

CHAPTER XX.

Hard frost. Account of Sister Schmitt's school. Visit to the Governor at the Grootte Post. Destruction of trees by Hottentots. Their diligence at work among the rocks. Ants' nests, used as ovens. Quarry. Aloe garden destroyed. Cuytges, salamanders, and serpents found. Foundation of the new church. Zaccheus Deba, a Caffre from Gnadenthal. Journey to Capetown. Reflections on the enjoyment of earthly comforts. Mr. Sieurvogel. Capetown dogs. Rev. Dr. Jones, Senior chaplain. Apologies not attended to. Mr. Slabbert's waggon and ten horses. Yellow finches. Cameleons. Elephant-stones. Moy-Mack's Revier. Farewell-discourse. Laying the foundation-stone of the new church. Mr. Schroeder. Dacha, a poisonous plant.

AUGUST 1st. It had frozen very hard last night, and the ice was in some places nearly an inch thick. The air, however, was perfectly clear, and the sun shone warm. As I was making a sketch of the rocks behind the stables, Sister Schmitt's school-girls came towards me, one carrying a plate, with a piece of ice in it, fast melting in the sun. They asked me, whether the water, flowing from the ice, might be drank with safety, as they thought, that it was poisonous. I gave them some information on the subject, and when I described the quantity and thickness of the ice in the northern regions, and told them of the immense ice-mountains and fields, floating in the ocean, I perceived, by their astonished looks, that, had they not thought one of their teachers incapable of falsehood or exaggeration, they would have suspected me of sporting with their credulity.

These children are from ten to fourteen years old, and instructed, out of pure charity, by Sister Schmitt, in satten-stich, tambour, and plain work. It is surprising, with what neatness they have learnt

to execute it. When Sister Schmitt first arrived at Groenekloof, and saw the wretched state of most of the Hottentot children, it exceedingly distressed her, and having perceived, that most of the Hottentot women are good seamstresses, and teach their girls early the use of the needle, it occurred to her mind, that they might soon learn to work *sattin-stich*, which she herself perfectly well understood. She therefore tried the experiment with one or two, and succeeding, added more to the number. By these means, she taught the children to earn their own bread, and even to afford relief to their poor parents. Her countrywoman, Sister Leitner, has done the same at Gnadenthal.

Being invited to dine with the Governor at the Groote Post, I met there Captain Cloete, Mr. Bentinck, and Mr. Ward. We were spending the afternoon very pleasantly, when a dispatch announced to his Excellency the death of his brother at Lisbon. Some time after he had left the room, he sent the letter for our perusal. The mournful news was heard by the company with sincere sympathy, and we spent the remainder of the day in silence and reading.

2d. While I was waiting for my horse, to return to Groenekloof, the Governor, coming into the room, desired me to spend the day with him. I had much conversation with his Excellency, concerning various subjects, and thought my time not unprofitably spent. He kindly acceded to some proposals, laid before him, tending to remove unpleasant disagreements between neighbours.

During the forenoon, Mr. Croucher, by his orders, showed me a new plough, made of cast iron, worked with only two horses, or four, if more depth of furrows is required, without holding the shafts. He wished me to recommend it to our missionaries. In the evening, I took a solitary walk to the hills, and went up to some rocks, or large fragments of granite. They form a good foreground to a view of the Groote Post, lying in the plain. The Table-Mountain and its companions adorn the horizon.

3d. I set out early, and was followed by the Governor, who, after breakfast, passed through Groenekloof, on his return to Capetown.

He was in better health and spirits. I had caught a violent cold, and felt unwell. But a packet of letters from England made me forget all indisposition.

5th. In the afternoon, visiting some Hottentot families, I observed an unfinished house, the walls of stone, and well built, and inquired into the reason of its being left in that state, when I found, that it was owing to a want of wood for the doors, roof, and furniture. This led to an explanation respecting the possession of the wood, and prevented the poor people appealing to the landdrost against the overseer, who had very properly prohibited their cutting wood at their pleasure, by which, formerly, a great many trees have been destroyed. Till better instructed, the Hottentots have no thought beyond the present moment, and being too lazy to stoop and apply their axe to the bottom of the stem, they chop it off as high as they can stand to it, besides maiming others by cutting off their branches, or tops, without any attention to the growth of the tree. The general scarcity of wood makes it therefore highly necessary to prevent such mischief, and as they may have what wood they want, to build their huts, if they only apply to the overseer, there is no hardship in their asking for it. They were satisfied, when Brother Schmitt explained the matter to them.

In the evening, the family met to a consultation respecting the commencement of the building of the new church, and the means of providing food and dwelling for any additional hands.

6th. To-day we began to carry stones from the rocks behind the stables, to lay the foundation of the church, and I was much pleased to see the zeal and spirit, with which the Hottentots went to work. There was indeed a good deal of amusement connected with it, which, with them, is a great stimulus to exertion. Many very large stones were dislodged, and dragged to the building, on a strong sledge, by ten oxen. In separating two parts of an immense block, which, by some violence not accounted for, had a crack right through the middle, a nest of ants of the largest size, was laid open. They

were from half, to near three quarters of an inch long. Almost every stone seemed to afford protection to larger or smaller ants. They differed from those, which raise solid nests of clay in all parts of the wilderness, in shape like a baker's oven, and used for that purpose in the interior. The Caffres, when first permitted to settle at Gnadenthal, before they could build ovens, according to the custom of their country, availed themselves of these tumuli, and having expelled or destroyed the inhabitants by fire and smoke, scooped them out hollow, leaving a crust of a few inches in thickness, and used them for baking, putting in three loaves at a time. The clay, of which the nests are formed, is so well prepared by these industrious insects, that it is used for the floors of rooms, both by Hottentots and farmers.

7th. The people continued their work at the stones as long as the weather remained fine, and I frequently accompanied Brother Schmitt, when he attended them. No European labourers could work with greater diligence and effect. We had engaged a Dambra Hottentot, called Ephraim, to work in a quarry at the top of the eminence, where the granite was split into irregular strata, nearly in a perpendicular direction. The quarry yielded good stone for building walls. The large masses above ground, were of a harder texture, than the stones under the surface. Thin layers of schistus cleaved to some part of the latter. Ephraim distinguished himself by his steadiness and persevering diligence. The Dambras differ much in their manners from the Hottentots of this country, they are of a more swarthy complexion, and have features better formed.

When a large stone was dislodged, I generally met with something deserving attention. To-day I saw, for the first time, that singular animal, called by the Hottentots, the mountain-salamander. It is shaped like a lizard, but broader, seven or eight inches long, and scaly. The scales on the tail are pointed, and stand off from the body, but whether generally, or only in fright or anger, I cannot tell. A nest of young cuytges was uncovered. This is a small species of

newt or asker; its bite is said to be very venomous, and as it lodges in old thatch, the Hottentots are very cautious in taking down an old roof. Under some of the stones we found caterpillars, black and hairy.

By the operation of grubbing up, and removing these stones, which may have lain there since the deluge, many flowers, much beautiful shrubbery, and a great quantity of aloes, were destroyed. I defended them as long as I could, but was obliged to submit to the necessity of using the stones. The ground was strewed with flowers and bulbs, shattered aloe-leaves and beautiful plants, but I was assured, for my comfort, that, after a short rest, the earth would bring forth abundantly, and the aloes and fahlblar again adorn the spot. By far the greater part of the masses of stone, being beyond the power of man to move, they still present a singular and beautiful group of rocks, and the removal of the smaller fragments, laying the larger masses more open, gave them more picturesque dignity.

9th. Brother Bonatz, after the meeting for instruction, having proposed to the men, that they should begin to dig the foundation of the church, they immediately fell to work, with great alacrity.

The ground opened easily, but some remnants of old walls were discovered, the farm-house belonging to the Dutch Company having occupied this spot, previous to the building of the present dwelling-house. At the west corner, water appeared, not proceeding from a spring, but oozing out of a sandy stratum. Beneath the sand was a layer of a kind of pipe-clay, and to this we were obliged to penetrate, to get a firm foundation. In the afternoon, I visited several families in the village.

10th, After breakfast, I went to the people at work among the rocks. Between two large flat stones, one lying on the other, leaving a small space between them, we discovered the nest of the serpent, called here, cobra di capella. A Hottentot lad, who had fortified himself against the poison of a serpent's bite, was called, and took out three young ones. One of them I put into a bottle

of brandy. We had scarcely disposed of them, before a bergadder made his appearance. It was seized by the neck, and sent after the cobra di capella, into the bottle. Under the same stone, a scorpion, and several large spiders were found. In the evening, Ephraim killed and sent me a young Nachtschlange, or night-serpent, beautifully marked with yellow, vermilion, and dark-blue rings.

11th. Many Hottentots attended the public-service. Brother Schmitt delivered an animated discourse on the gospel of the day; and in his prayer commended the building of the new church, and all who take share in it, to the blessing and protection of our Heavenly Father.

12th. Mr. Melville surprised us very agreeably, by his unexpected arrival. I delivered to him the Governor's order, to make a diagram of this place, by which I had the satisfaction to detain him. To-day, a Caffre, Zaccheus Deba, arrived here from Gnadenenthal, with letters and journals. The letters from our missionaries described the impression made upon the Hottentots, by the departure of their beloved Father Schwinn, as very great. They still wept tears of remorse, when they called to mind his affectionate zeal and admonitions, and his tender concern for the salvation of their souls, and for their improvement in all things that adorn the Christian character. We hope that the effect of this contrition will be salutary and permanent.

13th. Being a memorial-day in the Church of the United Brethren, it was celebrated with due solemnity. At nine we met in the chapel. I had never seen this place so well filled, nor a more attentive auditory. Every bench was crowded, and the children sat on the ground. Brother Schmitt delivered a suitable discourse, in which he introduced a most luminous, and even to Hottentots, intelligible, account of the event, which gave rise to this festival. (*See Crantz's History of the Brethren. Part I. p. 115.*)

Mr. and Mrs. Slabbert were present, on their return from the Cape, and expressed great satisfaction and astonishment at the devout behaviour of the congregation. He informed us, that the sail-

ing of the Brilliant was put off till the 7th of September; a delay, which I then much regretted.

In the evening, the Holy Communion was administered, the Missionaries having previously met, to encourage each other to brotherly love, and that union of spirit, without which, the best intentions, plans, and talents, remain unprofitable in the service of God; for only "where brethren dwell together in unity, there the Lord commandeth his blessing."

14th. In the evening, the Caffre, Zaccheus Deba, came into my room, to take the letters I had written to Gnadenthal. One object he had in view, in offering himself to go as messenger to Groenekloof, was to see *me* once more, and to tell me, that his wife had departed this life, rejoicing in God her Saviour. He added, that before her departure, she had particularly requested to be remembered to me, with that assurance, that she had continued to pray for me, that the Lord would bless me, and grant me a safe passage to England. I felt thankful for the prayers of this worthy woman, whom I had frequently seen, and conversed with, and knew as a very exemplary character. The mild, humble deportment of Zaccheus, was particularly noticed by a gentleman present.

15th. I accompanied Mr. Melville to Capetown. We proceeded gently, engaged in pleasant conversation, and were seven hours on the road. At Mr. Melville's house, we found two gentlemen, just arrived from Van Diemen's Land. They gave an entertaining account of that earthly paradise.

It would be tedious to relate, in order, all the various occupations and visits, by which my time was employed, during my present stay at Capetown. I will, therefore, only observe, that the society of my friends, the Disandt family, Mr. Hancke, Mr. Poleman, and the reverend Mr. Hesse, proved a source of great enjoyment to my mind.

18th. I attended divine-worship, at the Lutheran church. The organist played more soberly than usual, but could not refrain from performing a very brilliant rondo, from one of Haydn's

symphonies, when the service was over. I felt the impropriety of introducing it into the church, but could not help admiring the very great dexterity, with which he executed the most difficult passages, and made them tell on the organ. I was displeased with myself, for not being more displeased with him.

With a very highly esteemed friend, I had a conversation on several subjects, which made a deep impression upon me. Being rather of an anxious turn of mind, he expressed surprise at the confidence and cheerfulness of some Christians. He related, that he was educated in the celebrated Paedagogium at Halle in Saxony, where, contrary to the intention of its founders, he and others were taught to entertain scruples concerning the principal doctrines of Christianity, and to explain away those scriptures, which the *Neologen*, or Socinians and Deists, found to bear against their favourite opinions. But as he could find no comfort and peace in the new doctrines of self-enlightened men, he began well to consider those, which they had rejected, and, by slow degrees, seemed to obtain more faith in them, and to consider them as the basis of all sound religion. He wished, however, to know my views of that real and convincing experience of the efficacy of faith in Jesus, and the atonement made for sin, which a true believer ought to possess. I gave him a plain and faithful account of the manner, in which, "it pleased God to reveal his Son in me," though naturally averse to religion, falsely supposing, that it tended to check all cheerfulness, and the enjoyment of the pleasures of this life, whereas I now knew, that the only way to live happy, and innocently to enjoy that good, which God has left to us in this world, as "a witness for himself," for our use, improvement, and comfort, was to make sure, that He is our Father, Friend, and Deliverer from the curse and punishment of sin, as declared in the Gospel.

My friend observed, that ever since he had become acquainted with me, he had wondered, how a man of so lively a disposition, could belong to a community so recluse and religious, as that of the Church of the Brethren, in which there were so many checks,

by particular rules and regulations, against the ways of the world, and its pleasures and amusements. He added, however, that, in general, he had always found those members of our Church, with whom he had become acquainted, lively and cheerful people, and attentive to the innocent means of making their lives and dwellings on earth comfortable. This led to a consideration of the effects of true conversion of heart, when a man is turned from the love of the world and sin to his God and Saviour, and has his "conversation in heaven." To him it is no act of painful self-denial, to avoid the things that lead from God, and no punishment, to be excluded from them. Surely no one has more reason to be happy and contented, than the man who expects, that better things than those, which he now possesses, will shortly be his portion: he uses the world, yet as not abusing or cleaving to it; and enjoys all the gifts of his Creator with a thankful heart. But I felt, that I ought to take his remark as a kind admonition, to beware, lest too much vivacity and attention to objects, which afford pleasure to the mind, and engage the activity of the intellectual part of man, though sinless in themselves, should sometimes lead to forgetfulness of higher and more important spiritual concerns.

With his Excellency the Governor, I had an opportunity of conversing on some arrangements at Groenekloof, by which real service was done to the Mission. From Colonel Bird, I experienced the same kindness,

Brother Schmitt found Mr. Sieurvogel, a timber-merchant, disposed most honourably to abide by a verbal agreement respecting the price of the timber, wanted for the building of the church at Groenekloof, though by the loss of his vessel, the Young Phoenix, in the late storm, timber had risen considerably in price. But a conscientious man needs no legal tie, to bind him to a promise.

For several nights I was much disturbed in my sleep by the continual barking and howling of dogs in the street, about which the inhabitants seem not to trouble themselves. A large number of these animals have no masters, but find food, shelter, and

places to litter in, wherever they can. The people go and pick out such puppies as they think will turn out well, and leave the rest. The heavy rain may have been troublesome to these stray-dogs, and the cause of their nightly vociferations.

Before I left Capetown, I visited the Rev. Mr. Thom, employed by the Missionary Society in London, with whom I had much friendly conversation, concerning the state of their, and our Missions. I also waited upon the Senior Chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Jones, who returned to the Cape some time ago. His services to the colony have been highly beneficial, especially as it regards the improvement of schools. To his benevolent exertions, we owe the building of the school-house at Gnadenthal, and the introduction of Dr. Bell's plan of teaching, as far as it is practicable among Hottentot children.

Brother Schmitt engaged a master-builder, Mr. Schroeder, to undertake the building of the new church at Groenekloof, who advised us to make as many bricks as we could.

After a very pleasant visit, having transacted all our business with satisfaction, we took leave of our worthy friend and hospitable hostess, Mrs. Disandt, and returned on the

22d to Groenekloof, with Mr. Slabbert, in his travelling waggon, he driving ten horses in hand. The four nearest to the waggon are guided by a servant with reins, while his master, sitting beside him on the box, governs the other six, by a dexterous use of the long whip.

23d. I was engaged with packing, intending to send all our baggage on board the Brilliant, which, as the Captain informed us, would be ready to sail by the 5th of September. The Hottentots had not forgotten the bottle of serpents, but brought me a young puffadder, and three cameleons. The cameleons were found in the nest of a yellow finch. The poplar-wood at Groenekloof abounds with these nests. They are like bags, suspended from the ends of the smaller branches of trees, to render them secure against serpents and vermin, but the cameleons had contrived to



Stallor sculp.

Drawn by R. Cording, from a Sketch by C. Labroze.

MISSIONARY SETTLEMENT AT GROENEKLOOF.

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dislodge the poor birds, and sieze upon the nest. The lateness of the season prevented my taking any animals alive. My friends had provided for me several tortoises, cameleons, fresh water turtles, (a small turtle about four inches square), and even a young baboon.

25th. In the afternoon the whole family, accompanied by Mr. Melville, visited the Oliphants' Klippen, (Elephants' stones), near the Klaberfalg, Mr. Duckett's farm. They are detached masses of granite, erect, or in a leaning posture, situated in a valley, as if they had been thrown from an adjoining hill, or rather, left there by the washing away of the ground, when the valley was formed. Every eminence in this neighbourhood also, is crowned with a collection of stones, forming a kind of rock among the bushes. Many beautiful flowers were now beginning to peep out, as the spring was fast advancing.

26th. Mr. Melville's waggon conveyed all my heavy baggage to Capetown. In the afternoon, Brother Bonatz accompanied me on a visit to that part of the settlement, called Moy Mack's Revier, which lies to the right of the Cape road, on entering the farm. A small stream passes through it, crosses the road, and, skirting the little wood, helps to irrigate the grounds in that part of the village under the hill.

The cottages are of the meaner kind: the gardens slope down towards the brook: the soil is a dry sand, and will require much culture, before it is turned into a fruitful mould. Peter, a Dambra Hottentot, has the best garden, and is an active man. The people seemed much pleased with our visit. We then went to the upper row of cottages, to the left of the road, and there saw a woman upwards of an hundred years old. Sister Schmitt, who had joined us, accosted her, but she appeared quite stupid. Her children and grand-children live with her. She had been an inhabitant for six years, but seemed perfectly indifferent about religion. Of late, however, she sometimes asked a person, in

whom she had confidence, whether it were still possible for her to be saved.

The people now begin to dig in their grounds, and in a short time they will look well. But for want of hedges, they cannot prevent their neighbours' cattle from entering their grounds, which sometimes produces great uneasiness. Since by the Governor's kindness, the boundary is now defined, and there need be no more contention about the wood, I endeavoured to impress upon the people the necessity of attending to the making of hedges, and that plantations should be promoted as much as possible, yet under proper regulations, that there may be no useless waste, or even destruction of the young trees, by improper treatment. Mr. Croucher, who visited us about this time, gave the best advice, being well versed in the management of woods.

27th. We visited that part of the village, which we could not reach yesterday, for the inhabitants would have been greatly disappointed and grieved, if I had not called at every house and hut. In the evening, a couple were married at the church.

30th. Our friend, Mr. Slabbert, returning from the Cape, brought with him the master-builder, Mr. Schroeder. With the latter, Mr. Melville and I conferred about the plan of the new church. In the valley to the north of the farm, we sought and found brick-earth, and on examination of the premises, Mr. Schroeder declared, to our great satisfaction, that every facility existed here within reach: good clay for bricks, a sufficient quantity of stone, water, and the right sort of sand. He also pronounced the pipe-clay under the sand, to be a good foundation.

I read my farewell-address this evening to a crowded auditory. After I had finished, Brother Bonatz took the chair; and, after making some observations on my visit and voyage, concluded with prayer, commending me and his son Adolph to the protection and blessing of the Lord.

31st. This was the day appointed for laying the foundation-stone of the new church. The ceremony took place at 10 A. M. Early in the morning, a number of Hottentots had conveyed the stone from the hill to the spot. They delighted in the work, and there was no want of hands. The stone was of a triangular shape, its south-side, four feet five inches; east-side, three feet six inches; north-east side, five feet six inches; and one foot four inches in thickness. A square hole had been punched into it, to hold the leaden box, with the writing.

The service was conducted in the following manner: Brother Schmitt opened it with that hymn; *Sing hallelujah, honour, praise, &c.* and then addressed the congregation in a suitable discourse. The people stood, both about the ditch, and within the space enclosed. He then read the texts of Scripture appointed for the day: “*Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Luke x. 10. Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works, which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Ps. xl. 5.*” Brother Fritsch read the Dutch translation of the contents of the parchment, which he held in his hand, and having delivered it to me, I placed it in the leaden box; Brother Stein deposited it in the foundation-stone. Mr. Schroeder followed, put a flat stone over it, and gave a stroke upon it with a mallet. Each of us followed, repeating the stroke, as is usually done on such occasions. A verse being sung, Brother Bonatz, kneeling upon the stone, offered up a prayer. The congregation then sung that hymn, *Now let us praise the Lord, &c.* and the blessing being pronounced, the assembly dispersed.

It was a solemn and delightful service. The Hottentots seemed fixed to their places in attention and devotion; and several friends, who were present, expressed their admiration both of their behaviour, their joyful songs of praise, and their fervent expressions of gratitude to God for the mercies bestowed upon them. A spi-

rit of joy and gladness prevailed on this occasion, which, by God's blessing, gave a new stimulus to the exertions of all engaged in the building, and contributed not a little to its completion, in a manner which has given general satisfaction.

Mr. Schroeder, having given us some good advice, left us in the afternoon. We met this evening to make arrangements previous to my departure.

There is in this country a plant, called by the Hottentots *Dacha*, a species of wild hemp, (*cicuta*). Some of them smoke it like tobacco, or mix it with the latter herb, and are exceedingly fond of it. Its effects upon the human body are dreadful. It not only takes away the senses for a season, even more completely than drunkenness, but, by degrees, undermines the constitution, weakens every faculty of mind and body, and makes cripples of those that continue in the practice. It is necessary, therefore, that most determined resistance should be made against this destructive propensity, and by a rule established in our settlements, the use of *dacha* is to be entirely abandoned. Whoever is guilty of smoking it, is excluded; but a seducer of others to the abominable practice, expelled. The chief complaint against the Hottentots is, that they are incorrigibly lazy, and unfit for labour. In most instances, the cause of it is the use of this poisonous herb. Who would believe, therefore, that the very men who complain, should encourage the growth of it in their grounds, and sell it to the Hottentots! Yet this I have seen with my own eyes, even where I least suspected it.

September 1st. Being Sunday, the Hottentots came in parties, between the services, to take leave of me, and with many of them I entered into pleasant conversation. There were some good spokesmen among them, who expressed the sentiments of their brethren in very affectionate terms. Two *Dambras*, *Ephraim* and *Peter*, gave me particular satisfaction, by the modest, unaffected manner, in which they declared their gratitude and good-will.

In the afternoon, all the missionaries met, when I had an op-