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On The South African Frontier



Synopsis

This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1899 edition. Excerpt: ...path we saw three sable antelopes grazing in a meadow. They ran away when they smelled us. Then we came through the bush to this stream of water, where Umtanitchani took a drink with his hands and I lay down on my belly and took a drink; then Umtanitchani took another drink, after which we both peeled bark off some umsassa bushes to make a rope. Then we saw you come down the opposite bank, and that is all! " This finished, the spokesman of the second party similarly narrates all his experiences since arising in the morning, and the greeting is ended. After taking a little snuff and then smoking daka together, they are ready to pass on. Time is no object with the African aborigines. Their marriage customs are likewise peculiar. The father of a girl receives payment for her in cows. Ten is the number established by time-honored usage. Owing, however, to scarcity of kine, due to Matabele raids in former years, a far smaller number, with other contributions, is now sufficient. Frequently only one cow and a few goats, or even a gun and some blankets, are given. These articles are received "on account," so to speak, with the understanding that more are to be presented subsequently; but once a Mashona gets possession of his wife it is highly improbable that the remainder is ever paid, unless, perchance, the wife should intrigue with her relatives and flee to the home of her father, to be held as a hostage until the rest of the lawful debt or a good portion thereof be forthcoming. A woman has no voice in the choosing of a partner, but must go with the man to whom her father sells her, or, in other words, betroths her. Girls, as a rule, are betrothed very young, even when babes, and not infrequently they are bargained for before they are born. Often,...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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Very entertaining account of the adventures of a young American sent by the Smithsonian to South Africa to collect natural history and ethnographic specimens for their institution. While there he gets involved in the Matabele war, dabbles in prospecting looking for gold, does quite a bit of hunting and all told in a very easy-to-read, casual style that I found refreshing after reading other "stuffy" works from the same time period. The Negro Universities Press edition has two fold-in maps and is fully illustrated, recommended

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