

"Bushman" notes

[The Willman?]

1. Mr. v.d. Merwe of Koppies Kraal, Calvinia district, told me that one of his earliest recollections was seeing his father go out with two other Boers to shoot an old Bushman - Piet Tachtpan. The Bushman had entrenched himself in a hole he had dug. The middle Boer advanced holding a large shield of double oxhide. Under cover of this the other two - one at each side, advanced with their rifles. The Bushman lying on his back, shot his arrows, using both feet and hands to stretch his bow. Some of his arrows travelled nearly a hundred yards. When they shot him they found he had cut through the skin of his finger tips with the constant pulling of his bowstring. This Bushman had hit Mr. v.d. Merwe's uncle with one of his poisoned arrows, but it had struck his head through the hair and Mr. v.d. Merwe recovered. Mr. v.d. Merwe told me a Kaffir was a human being but a Bushman was not quite one. He was untameable. The lesson he gave impressed me from the vivid manner in which he expressed it. He said, when a Bushman came into a house his eyes were always glancing quickly around like a wild animal in a trap.
2. Mr. v.d. Merwe of Spitzkop, Calvinia, told me there had been a Bushman graveyard on his farm, but it had been plundered some years before.
3. Mr. Nel of Graaustbosch Kolk, Calvinia, told me, some three hours off from his house there was a ridge round the edges of which he had got a good many ostrich eggs which the Bushmen had used for storing water. I saw some of the shells but they were broken. He told me there were some Bushman skeletons also near the place.
4. Mr. v.d. Ahee of Murraysburg district, has an old stone on

his farm commemorating the death of three Kaffir servants who were killed by Bushmen with their poisoned arrows.

5. Mr van Heerden of Rustenburg, Murraysburg, had an old Bushman head on his farm. The old man looked a genuine Bushman with his wrinkled face and small stature. He looked decrepit and wore his clothing, rags, huddled in a bundle round his head and shoulders, his legs were bare. Though he looked decrepit, Mr van Heerden said that if he started to run, neither of us could catch him among the Kopies. He never talked to the other servants who were afraid of him, but muttered to himself. He came to the house once a week for his rations. Tobacco and Dagga he could not do without. Mr van Heerden who was held correct had been lately engaged in taking the ~~census~~ census, to the query about religion he thought the correct answer for this old man was that he worshipped "Dagga".
6. Mrs Greig of Murraysburg told me when she was a little girl on a farm, one day while she was out on a Kopeje, about half a mile from the house, three little men suddenly stood round her. They took her head but did her no harm. Her people were much concerned when they heard it.
7. Mrs du Toit of Cordato Kruis, Victoria West, had a little Bushman pie of about eight which the mother had given to her. The child was very small, it used to sit on the floor at meal time, just behind the chair of Mrs du Toit's little daughter, also about eight, and the daughter would pass it down bits of bread and meat just as to a pet dog. The little pie was well kept and evidently happy tho' with a very solemn expression. Some time afterwards I was at the farm Garat Kolk in Carnarvon, and there I saw a little pie the image of the Bushman child at Cordato Kruis. On mentioning this

I learned that Mrs. du Toit was a sister of the lady at Garst Kolk and had been born there. Their father had been good always to this family of Bushmen and the mother had promised each of the sisters a child. She knew they would treat them well, and in their journeyings it seemed that young children were hard to look after.

8. About three months before my visit to Vostang in 1904, Mr. Vos had discovered a Bushman's grave. There was a skeleton in a sitting position, bow and arrows and some pottery. These remains had been brought into the house. The old farmer however, was much disturbed over this. He feared a spook would come about the house and he gave orders that the things were to be broken and thrown away.
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