EREWHON

Samuel Butler

Erewhon

Erewhon

Samuel Butler

PREFACE

Having been enabled by the kindness of the public to get through an unusually large edition of “Erewhon” in a very short time, I have taken the opportunity of a second edition to make some necessary corrections, and to add a few passages where it struck me that they would be appropriately introduced; the passages are few, and it is my fixed intention never to touch the work again.

I may perhaps be allowed to say a word or two here in reference to “The Coming Race,” to the success of which book “Erewhon” has been very generally set down as due. This is a mistake, though a perfectly natural one. The fact is that “Erewhon” was finished, with the exception of the last twenty pages and a sentence or two inserted from time to time here and there throughout the book, before the first advertisement of “The Coming Race” appeared. A friend having called my attention to one of the first of these advertisements, and suggesting that it probably referred to a work of similar character to my own, I took “Erewhon” to a well-known firm of publishers on the 1st of May 1871, and left it in their hands for consideration. I then went abroad, and on learning that the publishers alluded to declined the MS., I let it alone for six or seven months, and, being in an out-of-the-way part of Italy, never saw a single review of “The Coming Race,” nor a copy of the work. On my return, I purposely avoided looking into it until I had sent back my last revises to the printer. Then I had much pleasure in reading it, but was indeed surprised at the many little points of similarity between the two books, in spite of their entire independence to one another.

I regret that reviewers have in some cases been inclined to treat the chapters on Machines as an attempt to reduce Mr. Darwin’s theory to an absurdity. Nothing could be further

from my intention, and few things would be more distasteful to me than any attempt to laugh at Mr. Darwin; but I must own that I have myself to thank for the misconception, for I felt sure that my intention would be missed, but preferred not to weaken the chapters by explanation, and knew very well that Mr. Darwin's theory would take no harm. The only question in my mind was how far I could afford to be misrepresented as laughing at that for which I have the most profound admiration. I am surprised, however, that the book at which such an example of the specious misuse of analogy would seem most naturally levelled should have occurred to no reviewer; neither shall I mention the name of the book here, though I should fancy that the hint given will suffice. I have been held by some whose opinions I respect to have denied men's responsibility for their actions. He who does this is an enemy who deserves no quarter. I should have imagined that I had been sufficiently explicit, but have made a few additions to the chapter on Malcontents, which will, I think, serve to render further mistake impossible. An anonymous correspondent (by the hand-writing presumably a clergyman) tells me that in quoting from the Latin grammar I should at any rate have done so correctly, and that I should have written "agricolas" instead of "agricolae". He added something about any boy in the fourth form, &c., &c., which I shall not quote, but which made me very uncomfortable. It may be said that I must have misquoted from design, from ignorance, or by a slip of the pen; but surely in these days it will be recognised as harsh to assign limits to the all-embracing boundlessness of truth, and it will be more reasonably assumed that each of the three possible causes of misquotation must have had its share in the apparent blunder. The art of writing things that shall sound right and yet be wrong has made so many reputations, and affords comfort to such a large number of readers, that I could not venture to neglect it; the Latin

grammar, however, is a subject on which some of the younger members of the community feel strongly, so I have now written “agricolas”. I have also parted with the word “infortuniam” (though not without regret), but have not dared to meddle with other similar inaccuracies.

For the inconsistencies in the book, and I am aware that there are not a few, I must ask the indulgence of the reader. The blame, however, lies chiefly with the Erewhonians themselves, for they were really a very difficult people to understand. The most glaring anomalies seemed to afford them no intellectual inconvenience; neither, provided they did not actually see the money dropping out of their pockets, nor suffer immediate physical pain, would they listen to any arguments as to the waste of money and happiness which their folly caused them. But this had an effect of which I have little reason to complain, for I was allowed almost to call them life-long self-deceivers to their faces, and they said it was quite true, but that it did not matter.

I must not conclude without expressing my most sincere thanks to my critics and to the public for the leniency and consideration with which they have treated my adventures.

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

My publisher wishes me to say a few words about the genesis of the work, a revised and enlarged edition of which he is herewith laying before the public. I therefore place on record as much as I can remember on this head after a lapse of more than thirty years.

The first part of “Erewhon” written was an article headed “Darwin among the Machines,” and signed Cellarius. It was written in the Upper Rangitata district of the Canterbury Province (as it then was) of New Zealand, and appeared at Christchurch in the Press Newspaper, June 13, 1863. A copy of this article is indexed under my books in the British Museum catalogue. In passing, I may say that the opening chapters of “Erewhon” were also drawn from the Upper Rangitata district, with such modifications as I found convenient.

A second article on the same subject as the one just referred to appeared in the Press shortly after the first, but I have no copy. It treated Machines from a different point of view, and was the basis of pp. 270-274 of the present edition of “Erewhon.” This view ultimately led me to the theory I put forward in “Life and Habit,” published in November 1877. I have put a bare outline of this theory (which I believe to be quite sound) into the mouth of an Erewhonian philosopher in Chapter XXVII. of this book.

In 1865 I rewrote and enlarged “Darwin among the Machines” for the Reasoner, a paper published in London by Mr. G. J. Holyoake. It appeared July 1, 1865, under the heading, “The Mechanical Creation,” and can be seen in the British Museum. I again rewrote and enlarged it, till it assumed the form in which it appeared in the first edition

of “Erewhon.”
The next part of “Erewhon” that I wrote was the “World of the Unborn,” a preliminary form of which was sent to Mr. Holyoake’s paper, but as I cannot find it among those copies of the Reasoner that are in the British Museum, I conclude that it was not accepted. I have, however, rather a strong fancy that it appeared in some London paper of the same character as the Reasoner, not very long after July 1, 1865, but I have no copy.
I also wrote about this time the substance of what ultimately became the Musical Banks, and the trial of a man for being in a consumption. These four detached papers were, I believe, all that was written of “Erewhon” before 1870. Between 1865 and 1870 I wrote hardly anything, being hopeful of attaining that success as a painter which it has not been vouchsafed me to attain, but in the autumn of 1870, just as I was beginning to get occasionally hung at Royal Academy exhibitions, my friend, the late Sir F. N. (then Mr.) Broome, suggested to me that I should add somewhat to the articles I had already written, and string them together into a book. I was rather fired by the idea, but as I only worked at the MS. on Sundays it was some months before I had completed it.
I see from my second Preface that I took the book to Messrs. Chapman & Hall May 1, 1871, and on their rejection of it, under the advice of one who has attained the highest rank among living writers, I let it sleep, till I took it to Mr. Trübner early in 1872. As regards its rejection by Messrs. Chapman & Hall, I believe their reader advised them quite wisely. They told me he reported that it was a philosophical work, little likely to be popular with a large circle of readers. I hope that if I had been their reader, and the book had been submitted to myself, I should have advised them to the same effect.
“ Erewhon” appeared with the last day or two of March 1872. I attribute its unlooked-for success mainly to two

early favourable reviews—the first in the Pall Mall Gazette of April 12, and the second in the Spectator of April 20. There was also another cause. I was complaining once to a friend that though “Erewhon” had met with such a warm reception, my subsequent books had been all of them practically still-born. He said, “You forget one charm that ‘Erewhon’ had, but which none of your other books can have.” I asked what? and was answered, “The sound of a new voice, and of an unknown voice.”

The first edition of “Erewhon” sold in about three weeks; I had not taken moulds, and as the demand was strong, it was set up again immediately. I made a few unimportant alterations and additions, and added a Preface, of which I cannot say that I am particularly proud, but an inexperienced writer with a head somewhat turned by unexpected success is not to be trusted with a preface. I made a few further very trifling alterations before moulds were taken, but since the summer of 1872, as new editions were from time to time wanted, they have been printed from stereos then made.

Having now, I fear, at too great length done what I was asked to do, I should like to add a few words on my own account. I am still fairly well satisfied with those parts of “Erewhon” that were repeatedly rewritten, but from those that had only a single writing I would gladly cut out some forty or fifty pages if I could.

This, however, may not be, for the copyright will probably expire in a little over twelve years. It was necessary, therefore, to revise the book throughout for literary inelegancies—of which I found many more than I had expected—and also to make such substantial additions as should secure a new lease of life—at any rate for the copyright. If, then, instead of cutting out, say fifty pages, I have been compelled to add about sixty invitâ Minervâ—the blame rests neither with my publisher nor with me, but with the copyright laws. Nevertheless I can assure the

reader that, though I have found it an irksome task to take up work which I thought I had got rid of thirty years ago, and much of which I am ashamed of, I have done my best to make the new matter savour so much of the better portions of the old, that none but the best critics shall perceive at what places the gaps of between thirty and forty years occur.

Lastly, if my readers note a considerable difference between the literary technique of “Erewhon” and that of “Erewhon Revisited,” I would remind them that, as I have just shown, “Erewhon” look something like ten years in writing, and even so was written with great difficulty, while “Erewhon Revisited” was written easily between November 1900 and the end of April 1901. There is no central idea underlying “Erewhon,” whereas the attempt to realise the effect of a single supposed great miracle dominates the whole of its successor. In “Erewhon” there was hardly any story, and little attempt to give life and individuality to the characters; I hope that in “Erewhon Revisited” both these defects have been in great measure avoided. “Erewhon” was not an organic whole, “Erewhon Revisited” may fairly claim to be one. Nevertheless, though in literary workmanship I do not doubt that this last-named book is an improvement on the first, I shall be agreeably surprised if I am not told that “Erewhon,” with all its faults, is the better reading of the two.

CHAPTER I: WASTE LANDS

If the reader will excuse me, I will say nothing of my antecedents, nor of the circumstances which led me to leave my native country; the narrative would be tedious to him and painful to myself. Suffice it, that when I left home it was with the intention of going to some new colony, and either finding, or even perhaps purchasing, waste crown land suitable for cattle or sheep farming, by which means I thought that I could better my fortunes more rapidly than in England.

It will be seen that I did not succeed in my design, and that however much I may have met with that was new and strange, I have been unable to reap any pecuniary advantage.

It is true, I imagine myself to have made a discovery which, if I can be the first to profit by it, will bring me a recompense beyond all money computation, and secure me a position such as has not been attained by more than some fifteen or sixteen persons, since the creation of the universe. But to this end I must possess myself of a considerable sum of money: neither do I know how to get it, except by interesting the public in my story, and inducing the charitable to come forward and assist me. With this hope I now publish my adventures; but I do so with great reluctance, for I fear that my story will be doubted unless I tell the whole of it; and yet I dare not do so, lest others with more means than mine should get the start of me. I prefer the risk of being doubted to that of being anticipated, and have therefore concealed my destination on leaving England, as also the point from which I began my more serious and difficult journey.

My chief consolation lies in the fact that truth bears its own impress, and that my story will carry conviction by reason

of the internal evidences for its accuracy. No one who is himself honest will doubt my being so.

I reached my destination in one of the last months of 1868, but I dare not mention the season, lest the reader should gather in which hemisphere I was. The colony was one which had not been opened up even to the most adventurous settlers for more than eight or nine years, having been previously uninhabited, save by a few tribes of savages who frequented the seaboard. The part known to Europeans consisted of a coast-line about eight hundred miles in length (affording three or four good harbours), and a tract of country extending inland for a space varying from two to three hundred miles, until it a reached the offshoots of an exceedingly lofty range of mountains, which could be seen from far out upon the plains, and were covered with perpetual snow. The coast was perfectly well known both north and south of the tract to which I have alluded, but in neither direction was there a single harbour for five hundred miles, and the mountains, which descended almost into the sea, were covered with thick timber, so that none would think of settling.

With this bay of land, however, the case was different. The harbours were sufficient; the country was timbered, but not too heavily; it was admirably suited for agriculture; it also contained millions on millions of acres of the most beautifully grassed country in the world, and of the best suited for all manner of sheep and cattle. The climate was temperate, and very healthy; there were no wild animals, nor were the natives dangerous, being few in number and of an intelligent tractable disposition.

It may be readily understood that when once Europeans set foot upon this territory they were not slow to take advantage of its capabilities. Sheep and cattle were introduced, and bred with extreme rapidity; men took up their 50,000 or 100,000 acres of country, going inland one behind the other, till in a few years there was not an acre

between the sea and the front ranges which was not taken up, and stations either for sheep or cattle were spotted about at intervals of some twenty or thirty miles over the whole country. The front ranges stopped the tide of squatters for some little time; it was thought that there was too much snow upon them for too many months in the year,—that the sheep would get lost, the ground being too difficult for shepherding,—that the expense of getting wool down to the ship's side would eat up the farmer's profits,—and that the grass was too rough and sour for sheep to thrive upon; but one after another determined to try the experiment, and it was wonderful how successfully it turned out. Men pushed farther and farther into the mountains, and found a very considerable tract inside the front range, between it and another which was loftier still, though even this was not the highest, the great snowy one which could be seen from out upon the plains. This second range, however, seemed to mark the extreme limits of pastoral country; and it was here, at a small and newly founded station, that I was received as a cadet, and soon regularly employed. I was then just twenty-two years old.

I was delighted with the country and the manner of life. It was my daily business to go up to the top of a certain high mountain, and down one of its spurs on to the flat, in order to make sure that no sheep had crossed their boundaries. I was to see the sheep, not necessarily close at hand, nor to get them in a single mob, but to see enough of them here and there to feel easy that nothing had gone wrong; this was no difficult matter, for there were not above eight hundred of them; and, being all breeding ewes, they were pretty quiet.

There were a good many sheep which I knew, as two or three black ewes, and a black lamb or two, and several others which had some distinguishing mark whereby I could tell them. I would try and see all these, and if they were all there, and the mob looked large enough, I might

rest assured that all was well. It is surprising how soon the eye becomes accustomed to missing twenty sheep out of two or three hundred. I had a telescope and a dog, and would take bread and meat and tobacco with me. Starting with early dawn, it would be night before I could complete my round; for the mountain over which I had to go was very high. In winter it was covered with snow, and the sheep needed no watching from above. If I were to see sheep dung or tracks going down on to the other side of the mountain (where there was a valley with a stream—a mere *cul de sac*), I was to follow them, and look out for sheep; but I never saw any, the sheep always descending on to their own side, partly from habit, and partly because there was abundance of good sweet feed, which had been burnt in the early spring, just before I came, and was now deliciously green and rich, while that on the other side had never been burnt, and was rank and coarse.

It was a monotonous life, but it was very healthy and one does not much mind anything when one is well. The country was the grandest that can be imagined. How often have I sat on the mountain side and watched the waving downs, with the two white specks of huts in the distance, and the little square of garden behind them; the paddock with a patch of bright green oats above the huts, and the yards and wool-sheds down on the flat below; all seen as through the wrong end of a telescope, so clear and brilliant was the air, or as upon a colossal model or map spread out beneath me. Beyond the downs was a plain, going down to a river of great size, on the farther side of which there were other high mountains, with the winter’s snow still not quite melted; up the river, which ran winding in many streams over a bed some two miles broad, I looked upon the second great chain, and could see a narrow gorge where the river retired and was lost. I knew that there was a range still farther back; but except from one place near the very top of my own mountain, no part of it was visible: from this

point, however, I saw, whenever there were no clouds, a single snow-clad peak, many miles away, and I should think about as high as any mountain in the world. Never shall I forget the utter loneliness of the prospect—only the little far-away homestead giving sign of human handiwork;—the vastness of mountain and plain, of river and sky; the marvellous atmospheric effects—sometimes black mountains against a white sky, and then again, after cold weather, white mountains against a black sky—sometimes seen through breaks and swirls of cloud—and sometimes, which was best of all, I went up my mountain in a fog, and then got above the mist; going higher and higher, I would look down upon a sea of whiteness, through which would be thrust innumerable mountain tops that looked like islands.

I am there now, as I write; I fancy that I can see the downs, the huts, the plain, and the river-bed—that torrent pathway of desolation, with its distant roar of waters. Oh, wonderful! wonderful! so lonely and so solemn, with the sad grey clouds above, and no sound save a lost lamb bleating upon the mountain side, as though its little heart were breaking. Then there comes some lean and withered old ewe, with deep gruff voice and unlovely aspect, trotting back from the seductive pasture; now she examines this gully, and now that, and now she stands listening with uplifted head, that she may hear the distant wailing and obey it. Aha! they see, and rush towards each other. Alas! they are both mistaken; the ewe is not the lamb’s ewe, they are neither kin nor kind to one another, and part in coldness. Each must cry louder, and wander farther yet; may luck be with them both that they may find their own at nightfall. But this is mere dreaming, and I must proceed.

I could not help speculating upon what might lie farther up the river and behind the second range. I had no money, but if I could only find workable country, I might stock it with borrowed capital, and consider myself a made man. True,

the range looked so vast, that there seemed little chance of getting a sufficient road through it or over it; but no one had yet explored it, and it is wonderful how one finds that one can make a path into all sorts of places (and even get a road for pack-horses), which from a distance appear inaccessible; the river was so great that it must drain an inner tract—at least I thought so; and though every one said it would be madness to attempt taking sheep farther inland, I knew that only three years ago the same cry had been raised against the country which my master's flock was now overrunning. I could not keep these thoughts out of my head as I would rest myself upon the mountain side; they haunted me as I went my daily rounds, and grew upon me from hour to hour, till I resolved that after shearing I would remain in doubt no longer, but saddle my horse, take as much provision with me as I could, and go and see for myself.

But over and above these thoughts came that of the great range itself. What was beyond it? Ah! who could say? There was no one in the whole world who had the smallest idea, save those who were themselves on the other side of it—if, indeed, there was any one at all. Could I hope to cross it? This would be the highest triumph that I could wish for; but it was too much to think of yet. I would try the nearer range, and see how far I could go. Even if I did not find country, might I not find gold, or diamonds, or copper, or silver? I would sometimes lie flat down to drink out of a stream, and could see little yellow specks among the sand; were these gold? People said no; but then people always said there was no gold until it was found to be abundant: there was plenty of slate and granite, which I had always understood to accompany gold; and even though it was not found in paying quantities here, it might be abundant in the main ranges. These thoughts filled my head, and I could not banish them.

CHAPTER II: IN THE WOOL-SHED

At last shearing came; and with the shearers there was an old native, whom they had nicknamed Chowbok—though, I believe, his real name was Kahabuka. He was a sort of chief of the natives, could speak a little English, and was a great favourite with the missionaries. He did not do any regular work with the shearers, but pretended to help in the yards, his real aim being to get the grog, which is always more freely circulated at shearing-time: he did not get much, for he was apt to be dangerous when drunk; and very little would make him so: still he did get it occasionally, and if one wanted to get anything out of him, it was the best bribe to offer him. I resolved to question him, and get as much information from him as I could. I did so. As long as I kept to questions about the nearer ranges, he was easy to get on with—he had never been there, but there were traditions among his tribe to the effect that there was no sheep-country, nothing, in fact, but stunted timber and a few river-bed flats. It was very difficult to reach; still there were passes: one of them up our own river, though not directly along the river-bed, the gorge of which was not practicable; he had never seen any one who had been there: was there to not enough on this side? But when I came to the main range, his manner changed at once. He became uneasy, and began to prevaricate and shuffle. In a very few minutes I could see that of this too there existed traditions in his tribe; but no efforts or coaxing could get a word from him about them. At last I hinted about grog, and presently he feigned consent: I gave it him; but as soon as he had drunk it he began shamming intoxication, and then went to sleep,

or pretended to do so, letting me kick him pretty hard and never budging.

I was angry, for I had to go without my own grog and had got nothing out of him; so the next day I determined that he should tell me before I gave him any, or get none at all.

Accordingly, when night came and the shearers had knocked off work and had their supper, I got my share of rum in a tin pannikin and made a sign to Chowbok to follow me to the wool-shed, which he willingly did, slipping out after me, and no one taking any notice of either of us. When we got down to the wool-shed we lit a tallow candle, and having stuck it in an old bottle we sat down upon the wool bales and began to smoke. A wool-shed is a roomy place, built somewhat on the same plan as a cathedral, with aisles on either side full of pens for the sheep, a great nave, at the upper end of which the shearers work, and a further space for wool sorters and packers. It always refreshed me with a semblance of antiquity (precious in a new country), though I very well knew that the oldest wool-shed in the settlement was not more than seven years old, while this was only two. Chowbok pretended to expect his grog at once, though we both of us knew very well what the other was after, and that we were each playing against the other, the one for grog the other for information.

We had a hard fight: for more than two hours he had tried to put me off with lies but had carried no conviction; during the whole time we had been morally wrestling with one another and had neither of us apparently gained the least advantage; at length, however, I had become sure that he would give in ultimately, and that with a little further patience I should get his story out of him. As upon a cold day in winter, when one has churned (as I had often had to do), and churned in vain, and the butter makes no sign of coming, at last one tells by the sound that the cream has gone to sleep, and then upon a sudden the butter comes, so I had churned at Chowbok until I perceived that he had

arrived, as it were, at the sleepy stage, and that with a continuance of steady quiet pressure the day was mine. On a sudden, without a word of warning, he rolled two bales of wool (his strength was very great) into the middle of the floor, and on the top of these he placed another crosswise; he snatched up an empty wool-pack, threw it like a mantle over his shoulders, jumped upon the uppermost bale, and sat upon it. In a moment his whole form was changed. His high shoulders dropped; he set his feet close together, heel to heel and toe to toe; he laid his arms and hands close alongside of his body, the palms following his thighs; he held his head high but quite straight, and his eyes stared right in front of him; but he frowned horribly, and assumed an expression of face that was positively fiendish. At the best of times Chowbok was very ugly, but he now exceeded all conceivable limits of the hideous. His mouth extended almost from ear to ear, grinning horribly and showing all his teeth; his eyes glared, though they remained quite fixed, and his forehead was contracted with a most malevolent scowl.

I am afraid my description will have conveyed only the ridiculous side of his appearance; but the ridiculous and the sublime are near, and the grotesque fiendishness of Chowbok’s face approached this last, if it did not reach it. I tried to be amused, but I felt a sort of creeping at the roots of my hair and over my whole body, as I looked and wondered what he could possibly be intending to signify. He continued thus for about a minute, sitting bolt upright, as stiff as a stone, and making this fearful face. Then there came from his lips a low moaning like the wind, rising and falling by infinitely small gradations till it became almost a shriek, from which it descended and died away; after that, he jumped down from the bale and held up the extended fingers of both his hands, as one who should say “Ten,” though I did not then understand him.

For myself I was open-mouthed with astonishment. Chowbok rolled the bales rapidly into their place, and stood before me shuddering as in great fear; horror was written upon his face—this time quite involuntarily—as though the natural panic of one who had committed an awful crime against unknown and superhuman agencies. He nodded his head and gibbered, and pointed repeatedly to the mountains. He would not touch the grog, but, after a few seconds he made a run through the wool-shed door into the moonlight; nor did he reappear till next day at dinner-time, when he turned up, looking very sheepish and abject in his civility towards myself.

Of his meaning I had no conception. How could I? All I could feel sure of was, that he had a meaning which was true and awful to himself. It was enough for me that I believed him to have given me the best he had and all he had. This kindled my imagination more than if he had told me intelligible stories by the hour together. I knew not what the great snowy ranges might conceal, but I could no longer doubt that it would be something well worth discovering.

I kept aloof from Chowbok for the next few days, and showed no desire to question him further; when I spoke to him I called him Kahabuka, which gratified him greatly: he seemed to have become afraid of me, and acted as one who was in my power. Having therefore made up my mind that I would begin exploring as soon as shearing was over, I thought it would be a good thing to take Chowbok with me; so I told him that I meant going to the nearer ranges for a few days' prospecting, and that he was to come too. I made him promises of nightly grog, and held out the chances of finding gold. I said nothing about the main range, for I knew it would frighten him. I would get him as far up our own river as I could, and trace it if possible to its source. I would then either go on by myself, if I felt my courage equal to the attempt, or return with Chowbok. So, as soon

as ever shearing was over and the wool sent off, I asked leave of absence, and obtained it. Also, I bought an old pack-horse and pack-saddle, so that I might take plenty of provisions, and blankets, and a small tent. I was to ride and find fords over the river; Chowbok was to follow and lead the pack-horse, which would also carry him over the fords. My master let me have tea and sugar, ship’s biscuits, tobacco, and salt mutton, with two or three bottles of good brandy; for, as the wool was now sent down, abundance of provisions would come up with the empty drays.

Everything being now ready, all the hands on the station turned out to see us off, and we started on our journey, not very long after the summer solstice of 1870.

CHAPTER III: UP THE RIVER

The first day we had an easy time, following up the great flats by the river side, which had already been twice burned, so that there was no dense undergrowth to check us, though the ground was often rough, and we had to go a good deal upon the riverbed. Towards nightfall we had made a matter of some five-and-twenty miles, and camped at the point where the river entered upon the gorge.

The weather was delightfully warm, considering that the valley in which we were encamped must have been at least two thousand feet above the level of the sea. The river-bed was here about a mile and a half broad and entirely covered with shingle over which the river ran in many winding channels, looking, when seen from above, like a tangled skein of ribbon, and glistening in the sun. We knew that it was liable to very sudden and heavy freshets; but even had we not known it, we could have seen it by the snags of trees, which must have been carried long distances, and by the mass of vegetable and mineral débris which was banked against their lower side, showing that at times the whole river-bed must be covered with a roaring torrent many feet in depth and of ungovernable fury. At present the river was low, there being but five or six streams, too deep and rapid for even a strong man to ford on foot, but to be crossed safely on horseback. On either side of it there were still a few acres of flat, which grew wider and wider down the river, till they became the large plains on which we looked from my master’s hut. Behind us rose the lowest spurs of the second range, leading abruptly to the range itself; and at a distance of half a mile began the gorge, where the river narrowed and became boisterous and terrible. The beauty of the scene cannot be conveyed in language. The one side of the valley was blue

with evening shadow, through which loomed forest and precipice, hillside and mountain top; and the other was still brilliant with the sunset gold. The wide and wasteful river with its ceaseless rushing—the beautiful water-birds too, which abounded upon the islets and were so tame that we could come close up to them—the ineffable purity of the air—the solemn peacefulness of the untrodden region—could there be a more delightful and exhilarating combination?

We set about making our camp, close to some large bush which came down from the mountains on to the flat, and tethered out our horses upon ground as free as we could find it from anything round which they might wind the rope and get themselves tied up. We dared not let them run loose, lest they might stray down the river home again. We then gathered wood and lit the fire. We filled a tin pannikin with water and set it against the hot ashes to boil. When the water boiled we threw in two or three large pinches of tea and let them brew.

We had caught half a dozen young ducks in the course of the day—an easy matter, for the old birds made such a fuss in attempting to decoy us away from them—pretending to be badly hurt as they say the plover does—that we could always find them by going about in the opposite direction to the old bird till we heard the young ones crying: then we ran them down, for they could not fly though they were nearly full grown. Chowbok plucked them a little and singed them a good deal. Then we cut them up and boiled them in another pannikin, and this completed our preparations.

When we had done supper it was quite dark. The silence and freshness of the night, the occasional sharp cry of the wood-hen, the ruddy glow of the fire, the subdued rushing of the river, the sombre forest, and the immediate foreground of our saddles packs and blankets, made a picture worthy of a Salvator Rosa or a Nicolas Poussin. I call it to mind and delight in it now, but I did not notice it at

the time. We next to never know when we are well off: but this cuts two ways,—for if we did, we should perhaps know better when we are ill off also; and I have sometimes thought that there are as many ignorant of the one as of the other. He who wrote, “O fortunatos nimium sua si bona nôrint agricolas,” might have written quite as truly, “O infortunatos nimium sua si mala nôrint”; and there are few of us who are not protected from the keenest pain by our inability to see what it is that we have done, what we are suffering, and what we truly are. Let us be grateful to the mirror for revealing to us our appearance only.

We found as soft a piece of ground as we could—though it was all stony—and having collected grass and so disposed of ourselves that we had a little hollow for our hip-bones, we strapped our blankets around us and went to sleep. Waking in the night I saw the stars overhead and the moonlight bright upon the mountains. The river was ever rushing; I heard one of our horses neigh to its companion, and was assured that they were still at hand; I had no care of mind or body, save that I had doubtless many difficulties to overcome; there came upon me a delicious sense of peace, a fulness of contentment which I do not believe can be felt by any but those who have spent days consecutively on horseback, or at any rate in the open air.

Next morning we found our last night’s tea-leaves frozen at the bottom of the pannikins, though it was not nearly the beginning of autumn; we breakfasted as we had supped, and were on our way by six o’clock. In half an hour we had entered the gorge, and turning round a corner we bade farewell to the last sight of my master’s country.

The gorge was narrow and precipitous; the river was now only a few yards wide, and roared and thundered against rocks of many tons in weight; the sound was deafening, for there was a great volume of water. We were two hours in making less than a mile, and that with danger, sometimes in the river and sometimes on the rock. There was that

damp black smell of rocks covered with slimy vegetation, as near some huge waterfall where spray is ever rising. The air was clammy and cold. I cannot conceive how our horses managed to keep their footing, especially the one with the pack, and I dreaded the having to return almost as much as going forward. I suppose this lasted three miles, but it was well midday when the gorge got a little wider, and a small stream came into it from a tributary valley. Farther progress up the main river was impossible, for the cliffs descended like walls; so we went up the side stream, Chowbok seeming to think that here must be the pass of which reports existed among his people. We now incurred less of actual danger but more fatigue, and it was only after infinite trouble, owing to the rocks and tangled vegetation, that we got ourselves and our horses upon the saddle from which this small stream descended; by that time clouds had descended upon us, and it was raining heavily. Moreover, it was six o'clock and we were tired out, having made perhaps six miles in twelve hours.

On the saddle there was some coarse grass which was in full seed, and therefore very nourishing for the horses; also abundance of anise and sow-thistle, of which they are extravagantly fond, so we turned them loose and prepared to camp. Everything was soaking wet and we were half-perished with cold; indeed we were very uncomfortable. There was brushwood about, but we could get no fire till we had shaved off the wet outside of some dead branches and filled our pockets with the dry inside chips. Having done this we managed to start a fire, nor did we allow it to go out when we had once started it; we pitched the tent and by nine o'clock were comparatively warm and dry. Next morning it was fine; we broke camp, and after advancing a short distance we found that, by descending over ground less difficult than yesterday's, we should come again upon the river-bed, which had opened out above the gorge; but it was plain at a glance that there was no available sheep