neck and throat to show that she was a blonde woman and that the warm blood of perfect health ran in her veins. "Dinna stir, Jock, lad," said the Scot-Australian feverishly, "dinna stir, or maybe you will spoil the picture. Ma certie, lad, A didna think they built sic wummin as that anywhere oot o' Australia."

A moment later the woman joined in the game. Darting swiftly here and there, she kept her racquet going deftly, and the ball seldom beat her. Many of the others who were playing were almost as skilful as she was, but none of them moved as she did.

"Look at that wummin, Jock, look at her the noo; see hoo she gangs fra ane ta the ither like a bird fra ane bough ta anither. Look at the ithers, Jock," he said, comtemptuously, "hoppin' an' flutterin' an' flyin' aboot like hens splutterin' an' cacklin' a' the time. Look at the little deevil in muslin, Jock, skimpin' aboot a' the time like a cock sparrow wi'oot his tail feathers, tryin' to fly before the wind—na deegneety, na grace, na stateliness aboot any o' them except that wummin in plain holland. Who is she, Jock?"

His friend did not know, but he invented both a name

and a romance there and then to fit McGlusky's divinity—a romance that fired McGlusky's blood, already running warm in his veins at sight of an almost perfect woman. He raved in deep-throated tones to his countryman concerning the "lady in holland" until Jock O'Neil, who fully relished the situation, said in his innocent fashion that he had fancied McGlusky had left his heart in Basutoland.

"Jock," said the Scot in a husky undertone, "Jock, if ye say anither ward aboot the black she-devil A wull pick ye oop an' throw ye ower the balcony this meenit. Why, lad, it's worse than sacreelege ta mention any ither white wummin in Africa in the same breath wi' this wan, an' ye ha' dared ta bring oop tha image o' a black wench wi' such a human poem as that before ye, man. A wonner God A'michty does na strike ye dead!"

So Jock put on a humble and a contrite air and crept away, but when he got to the seclusion of his own room, he danced around and laughed mightily, for his spirit was moved. An hour later he reappeared on the balcony, and looking up and down its length sought vainly for a sight of his friend. He turned his gaze to the lawn in front of the hotel, and there he beheld McGlusky the explorer, McGlusky the gold fossicker, McGlusky the driver of bullocks, McGlusky the apostle of a new religion, McGlusky the fighter, the drinker, the brawler, the peacemaker, the maker and breaker of laws, running to and fro like a lap dog at the beck and call of a woman. Whenever the lady in holland was short of a ball, it was McGlusky who approached her with mingled dignity and shyness, and attended to her wants. Whenever a ball that should have gone to her went bounding off on the smooth close-cut grass, it was McGlusky who sprang after it and grabbed it in the hollow of his great palm. If the lady in holland stopped to fan herself for a moment

with her kerchief on account of the heat, for the day was warm, it was McGlusky who, with an imperious wave of his arm, brought the waiter flying on the wings of fear with iced lemon water. Once when one of her shoelaces broke, it was McGlusky who knelt with averted head on one knee and offered his other knee duly bent as a rest for the well-formed foot whilst the broken lace was replaced. All the ladies except the lady in holland were smiling at the attentions of the fierce-looking war and travel-stained veteran. She, with a clever woman's inborn intuition, had seen at a glance that this was no mere trooper seeking an amorous adventure, but a man worth something more than a wayward glance. A number of the men in silk and flannel had thought fit at first to eye him haughtily, and then to indulge in contemptuous little laughs at his expense, but McGlusky soon killed all that. He had bent his rugged brows and drawn his lips together and fixed first one, then the other, with so fierce and grim a look that they had one by one gladly avoided his gaze. He looked as he stood there in that pretty gathering like some great mastiff fresh off the chain in the midst of a group of ladies' lap dogs. At last, Jock looked from the balcony, he saw that the game was over, for the afternoon was very hot. The lady in holland, with a pretty bow and a smile that parted her lips as wind parts rose leaves, had moved away in search of a seat. She walked lazily towards a shady tree where an old-fashioned rustic form was placed. A couple of stout young men, whose dark eyes and hair, plentiful display of diamonds, hooked noses and thick red lips, bespoke them Hebrews from Johannesburg, were sprawled upon the seat smoking, whilst their iced brandy and sodas stood on a small table close to their hands. With the acumen of their race they had selected by far the shadiest seat in the place, and with the greed of their tribe they had monopolized it. They

did not offer to make room for the lady in holland when she half hesitated in front of them, though there was seating accommodation for nearly a dozen. They simply lifted the heavy lids of their Semitic eyes and stared at her insolently, disrobing her mentally garment by garment as only sensualists can. She flushed under their scrutiny and turned away; McGlusky said no word, but he strode over to the pair on the seat and glared at them as a watch-dog glares at a nigger near a chicken roost. They flashed their diamonds at him as if to dazzle him with an exhibition of their wealth. The Scot-Australian, who had an instinctive loathing for the clan of Judah, went behind them, and taking the seat by the middle, turned it upside down, depositing the two Semitic gentlemen on the grass; then swinging the seat round so that it nestled beautifully under the shadiest part of the far-spreading tree, he affixed a placard which he had taken from another nook to the middle of the seat he had so rudely commandeered. The two Semites gazed at the placard and read "For ladies only"; and after measuring McGlusky with their eyes for a second or two, as he busied himself dusting what he had commandeered, they picked up their sodas and brandies and went away to lodge a complaint with the landlord of the place. The lady in holland had seen McGlusky's action, and though his championship did not displease her, rough and crude as it was, she had no intention of giving the gossips of the place a chance to connect her name with the episode; so quickly, but without any seeming haste, she turned down a by-path which led her to another part of the ground altogether, and reaching the hotel by a side door walked out on the balcony and stood there leaning her elbows on the rail and apparently absorbed in the scenery. Prompt as McGlusky was in his deeds, he was not slow of wit, and

when he saw that the lady in holland had disappeared he guessed the real reason and blushed.

"A am a fule," he mused, "naething but a fechtin', blunderin' eediot; A might ha' known she wadna want ta be mixed in a beesness o' this kind; she is na that sort o' a wummin. A wull ha' ta mend ma manners if A want ta mak' ony headway wi' her, A'm thinkin'!" And mend his manners he did. Day by day, week by week, his tandem team of niggers carried him from Durban to the hotel where the lady in holland was staying. Every night they took him back again. Each day he won his way a little bit more in her good graces; he found out that she could play a decent game of billiards, and he induced her to play with him, and it was a treat to see him trying to let her win and yet not let her know that he was malingering. She, however, saw through him plainly enough. Any one could tell that by the way she looked at him occasionally, when he was intent upon something else; at such times her brows would pucker into a queer little frown, and a half-annoyed, half-amused sparkle would set her blue-grey eyes dancing like fire flies, whilst her mouth would droop at the corners, as though she did not know whether to laugh or sneer. She was not pretty; her face was too strong for mere prettiness; she was not really beautiful, but her face was full of subtle charms, and her manner was a daily delight to all who knew her. One night McGlusky discovered that she could sing, and his passion became an infatuation. She could sing, that lady in holland; she had a rich contralto voice, strong and mellow, and when she sang McGlusky would quiver from the hair on his head to the heels of his feet. One evening she swung herself round on the music stool and bade him come and sing to her. Now the Scot-Australian had only two classes of songs: one class belonged to his unregenerate days, the days of the shearing sheds; songs

men sang whilst their comrades sat round the rough-hewn board drinking undiluted rum out of tin pannikins. He could not sing one of those lays in the presence of a decent black gin when sober, so could not draw upon that stock to please the lady in holland. The other melodies he knew belonged to his converted era ; hymns with a martial tone in them, hymns suggestive of holding forts or of smiting the heathen, or of dying grandly for the cause. He felt that she would hardly appreciate one of those lays, so he fell back upon a lie and said he could not sing a note, never could sing a note, and had never cared to hear any one sing until he heard her.

Every one about the hotel knew that McGlusky was head over ears in love with the lady in holland. Many a wink was exchanged, many a nudge of the elbow, many a whispered word, and many a snigger behind his back, but no one made too free in front of his face. Every one trod very gingerly and with extreme care when he was near, for they felt that the ice was thin, and the water under it deep. So matters progressed, until one sunny afternoon, when Mac and the lady in holland were playing a quiet game of billiards, a man with a worn face and attenuated figure, carrying one sleeve of his coat pinned across his chest, walked into the billiard-room without ceremony and looked hard at the lady in holland. She was just in the act of chalking her cue at the moment that her eye fell on the one-armed man. A great flush of rosy joy swept over her, covering face, throat and neck. Chalk and cue fell to the floor ; a swift spring took her to the side of the intruder, the next her arms were round him and she had drawn his pain-lined face on to her bosom. McGlusky caught the words—husband—wife ; then he drew himself up very stiffly, and, holding his head high, he walked out of the room, and closing the door gently marched straight to the bar, called for a bottle of brandy

and drank swiftly and deeply for half an hour, then he called for his bill and paid it. He heard the talk of the bar-room, though he did not join in it. He learned that the lady in holland was the wife of a Boer who had fought gallantly against the British, until, wounded and disabled by a fragment of shell, he had been taken prisoner and afterwards released on parole.

"A knew it a' the time," McGlusky said to Jock O'Neil, lying with noble latitude. "She told ma all aboot it hersel' the second day A met her, and that was why A always treated her as a seester."

Then McGlusky harnessed up his niggers, stuffed a big cigar defiantly in his cheek, and started for Durban without Jock. For the first two miles he cursed himself, his parents, his Creator, and all his kind, but sore as he felt he never cursed the lady in holland.

"A was a pig," he said, "an' A went rooting among the pearls, an' as ma soul leeveth A ha' got ma deesarts, but A was a fule, a dom fule, an' A canna forget it. A wull da penance." And he did it. He got out of the rickshaw and kicked the leading nigger out of the traces, and then kicked him into the rickshaw right into the place of honour. Then he put on the nigger's harness and trotted off to Durban like any Kaffir, whilst, lolling back at his ease on the seat, sat the nigger grinning at the funniest episode in his whole career. Even as he ran like a mule McGlusky could not help thinking of the lady in holland, of her fair face and rich voice and the nameless beauties of the curving figure which had first bewitched him. But she, the lady in holland, had no thoughts to waste upon him; she had forgotten him as clearly as though he had never existed as she sat at the feet of her one-armed hero, and heard from his lips the story of the battles he had fought and the sufferings he had borne.

CHAPTER XVIII

HE JOINS THE BUSH VELDT CARABINEERS

IN all the world there was no sadder man than McGlusky the morning after the arrival of the Boer prisoner who turned out to be the husband of the lady in holland. Sadly he sat out on the step of his hotel and smoked, and as he smoked he meditated. "A am a withered bough, a dry limb, a useless bit o' human lumber. A thocht A unnerstood wummin, but A dinna. Veera strange bits o' furniture wummin air, an' A am theenkin' the mon is na created who can dae mair than accept them blindfold, for the mair ye luk inta 'em the less ye see. A thocht the lady in holland wad ha' telt me she was a mon's wife, but she didna, an' A ha' been guilty o' the deespecable sin o' makin' love to anither mon's wife whilst that mon was fechtin' bravely for his country. A wadna ha' done it if A had known she was wed, but noo A canna help masel'. She is in ma blood, an' A must e'en gang alang lovin' her in spite o' masel'. She was wi' ma in ma dreams last nicht. She will be wi' ma nicht an' day, an' A canna help it, an' that is a sin, the unforgivable sin, for it is written that a mon may not throw his leg ower anither mon's horse, or cast his eye longingly at anither mon's wife, an' A am bitten wi' the sin o' covetousness. A am as bad as Dauvid was when he looked through the hole in the hedge o' Naboth's vineyard and watched Missis Naboth

amang the grape vines. A ken verra weel that it is written, 'If thy een offend thee pluck it oot,' but, ma certie, that wad dae na manner o' gude in my case, for A can shut ma een an' see the wummin all day lang, an' the harder A shut ma een the plainer A can see her. A canna pluck it oot o' ma heart unless A pluck ma heart oot too, for she fills it all the day lang. She mak's ma wakin' hoors a hell, but in ma sleep she tak's ma wi' her ta Paradeese. A wull gang awa' an' know anither mon is sittin' in the garden while A may na look ower the wall. A canna peeck a quarrel wi' him an' fecht him, because he has but one arm ta fecht wi'; but if it should please the Lord ta hit him wi' lightnin', or buck him oot o' a train, an' so gather him to his fathers, A wadna gang inta mournin' for him, but A wad deal veera kindly wi' his widder."

McGlusky had just arrived at the above conclusion, when a man broke in on his musings with a rough but good-humoured salutation. McGlusky looked up and saw a khaki-clad figure wearing a spotted pugaree round his soft slouch hat.

"How are you, Mac?" said the new-comer rather boisterously. "You don't look too fit. Years since I saw you last, but you haven't altered very much. You cast-iron-faced men seldom do alter to any extent."

McGlusky knew his man at a glance; knew him but did not like him too well, for though an Australian bushman and a brave fellow, he was not the class of man with whom the Scot-Australian usually forgathered in his native wilds. No one ever accused him openly of wrong-doing, but he was always a bit on the shady side in his way of living. A wild, reckless blade, ripe for any devilment, fit for any fate, just the class of man that any Australian Contingent would find a place for; a grand rifle shot, a peerless horseman, a thorough bushman, but possessing a finger that was far too light on the trigger to

please ordinary men, and a temper that a devil might have sighed for. Almost a stranger to cities and city ways, but quite at home either in the pathless bush or in the rough waters on the coast, one year he would be droving cattle far inland for the purpose of stocking a new run for a wealthy squatter, the next he would be working his own craft on some pearling station. He had two good qualities, and perhaps only two. He was braver than any tiger that ever prowled, and as skilful in his calling as a man might be, a dangerous man to wear an official uniform either in peace or war. Yet as he stood before McGlusky the Scot saw that that was just what he was doing.

As the new-comer's words reached his ears, "Mac," who was in a churlish humour on account of the lady in holland, at once answered in belligerent tone and word: "Ye theenk A am na lookin' fit, da ye, Jack McCrae? Fit or ill, A am as gude a mon as any McCrae that ever sat saddle or walked in shoe leather, an' if ye haud an opeenion that deefers fra ma words, McCrae, A am weelin' ta debate 'em in bush fashion." As he spoke the truculent Scot took a pull at his belt, and tightened it by two holes. McCrae grinned.

"You have not altered a bit, McGlusky," he cried, "not a bit. You are the same lad you always were, and I don't want to fight with you. I'm not afraid of you; no one knows that better than you do, but you always did like salt with your meat."

"Why should I na like salt wi' ma meat?" was the surly reply. "The only sweet thing in the wide worl' is a fecht wi' a mon who kens hoo ta fecht, an' doesna claw ye by the lug like a wild ape."

Again McCrae grinned. He had heard the story of McGlusky's fight with De la Rey's Dutchman, and he knew that the episode still rankled in the Scot's mind.

"I'm told," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "I'm told, Mac, that there is a long Dutchman wandering round the veldt, named Eli something or other, who carries a lock of your hair to remember you by."

It was McGlusky's turn to smile. "A ken the mon ye are reefering ta," he said; "A ken him weel enoo'; an' A dinna think he wants any o' ma hair ta mak' him reemember ma. He wull carry two bent ribs ta the grave wi' him. A bent 'em wi' ma right fist, an' they'll da ta reemind him o' a mon ca'ed McGlusky."

"Are you tired of fighting, Mac?"

"A canna say A am too fond o' it; ye ken weel A was never a quarrelsome mon, even in ma youth; an' noo A am thinkin' o' goin' inta a nunnery to end ma days, or maybe A wull gang ta some lone place and be a hermit. A cud wear a cowl an' a frock an' sandals, an' leeve on locusts an' wild honey, wi' now an' then a bit o' deer's meat, which ma rifle wad git for ma; an' if A leeved a holy life A micht some day get a reeveelation o' the warl' ta come. Mahomet was naething but a camel driver until he got his reeveelation."

"Why not chip in with us, McGlusky? There's a lot of Australian bush boys in our corps, and we are in for a pretty thick thing."

"Who air ye, an' what air ye goin' ta da?"

"Well, they call us the Bush Veldt Carabineers, and we are going up into the far northern Transvaal to hunt out the Transvaalers who have vowed to fight us until there is not a man left. It will be hot work, and a man like you would be worth ten ordinary bushmen."

"Air you in command o' the corps, McCrae?"

"Well, no, not exactly, but I'm one of the officers."

"Hoo did ye get a commisssion? A thocht the record

ye put oop among the Australian niggers wad a preeveented ye fra gettin' a commeesion fra the Federal Government."

"What record? What the devil do you mean?"

"A mean what A say. Ye ken weel what ye did in the northern part o' Queensland, and in the nor-nor-west o' Western Australia, an' in the northern territory o' South Australia."

"I thinned the niggers out a bit," growled McCrae, "and made it safer for men who came after me. I did the work and got the blame, and yet the whites who followed in my track, prospectors, and settlers, and drovers slept all the safer because I had travelled the country in front of them. Before my time," he said savagely, four whites out of six who tried pioneer life were speared in their sleep, or else had their horses or camels speared and their packs looted, and found themselves left to die a dog's death from thirst. I altered all that, and got no thanks for doing it."

"Ye cleared the country wherever ye travelled, mon, cleared it as far as yer rifle wad reach. A ha' seen a nigger turn white at the mention o' yer name, an' A ha' heard 'em start screechin' like guinea-fowls at the soond o' yer voice, or a sicht o' yer figure in the saddle. Mon, is nigger huntin' yer game in the northern Transvaal? If so, A dinna want ta be in it at a', for though A coont it na sin to kill a nigger in fair fecht, or if A foond him tryin' to deal treacherously wi' ma, A wadna ha' black blood in on ma han's ony more than A wad ha' white blood. Every drap spilt will ha' ta be answered for, mon, when God A'michty comes to reckon up the war an' its wastage o' human life."

"You've done some killing yourself in your time, McGlusky, so don't try to come the saint with men who know you. There are those living yet who worked with

you when you were running cargo in the China seas, and they have a tale to tell."

At that McGlusky bounded to his feet, every hair on end with rage.

"If any man says A spilt a drop o' eenocent blood in the China seas, A say he is a leear—a cooardly leear. A did but help to sweep tha seas o' cut-throat pirates, an' A wad dae the same again if it had ta be done; ay, an' A wad glory in daein' it, too. A made commerce safe for sma' traders in those watters, or anyway A helped ta mak' it safe. A served wi' a mon who did mair ta mak' the English flag respectit in those watters than any gun-boat that England ever sent oot. A tell ye, mon, there's mony a thing done on the face o' the watters that the Admiralty wadna venture ta dream o' sanctioning, but air right glad ta ha' done all the same."

"You and your mates helped to clear the water and make commerce safe," said McCrae, gloomily. "I cleared the bush and made it passably safe for white men; anyhow, I helped to do it, so there's not much room on either side for mud-slinging. You spilt some yellow blood, I spilt some black, and the only difference I can see is in the colour."

"Mon," was the stern response, "if yer soul is as clear fra guilt as ma ain ye can rest easy. Dae ye haud yer commeesion fra the Australian Government?"

"No, I do not," was McCrae's short answer, "I do not. I could not get a place amongst the Colonials, but I have served here in the British Yeomanry for a long time, and when the Carabineers were formed they offered me a commission, and I am going to make a mark for myself somehow. You had better come too; a man like you can rise to any place you like. Look at Driscoll, the scout; he's not a wonder, and yet he has gone up pretty high already, and will go higher."

"Dae ye ken Driscoll, the scout, yersel', McCrae ?"

"No, but I've heard a lot about him."

"A thocht ye didna ken him," was the reply. "A dae, an' A tell ye he wull be a major-general before he dees unless a bit o' lead ca's him awa' pretty soon. He's the finest leader o' scoots in all the wide warl' this day, an' a braw fechter either wi' his han's or wi' weapons. If ye can do as weel as Dan Driscoll ye will rise as high ; many a worse mon has been knighted for half what he ha' done, an' gude fechter an' bonny lover o' a fecht as he is, he ha' never done a thing through the whole war that a mon an' a soldier shudna ha' done. He's a credit ta the flag, he is, an' A for ane will na hear him belittled by any mon, either soldier or ceevilian ; if Englan' had a hunner thoosan' sic men as he, she cud rule the warl' an' na ha' ta get niggers ta help her."

"Will you come and try your luck with us, Mac ?"

"A wull think it ower for a day an' A wull let ye know ay or nay."

The result of his thinking was, that the Scot-Australian took train for Pretoria a week later in the uniform of a Bush Veldt Carabineer, and so commenced the last episode in his South African career. He rode with that ill-fated band for many a long month, fighting the bush-bred Transvaalers in their own way. Often it was mere struggling between man and man, solitary stalking among the pestilential scrub-land where the Boers could give the regular soldier points and a beating, but where the Australian bushmen proved themselves quite a match for the farmers and drovers of Dutch descent. The fighting was always devoid of personal glory. There was no distinction to be gained by it, no kudos, no advancement, only unending fighting. There was no rest, night or day ; sometimes the Boers crept in on the British camp in the dark hours of the night, clubbing a careless

sentry to death with the butts of their heavy Mausers, and then pouring volley after volley with lightning rapidity into the ranks of the sleeping British ; sometimes the game was reversed, and the Carabineers stalked a commando in the darkness, and rushing them suddenly made a charnel-house on the spot.

Poor food, poor horses and poor praise fell to the lot of the bushmen. Day by day the feeling of racial bitterness grew deeper and deeper between the contending parties. McGlusky did his part like a man ; he would stalk a Boer all day long, exchanging shots hour after hour, trying every ruse he knew, and being tried by all the wiles his enemy possessed ; and when at last he would manage to bring his man down he would hasten to the wounded burgher and do all that in him lay to make his last moments comfortable. He would pray for the dying sinner even whilst he moistened the lips that could scarce frame a last prayer. The Boers could not understand this hairy apostle who shot so straight, and hunted them with such dogged pertinacity, and yet in the last extremity became torn with anguish over the state of their souls. His own comrades understood him even less than the Transvaalers, and were half afraid of him, for many of them counted him as a madman. The long hours, the poor food, the unending strain, the wounds, the wretchedness of this phase of the war aroused a spirit of vendetta amongst the contending parties, and deeds were often done that reflected no credit on either side. Wounded British soldiers who had no chance were slaughtered in cold blood ; helpless Boers who had thrown up their hands in despair were shot like shambled sheep. Much of this arose through the folly of a British officer who said to one of the Carabineer officers (unless the latter lied most dismally), " This thing has to be ended somehow; take no more prisoners."

A fatal order, if order it was, for it was destined to bring forth fruit more bitter than any the Dead Sea ever produced. It was destined to bring more than one man to a shameful death, and to smirch the fair fame of the young Australian nation. One day three Boers threw down their rifles and held up their hands to half a dozen Australians. McCrae was the officer in charge. McGlusky was one of the men. "Shoot those fellows where they stand; I mean to take no prisoners," cried the officer, adding darkly, "it's my orders."

"The men ha' surrendered; they ha' thrown oop their han's," said McGlusky, fiercely; "shootin' them is na war, it's dom murder, jest that—na mair, na less."

"Fire as you are told," said McCrae, drawing his revolver.

"A wull see ye in hell first," was the Scot-Australian's bitter answer as he stood balancing his carbine in his hands. "If ye wull na gie the puir de'ils decent quarter when they ask for it, be a mon and not a cooard, Jack McCrae. Tell them ye wull na gie quarter; tell them ta pick oop their rifles an' fecht it oot ta the bitter end. Gie them a fechtin' chance, or by ma soul ye air a cooard, an' yer mither was nae fit ta bring a man-child inta the warl'."

"You mad Scotch devil," shouted the officer with an oath that was fit to fell a bullock, "if you want fighting you shall have fighting. Go and tell the Boers to pick up their carbines again. This has got to be a fight to a finish, and I hope they will fill you full of lead for your pains."

"A wull tak' ma chance, McCrae. A wull tak' ma chance, jest that an' na mair," answered McGlusky; and taking his carbine ready loaded for all emergencies he went to the three Dutchmen, a middle-aged man and his two half-grown sons. "Men," he said, "ma orders

air ta tell ye that there can be na surrender, it's a fecht ta a finish ; pick oop yer carbines an' brak back into the bush wi' a run, an' dinna dream o' surrender ta this crowd. If ye want ta surrender, gang awa' ta Pretoria and surrenner there, but not here in the bush veldt if he ha' any value ta yer lives."

The Boers looked at each other silently for half a second, then setting their lips hard, they snatched up their carbines and rushed back to the bush. McGlusky was midway between them and his own party when the carbines on both sides began to speak. He heard the swift whistling of the flying lead, he heard the whip-like crack of the weapons, then a sharp pain took him in the chest. He let his carbine slide to the ground, swaying a little, then dropped on one knee ; then he reached out his hands to the earth and felt its brown kindly face, and closing his eyes he laid himself down wearily, like a man very tired who fain would sleep a long, untroubled sleep, and as he closed his eyes he fancied he saw a woman dressed in plain holland coming to him through the trees. Then he lost all consciousness for a time, until he heard the voice of Jack McCrae say to some one beside him, "Well, old cast-iron McGlusky's gone ; a lot of good his trust in Providence did him." Then he heard or thought he heard a rifle, and some one tumbled to the earth with a crash almost on top of him. After that he knew nothing for a long time, but woke to consciousness to find a couple of men lifting him on to a rude stretcher. He heard the voice of the troop sergeant say, "Hurry up, you chaps, and bury Mr. McCrae. Just fold his hands decently and lay him in his last berth ; the enemy may commence sniping again at any moment. As for old McGlusky, he'll pull through if he can be got to Pretoria. I don't think the Boers could kill the old devil with a gatling gun."

CHAPTER XIX

HE RETIRES FROM PUBLIC VIEW TO WRITE A BOOK

ABOUT forty miles from Port Elizabeth a little log hut stands in the middle of a clearing. The clearing is not very large, but it represents a lot of labour, for it had been hewn out of densely wooded forest country. Here and there open glades existed, and in those glades wild game abounded, for the crack of the huntsman's rifle was not often heard in that wilderness of wood. Elephants ranged at will through the tangled forests, leopards prowled through the shaded thickets, deer of many kinds grazed in the long, narrow, dim avenues that natives had left open, as if providing a special place of protection for the timid and more harmless denizens of the forest. Snakes of all kinds were plentiful, from the devilish cobra to the gigantic python. Swamps abounded in some portions of the woods, and in many places giant creepers entangled themselves with the trees in such a manner that the living mass became impenetrable. Not an ideal place for a white man's residence this wonderland of wood. Yet a white man had built the hut and cleared the patch of ground and planted a few homely vegetables in the little garden that fronted the hut; a hard-featured, gaunt-framed, wildly whiskered man, Scots by descent, Australian by birth, a traveller by choice, a thrifty soul by instinct. It was noonday.

The owner of the habitation sat on a section of a log turned upward upon its end in front of a rough table which his hands had made. On the table lay an open Bible, a tobacco jar, a cluster of pens, a bottle of ink, and a pad of writing-paper. At one side of him his carbine rested, on the other a fine staghound crouched. The dog, a gift from an officer in a Highland regiment, looked up in the man's face with that appearance of intent but silent eloquence which only a staghound can convey. Possibly in all the world there is no dog that combines so many good qualities as the Scotch staghound. Swift, bold, sagacious, patient, tireless, stout of heart and steady, it is typical of the folk by whom it is bred. The man puffed steadily at his pipe, sending great clouds of smoke from the gap in his whiskers. Sometimes he looked at the dog, sometimes at the Bible, and anon at the writing on the paper in front of him. At last he laid down his pipe with a sigh, and dropping his hand on the hound's shaggy head he spoke sadly, like a man whose soul is heavy within him.

"A fear it is na sa easy as A eemageened," he said. "A wull ha' ta leeve awa' fra all carnal theengs an' fix ma mind on theengs speeratual for a leetle while before A attempt ta da it. A'm beginnin' ta unnerstan' noo why John the Baptist had to gang oot into the wilderness and leeve on wild honey and locusts; an' A ken noo wharfore a' the prophets had to gae amang beasties instead o' stayin' at hame wi' their wives, an' sittin' o' nights in lonely caves instead o' sittin' i' comfort by their ain hearth an' writin' the Lord's blessed message i' peace an' comfort. A didn't unnerstan' before, but it's dawnin' in on ma tha noo." He drew his hand from the dog's head and wiped the perspiration from his rugged forehead. The hound whipped its head around and buried its long muzzle in the hair on its flanks in search

of fleas, the big white teeth coming together viciously. McGlusky—for it was the Scot-Australian—looked at the hound hunting for vermin and drew a moral from the animal's efforts. "The Lord made the fleas an' the Lord made the dog; but the dog doesna' seem ta think that the Lord meant them ta bide tageether," he mused. "An' the Lord made ma, an' He made the rest o' the warl', but if A'm ta judge by ma past the warl' will na let dwell wi'in its circle. A am a flea in the hair o' the ma ma universe." He was in a dejected mood, because the inspiration of a ready writer had not come to him as freely as he had imagined it would. He had settled down in his hut far from the haunts of man with the fixed determination of writing a new Bible. He had planned his book carefully; it was to be full of noble sentiments and rich in glowing language. He meant to draw inspiration from silence and solitude, and guidance from the stars. Most men, learned and unlearned, who had read the Scriptures, had been content therewith, but not so McGlusky. The phrasing that had silenced the criticism of the ages was not satisfactory to him. The heroes of the noble old Book were not heroic enough for his barbaric soul. Solomon was wise, but he was "too fond o' the wimmin ta feegaure as the corner-stone o' weesdom. David was a michty mon in his youth, but, like Solomon, he drifted too much tawards wimmin in his old age, an' was too fond o' advisin' the Almichty how an' when ta engineer tha universe." He fell out with the Psalms because they were "ower lang," and found fault with the Book of Proverbs because they were "muckle ta shart." He disliked Job because that ancient Hebrew was always either "blitherin' or braggin'." He scorned Joseph inasmuch as Joseph, having found a woman weak enough to fall in love with him, did not know how to get rid of her and her attentions in "a manner

becoming the dignity o' a elder o' the kirk an' a meekness o' righteousness. For why should Joseph run fra the face o' a auld married housewife an' leave his sark in her han's ? For why cud he na stan' up ta the wummin an' say, ' Gang awa' hame ta yer husban', ye she-serpent. If A want any beesness wi' a wummin, ha' I na got the pick o' the dauchters o' Egypt to choose fra ? Gang awa' hame ta Mr. Photipha the noo, an' dinna put yer han's on ma claes, or, wummin, A wull cool ye wi' a pail o' cauld watter.' " That was McGlusky's idea of the pastoral dealing with Joseph and the wife of Potiphar of Egypt. He disliked Jeremiah because he was constantly foretelling evil, or, as the Scot put it, " Jeremiah was the voice o' sorrow in the ears o' sadness. There was no sunshine in him." Holding those ideas, he had with sublime egotism decided that the time had arrived for the writing of a new Bible which should touch the hearts and minds of men with a point of flame.

Having arrived at that conclusion, it did not take him very long to decide that he and no other was the person to write it. Besides, there was another and a cogent reason why he should retire from active public life just at this period. He had been left by General Hector Macdonald in charge of a very large body of Basuto teamsters, with orders to see to their general health. Things had gone exceedingly well with all at the depôt for a while, and then smallpox broke out in a virulent form, and McGlusky promptly decided to vaccinate every man, boy and woman in the depôt, white or black. Now, it so happened that vaccination was one of the things he knew absolutely nothing about. He had never seen a case of smallpox in all his wanderings, and all he knew was that lymph was extracted from a diseased cow or calf and let into the human form by puncturing the skin of the biped. As to how the lymph was extracted from the calf he knew

no more than a Hottentot. In this dilemma he chanced upon an Irish railway ganger who professed to know all about it. McGlusky promptly promoted the Irishman to the post of surgeon-extraordinary to the depôt. The Irishman, who considered that the Almighty had made niggers especially for the purpose of being experimented upon by whites who followed scientific research, at once captured a youth who was very bad with the disease, and cupped him until the writhing wretch nearly died. Then he secured a calf and inoculated it with the small-pox microbe to such an extent and in such a manner that the calf died. McGlusky at once argued that there was something wrong about either the Irishman's method or his principle, but the Hibernian asserted that the calf had done the correct thing by dying as it did.

"Faith," he said to the Scot-Australian, "it's not live lymph ye want, it's dead lymph. If ye was to vaccinate with live lymph ye'd give all yez patients smallpox at wanst."

"Da ye mean ta tell me, mon, that ye tak' lymph from a dead calf?"

"Ay, coorse ye do," was the cheerful response; "an' the dead lymph kills the livin' microbe in the blood av the nigger."

"Veera weel," was the Scot's reluctant reply. "A dinna ken enough aboot sma'pox ta tell it fra gravel rash, but, 'Micky,' ma mon, A wull ha na dead calf in ma, ye ken."

"Micky" sniffed disdainfully, and went about his surgical duties. It was blistering hot weather, and as the dead calf was left out in the sun, it was not long before it was brimful of what "Micky," the surgeon-elect, called "lymph." It smelt so "gamey" that even the vultures put their heads under their wings when they

went to sample it. McGlusky had volunteered to help "Micky" collect his "lymph," but when he got within three hundred yards of the calf on the day appointed he turned tail and fled; but "Micky" Farrell, with a brazier full of burning sulphur in one hand and a quart pot in the other, proceeded calmly enough. He did not notice the smell of the calf to any extent, because he had only recently arrived from one of the concentration camps where the Boer women and children were confined and the death-rate was high. But McGlusky, who had never smelt anything worse than a choked sewer in an Edinburgh slum on a hot evening, could not stand it. So "Micky" Farrell got his "lymph"; if he had got fever, or the plague, or cancer in the stomach, no one within half a mile of the place would have been very much astonished; but, as he said, a man who had camped for months amongst shallow graves in a fever camp could afford to risk anything. When the "lymph" was handed to McGlusky he nearly fainted; but nerving himself with an effort, he took a metal syringe he used for doctoring horses, and after filing the point until it was sharp enough to enter a man's skin by a simple pressure on the part of the operator, he filled it with "lymph" and sallied forth in search of the Basutos.

The first day he inoculated fifty men, and had nearly as many fights. His method was very simple. He simply rounded a warrior up as he would have rounded up a steer and four of his assistants gripped the victim, each assistant taking a limb. Then McGlusky passed behind his man and wound his arms lovingly around his neck forcing the black head backwards by running his bony forearm under the Basuto's chin. Having taken this grip, the Scot-Australian, balancing himself firmly on one leg, plunged his other knee into the small of the patient's back, and by this means held him whilst "Micky"

Farrell pushed the syringe half an inch into the flesh of the forearm and injected "lymph."

On the second day McGlusky and "Micky" Farrell inoculated thirty-seven males, and on the third day two hundred and forty-five Basutos, male and female; inoculated them, for on the third day at dawn nearly every man who had been vaccinated with the "lymph" from the dead calf was raging wild with incipient blood-poisoning. They came to the tent where the Irishman and the Scot-Australian were sleeping, and they showed their arms swollen almost as big as their thighs. They were in awful agony, and they demanded relief from their anguish. At first the Scot was inclined to make light of their torments, thinking it was merely the usual outcome of vaccination; but when he saw the awful wounds with the poisoned flesh breaking as only poisoned human flesh can break; when he noted the rolling eyes, the clenched teeth, the shivering limbs, and the beads of agonized sweat that ran down their ebony faces, he knew that he had made an error of judgment in his appointment of camp medical officer.

"Ye ha' done a sinfu' thing, mon," he said to the Irishman; "ye ha' arrogated ta yersel' knooledge ye ha' not possessed, an' now the fruits o' yer ignoreence will be death; what air ye goin' ta da, mon?"

"Micky" said the first thing he intended to do was to place twenty good miles between himself and the camp, after which he would give the matter his earnest attention.

"There is cooardice in runnin' awa' fra a seetuation ye ha' made dangerous, mon," was the Scot's answer.

"Micky" said he thought there was common sense in it, and he argued that it was no fault of his that the dead calf was not healthy.

McGlusky went forth and tried to pacify the heathen.

He spoke to them soothingly, and even unbent so far as to attempt a tune on the bagpipes in order to allay their sufferings ; but the heathen would have none of him as a musician, though they could hardly get sufficient of him as a football. From one corner of the camp to the other they kicked him with their naked feet, and then belted him with raw hide thongs up and down the location. The women plucked his hair and his whiskers out in handfuls, and flogged him with thorn brambles. As for his assistant, the Irish quack doctor, the enraged women dealt with him in a manner which even McGlusky could never think of without a shudder. They did not kill him, but when they hurled him out of the camp he was fit for the pity of the gods. As for McGlusky, when at last he fell, battered and bruised out of all semblance to humanity, they laid him out upon his back in the glaring sun and pegged him down on the hot earth with his face to the skies. Then the women pinned his eyelids back to his eyebrows, so that he could not close them to hide the blue of the sky or the glare of the yellow sun, and so they left him to die the death of a dog. It was so Dan Driscoll, King of Scouts, found him, a writhing, wriggling, tormented wretch, jibbering up to the awful skies that only smiled down upon him, in spite of his awful blasphemies. Dan Driscoll had ridden into the depôt with fifty troopers at his heels to enlist some Basutos as teamsters for his convoy, and he saw McGlusky with a row of black madmen round him. It was a sight to curdle the blood of even such a lion heart as the grey scout. For half a second he had paused, then digging the spurs into his grey stallion's flanks, he had charged at the head of his troop and scattered the Basutos near and far. For a month McGlusky had lain in hospital gibbering of dead calves and "lymph," and when the hospital surgeon had attempted to inject

morphine into him with a syringe to make him slumber, he had broken out into such woeful howlings, and had fought with such maniac strength against the operation, that the surgeon had deemed it wise to desist.

When he recovered he developed a strong desire for a solitary life, partly because his spirit was soured and partly because there was some talk of court-martialing him first and shooting him later, as a good many negroes had died from the effects of his "lymph." His old-time ally, the remount officer, had stood his firm friend in his dark hour, and the Scot-Australian was allowed to pass out of public life for the time without molestation.

"A am a warl'-weary mon," he remarked to the officer. "A am na gaein' to fecht ony mair for warldly gear or warldly glory. When A left Australia A meant ta da great theengs. A meant ta get gear oot o' minin', an' then A meant ta get glory by warkin' ma way oop step by step wi' the Boers; but, ma certie, A got veera leetle oot o' the burghers excep' mony stripes. Then A did some fechtin', an' A didna dae so bad at that, for ye ken, though A am a mon o' peace, A love ta ha' salt wi' ma meat. But A didna hanker after meelitary glory, ye ken, an' ma heart was never in the job, because, as ye may ha' guessed fra ma accent, A am o' Scots descent; an' a Scot canna tak' a deelight in helpin' a big nation wipe a little nation off the face o' God's airth ta pleese a mon, even though the callant can ca' himsel' the first gentlemon in Birmingham. A hated ta see gude fechtin' men like tha Breetish Tommies doin' deevils' wark, burnin' farms ower tha heeds o' puir wummin an' bairns; an' A felt sick in ma wammle ta see the wummin an' bairns o' our eeneemies cooped up like coos in death camps. A'm na a poleetician, but, as ma soul leeveth, A'm theenkin' that when Joseph Cham'erlain stan's in the preesence o'

God A'michty, pleadin' for marcy for his soul's sak', he wull hear the voices o' hunners o' little children cryin' oot ta that God o' tha fatherless askin' for justice, an' then, ay, and then, ma certie, A wad rather be drawn through a sieve wi' ma claes off than A wad change places wi' the finest gentlemon o' Birmingham, even if he dies a duke. A dinna want ta boast, as the Pharisees da in theer pride, for A am o' a hum'le deesposition, as ye veera weel know, and A ken weel that all flesh is grass when it's young, an' hay when it's auld. A am na parfict, A am na a saint. A ha' slippit fra grace masel' mair than aince, but accordin' ta ma gifts A ha' tried ta leeve like a mon an' not like a mud imeege o' evil. A wanted aince ta start a new reeleegion, a reeleegion o' the rifle, as Mahomet started the reeleegion o' the sword, but A slippit fra the narrer way. A was led astray by the golden calf ; daam tha calf, A say. A ha' na luck wi' calves, for A am in sair deesgrace thro' meddlin' wi' a calf that 'Micky' Farrell filled wi' 'lymph.' Ma certie, if the wummin hadna made 'Micky' less than a mon, a wad masel' mak' him less than a son o' a coo, tha bletherin' chiel o' Sautan ; but A'm dagressin.' A dinna care ower much what A do noo ta get ma leevin' in a decent way. A was talkin' ta ma freend, Abraham Goldstein, yesterday, an' A said ta him, 'Abraham, A am sick in ma wammle o' th' adveentures o' South Africa. A wad like a change if A cud see an opeenin' in a beesness way.' An' Abraham say, 'Vy don't you go ta Scotlan', McGlusky, an' start beesness there ?'

"An' A asked him what beesness a mon cud do in Scotlan' an' flourish, an' the son o' Judas made answer ta me, sayin', 'McGlusky, gae ta anny garreeson toon in a' Scotlan', an' start peddlin' Bibles an' sma'tooth combs, an' ye wull mak' a fortune, for a Scot is either full o' the livin' Word or he's full o' livin'——' A dinna want to fecht wi' a Hebrew, but A gied him ane ta gang

on wi'. A dinna know how he felt after it, but it did ma gude masel'."

The remount officer chuckled. "You don't seem overfond of the tribe of Judah, McGlusky?" he chortled.

"A am na," was the emphatic reply. "When twa Scots meet in trade they cut theengs michty fine, but a Jew gets fat on what a Scot wastes, an' that is na ower much, as the warl' knows. A was in a toon in New Zealand aince. The folks were all Scots an' Jews, an' a plague o' vermin broke oot, so the Scots cleaned tha toon clear o' both, an' ta keep 'em oot they erected big gates at tha ends o' all tha streets, big gates made preecisely like sma'tooth combs. Ye cudna scarcely breathe through them."

"Did the—er—the—er—vermin manage to get back through those gates?" asked the officer.

"Na," chuckled McGlusky, "na, the vermin couldna crawl through—but the Jews did!"

"What do you intend to do?" queried the remount officer.

"Well, I dinna see daylight ahead o' ma jeest at present, but A am thinkin' A wull retire fra public life for a while, an' in tha seclusion o' the michty forest A wull just compose ma thochts an' set ma hoose in order, and A wull write a new Bible, a bran'-new book, chock-full o' speeritual grace, an' fechtin', an' war'ly weesdom; for ye ken A ha' had some experience o' the ways o' sinfu' men, an' A'm thinkin' a new reeleegion is what the mon o' Breeteesh breed air most in need o', for their churchmen, their meeneesters, an' the elders an' dacons air veera much like the officers o' their army—they air brave enough, they wad die if need be for their professions; but, ma certie, they dinna leeve up ta it, an' it's tha life, not tha death, o' a mon that coonts.

"A wad write a new book o' proverbs for the gude

guidance of meeneesters, elders and deacons, an' ane o' my proverbs wud be—

"'Feed the hungry who air fatherless; feed 'em wi' bread and meat, and dinna pelt prayers at mon or chiel when his wammle is empty; for man canna live by platitudes alane.'

"Anither ane o' ma proverbs wad be—

"'Dinna tak' fra the lean ta gie ta the fat, for that is the way o' the warl' and the deevil, an' a gude mony pious persons as weel.'

* * * * *

"'If ye want ta plough a lonely furrow, dinna ask all the universe ta help ye da it.'

"An', moreover—

"'If a man hits ye in the wammle, turn yer back to him also; if he doesna kick ye ta h——, he ocht ta.'

* * * * *

"'Dinna waste siller on statues to a mon's memory—an' let his widow an' bairns want bread.'

* * * * *

"'If ye ken a mon praisin' God Almichty wi' a loud voice an' puttin' the bailiff in on his neebour the next minit, honour him not; a dead dog by the wayside is sweeter than he.'

* * * * *

"'Dinna marry a wummin for siller, but dinna say her nay on account o' it.'

"There noo. . . . What da ye think o' ma buk?"

THE END