

53
loved by sitting long after dinner, and the late hours
which he extended on vigils. Bartley had long fallen
asleep and finding him dead to sense I took his sword
alas for what followed. Bugs to a degree beyond belief soon
fastened on me and I passed a sleepless night on the
floor in disgust & head-ache.

Tues. Feb 19th. Felt tired and stupid this morning, and
not a little feverish after the worry I received last night
from the Army of bugs which followed me in spite of my
precipitate retreat to the floor. The two Iron bed-steads were
full of them which shows that metal alone without cleanings
has no virtue. Gibbs sat in judgement on some drunken
men



56 Bartley hung out next hut and we were very cosy in all respects. I saw a flock of five brown Ibis. One known as Haddidaks, which I have long been anxious to see. From the description of the Sacred Ibis. I imagine this to have been the bird. indeed I find so many of the birds of Northern Africa here that I think it extremely probable.

For the first time too, I saw the brilliant Securus Cepensis in flower to day. I have frequently observed the shrub which is a half climber, but never the blossom in a wild state. It is singularly beautiful.

Poor Thompson received an imperative order to return to Churme at once, so his dinner will have to wait for some time. No bugs thank goodness.

Weddy Feb 20th. Wrote in my journal and cosed up Bartley for breakfast. Martin the Adjutant of the 2nd was on host and most civil.

It is curious to see every leg of every tall in families of water from the nuisance of ants which infest the Clay floors. They are a single red variety.

whole. The Spotty appearance was here most marked, but ²⁴
the rich tracts of some old burnings varied what would otherwise
-wise have been a rather monotonous coloring, and I
enjoyed being in a really hill country, not largely help
as elsewhere, where one main chain runs parallel to
a long stretch of lower land.

As for Monkeys we saw plenty in the Mi-
-mosas and Cape Willows lining the road. I also saw
one of the Green Scorpion lizards, like a blue Kingfisher
with a red bill. We were very thirsty and the flies
were troublesome to a degree, but we rested for ten minutes
under some shady banks while watering the horses &
then went on to Fort Beaufort.

The view of the well looking white Town &
Barracks was most inviting as we came suddenly
upon it in its valley, and the well built bridge over
the River looked civilized and English after the dreary ex-
-tent of uninhabited though beautiful country through
which we had passed.

The Inn seemed clean and comfortable
and

58 He prepared to force his way to King William's Town
unhappily instead his intention of making for Fort
Dare; deceived by this the Staffers mustered in strong
force thereabouts, leaving the real road watched only,
but still a sharp fight was maintained and more
than once the Colony was within an ace of losing ^{the} ~~the~~
governor. With him was Capt Davies who was sent on at a
moments notice to raise levies in Grahamstown &
march to his standard, from whence after a months delay
they succeeded in raising the blockade of Fort Cox just
as the Garrison were beginning to die of hunger having
eaten their last ration. How Montagu at Capetown
sounded the trumpet, roused the Buffs, and in 6
weeks brought a force of 1000 men to his Chief's aid
on the frontier, is a matter of history. But I must not
omit to mention the wholesale desertion of the Staff
Police, who carried off arms & horses. The hour after they
had brought Davies safe home from the first Patrol after
Sandilli. They were frightened by Montagu in the native

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Prophet who threatened to call down fire from heaven
unless they joined their comrades, and, save about 50
who remained faithful, they all reluctantly left their
white friends. He said to however kept a sharp look
out on the heavens, and the first indication of fire ^{coming}
down would have seen them on the road too.

Mrs Davies and her children were summoned
to Fort Cox at a moment's notice, and her husband
finding himself without men or horses walked up
with her too. Ten minutes afterwards a mounted Police-
man galloped in with the Capt's favorite horse, having
been shocked at seeing his old Chief reduced to disloyalty.
He is now a Sergeant bristling with medals, Good
Conduct pensions, and other proofs that a double
desertion may sometimes pay tolerably well.

Mrs Davies describes her month of anxiety in
Fort Cox as a terrible time indeed. She & Mrs Mackean
were the only two ladies there and reduced to the mere
bit of food daily, while the Skaffis from the mountains
round taunted the starving families and derided their
misery. Such times are coming again I fear.

60 On leaving Alice we returned to Fort Hale, waited for
some change, and at 11 1/2 started for Heiskamna Koch
rià Fort Cox. The road was uninteresting after the beau-
tiful scenery of the Chumie, but the constant presence
of the Hive-like Fingos huts with the Smudge looking in-
mates in all the naked finery of Tiger teeth necklaces
bronches and brass armlets gave a novel character to
the road sides. The Teloma however must not be forgotten
as in one part especially it blazed over all the trees re-
minding one of the poisonous Bois Immortel of Trinidad.

Bentley having confidently affirmed that he knew every
inch of the road, of course lost it the first opportunity,
however he chased a mounted Soldier, caught him up
near Middle Drift, a small town & port with on
one side, and we were soon again en route for Fort Cox.

The drift over the Heiskamna was steep, deep
and rapid, and the river itself more like an English
steam than a muddy South African one. Before long
we sighted Fort Cox cresting a hill at the entrance of a
a beautiful mountain valley, at once rich, wild, and



luxuriantly wooded. I have seldom seen a more striking situation, and the grey crags begetting over the hills just out of rich swelling woods and bushlands, reminded me much of Dellystrine.

Like Fort Armstrong, Fort Cox is almost surrounded by the river. A long & circuitous road led over the back to the quadrangle of strong stone cottages & walls, and on entering and enquiring for Mr Croome the Sub in charge, we found him out and formally took possession of his quarters, went to eating his bread & cheese, using his Eau de Cologne, and reading his books. The soldiers were playing at a mysterious game

62 called Long Bullet as we passed out, which as far as I could see, consists in throwing an Iron Ball of great weight into a crowd of friends and whoever succeeds in breaking most legs, wins of course.

From Fort Cox to Heiskanma Hoek. 12 miles. The ride was magnificently beautiful. We passed the Mission Station of Burnt or Burnis Hill along a bold ridge over the river and then entered the rich and beautiful Linia Valley, the most lovely thing in Kaffraria.

We crossed and recrossed the Heiskanma frequently, also the Wolfe or Simuka River, and leaving the fine valley of the Wolfe to our left, with the bold heights of Seenkloof Mountain & Port Macdonald, entered the famous Boma Pass and once more rejoined the N. River. The Boma Pass is a military road underneath a bridge of Cliff & wood, and over the river which winds in its folds beneath. Some points of view are singularly beautiful but it is a beauty derived more from luxuriance of vegetation and the presence of water than from any grandeur.

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