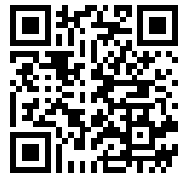
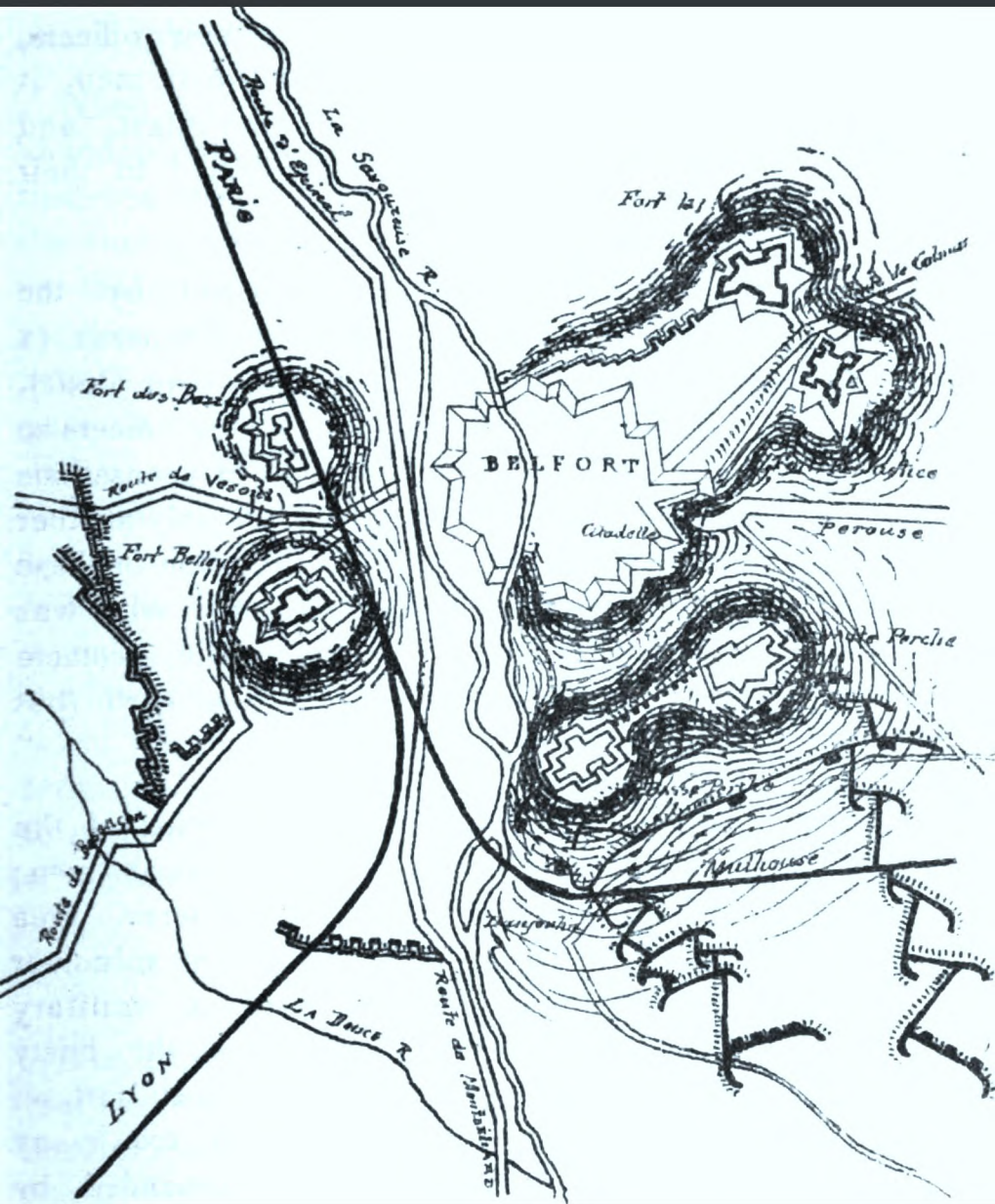

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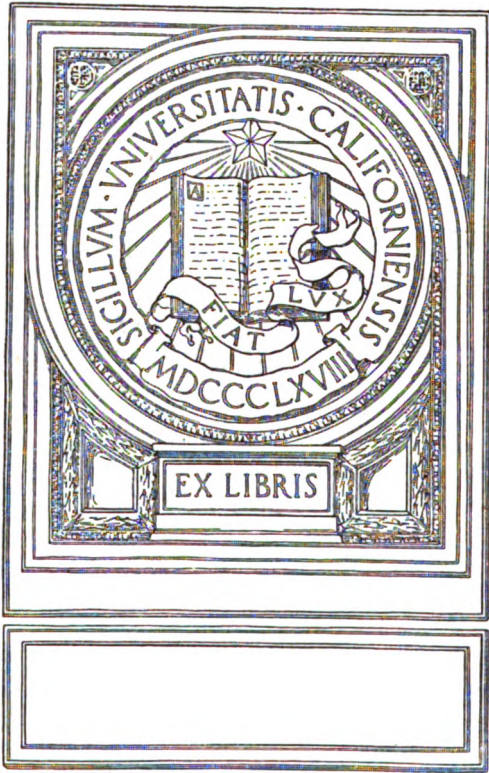
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*Transactions of the Literary
and Historical Society of Quebec*

Literary and Historical Society of Quebec



TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

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OF QUEBEC.

SESSION OF 1871-72.

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TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

SESSION OF 1871-72.

PAPER I.—SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE KAFFIRS.

BY R. E. ROBERTSON, Esq., MAJOR, H. M. 60TH RIFLES.

(Read before the Society, May 17th, 1871.)

WHAT I propose reading to you this evening is taken partly from notes, and partly from recollections of my life, during two years I spent amongst the Kaffir tribes of southern Africa, as a government political agent. I will try to be as little egotistical as possible; but in reading notes from journals kept for my own private amusement, I am afraid you may find them rather like Dr. Johnson's dictionary, a little unconnected; and a good deal about self is likely to creep in, which I hope you will excuse.

There are several subjects I wish to touch upon, in order to give you an idea of life in South Africa, and the different races of mankind you meet there; but you will understand that the limits of a short lecture will only admit of my remarks being *very* sketchy upon any of them.

In the year 1856 I was ordered to join the 2nd battalion of the 60th Rifles, then quartered in British Kaffraria, and sailed from Cork in the stormy month of March, in H. M. S. *Penelope*, Captain Sir Wm. Wiseman. Seven days of the usual amount of cold, sea-sickness, and discomfort, brought us to Madeira; and I may remark, in passing, that a man-of-war is not a convenient place to be ill in. If you have no cabin (I had none), you are apt to find yourself a good deal in people's

way, and perhaps hunted by some stout hirsute official touching his hat, and requesting you "not to be sick on that gun;" or, "Please, sir, this is the captain's side of the deck, and you can't be sick here." However, when you get your "sea-legs," you appreciate very much the perfect order and discipline of H. M.'s navy, especially when your ship is commanded by a captain like Sir Wm. Wiseman. We anchored close to the town of Funchal, the capital of the island, beautifully situated on the side of a mountain which rises from the sea. You have all heard of the salubrity of the climate, and how beneficial it is for patients suffering from pulmonary complaints. The island is also celebrated for its wine and sweetmeats, all kinds of fruit being here candied in the most exquisite perfection. A few days, not more, can be spent here very pleasantly: the principal excursion is to the Curaal, a beautiful valley in the mountains, about seven miles from Funchal. There is a small garrison of tidy-looking Portuguese soldiers at Funchal. On leaving Madeira, you will probably be surprised to hear that our shortest way to South Africa was via South America—at least so said our captain, Sir Wm. Wiseman; and about twenty-three days' sailing and steaming brought us to Rio Janeiro, situated on one of the largest and perhaps the most beautiful harbour or bay in the world,—studded with lovely islands, clothed with trees of various hues of foliage, including the graceful palm, which grows to a great size in this tropical country. The fertility everywhere in this part of the world was quite marvellous to behold; and here, for the first time in my life, I saw slaves at work in the fields. The country produces cotton, sugar, rum, coffee, cocoa, pepper, indigo, rice, and tobacco, with abundance of the delicious fruits of South America, and garden-stuff, but no bread-corn. It has numerous mines of gold, and precious stones are to be found in great quantities. We were there in the month of April, the winter time in those parts; and the climate, though hot, about the temperature of a summer-day in Quebec, was pleasant enough. After spending a

week at Rio, we proceeded on our way, and reached the Cape of Good Hope, taking no more short-cuts, in about three weeks. The Cape is situated in long. 18.23 E., lat. 33.50 S., and, like Madeira, is admirably suited for consumptive patients. The climate of our vast possessions in this country is unsurpassed (and I question if equalled) by any in the world. Numbers of Europeans, whose constitutions had been impaired by an Indian climate, used to come here at one time; but since the journey to Europe has been so much shortened by the overland route, it has been almost deserted by East-Indians. It is a climate in which you can do anything, summer or winter. However hot the day may be—and it is sometimes very hot—still, the atmosphere never has that steamy, debilitating feeling so well known in India; and a pleasant, cool night always follows the hottest day. You may sleep out of doors at night without thinking of cold or rheumatism. The winter is generally dry. I have seen snow fall, but it never lies for more than a few hours. The Cape belonged for 143 years to the Dutch, and, after various vicissitudes, was finally ceded to the British at the congress of Vienna, in 1815. The form of government is similar to that of this country. There is a governor with a salary of five or six thousand a year, and a lieutenant-governor. The parliament hold their sittings at Cape Town. As a naval station, the Cape was considered at one time important. Homeward-bound ships from India generally touched there; but the opening of the Suez Canal will, I fancy, make a great difference to it in this respect. It is inhabited by a very mixed population, composed of Dutch, (or Boors, as they are called,) English, Hottentots, Fingoes, Kaffirs, and Bushmen. With the Kaffirs my experience is chiefly connected. On my arrival, I proceeded at once to join my battalion in Kaffraria, going round in the *Penelope* to Buffalo-mouth, where we landed. Here, many of the names of places indicate the former existence of large game, such as Buffalo-mouth, Eland's Post, Leo Fountain, &c., &c. The country, for the most part, consists of extensive

undulating plains, covered with long coarse grass. There are two descriptions of this grass, called sweet velt and sour velt: the former is good pasture for cattle, but the latter is only fit for game. There are no lofty mountains, though the Amatolas and other small ranges are very beautiful. Inland communication is difficult for the purposes of trade, as there are no navigable rivers; and the absence of natural harbours, and the great difficulty of landing anywhere along the coast, even at Buffalo-mouth, on account of the heavy surf, will, I am afraid, prevent the country from ever attaining to any great commercial prosperity. But the emigrant there has very few difficulties to overcome, in comparison with this or other countries. In the first place, the climate is perfect all the year round; the ground is not more encumbered than is sufficient to embellish the scenery and to supply timber fuel; the soil is ready for the plough, and in many places is so fertile that you might almost grow ten-penny nails into iron crow-bars. The pasturage is abundant throughout the year for all descriptions of stock, and unoccupied lands, almost boundless, extend themselves in every direction. Of late years, I believe, cattle and sheep farmers have been very successful; and large quantities of wool are now produced, which compete successfully with the Australian produce in the London market. There is also a large export trade in hides and horns. Last year, South Africa shipped 5,802 diamonds: they are said to be of an inferior quality, though they brought \$661,777 in money. Cattle of all kinds seem to thrive well. The first emigrants found the natives of the Cape in possession of prodigious herds of fine cattle: these are supposed to have come from the north-east, for from this point the native Hottentots ascribe their original migration. They brought cattle, sheep, goats and dogs, but no horses or asses. The Cape and Kaffraria are now celebrated for good horses; but many of them have a most disagreeable and dangerous trick of bucking, and I defy the best horseman in the world to sit an inveterate Cape buckler. The rough rider of the Cape Mounted Rifles was a first-rate horseman, and

could sit a buckler longer than most people ; but I remember a very handsome little horse, the property of an officer, sending him flying over his head, and then bucking the saddle off, getting rid of it by pulling his head and fore-legs through the girths. I was thrown several times, till I learnt by experience to ask the question, " Is he a buckler ? " before mounting a strange horse. The last Kaffir war had been over about two years when I arrived in Kaffraria ; but a great deal of irritation existed along the frontier : murders were committed from time to time, and constant raids were being made by the Kaffirs, who carried off cattle from the frontier farmers. Things were in a very unsatisfactory state, and an outbreak was constantly expected. Sir George Gray, who had a high reputation as a colonial governor, and had been very successful in his dealings with the disaffected native tribes in New Zealand, was at this time governor of the Cape, and he now organized a scheme for controlling the Kaffir chiefs. He divided British Kaffraria into four districts, and directed Sir James Jackson, commanding the troops in South Africa, to select four officers from H. M. regiments to take the political charge and supervision of these districts. I was fortunate in being one of the officers selected for this duty, and was posted to a district situated between the Kie and the Thomas river, about twenty miles from Queenstown. My duties were chiefly acting as a magistrate and representative of the English government with the chiefs, and to control their patriarchal authority amongst the people. I was also a Justice of the Peace, with power to act in the colony and to arrange disputes between the frontier farmers and the Kaffirs. But Sir George Gray's primary object in sending us into Kaffirland was to break up the power of the chiefs by English influence and a little English money judiciously introduced—that very powerful stimulant for good or evil. I may remark here that the Kaffirs are divided by themselves into various subdivisions, as the Amakosa, Amaponda, Basutos, Tambookies, &c., &c. Where they come from, originally, I do not know ; but it is evident that they are not the aborigines

of Southern Africa. I have heard it supposed that they are the lost tribes; and as many of their customs are very Israelitish, this descent may not be improbable. The Basuto division is, I fancy, the most advanced in civilization—at least their great chief, Moshese, is a very enlightened barbarian, and anxious to do his best to improve his people. He sent his sons to be educated in England, and he has built himself a house in the European style, though I believe he prefers living in a Kaffir hut. The Zulus of Natal belong to the same family, and are as famed for their honesty as my friends on the colonial frontier are renowned for cattle-lifting.

I had to deal directly with two of the principal chiefs, by name Anta (*alias* Kiimpie), the warrior, and Oba (*alias* Goniama, or the lion). Anta was a very fine specimen of the human race, and one of the largest men in Kaffirland. I think his height was about 6 ft. 4 in.; but, though a very powerful man, his limbs did not seem remarkable for much muscle. He had very pleasant features, full of good humour; and when he could get it, which was pretty often, the humour was a good deal heightened by Cape smoke, a vile composition made from an inferior Cape grape. He had the reputation of being the best fighting chief in Kaffraria, and during the war gave us a great deal of trouble. He was half-brother to Sandillie, a well-known chief in the Kaffir war. Oba was also a fine-looking young man, and a much sharper fellow than Anta: he was tall and slight, particularly good-looking, with fine eyes, and a very high-bred, open, manly manner. Indeed, this description of his manner applies to that of most Kaffirs. A stranger is always much struck with the easy and noble carriage of the men and their peculiarly graceful demeanour: they are always perfectly at their ease; and a Kaffir, when he wishes, can be amongst the most dignified of mankind; he never troubles himself about asserting his dignity, and he is undoubtedly one of nature's gentlemen. Oba was higher in rank than Anta, and

his tribe was at least twice the size. Of his counsellors, eight or ten had been the influential counsellors of Gaika, and also higher in rank than Anta's. He was in bad health at this time, and thought himself bewitched. I was anxious for him to go with me to King William Town, about fifty miles off, to see our regimental doctor; but he seemed to have no confidence in European wisdom: he thought our witchcraft was different from theirs, and, therefore, an English doctor could not cure him. At the same time, he was very anxious that I should bring him a bottle of cod-liver oil, in which he seemed to put much faith. He was very interesting, and I took a great fancy to him, and did my best to be friendly and on good terms with him; but he never took kindly to me or to Sir George Gray's scheme, and, indeed, after a time he refused to receive the monthly subsidy I paid the chiefs. Of course, all our power over the tribes lay through the chiefs, and this subsidy was at first the mainspring of it.

The Kaffir chiefs, like more civilized men, are fond of the ladies, and my chiefs were no exception to this rule, each having a good many wives: Anta had six. Marriage is usually contracted very early amongst the Kaffirs; but, unlike the mercenary white men *there*, it is useless for the young marrying man to wonder if the lady of his affections has, or is likely to have, any money, for the beautiful princess, or the interesting maiden, must be bought from the cattle-loving father. She is always paid for in cows, the price depending a good deal upon her birth and condition. This plan seems to answer very well, for I never heard of the Kaffir father having any difficulty in getting his daughters off his hands. The Kaffirs are very aristocratic in their ideas; they are proud of genealogy and fond of relationship to great families. Not possessing any written documents, their traditionary legends are all oral; but they can, nevertheless, count their grandfathers on their fingers for at least 150 or 200 years. The principal,

or, as they call her, the right-hand wife of a chief, is always a lady from the Royal tribe of the Tambookies, and her son inherits the hereditary chieftainship. They generally treat their wives and children very kindly, though it is difficult to reconcile this with making them do all the hard work, such as digging the ground, constructing huts, and a variety of other employments. There is a story of a missionary remonstrating with a Kaffir for throwing all the hard work upon his wife and doing nothing himself, and endeavoring to strengthen his position by mentioning the manner in which Europeans treated their wives ; but he met with little success in his argument. The Kaffir's reply was sufficiently to the point : " White men do not buy their wives, and the two cases are not parallel." The divorce court is a very simple business, for if a woman runs away from her husband, or is unfaithful to him, he can demand from her father the price he paid for her, and there is an end of the matter.

Between married persons and their relatives a very singular code of etiquette prevails. In the first place, a man is not allowed to marry any one to whom he is related by blood. He may marry two or more sisters, provided they come from a different family from his own ; but he may not take a wife who is descended from his own particular ancestors. A man may not only marry the wife of a deceased brother, but considers himself bound to do so in justice to the widow and children of his brother, who then become, to all intents and purposes, his own. After a man is married, it is contrary to etiquette to speak to his mother-in-law, except at a great distance. Perhaps this is a mistake ; but if so, it is on the right side, for a Kaffir has generally a considerable number of mothers-in-law, and the rule is, doubtless, a very good one. So far is this peculiar etiquette carried, that if the man and his mother-in-law meet in a narrow path, they must always pretend not to see each other. The woman generally looks out for a convenient bush and gets behind it, and the man passes, carefully turning his head in the other direction. One

of my chiefs was very anxious to form a matrimonial alliance with an English family of position ; and some one induced him to offer twenty head of cattle for Miss Pringle Taylor, the only daughter of General Pringle Taylor, commanding the troops in Kaffraria at that time, who had the bad taste to decline the offer. My friend was a little surprised at the rejection of so good a *parti* ; but, like my worthy countryman, he consoled himself with the thought that “ she was daft to refuse the laird of Cockpen.” From hard work the women are inferior in appearance to the men, though their figures are remarkably good when young, and the very airy dress they wear serves to shew them off to the best advantage. In full dress they wear long black cloaks made of ox-skins, ornamented with beads, brass, and pieces of polished copper, and generally the shell of a small tortoise suspended from the neck of the cloak, hanging down the back ; they also wear a short leathern petticoat. They are all admirable dressers of furs, and the skins they wear are as soft and pliable as our winter coats in this country. They use a good deal of milk and butter in preparing the skins. The chief is generally distinguished from his people by a carosse of tiger’s skin. He decorates his arms with quantities of polished brass rings (as do the women), and wears a necklace of tiger’s teeth. In British Kaffraria, his usual dress is a dark-red blanket—in fact, this is the only dress worn by the men now-a-days, and is fastened over the shoulder of the naked arm, while the other side is wholly concealed. But in their kraals most of them go about quite naked, excepting a little leathern bag, called a *nuchie*, from which an ornamental thong depends down to the knee. Sir George Gray, being anxious to introduce civilization, gave an order that only Kaffirs in decent clothing should be allowed to enter King William’s town. I remember a very fat man, thinking himself hardly treated, being refused admittance by the police, after having, as he considered, got himself up rather well in military costume, which consisted solely and entirely of a very tight-fitting red shell-jacket. When away from home they usually

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carry three or four assagais, light javelins about four or five feet long, armed with sharp iron knife-like heads. This weapon they use in hunting and war, and they can throw it a distance of 30 or 40 yards, with great accuracy of aim. In throwing it, they make a run, and discharge it with the aid of the jerk of stopping, giving it an upward direction in the discharge, so that it comes down on the object with accelerated force. The following passage, describing the dress and appearance of the Kaffir, is taken from Rose's *Four Years in South Africa*: "The chief is generally distinguished from his followers
 " by a carosse of tiger's skin, and by a tasteful beaded band
 " worn round the head; and when he stands surrounded by
 " his armed attendants, wrapped in their dark cloaks, it
 " forms a most imposing sight, and one which, though my
 " expectation had been raised, surprised me. Their figures
 " are the noblest that my eye ever gazed upon, their
 " movements the most graceful, and their attitudes the
 " proudest, standing like forms of monumental bronze. I
 " was much struck with the strong resemblance that a group
 " of Kaffirs bears to the Greek and Etruscan antique remains,
 " except that the savage drapery is more scanty, and falls in
 " simpler folds; their mantles, like those seen on the figures
 " of the ancient vases, are generally fastened over the
 " shoulder of the naked arm."

The men, however, are very nearly as idle as these figures on the ancient vases; but they occasionally occupy themselves in hunting, fighting, politics, and looking after the cattle, and frequently stealing other people's. In fact, the description given by Macaulay of the Scotch Highlanders in 1689 very well describes the Kaffir of the present day. Their dislike to manual labor, throwing the heaviest part on the weaker sex; their dwellings, too, in which a traveller would sometimes find his lodging in a hut, of which every nook swarmed with vermin—(I must say, however, that the Kaffir, though he is fond of a flea-hunt, and the game is sometimes plentiful, is by no means an uncleanly animal,

and I never saw vermin in their huts); a supper of grain fit only for horses, and his bed always the bare earth, wet or dry, as the weather might be; their lawless practices, too, in the way of "cattle-lifting," are much the same. The following lines, on the first Highlander that God created, apply so well to the Kaffir, and his sentiments on the subject, that, perhaps, you will permit me to repeat them :

" Says God to the Heighland-man,
 ' Quhar wilt thou now ?'
 ' I will down to the Lowlands,
 Lord, and there steal a cow.'
 ' Fye,' quod St. Peter ; ' thou wilt
 Nere do weel,
 An thou but new-made, so sune
 Goes to steal.'
 ' Umph !' quod the Heighland-man, and swore by yon Kirk,
 ' So long as I may get to steal
 Will I never work.' "

However, time and civilization have made an honest man of the Highlander ; so we may hope it will do the same for the Kaffir.

In their own open country they have hunted nearly all the game to death, their mode of hunting being very destructive. They spread themselves far and wide over the country, forming a large circle, which is gradually contracted till the game are enclosed within a narrow space, where they kill great numbers with their dogs and assagais. They are very dexterous in throwing the kerrie, which is a stick of rather heavy wood, with a knob at the end. I remember feeling rather small after firing at and missing a partridge (called, in Kaffir, insequatchie) to find my eye wiped by a Kaffir-beater bringing my bird down in its rapid flight by throwing his knob-kerrie at it.

I don't think the Kaffirs have any knowledge of a God, which is strange, as nearly all savages believe in something. They certainly have no form of worship, or of idols, or of prayers, or sacrifice. It seems almost impossible to make them comprehend the doctrines of the Christian religion.

One would think that they ought to be easily converted, as they have no prejudices or preconceived ideas on the subject. It is, however, difficult to give an idea of the little effect teaching produces. They listen with respect and attention to what you tell them, but it seems not to make the least impression, and the idea of praying to an unseen Being appears to them perfectly ridiculous. The devil is also a sad stumbling-block, and they think it would facilitate their conversion very much if he could be first converted himself, or, at any rate, induced to mend his ways. A missionary I located amongst them was very popular as long as he confined his instruction to playing tunes on the fiddle and could give the children something to eat. However, I am thankful to say they did not eat him, as the New Zealanders did the missionary that was sent to them, and told the bishop when he came his rounds that they liked him very much. There is a story told by Dr. Livingstone of how he converted a chief, but found some difficulty in converting the rest of the tribe; and the chief one day remarked to him: "Do you imagine these people will ever believe by your merely talking to them? I can make them do nothing except by thrashing them, and if you like I shall call my head-men, and with our litupa (whips, made of rhinoceros hide) we'll soon make them all believe together."

Anta and three or four of his head-men were sitting in my hut one day, and appeared to be very much interested in my Bible, which they examined with much curiosity and awe, inside and out, when I told them it contained God's word; and I really thought my teaching was making some little impression, till Anta, in a very unconcerned voice, said: "A-awa incose, incoolu; bassaila cuba"—which means, "All right, chief; give me some tobacco." The word "bassaila" is, literally, "give me a present," and is used by the Kaffirs as a form of salutation. As we say, "How are you?" or "a fine day," they say, "bassaila." I was always addressed as "incose," or chief. But that individuals amongst them

have been converted to Christianity there is no doubt, for I have heard a Kaffir preach an admirable sermon, and, much to my astonishment, with a strong Scotch accent. I found out afterwards that he had been educated in Glasgow. But one thing they do believe in is witchcraft, for which the punishments are dreadful. The accused is generally a rich man, possessed of many cattle; and, guilty or not guilty, if accused by the witch-doctor, the wretched creature is convicted and summarily punished. Sometimes he is fixed to the earth over an ant-heap, by a thong carried round the ankles and wrists, which are fastened to stakes driven into the ground; he is then left in the sun, where he is quickly eaten up alive by those multitudinous insects. His cattle and wives are confiscated and divided between the chief and his counsellors, part going to the person he is supposed to have bewitched. But you will not be surprised at this dreadful superstition amongst these poor pagans when you remember that it is barely 200 years since the criminal tribunals of Europe were continually occupied in similar trials, and condemned to quite as awful punishments the wretched victims of a creed that taught the possibility, or, rather, actual fact, of infernal and human connection. Death by burning and drowning were the common penalties observed from the most ancient times throughout Christendom. The only case of superstition that came before me was that of a woman, who rushed wildly into my camp, in the greatest state of grief and excitement, to claim my protection, saying that she was accused of being a witch, and her husband said she must die. I at once sent for Anta, and cautioned him that in the event of any ill-treatment to the woman, I should hold him personally responsible. This, I think, had the effect of exorcising the evil spirit, for I heard no more about it.

How ruthlessly cruel a Kaffir can be when he is excited by the fear of witchcraft, can be imagined from the following account of the trial and execution of a supposed wizard. The reader must, moreover, be told that the whole of the

details are not mentioned. The narrative is taken from Major Ross King's interesting "*Campaigning in Kaffirland*," a work which describes the Kaffir in 1851-2. Kona, whose illness was the cause of the fearful scene I am about to read, was a son of Macomo, the well-known Kaffir chief who resisted the English forces for so long a time. I was personally acquainted with Macomo, who was one of the most astute old scoundrels in the world:—"The same Kona, some years before, having fallen sick, a 'witch-doctor' was consulted, according to custom, to ascertain the individual under whose evil influence he was suffering; and, as usual, a man of property was selected, and condemned to forfeit his life for his alleged crime. To prevent his being told of his all by his friends, a party of men left Macomo's kraal early in the morning to secure the recovery of the sick young chief by murdering one of his father's subjects. The day selected for the sacrifice appeared to have been a sort of gala day with the unconscious victim: he was in his kraal, had just slaughtered one of his cattle, and was merrily contemplating the convivialities of the day before him, over which he was about to preside. The arrival of a party of men from the 'great place' gave him no other concern than as to what part of the animal he should offer them as his guests. In a moment, however, the ruthless party seized him in his kraal. When he found himself secured by a rheim round his neck, he calmly said: 'It is my misfortune to be caught unarmed, or it should not be thus.' He was then ordered to produce the matter with which he had bewitched the son of his chief. He replied: 'I have no bewitching matter; but destroy me quickly if my chief has consented to my death.' His executioners said they must torture him until he produced it; to which he answered: 'Save yourselves the trouble, for, torture as you will, I cannot produce what I have not.' He was then held down on the ground, and several men proceeded to pierce his body all over with long Kaffir needles. The miserable victim bore this with extraordinary resolution, his tormentors tiring and complaining of the pain it gave their

hands, and of the needles and skewers bending. During this time a fire had been kindled, in which large flat stones were placed to heat. The man was then directed to rise ; they pointed out to him the fire, telling him it was for his further torture unless he produced the bewitching matter. He answered : ' I told you the truth when I said, *Save yourselves the trouble.* As for the stones, I can bear them, for I am innocent. I would pray to be strangled at once, but that you would say I fear your torture.' Here his wife, who had also been seized, was stripped perfectly naked, and cruelly beaten and ill-treated before his eyes. The victim was then led to the fire, where he was thrown on his back, stretched out with his arms and legs tied to strong pegs driven into the ground, and the stones, now red hot, were taken out of the fire and placed on his naked body, on the groin, stomach, and chest, supported by others on each side of him, also heated and pressed against his body. It is impossible to describe the awful effect of this barbarous process, the stones slipping off the scorched and broiling flesh, being only kept in their places by the sticks of the fiendish executioners. Through all this the heroic fellow still remained perfectly sensible ; and when asked if he wished to be released to discover his hidden charm, said, ' Release me.' They did so, fully expecting they had vanquished his resolution, when, to the astonishment of all, he stood up a ghastly spectacle, broiled alive ! his smoking flesh hanging in pieces from his body, and composedly asked his tormentors, ' What do you wish me to do now ?' They repeated their demand, but he resolutely asserted his innocence, and begged them to put him out of his misery ; and as they were now getting tired of their labour, they made a running noose on the rheim around his neck, jerked him to the ground, and savagely dragged him about on the sharp stones ; then, placing their feet on the back of his neck, they drew the noose tight and strangled him. His mangled corpse was taken into his own hut, which was set on fire and burnt to ashes. His sufferings commenced at 10 A.M., and only ended at sunset."

It seems strange that the Kaffir should act in this manner: naturally, he is by no means of a vindictive or cruel nature. Hot-tempered he is, and likely enough to avenge himself when offended by a blow of a club or the point of an assagai; but after the moment has passed away, his good humour returns, and he becomes as cheerful and lively as ever. Even in war, he is not generally a cruel soldier, when not excited by actual combat. The fact is, this conduct shews how great is his fear of the intangible power of witchcraft. Fear is ever the parent of cruelty; and the simple fact that a naturally kind-hearted and good-tempered man will lose all sense of truth, and inflict nameless tortures on his fellow, shews the abject fear of witchcraft which fills a Kaffir's mind. Their other superstitions are less hurtful, and some of them almost approach religion. A Kaffir selects as his guardian the spirit of some former chief or friend; invokes him on all occasions of difficulty; thanks him on all escapes from danger; sacrifices to him part of the ox he kills, part of the game that he takes; and in harvest-time, scatters a portion of the grain as an offering. In crossing a ford, or a drift, as it is called, he calls upon him. And I know of few places where a little spiritual assistance is more requisite at times; for when you get into the middle of one of these flooded drifts (for there are few or no bridges in the country), and your floundering horse loses his footing among the great stones at the bottom, you are very apt to be carried down stream, past the landing-place; and when the banks are high and rugged, it is a very nasty business getting out again. Colonel Nesbitt, who commanded the 2nd battalion 60th Rifles at the Cape, was drowned in this way. When a kraal is struck by lightning, the site is either deserted or an ox is buried beneath it as an offering to the incensed spirit of the kraal. The apparition of the dead shulanga is supposed at times to haunt a kraal when his dying wishes have not been complied with, and an ox is sacrificed to appease it, and a man rushes from the hut, in wild pursuit of the dark shadowy bogie. When the wife of a Kaffir dies, he becomes unclean,

leaves his kraal, and lives in the bush for a certain time ; and on his return, puts on a fresh carosse, burning that in which he had mourned. When a chief dies, they generally wall up the body in his hut, and desert the kraal. They also adopt this method of disposing of very old people when they don't seem inclined to make a natural exit.

On taking up my residence amongst the Kaffirs, I located my party, consisting of an interpreter, a soldier servant, a Kaffir groom, and four or five horses, about three miles from Anta's kraal, and about thirty miles from the nearest military post. The situation was a good one in case of having to beat a hasty retreat into the colony. My tents were pitched at the foot of a mountain rejoicing in the euphonious name of the *Windvogelberg*, called after a bushman who had lived on it. The country about was pretty, and well stocked with game, principally hartebeests, quaggas, antelopes, spring-buck, an odd lion now and then, and ostriches, but all exceedingly wary, from being much hunted ; there was also no end of small game. I had several very exciting gallops after ostriches, but never succeeded in killing one, though I have ridden into a string of them once or twice by making a cross-cut to their undeviating course. The only time I ever had a very good chance of getting one, I had succeeded in riding into a string of eight very fine birds, and was going at a great pace beside them ; but, in the excitement to get a near shot, I threw myself off the horse without pulling up, and my foot catching in the rein gave me rather a severe fall. No horse can keep pace with them for more than a few minutes, their average speed being from twenty-six to thirty miles an hour. We caught a few young ones, which were easily tamed. My servant had an ostrich egg on tap, like a beer-barrel, for some days, and used to run it off for omelets ; but it had a strong, disagreeable flavour, and required a very keen appetite to appreciate it. These eggs are constantly found lying about forsaken all over the country, as the ostrich begins to lay her eggs before she has fixed on a spot for a nest, which is only

a hollow a few inches deep in the sand, and about a yard in diameter. The flesh of the bird is white and coarse : parts of it are said to be good eating ; but my recollections of how I got my teeth into it, and with some difficulty out of it, are not pleasant.

The noise the ostrich makes is singularly like the roar of the lion—indeed, few people can detect any difference at a little distance. The ostrich, however, roars only by day, and the lion by night. The male bird is of a jet-black glossy color, with the single exception of the white feathers, which form a considerable export-trade from South Africa. In the moulting season you can pick up quantities of these feathers, white and black, but more of the latter, scattered over the flats. The hen ostrich is of a dark-brownish, gray color, and so are the half-grown cocks. The young squat down and remain immoveable when too small to run far, but attain a wonderful degree of speed when about the size of common fowls. We had twelve or fourteen young ones at Windvogelberg, but they all died with the exception of one, which became very tame, and was a pet about the camp. A kick from an ostrich, when vigorously applied, will break a man's leg ; but you will not think this very wonderful when you consider that the thigh of this bird is, if anything, rather larger, and quite as muscular as a horse's fore-arm.

The spring-bock, so called from its mode of progression, is a very beautiful creature. It is never met except in large herds. In my part of the country I have seldom seen more than a few hundreds together ; but further north, a herd will amount to the number of nine and ten thousand. Its usual pace is that of a constant jumping, with all four legs straight off the ground at the same time. I used to find great amusement, when riding a good horse, in getting as near them as possible, and then making a rush at the herd, best pace. This had the effect of making them spring away with immense leaps, which were very beautiful to see ; and when

closely pursued, a single leap will measure from fifteen to thirty feet. I have shot them from the saddle. No dog can attempt to approach the old ones; but a good Kaffir greyhound will sometimes pull down a young one, after a hard chase. Both old and young are good venison, and make excellent soup.

Soon after my arriyal amongst the Kaffirs, I received a warning from Mr. Brownlee, the Guika commissioner, to keep a sharp look-out, as an attempt might be made on my life; so, for some time this information gave me the pleasing excitement of looking well to my revolver and double-barreled gun before going to bed at night; and my interpreter and soldier-servant, who were not paid quite so well as I was, and did not see the fun of running the risk of having their throats cut, were also very particular not to be caught napping. However, with the exception of losing a rather valuable horse, which was stolen from my stable, within a few feet of where I was sleeping, I was always treated with great respect, and most hospitably received, fed and lodged, when visiting kraals in my district. The Kaffir is essentially hospitable. On a journey, any one may go to the kraal of a stranger, and will certainly receive the best of good treatment, both according to his rank and position. My first duty was organizing a police force, consisting of fifty or sixty Kaffirs, who received payment monthly. The chiefs, as I said before, were also paid, and received £8 a month as long as they behaved themselves—or, in other words, so long as they assisted me in carrying out the governor's policy and plans with regard to them and their people. I employed three men as messengers; one of them, Dacumbana, was the most perfect model of a man I ever saw. Poor fellow!—I had to give him seven years' transportation for cattle-lifting. I call it cattle-lifting, because the act is not considered immoral in the way that theft is; and I rather think that the word they use for it is very similar with the Highland term for the same deed. If you will permit me, I will read a short account

of a Kaffir messenger from Mr. Wood's new book, "*The Uncivilized Races of the World*," as it answers in every respect to the men who were in my service :

"These young fellows are marvellously swift of foot, speed reckoning as one of the chief characteristics of a distinguished soldier. They are possessed of enormous endurance. You may send a Kaffir for 60 to 70 miles with a letter, and he will prepare for the start as quietly as if he had only a journey of three or four miles to perform. First, he cuts a stick some three feet in length, splits the end, and fixes the letter in the cleft, so that he may carry the missive without damaging it. He then looks to his supply of snuff, and, should he happen to run short of that needful luxury, it will add wings to his feet if a little tobacco be presented to him, which he can make into snuff at his first halt. Taking an assagai or two with him, and perhaps a short stick with a knob at the end, called a 'kerry,' he will start off at a slinging mixture between a run and a trot, and will hold this pace almost without cessation. As to provision for the journey, he need not trouble himself about it, for he is sure to fall in with some hut, or perhaps a village, and is equally sure of obtaining both food and shelter. He steers his course almost as if by intuition, regardless of beaten tracks, and arrives at his destination with the same mysterious certainty that characterizes the migration of the swallow. It is not so easy to address a letter in Africa as in England ; and it is equally difficult to give directions for finding any particular home or village. If a chief should be on a visit, and asks his host to return the call, he simply tells him to go so many days in such a direction, and then turn for half a day in another direction, and so on. However, the Kaffir is quite satisfied with such indications, and is sure to attain his point. When the messenger has delivered his letter, he will squat down on the ground, take snuff, or smoke—probably both—and wait patiently for the answer. As a matter of course, refreshments will be supplied to him ; and when the answer is handed to him, he will return at the same pace. Europeans are always surprised when they first see a young Kaffir undertake the delivery of a letter at so great a distance, and still more at the wonderfully short time in which he will perform the journey. Nor are they less surprised when they find that he thinks himself very well paid with a shilling for his trouble. In point of fact, the journey is scarcely troublesome at all. He has everything his own way. There is plenty of snuff in his box,

tobacco wherewith to make more, the prospect of seeing a number of fellow-countrymen on the way and enjoying a conversation with them, the dignity of being a messenger from one white chief to another, and the certainty of obtaining a sum of money which will enable him to adorn himself with a splendid set of beads at the next dance. Barefoot though he be, he seldom complains of any hurt. From constant usage the soles of his feet are defended by a thickened skin as insensible as the sole of any boot, and combining equal toughness with perfect elasticity. He will walk with unconcern over sharp stones and thorns which would lame a European in the first step, and has the great advantage of possessing a pair of soles which never wear out, but actually become stronger by use. Mr. Baines, the African hunter, narrates a rather ludicrous instance of the insensibility of the Kaffir's foot. Passing by some Kaffir houses, he heard doleful outcries, and found that a young boy was undergoing a medical or surgical operation, whichever may be the proper name. The boy was suffering from some ailment, for which the medicine-man prescribed a thorough kneading with a hot substance. The plan by which the process was carried out was simple and ingenious. A Kaffir man held his foot over the fire until the sole became quite hot. The boy was then held firmly on the ground, while the man trampled on him with the heated foot, and kneaded him well with this curious improvement of medicine. When that foot was cold, he heated the other; and so proceeded till the operation was concluded. The heat of his sole was so great that the poor boy could scarcely endure the pain, and struggled hard to get free; but the operator felt no inconvenience whatever from subjecting his foot to such an ordeal. The dreaded 'stick' of the orientals would lose its terrors to a Kaffir, who would endure the bastinado with comparative impunity. Among these people the foot assumes its proper form and dimensions. The toes are not pinched together by shoes or boots, and reduced to the helpless state so common in this country. The foot is like that of an ancient statue, wide and full across the toes, each of which has its separate function, just as have the fingers of the hand, and each of which is equally capable of performing that function. Therefore, the gait of a Kaffir is perfection itself. He has not had his foot lifted high behind and depressed in front by high-heeled boots, nor the play of the instep checked by leathern bands."

Till my arrival, the power of the chief, supported by his counsellors, had been paramount in his tribe. He had the

power of life and death, and frequently exercised it in an arbitrary and reckless manner. The counsellors are themselves chieftains in a small way, and command the different subdivisions of the tribe; they were also paid by government. It is a very imposing sight to see a case tried before the chief, surrounded by his counsellors. He always dispenses justice seated on the ground in the cattle-kraal. If the case is an important one, it is argued before him at great length, and with much declamation and gesture on the part of the orator. The Kaffirs are great lawyers, and their reasoning faculties are powerful and active. They credit nothing, except witchcraft, that they are not fairly reasoned into. In a case of no importance, the chief decides it at once; or if it is frivolous and uninteresting, the plaintiff may be seen stating his case with great fluency, and nobody listening to him. When the case has been well argued, one or two of the counsellors speak, and give their opinions on its merits; and when the chief sees how public opinion inclines, he delivers judgment accordingly. The principal crime that came before me was cattle-lifting. When a farmer could trace his lost cattle across the border into Kaffirland, he handed the spoor or foot-prints over to one of my police, who, with most wonderful skill, would follow it with the certainty of a blood-hound, perhaps for miles, over hill and dale, till he, in his turn, could hand it over to the head-man, or chief of some village to which he had traced it, who was then answerable for it. The theft in this way was nearly always brought home to the right place. At any rate, the village at which the spoor was lost had to pay a fine of three-times the number of cattle stolen, two-thirds going to the farmer who had been robbed, and the remaining third I sold on the part of the government. Colonel Gawler, of the 73rd regiment, who was the political agent for the neighbouring district, with Macomo, the old scoundrel I mentioned in connection with the witchcraft story, was very successful in coercing the tribes under his supervision. He introduced flogging into his system of jurisprudence with great effect, and very much

to the astonishment of the recipients. It was a long time before they could quite understand why Gawler always gave them two dozen if they were found guilty of looking at a sheep over a colonial farmer's fence. They consequently stood in very great awe of him. However, one of his petty chiefs called on him one day in his war-paint, which he knew to be against the rule. Gawler saw him, and cautioned him not to do so again; but in a few days, being anxious, I suppose, to assert his independence, he returned again in his war-paint, as beautiful as before. Unfortunately for him, Colonel Gawler happened to be white-washing his hut at the time, and thought it a capital opportunity to read him a good practical lesson on disobedience to orders, by having him at once white-washed from head to foot, much to the chief's horror and indignation; but it is hard to kick against the pricks, and Gawler kept him in the hot sun until the wash was perfectly dry, before he allowed him to take his departure. As the black race have an idea that the devil is white, I have no doubt that the reappearance of the chief, white as the devil, must have caused much alarm and consternation among his loving wives and faithful followers.

The frontier farmer is a rough, independent pioneer of civilization, accustomed to look after himself, and fond of taking the law into his own hands when dealing with his Kaffir neighbours. He seldom lost an opportunity of a little rifle-practice at him when he ventured too near his farm. The farmers are principally English and Dutch, and hold their farms under a kind of military tenure, being obliged to furnish so many shots, or armed men, according to the acreage of their holdings, who are liable to be called out for military duty by their field-cornet, who is generally a farmer like themselves, and has the military command of a certain district. The Dutch (or the Boers) are generally a sober and industrious body of peasantry, traditionally religious, tracing their descent from the Huguenots and Dutch, some of the best

men that ever lived. They look upon themselves as the chosen people of God, who has given them the heathen for an inheritance; and consequently, they have always been very exacting and cruel in their treatment of the black race. Many of them live a curious gipsy wandering life in waggons, where they always have a rifle ready to fire at a Kaffir as soon as they see him. They take great pleasure in relating their warlike deeds, and glory in the bloody scenes in which they have themselves been the actors. I remember hearing two farmers bewailing the death of a friend, one Robert Pringle, and saying he was a great loss, "he was such an awful lucky shot at Kaffirs, was poor Robert Pringle." These itinerant Boers are very good people to meet, if you have a good horse or watch to dispose of, as they are always ready to buy, and willing to pay four or five-times the value of either. In company with a large Bible, which serves as a registry-office for their family, they usually carry all their money, sometimes amounting to four or five thousand pounds, about with them in the waggon. Money is no great object to them, and they have few demands on their purse, which no doubt accounts for their great liberality. They are free from the chief anxieties that attend a large family in civilized countries, and have no fear lest their offspring should not be able to find a subsistence. As a proof of their liberality, I may mention that in the *Illustrated London News* of the 22nd of last month, there is a sketch of a new Dutch church at Cradock, South Africa, which has just been completed at the cost of £27,000, subscribed by the Dutch Boers resident at that place. As I said before, the country at this time was in a very disturbed state. A prophet named Umlagaza had made his appearance, and was deluding the Kaffirs with most monstrous prophecies, and giving most outrageous orders, which the mass of the common people—being, like all savages, very superstitious—implicitly believed. He told them that (Hinza) Gaika and other dead patriarchs of the Kaffir race had appeared to him, and commanded him to issue an injunction to the people to

slaughter and destroy all their cattle and live stock, promising them, when the destruction of their property was complete, a general revival from the dead of all their ancestors, who would rise and join them to drive the English into the sea. The unfortunate people in many parts of the country performed their part of the contract. I need not say that the prophet signally failed in fulfilling his.

No more extraordinary delusion ever seized upon an unfortunate nation: the whole country for miles and miles stank with the smell of dead cattle rotting in the sun. I was able to prevent the slaughtering to a great extent in the district under my supervision. But there was the most dreadful suffering and famine throughout the country. It did good in one way, however, for a great exodus took place from Kaffirland into the colony, where labour was much wanted, and thousands of Kaffirs for the first time in their lives had to work for their daily bread. It was most painful to see them reduced to nothing but living skeletons, dragging their dying wives, and carrying on their backs emaciated, half-dead children, with their little household effects, towards the colony, many of them dropping by the way, never to rise again. The Kaffir has a particular horror of touching a dead body, and the wretched skeletons were left where they fell, till removed by nature's scavengers, the vultures and wild beasts. I had the greatest difficulty in finding people to remove some dead bodies from the immediate neighbourhood of my camp.

The aim of those who encouraged this extraordinary prophet—who, I believe, was a creature of Kraili's, the paramount chief of the Amakosa—was evidently to deprive the people of their own means of subsistence, and thereby to force on a desperate war with the English; but when the time came, the people were so exhausted with want that they had neither pluck nor strength left to undertake a rising. I may mention that these prophets play an important part in the religious system of the Kaffir tribes.

Their chief offices are: communicating with the spirits of the departed and ascertaining their wishes, counteracting spells thrown by witchcraft, and rain-making. A prophet must be descended from a prophet, though he need not be a prophet's son. He has to pass through a very long and arduous preparation for the office, and during his novitiate performs all kinds of insane feats. If he succeeds in his first attempts at prophecy, he will rise to unbounded power amongst his tribe. But should he fail, he is contemned as one whom the spirits of the departed think to be unworthy of their confidence. I believe the wretched impostor Umlagaza was put to a cruel death, which I have no doubt he richly deserved.

After this dreadful famine and destruction of property, the Kaffirs in British Kaffraria were pretty nearly, as our American cousins would say, "played out." And the prophet having done so much to further Sir George Gray's policy, he was not the style of man to let such an opportunity go by without profiting by it to the utmost. His former method of conciliation was now changed, and I was directed to select sites for villages throughout my country, and to insist on the scattered population being brought together, so as to be more under control. This I found a most difficult order to carry out, for, though there was no difficulty in finding good locations for any number of villages, the nature of the people, and their occupations as a pastoral race, did not admit of their living together in large numbers; and it was only by dint of threats to burn their huts, that I could induce them to move into the new villages. They were also to be taxed; but as they had no money, I fancy the tax-gatherer had rather a hard time of it. But how this part of Sir George's scheme turned out I cannot say, for, the Indian mutiny having broken out at this time, I had to proceed with my battalion to India, leaving, with much regret, this remarkable and interesting people, amongst whom I had succeeded in establishing very friendly relations.

I was particularly sorry to say good-bye to my kind friend Anta, and I think he quite reciprocated my feelings towards him. He knew that I always exerted myself for the benefit of his people, and always took his part when I could do so consistently with my duty to the government. And having now no further personal experiences of Kaffir life to relate, I beg to conclude with thanking you for the kind attention with which you have listened to me this evening.



