

manner in which they had been shut up in Fort Frederick, from September, 1802, till May, 1803; he was aware that, at the time he saw them, this people had not been more than seven months on the spot thrust upon the missionaries, under the pretence of temporary accommodation, and on which, during these few months, they had been occupied in building the village of Betheldorp; and Dr. Vanderkemp, at a subsequent period, in the same year, complains that the people, owing to the distressing circumstances in which they had been placed, were in the most destitute condition, without clothing, and without food; yet, the whole of those miseries, which were inseparable from the situation in which they had been placed, and even the barrenness and wretched appearance of the ground about the institution, are ascribed, by this uncandid writer, “*to the over pious spirit and proud humility of its head.*” There is a bitterness and malevolence against religion evinced throughout; and in the following passage, this feeling seems to have gained such an ascendancy over the understanding of the writer, as to render him insensible, when he was writing it, to the contradiction which it involves.

“It is true that these Hottentots,” he says, “were now nominally quiet, and kept in some order; yet often, under pretence of the chase, they wandered about armed, the government (then English) having allowed them, not merely a small quantity of powder and shot to kill game for the purposes of food, but having supplied themselves with it very abundantly; a favour, if favour it is to be called, which was too often misused. They were certainly daily instructed for some hours in the Christian religion, but these in-

structions made much more impression upon their memory than upon their understanding. They could sing and pray, and be heartily penitent for their sins, and talk of the Lamb of atonement, but none were really the better for all this specious appearance. No attention was paid to giving them proper occupations, and, excepting in the hours of prayer, they might be as indolent as they chose.

“ This convenient mode of getting themselves fed, attracted many of the most worthless and idle among these people, and all who applied were indiscriminately received into the establishment : the consequence was, that the colonists soon made heavy complaints of the want of servants, since the Hottentots were much better pleased with leading an indolent life in Vanderkemp’s school, than with gaining their bread by labour*.”

The prejudice such statements have a tendency to excite against missions, is, perhaps, one of the least evils to which they ordinarily give rise. The tendency of indiscriminate censure, unqualified abuse, and studied misrepresentation, is to render such as are friendly to missions incredulous, as it respects all the statements made by strangers, which give an unfavourable view of particular missions ; and, under the shade of a scepticism generated in this way, abuse and corruption will, in many cases, creep in, and produce irreparable injury, before their supporters will allow themselves to suppose them in any danger, or that the unfavourable reports propagated respecting them, are any thing else than calumnies raised against them by their enemies.

* Lichtenstein’s Travels, vol. i., p. 236.

We have missions, in the present day, in the heathen world, which have suffered much from this cause ; and it is natural to suppose, that unproductive or unsuitable missionaries will never be at a loss for covert under which to shelter themselves, while they can ascribe all that is said against them to the enmity of the human heart against the gospel, and refer to such writers as Lichtenstein, and the literary journals, which are in the habit of quoting his remarks against our missions, as a caution to their friends in Europe how they ought to receive the accusations of the enemies of missionaries.

In February, 1805, a proclamation was issued by General Janssens, which shows that he was at this time too much influenced by the prevailing sentiments of the colonists. The restrictions, under which Vanderkemp and his coadjutors were placed by this proclamation, had a tendency to limit the sphere of their labours considerably : they were no longer permitted to visit the Caffers ; but it is pleasing to observe, that we repeatedly find parties of that nation visiting the settlement at Bethelsdorp, and, when the state of the colony would permit it, residing for some time at the institution. In 1804 it was visited by Congo, a powerful chief, who brought with him his two sons for education ; and Tzatzoe, another chief, with his family, resided for some time, and left his son also, with the missionaries*.

* There was something in the appearance of Dr. Vanderkemp which made a strong impression on the minds of those who conversed with him. This was in no instance more strongly evinced than among the aboriginal tribes of South Africa. Such as saw him once never forgot him ; and they always afterwards spoke of him with the highest respect. If the time he was in Cafferland was too short to permit him to see the spiritual fruits of his

In this instance their labours were much blessed : young Tzatzoe became a decided Christian, and is now a useful missionary to his countrymen. In the journal of one of the missionaries, now before me, is the following passage, in which he expresses the pleasure he feels at the opportunities his situation affords him of being useful to this people. "We are happy to be placed in a situation where numbers of Caffers are daily passing and repassing : they sometimes attend at our seasons of worship, nor do our Hottentot brethren omit any opportunity of speaking concerning Christ to them ; and many of them, at times, have expressed a wish for persons to come among them, to instruct them. We long to see a mission established among this people."

On the 18th of April, 1804, Dr. Vanderkemp had written to the governor, stating, that his conscience would not permit him any longer to encourage Hottentots to enter into the service of the farmers, because

labours, it is to his exertions among the Caffers, and to the impression, in favour of the missionaries, made upon their minds, that we are indebted for the openings that we now enjoy for the propagation of the gospel among that interesting people. The following circumstance may be here adduced, as a striking instance of the respect which the Caffers entertain for the Doctor :—

In an attack made upon the institution at Botha's Place, in 1802, by the plundering Hottentots, their chief, Andries Stuurman, being killed in the conflict, his followers fled, and took refuge among the Caffers. When the Caffers came to know that they had attacked the missionary institution of Vanderkemp, they put three of them to death, and the others would have shared the same fate if they had not escaped. Klaas Stuurman, who was then in Cafferland, was obliged to clear himself of the suspicion which attached itself to him, of having been privy to his brother's attack on the missionary station, and with difficulty preserved his life.

of the cruelty and injustice with which they were treated, without any relief being afforded them by the magistrates. Particulars were given, and the governor ordered the landdrost to inquire into the complaints,—but nothing was done; and the farmers were so incensed at the doctor, that one of them went to Cape Town, and, without ceremony, requested from the governor leave to shoot him. General Janssens replied, by asking significantly, “If he had seen the gallows on his entrance into the town*?”

Again, on the 19th of April, 1805, Vanderkemp, in reply to a friendly and familiar letter from Governor Janssens, expresses himself in the following terms:—“You acknowledge the great wrong which the colonists, *perhaps here and there*, do to the Hottentots. This expression, Governor, shews that you are still uninformed of the true situation of things in this country, or at least in the Uitenhage district. Not ‘*perhaps*,’ and ‘*here and there*,’ but very certainly, and pretty nearly in all parts, does this oppression prevail; nor is it only particular inhabitants, but the landdrosts themselves, from whom the oppressed ought to find protection, who make themselves guilty in this respect.”

One of the greatest objections which the boors had to the English government, under General Dundas, was the favour shown to the Hottentots; and they fully expected that, with the return of the Dutch government, the mission of Dr. Vanderkemp would be suppressed, and that the Hottentots would be left in their hands, without any checks upon their authority. The news of the articles of the treaty of Amiens had

* Transactions of the London Missionary Society, vol. ii. p. 241.

no sooner reached the Cape, than they had expressed their sentiments, in the strongest language, on this subject.

Their first proposals to Governor Janssens were too gross to meet with a favourable reception; but their reiterated clamours at last prevailed, and, in 1805, the missionaries were summoned to Cape Town, to answer some charges preferred against them. It is almost unnecessary to say, that these charges were such as could not be brought forward in court; the governor was perfectly aware that the farmers could substantiate nothing that would criminate the missionaries; but the governor had too little firmness, or the government was too weak, to allow him to resist the unjust clamour raised against them by their enemies. On this occasion they were detained nearly nine months in Cape Town, in a state of suspense, the governor all the time refusing either to give them a trial or to allow them to remove into the interior, to prosecute their missionary labours.

Wearied with their inactivity, they had formed a resolution to leave the country, and were only prevented from putting this resolution into practice by the arrival of the English fleet in Table Bay, on the 4th January, 1806. On the 20th, the town was surrendered to the British. The change which this occurrence made in their circumstances was sensibly felt. General Baird, the new governor, favoured their views; and, considering it their duty to continue to devote themselves to the instruction of the Hottentots, they soon returned to Bethelsdorp, and resumed their beloved work.

During the absence of Vanderkemp and his coadjutor

in Cape Town, their place had been ably supplied by Mrs. de Smidt (or Smith), of Cape Town*. At the period the missionaries were summoned to the seat of government, it was apprehended that they would not be allowed to resume their labours at Bethelsdorp; and it was under this impression, and to preserve the institution, that this meritorious woman, in the fifty-fifth year of her age, disposed of her property, and relinquished the comforts of civilized society, to take upon her the management of it. The importance she attached to the education of youth, the success which had attended her labours in Cape Town in that department, the talents for which she was distinguished, the high respectability of her character, and her affectionate zeal, qualified her in an eminent degree for the duties of her new station.

Her efforts succeeded in bringing together many of the children of the people to the reading-school; and at the time she was superintending the school in which she had collected the parents and the children, that they might be taught to read, she formed and conducted a school of industry, which was of essential service to the institution. While she was exerting her influence to impart to the minds of the people a taste for instruction, reviving and improving the reading-school, conducting her school of industry, visiting the people in their houses and teaching them the decencies of life, conversing with the females apart, and endeavouring to impress their minds with the power of religion,—assembling with them in their social meetings, and ex-

* A Memoir of this remarkable woman has been published in English, and may be had at Mr. Francis Westley's, publisher and bookseller, Stationers'-court, Paternoster-row.

pounding to them the word of God,—she seemed to pay as much attention to each of those objects as if it had occupied her exclusive regard, and in the multiplicity of her avocations it could not be said that one of them suffered by her neglect.

During the time she was at Bethelsdorp, she had the satisfaction of seeing several of the females receive the first principles of the Christian character ; and several, who afterwards became members of the mission church, ascribed their first serious impressions to her labours.

She remained a twelvemonth at Bethelsdorp after the return of the missionaries. Her character and labours were highly appreciated by them ; and it was the anxious wish of all that she should remain ; but her absence was too greatly felt in the extensive sphere of usefulness she had formerly occupied, to allow her to comply with their wishes, particularly as the missionaries had now resumed their labours ; and, having accomplished the object she had proposed to herself at this station, she returned to Cape Town. Here she continued till 1821, when she entered into her rest, after a series of active exertions in the cause of benevolence, which has rendered her memory blessed, and made her death to be felt as a loss to the whole colony.

CHAPTER VI.

Progress of Christianity among the Hottentots.—David Stuurman's Kraal.—Native Teachers.—Vanderkemp's Opinion of them.—First Stage of Missions.—State of the Hottentots under the English.—Vanderkemp's Official Correspondence.

THE work of conversion in South Africa began at a much more early period after the commencement of our missions than in some other places. The Hottentots within the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and some of the Bushmen and Caffers immediately beyond its limits, had, from their intercourse with the colonists, a partial acquaintance with the Dutch language, which enabled our missionaries to enter upon the labour of instruction almost as soon as they landed on the shores of South Africa. An advantage of this nature can only be appreciated by the missionaries, who have to make themselves masters of a strange language before any favourable impression can be made upon the minds of the people, the care of whose souls they have undertaken. In as far as natural causes are concerned, it might be owing to this circumstance that Africa yielded her increase to God so much earlier than Tahiti.

Doctor Vanderkemp had not the same difficulties to encounter at the commencement of his mission among the Hottentots that he had among the Caffers ; he had not their language to acquire, as a previous step, before they could be brought under Christian instruction ; and in the course of a few years he had the satisfaction

of seeing several of that degraded people elevated in the scale of being by the blessing of God upon his labours.

Struck with the grandeur of an object that had to them all the charms of novelty, the zeal of the new converts brought many Hottentots to the institution to receive instruction, and prepared the way for the missionaries visiting the scattered remnants of the Hottentot tribes, which were still to be found associating together in kraals, or in small parties by themselves.

Among the kraals first visited by this means, that of David Stuurman furnishes a subject of pleasing and painful interest. Some notice has already been taken of the Chief Stuurman and his people. After the war had subsided, in which David Stuurman and his brother Klaas had taken such a conspicuous part, they were allowed to settle with their people near the Chamtoos River, at the distance of about fifty miles from Bethelsdorp. The Hottentots who received the gospel at Bethelsdorp were the first who awakened in the breasts of this horde a desire for Christian instruction, and by that means prepared them for the visits of the missionaries. Owing to the distance of this village from the institution, the missionaries could visit them but seldom, and for that reason they continued to labour among them for days, and sometimes for weeks at a time. After the difficulties and trials of patience which usually attend the first introduction of the gospel among savage tribes, they had the satisfaction of seeing their labours attended with the most beneficial effects; several individuals who were converted by means of the missionaries, at this period, have continued ever since to maintain a highly respectable Christian profession;

and all of them who were left at liberty during the subsequent troubles which came upon them, and after the apprehension and banishment of their chief*, sought an asylum in Bethelsdorp, where those who remain of them, and their descendants, continue to form a part of the population of that institution.

Our missionary societies can do little more in foreign countries than begin the work of conversion; we cannot long continue to supply the fields under cultivation with missionaries from England: the attention of our societies, therefore, cannot be too soon directed to the raising up of native teachers; and it will be seen, from the following extract from the *Missionary Transactions*, that this did not escape the observation of Dr. Vanderkemp. "Some of our converted Hottentots," he observes, "show a remarkable zeal in exhorting others to faith in Christ. In them this zeal is evidently an extraordinary gift of God's spirit, and their exhortations are attended with a not less remarkable success. Their external circumstances, as well as their natural disposition, seldom permit them to be at home; and it is especially poverty and want of food which compel them to wander about the country, working for their bread. In this manner they are, by necessity, itinerant preachers; but as the same necessity excludes them from instruction in reading, writing, scriptural doctrine, &c., their arguments are uniformly taken from spiritual experience, and want that strength which scripture affords; and in my eye, they are valiant champions, but without swords. Could a few of them be enabled and disposed to receive suitable instruction, God may

* For the history and fate of David Stuurman, see APPENDIX.

perhaps intend to do more by them than by missionaries from Europe, and with less expense to the society. The advantages of employing some of these men are too evident to be pointed out to you here. I shall only submit to your examination a rough sketch of my plan respecting them.

“ If they are to be instructed, they must stay a couple of years at home. They may live chiefly by means of cattle, and partly by exercising some mechanical art in their intermediate hours ; though it will be a hard matter to dispose a lazy Hottentot to such employments, no less than to keep him at home. The name of *missionary* must be avoided, which would attract the attention of enemies, and be a hinderance to their work. They ought to be merely members, or officers of the church at Bethelsdorp,—as to the rest, private Hottentots, though, in fact, ministers of the gospel. There is at present only one individual, (now on a journey to the Cape,) who seems calculated for this work, and willing to devote his all to the service of Christ : his name is Kruisman, mentioned in several of our reports as an exemplary Christian *.”

It is no small recommendation to the plan proposed by Dr. Vanderkemp, that all our missionaries to whose opinion any importance can be attached, have now come to the same conclusion ; and the method he proposes to be adopted in relation to the Hottentots is characterized by modesty and good sense. He wisely guards against any thing ostentatious in his plan, or the use of names to feed the vanity of the friends of missions at home, or to excite contempt and prejudice

* See “ Missionary Register,” vol. ii., p. 150.

against them among his enemies, to whose personal inspection his labours were open.

It was under this modest and unassuming character that the gospel obtained its triumph in the first ages of the church; and its permanent conquests, in subsequent ages, have been gained in a similar manner. Disposed as we naturally are to symbolize with the Jews in their attachment to a worldly kingdom, and with the world at large in its love of splendour, we are too prone to forget that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation or worldly pomp*.

While Vanderkemp saw enough to encourage him in his labours, by the partial success which attended them in the first stage of a mission to a savage people, or in the first generation which assumed the Christian name, it would, however, be unreasonable to expect that we should find among them that sense of propriety which shrinks from the appearance of evil; that modesty, which instinctively retires from danger; and that purity of mind and manners, which is expected, where the gospel has erected its standard, among a religious and a cultivated people.

While the following passage, from an admirable

* A further illustration of the importance of the plan recommended by Dr. Vanderkemp will be given in the sequel.

No reflection is intended by the above remarks on the distinguished individuals who founded the mission colleges of India and Malacca. While the writer considers the general principle laid down in those remarks, as having been established by the testimony of Scripture, and the experience of eighteen centuries, his own ignorance of our Eastern empire, and the high opinion he entertains of the judgment of Dr. Morrison and Dr. Milne, and of the missionaries at Serampore, leads him to consider the mission colleges of our Indian empire as exceptions to the general rule.

preface to the life of Mrs. Savage, written by Mr. Jay, discovers an intimate acquaintance with human nature, it sheds a ray of light upon the state of society among the Hottentots at the period we are considering, and shows the nature of some of those trials which a missionary has to lay his account with, either when his own labours are successful, or where he may have been called to reap where others have bestowed labour.

“Coarseness and freedom of manners,” says this author, “are too often the result of former viciousness, of which the individuals themselves are not aware, but which expose them to temptation in their social, especially female, intercourse.”—“Moral and virtuous habits produce delicacy, and impose restraint. Former scenes of guilt will often revive in the imagination; and though they are not entertained there, yet by passing through the mind they defile it, and distress it. I have heard more than one pious character confess the pain and injury he has suffered from this quarter, even in his public and private devotions, and who would have given the world to be free from the shocks he received from the hauntings of the ghosts of his old iniquities.”—“I never knew a professor of religion, or a preacher of the word, who fell by certain temptations, but had been, previously to his connexion with the Christian world, the victim of vice.”

An individual of a superior order of mind may be found amongst an uneducated people; a few specimens of good workmanship may be produced where no trade is followed; a few patriots may be seen struggling against the corruptions of a country sinking into ruin; a few individuals may be selected from a savage tribe, and cultivated, while the tribe itself is left in a state of

nature: but we must look to the rising generation, trained up in our schools under a disciplinary education, as the efficient instruments necessary for the promulgation of the gospel, and the elevation of the body of the people.

Among the schemes which occupied the mind of Dr. Vanderkemp, in the midst of his missionary labours, was an orphan asylum for the destitute children of Hottentots and Caffers. A plan of the establishment proposed was submitted to the directors of the London Missionary Society, and repeatedly urged upon them, with much zeal; but the difficulties connected with its execution prevented its being carried into effect.

It is a dangerous thing to tamper with the relation subsisting between parents and children: in this, as in similar cases, benevolence may sometimes increase the evils it intends to remedy; but, in connexion with the general improvement of the people, an establishment of this sort might have been attended with salutary effects. To carry on the work of God among a people emerging into a state of civilization, and to give the gospel a permanent habitation among them, without its being necessary to continue foreign aid to maintain the ground already gained, we must look to the children of those people, to whom the customs and manners of their ancestors, in a savage state, are become matters of pure history; and such an asylum, had it been at that period established, might have furnished our missionaries, by this time, with native teachers, with schoolmasters, and other useful auxiliaries. But we must leave these reflections for the present, and proceed to describe the condition of the missionaries, and the treatment of the Hottentots under their new masters.

Had the Dutch continued to retain possession of the Cape, many of the Hottentots, like the Javanese, might have still regretted the departure of the English from among them; but they have since been taught by experience, that the humanity with which they were at first treated by us, was less owing to any superiority in our national character, than to a fortunate conjunction of circumstances. It is, indeed, a matter deeply to be regretted, that the intellectual and moral qualities of such men as Lord Macartney, General Dundas, and Sir Stamford Raffles are not uniformly required in those to whom the government of our colonies is consigned. Were such important appointments always conferred on men of this description, the present publication would, in all probability, never have appeared—for the abuses which have called it forth would, unquestionably, have long ago ceased to exist.

When the English first took possession of the Cape, the Hottentots hailed their arrival before they knew anything of the character of their deliverers; and the story of their sufferings made a strong impression on the minds of a people who entertained a great aversion to their first oppressors, and who had, as yet, no interest to serve by enslaving them. The English found that the Hottentots could be trusted: they received from them the most efficient assistance in suppressing the insurrections of the boors, and, therefore, whilst the boors continued to be disaffected to the government, the Hottentots enjoyed the smiles of the British authorities. But when the boors, finding that the English were likely to retain permanent possession of the Cape, became reconciled to their new masters, the services of the Hottentots were forgotten, and their interest

sacrificed at the shrine of this union. This was a result which the missionaries had not anticipated, and for which they were not prepared. It was soon perceived that, under the new system, the oppression of the Hottentots continued, as under the old government; and Doctor Vanderkemp found that the new English authorities paid as little attention to his complaints; as the Dutch authorities of the colony had been in the habit of doing. Had he been properly supported by the local authorities of the district, an end might have been speedily put to the cruelties practised against the natives; but he had the mortification to find that his attempts to improve the condition of the Hottentots, and to bring their oppressors to justice, were constantly opposed by those by whom he should have been supported. In January, 1807, not a twelvemonth after the return of the missionaries to Bethelsdorp, by the permission of the English government, the Doctor thus writes, in a letter addressed to the Directors of the London Missionary Society:—

“ I think our enemies have in view to accomplish their design, not by expelling us out of the colony, or by a formal prohibition of our missionary work, but by teasing, and gradually confining us more and more to a narrow sphere of activity, in hope that, by repeated trials, we shall be wearied out, and disposed at length to abandon our station, and leave them masters of the field.”

The following extract of a letter, dated May 21, 1808, from Dr. Vanderkemp to the landdrost of the district of Uitenhage, may be taken as a specimen of some of the grievances of which he complains in this place:—

“ The bearers, Dansken Klaas and Hendrik Soldaat, complain bitterly that their wives and children are forcibly detained by their former master and mistress, Frans Greeff and Mrs. Suckling ; and that, together with two other Hottentot women, they were, by order of the last, violently taken up and carried away from the public road. Such outrages call loudly to heaven for justice ! I hope, and respectfully request, that it may please you to procure these four unhappy sufferers the enjoyment of that liberty, to which by nature, and the laws of this country, they are entitled : and I doubt not that you will at once perceive the necessity of putting a stop to these and similar excesses, which, being left unpunished, daily increase in number and atrocity, and render this country an execration to every stranger, in whom the least spark of humanity is not entirely extinguished.”

The following letter is addressed to the Secretary, Captain Smith, in reply to a letter from the Lieut.-Governor, on the affairs of the institution. It is dated January, 1809 :—

“ You express in your last letter his Excellency the lieutenant-governor’s wish, that I should for some time continue at Bethelsdorp to preserve the members of that institution in their present peaceable and well disposed habits of life.

“ However willing I may be to gratify (if it were in my power) his Excellency in this respect, it is not probable that my stay at this institution will be of long duration, being invited by the Missionary Society of London to other services. It is not, however, my intention to leave the institution till it shall be established upon a more solid and regular plan than it is at present,

and till I shall be enabled to give over its direction to a missionary successor better qualified for the service than myself. The last point is committed to my care by the before-mentioned society, but the first cannot be executed by me without his Excellency's co-operation and favour; and, in accordance with this view, I shall submit the following hints to his Excellency's consideration.

"The institution has been erected upon a most simple plan, at the invitation, and under the auspices, (as you, Sir, may recollect,) of General Dundas, who condescended to give immediately the orders necessary for its management, in relation to the peace and tranquillity of the country, without the intervention of the landdrost, or the commandant of Fort Frederick.

"Under the government of General Janssens, it was gradually more and more oppressed, and subjected, first, under the orders of the officer commanding at Algoa Bay, and afterwards under the landdrost, which proved a source of many complaints respecting the injuries under which our Hottentots groaned.

"At the restoration of the British government, we naturally expected that the restrictions under which the institution was placed would be removed, especially as the chief magistrate, Van Ryneveld, informed me that it was General Baird's wish that the institution should be reinstated, upon the same footing as it had been originally, under the government of General Dundas.

"Notwithstanding this, the Landdrost Cuyler continues to exercise an almost arbitrary power over the members of the institution, and has even taken steps to put me under the orders of a Field-Cornet. By a series of acts of injustice towards our Hottentots, of

which I am reluctant to complain in detail, (but which have rendered my station in this place extremely disagreeable and disgusting to me,) he has alienated the affections of our people, not only from himself, but from the government in general; insomuch, that when the obligations they have to government, as their protectors, are represented to them, the common reply is—‘*They are not the same English that they were under General Dundas.*’

“It is in the power of his Excellency to convince them, effectually, that this conclusion, from the conduct of one individual, as to the dispositions of the whole government, is erroneous and false, and I doubt not of his Excellency’s being inclined to give unequivocal proofs to the contrary. In this persuasion, I shall be so free as to add the following observations.

“The institution ought to be placed under the immediate protection of the acting governor—the missionary to receive the necessary orders immediately from his Excellency; and the plans of co-operation, as far as they may affect the political state of the colony, should be concerted between his Excellency and the missionary.

“It is, however, by no means my opinion that the institution should be entirely independent of the landdrost’s authority. Being so distant from the seat of government, it is necessary that there should be a local magistrate to watch over the proceedings of the missionaries, and their people, to prevent such steps being taken, as he may have reason to believe would be disapproved by the governor, and whose authority is to be respected (as it always has been) both in civil and judicial matters; and for this purpose explicit in-

structions should be given by his Excellency, and communicated by extract to the missionaries for their information.

“ I shall not presume to suggest the necessary articles for our regulation, which must be left to the wisdom and discretion of his Excellency. I only beg that they may be calculated to preserve the missionaries, with their people, in the free and unmolested exercise of their respective religious privileges; that the members, actually belonging to Bethelsdorp, (about eight hundred, women and children included,) who are in the service of the boors, may not be involved in war or commandoes against the natives; that no boor may engage such a member in his service, by annual contract, except in presence and with consent of the missionary; that no field-cornet or individual have any authority within the institution; and that the inhabitants of the colony be forbidden to offer brandy or other intoxicating liquors for sale, or to distribute them among the people, without the permission of the missionary.

“ As the ground of Bethelsdorp is entirely unfit for agriculture, Governor Janssens authorized me to look out for a more convenient spot. In the mean time some people suggested to him two farm places, which, in their opinion, would answer his Excellency's intentions; but, upon examination, those places were found pernicious to cattle. We remonstrated against our removal to a place labouring under a more material defect than Bethelsdorp itself. These places are situated in the district of Kromme River. By reiterated changes of government, this subject has been left undetermined. In this place we have now lingered more

than five years, under an extreme scarcity and dearth of the most necessary articles of food, bread, and vegetables; being moreover prevented from erecting the necessary buildings of more durable materials than reeds and straw: for this reason I humbly request that it may please his Excellency to grant a tract of ground more adapted to the wants of the institution, and, if possible, in the neighbourhood of Cafferland, that that nation also may enjoy the benefit of religious instruction, and in this way become more civilized and tractable. But should, unexpectedly, his Excellency think it more expedient that the institution be not removed from the ground which it actually occupies, it is desirable that his Excellency may be pleased to signify explicitly *this to be* his Excellency's resolution.

“While I am writing this, the landdrost (Major Cuyler) has ordered six Hottentots to be taken from each field-cornet's district, to work at the drostdy; and, considering the institution as a kind of extraordinary field-cornetship by itself, ordered me, also, to command six of our people to that same work. Having obeyed, and executed the order, I have (but in vain) endeavoured to point out to the major, in a friendly manner, the dissimilarity of the two cases. The Hottentots, who are in the service of the boors, being paid, and their families provided for, by their masters, they lose nothing when they are employed elsewhere; but it is not so with our Hottentots, who, receiving no payment, must be subsisted, with their families, from their industry. Besides this, there actually exists no necessity nor reason to call away the members of the institution from their work, families, and means of instruction as will appear, if we consider that the

number of Hottentots belonging to the institution, since the year 1802, is 1267 (including women and children) ; from these, if we deduct 300, who are now at Bethelsdorp, about 50, who are in military service, a few who died or lately emigrated to Cafferland, &c., the remaining 800 will be found in the service of the boors. May not this number be estimated as sufficient to afford the necessary workmen, without employing the inhabitants of Bethelsdorp to work at the drostdy, without any pay? I leave this, with the fullest confidence, to the decision of his Excellency, in which I shall readily acquiesce.

“There is another case, which compels me to have recourse to his Excellency’s sagacity. Two brethren, Salmon and Piet Campher, both members of the institution, went, with my permission, to visit their friends living at the place of Christian Kok ; there the field-cornet, Van Rooyen, found them, and he commanded them to work at the drostdy, as if they had been in the service of the above-mentioned Kok, and belonged to his field-cornetship.

“Having referred the case to the landdrost, and shown, from the register of the institution, that the report Van Rooyen made was false ; that they had never been in the service of Kok, but had been regularly dismissed by their former masters, P. van Stoll, jun., Reed Vermaak, and Sana Potgieter ; and that they had entered the institution the 7th of March ; it pleased the landdrost (notwithstanding this, my solemn declaration) to disallow the truth, in order to confirm the proceedings of the field-cornet ; and he condemned them both to work at the drostdy, along with the six mentioned before. Upon this, one of them fled into

Cafferland, whither many more, not belonging to the institution, are also gone, disgusted by the treatment which they have received in this district. The consequences of these emigrations Major Cuyler may, perhaps, not be aware of, but they cannot escape your penetration, as you have been witness of the calamities originating from them, during the government of General Dundas. The other brother (Salmon) is still here, relying upon his excellency's protection against this glaring injustice."

CHAPTER VII.

Commissioner Collins visits Bethelsdorp—Dr. Vanderkemp's Contests with the Local Authorities.—His Death and Character.

IN 1809, Lieutenant-Colonel Collins was appointed to visit the frontier districts of the colony, as his Majesty's Commissioner. I have been fortunate enough to procure copies of this gentleman's reports, made to the colonial government, and have extracted from them the following details.

Shortly after the arrival of the Commissioner at Uitenhage, he paid a visit to Bethelsdorp, on the 7th April, in company with Major Cuyler, Mr. Stockenstrom, the landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, and Mr. A. Stockenstrom, who has since succeeded his father, as the chief magistrate of that district. On this occasion, after some general remarks, in which he announced the object of his visit to the station, the power with which he was invested, the instructions he had received from his Excellency the governor, to converse freely with Dr. Vanderkemp on the state of the mission, and to assure him of his Excellency's best wishes for the prosperity of his labours, he drew from his pocket a paper, containing a number of questions, which had been written to assist his memory. The following is a specimen of the questions and replies:—

Among other questions in the paper which he held in his hand, he asked the Doctor, "Will you, Sir, agree

to send over to Uitenhage, Hottentots whose services may be required by the magistrate, Major Cuyler?" To this Vanderkemp directly replied in the negative. Being requested to state the grounds on which he rested his objections, he remarked, "that to apprehend men as prisoners, and force them to labour in the manner proposed, was no part of his duty." To a question, "whether he did not consider it his duty to compel the Hottentots to labour," he replied, "No, Sir; the Hottentots are recognized to be a free people, and the colonists have no more right to force them to labour in the way you propose, than you have to sell them as slaves." Being asked why he would not obey the order of the landdrost, in calling in the Hottentots who were among the farmers, when they were required by the landdrost; "Because, Sir," said he, "that is the duty of the landdrost himself, and he is paid for it." Being asked, if he would agree to prohibit the Caffers from visiting his institution; and whether he would send such as might resort to him under the pretext of coming to seek instruction, as prisoners to Uitenhage; he replied, "Sir, my commission is to preach the gospel to every creature, and I will preach the gospel to every one who chooses to hear me. God has sent me, not to put chains upon the legs of Hottentots and Caffers, but to preach liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound."

These proposals having been previously pressed upon Vanderkemp by Major Cuyler, he knew at once with whom they originated; and the landdrost did not escape without reproof for the attempt to force upon him, through the medium of the commissioner, what he

had so often before resisted, when they came immediately from himself.

Dr. Vanderkemp, not having received any answer to his letter of January, addressed to the governor, presented, on this occasion, a brief memorial to the commissioner, calling his attention to the points contained in that letter ; praying at the same time, that the case of the poor oppressed Hottentots might be pressed upon the consideration of his Excellency, and their numerous complaints and grievances examined ; and that the defects in the administration of justice under which they were sinking as a nation, might be fully remedied. In reply to the representation of the Doctor, the commissioner stated, that he would endeavour to procure an answer to the several points contained in his memorial as soon as possible. Among the topics discussed in this conversation, the proposal of a mission to Madagascar was one ; and it is stated in a letter of Mr. Read's, in the *Missionary Transactions*, that the commissioner was very zealous on this occasion in advocating the cause of the Madagascar mission ; and he at the same time expressed his assurance that Lord Caledon would give every encouragement and assistance to such an undertaking.

Colonel Collins states, in his report to government, (without supposing, I presume, that the statement would ever be seen by a missionary,) that he did all in his power to dissuade Vanderkemp from thinking of renewing the Caffer mission, by endeavouring to impress upon his mind the importance of a mission to Madagascar. He acknowledges, at the same time, that his motive for dissuading the Doctor from the Caffer mission, and for pressing upon him the Madagascar mission, was

not from any regard to Madagascar, nor from any interest he took in such an enterprise ; but merely to get rid of Dr. Vanderkemp's application to be allowed to re-commence a mission in Cafferland.

In the report, Colonel Collins also recommends to the government to abolish the institution of Bethelsdorp, on the following grounds : that Dr. Vanderkemp's labours had not been successful, the Doctor having acknowledged to him that he had not baptized more than sixty-seven individuals ; that the Doctor had admitted to him, that the institution was not designed for the benefit of the colony, but exclusively for the benefit of the Hottentots ; and, that the people might be serviceable to the farmers.

Dr. Vanderkemp estimated the importance of his success by another standard than that employed by Colonel Collins ; and his obvious meaning, in speaking of this great object of his labours, appears to have been strangely misapprehended by the commissioner. When the Doctor spoke of the institution's being for the benefit of the Hottentots, and not for that of the colonists, his expression was, "that the colonists had no *direct* interest in it ;" and it is somewhat surprizing that his Majesty's commissioner could not comprehend how the civilization and moral improvement of the Hottentots might *indirectly* redound to the advantage of the colony in general.

A proclamation, in relation to the Hottentots, was published by Lord Caledon shortly after the visit of Colonel Collins to Bethelsdorp, with the most benevolent intentions on the part of his lordship ; but the provisions of this enactment were so framed by those by whom it was constructed, that what his lordship in-

tended for the relief of the oppressed Hottentots, was practically employed by the local authorities of the country districts to increase their burdens. But as this important subject demands a much fuller discussion than would be suitable in this place, it will be explained and illustrated in a future chapter. The zeal, courage, and abilities of Vanderkemp were all employed in the good cause he had undertaken. But promises which were never fulfilled, and proclamations which made things worse, were the only fruits of his labours. A few extracts of his correspondence with Major Cuyler will afford further illustration on this subject.

In a letter addressed to this magistrate, dated 30th July, 1810, he thus writes: "I think it superfluous to inform you of the conduct of Lucas Van Rooyen towards the child of Bretagne, and its distressed father, as the last has himself explained to you the particulars of this barbarous outrage, which must fill every sensible heart with horror and indignation.

"But as Bretagne yesterday left you with the supposition that you were not disposed to do what justice demands—to restore him his child, (which certainly must be a mistake,) and consulted me about the best method to obtain justice and protection against such brutal disturbers of the public tranquillity, I advised him to return to you in order to understand better your meaning, which I doubt not will be calculated to secure the children belonging to the institution from being stolen from the highways of your district by characters who, in any country where justice is administered, should not escape the gallows."

The next letter is dated Bethelsdorp, the 6th November, 1810:—

“ The conduct of the field-cornet, Isaak van Nieuwkerk is so outrageous, in violating his Excellency’s proclamation respecting the Hottentots in the service of the boors, that I find it my indispensable duty to complain of it to you, before it be brought to the cognizance of his Excellency, as an instance of the oppression which takes place in this district. The field-cornet not only forces Hottentots, who have served out their time, to continue in service, or to choose (as he calls it) a new master, but, abusing your name, tells them that it is your order not to pass the Chamtoos river before they have engaged themselves to another boor. I have directed the bearers, being instances and witnesses of these proceedings, to give you more explicit information of them.”

Another letter, directed to the same individual by Dr. Vanderkemp, and from the same place, is dated 28th November, 1810 :—

“ I believe that you yourself are aware, that these outrages cannot be suffered to go on in this manner. I hope and pray most earnestly, that the poor sufferers, mentioned to you by the bearer Boatsman, may be liberated from their tyrants, and indemnified according to his Excellency’s order ; that, in particular, the Hottentots in the district on the right side of the Chamtoos river, may be secured against the lies and oppression of the field-cornet, by informing them of his Excellency’s order, by which their liberty is asserted ; and, lastly, that Nieuwkerk may be ordered to send the above-mentioned Hottentot, with his cattle, to Bethelsdorp.”

The last of these extracts is from a letter, dated Bethelsdorp, January 4, 1811.

“ The bearer, Winvogel Stuurman, (who is to ap-

pear before the matrimonial commission, to have his marriage registered,) informed me that the field-cornet, I. van Nieuwkerk, notwithstanding your last proceedings against him, continued to force Hottentots, who have served out their time, to remain in his cornetship, and in the service of the boors ; that he himself has been present when Nieuwkerk exercised this compulsion, in respect to Klaas Afrikaaner, which is sometimes accompanied by a most barbarous treatment, as a Hottentot woman, now in the service of Mrs. Machtild Potgieter, lately experienced, the particulars of which (and also of two Hottentots in service of Jan Meyer) the bearer will point out more fully to you. If, unfortunately, the measures, which I expect you will take in this case, should prove ineffectual to put an immediate stop to the outrages of this villain, and the extorted contracts shall not be rescinded, nor the injured indemnified, I hope you will not disapprove my representing to his Excellency the governor, how scandalously, in your district, justice is trampled under foot by the vilest characters, and his Excellency's proclamation treated with contempt ; but, as such a remonstrance would unavoidably place your own conduct in an unfavourable light, I should be extremely sorry to be brought under this painful necessity."

From the commencement of the evils of which Vanderkemp complains, he appears to have laboured under a misapprehension, which may account for the temper those letters display. He evidently believed that the oppressions of the Hottentots originated wholly with Major Cuyler, and he did not perceive that it had, by this time, become a part of the colonial system.

After the removal of General Dundas from the Cape

of Good Hope, under whose enlightened auspices Dr. Vanderkemp began his missionary exertions at Algoa Bay, the history of his labours is that of one continued struggle to protect the people and the missionary institution of Bethelsdorp against the measures of the local authorities of the district of Uitenhage. During this arduous struggle, of which his correspondence affords sufficient evidence, he did not complain in private only—he presented his grievances before the colonial government; and the following extract, copied from a letter written only a few months before his death, will show how little he gained by his exertions:—“I would go anywhere,” he exclaims, “to escape from my present situation: I cannot remain much longer at Bethelsdorp; my spirits are broken, and I am bowed down by the landdrost Cuyler’s continual oppressions of the Hottentots.”

About this time a letter from Mr. Read to the Directors, complaining of cruelties committed by the Christians (so called) upon the Hottentots, in the neighbourhood of Bethelsdorp, attracted the notice of the Governor, who ordered the landdrost Cuyler to summon Mr. Read before him, and to investigate the source of those complaints. Mr. Read readily obeyed the summons, and laid before him several cases of cruelty and of murder. Mr. Read also wrote to the Governor, expressing his willingness to lay the facts before his Excellency. The Governor accordingly requested both Mr. Read and Dr. Vanderkemp to appear before him at Cape Town. They immediately obeyed the summons; and produced such evidence of intolerable oppressions as satisfied him that a strict investigation ought to take place. A special commission

was appointed by the Earl of Caledon, for the above purpose ; but, before the investigation could take place, Doctor Vanderkemp was called to make his appearance before another tribunal.

The solemn time had arrived, when this distinguished individual was to be released from his labours, and called up to the joy of his Lord. On the morning of Saturday, Dec. 7th, 1811, he expounded a chapter with much freedom ; after which, finding himself indisposed, he said to a venerable mother in Israel, who had formerly resided at the settlement in Bethelsdorp, " Oh ! Mrs. Smith, I find myself extremely weak ; I should be glad to have an opportunity to settle my own affairs." But, alas ! this opportunity was not afforded. He was seized the same evening with a cold shivering ; a fever ensued, and he retired to his bed. From that bed he rose no more. His disorder rapidly advanced, notwithstanding the use of suitable means ; and his surrounding friends could not but entertain the most painful forebodings of the fatal result. It might have been hoped that a man who had devoted so many years of active life to the service of his Lord, and whose lips had fed such multitudes with spiritual knowledge, would have been enabled to instruct and strengthen his afflicted friends with his dying testimony to the truth and excellency of that holy gospel, to promote which he had made such uncommon sacrifices. But so great was the violence of his disorder, that he was rendered almost incapable of speaking ; a lethargic heaviness suppressed his powers, and it was with great difficulty he could be prevailed upon even to answer a question. When one of the friends, however, who called upon him a day or two before his decease, asked him, What was the state of

his mind?—his short, but emphatic and satisfactory answer was—“ All is well.” And in reply to a similar inquiry—“ Is it light or dark with you?” he said “ Light !” Light, in the best sense, it doubtless was. The light of his Redeemer’s countenance illuminated the darksome valley of the shadow of death, the har-binger of that brighter light which is sown for the righteous,—that gladness which awaits the upright in heart.

The history of Dr. Vanderkemp is so interwoven with the history of our missionary efforts in South Africa, that I shall be excused if I extend this chapter a little further by a few additional remarks upon his character.

Dr. Vanderkemp was certainly one of the most extraordinary characters of his age ; his natural talents were of a high order, and in him they were united with intellectual and moral qualities, which fitted him for great exertions. Among scholars he maintained an eminent rank ; he could read and write in sixteen different languages ; the Latin was as familiar to him as his own vernacular tongue ; the criticisms he has left behind him on the Greek and Hebrew text of the Scriptures, written in Greek and Hebrew, showed that he had excelled in sacred literature ; he had also acquired considerable skill in Armenian, Arabic, Persic, and Syriac. Among his books, I found a copy of Bayle’s dictionary, with the margins covered with notes written in French, which showed great metaphysical acuteness ; and several works in the German language, with notes in German. Even when he was between fifty and sixty years of age, his talents for acquiring languages enabled

him to master the first principles of any language, to which he applied his mind, in the course of three or four months. During the few months he was in Cafferland, he drew up a rough sketch of a grammar of the Caffer language, and formed a vocabulary of about eight hundred words.

His attainments in science were equal to his acquirements in literature. Such was his skill in mathematics, that he was regarded, when in the army, as a man likely to improve the art of fortification, and the military tactics of his country. The proficiency he had made in medicine, and his reputation as a physician in Holland, have been already noticed; and his knowledge of chemistry, natural history, comparative anatomy, and botany, would have enabled him to have done honour to a professorship in any one of those sciences, in any of the universities of Europe.

In contemplating the situation of Vanderkemp, as a missionary in Africa, we are justified in adopting the words of Professor Krom, in a preface written by that gentleman, to one of the doctor's theological works, published in Germany:—"How powerful must have been the conviction of Dr. Vanderkemp's mind of the truth and divine origin of the doctrines of the bible; how deeply must such a mind have been penetrated with the most cordial love to the cause of our blessed Redeemer!"

However we may differ from him in some of his opinions; whatever notion we may form of some of his peculiarities, now "that death has set his seal upon his character, and placed it beyond the reach of fortune," it will be admitted by every one whose mind has been elevated by an enlarged benevolence, that

such a sacrifice of personal comfort, such a consecration of talents, of literature, and of science, as is exhibited in the example before us, in an attempt to evangelize, to civilize, and to elevate one of the most oppressed and degraded classes of human beings, furnishes one of the most sublime spectacles upon earth.

It may be remarked by some, that Africa was not a sphere sufficiently extensive for such great and varied attainments : but when we consider how much the aborigines of that country wanted, at that time, a protector ; and reflect upon the courage, the zeal, the incorruptible integrity, and the weight of character attached to Dr. Vanderkemp, we must admire the wisdom of Providence in directing his attention to this sphere of action. He is entitled to the praise of pure disinterestedness, a quality of great importance in a missionary. To the missionaries who were his fellow labourers, he was a father and an adviser. His history in Africa furnishes sufficient proofs of his zeal and his devotedness to the great objects of his mission ; but it is to his exertions in the cause of the oppressed aborigines that we are to look for the grandeur of his character, and the most efficient part of his services*.

Others may have been more successful than even Vanderkemp in conveying the elementary parts of instruction to the savages under their care ; and it was less matter of surprise to find him occasionally in-

* A gentleman well acquainted with the circumstances of Dr. Vanderkemp, in a letter addressed to the Rev. G. Burder, secretary to the London Missionary Society, dated the 31st of May, 1826, uses the following expressions :—" You well recollect the struggles that the late Dr. Vanderkemp had for the poor Hottentots : he died in the battle, when at Cape Town, to represent their sufferings."

vigorating his mind with the abstruse studies, to which he had been formerly accustomed, than to observe him, so frequently as he was to be seen, with the alphabet in his hand, teaching the savages their letters ; but some of the missionaries, who were in Africa at that time, who supposed he paid too much attention to his studies and his books, have since admitted that it was owing to his persevering and vigorous efforts, that they had been allowed to continue their labours, and that unmitigated slavery is not now the law of the land.

In a country where slavery obtains, the mind cannot remain long in a state of neutrality. By a residence in such a country, a stranger from Europe will either have his aversion to the slave system increased, or that aversion will gradually subside, and his sympathies for the slave will at last be exchanged, perhaps imperceptibly to himself, for the views and feelings of the master. This assimilation to the feelings of the slave-holder, is a process which is often completed, before the person, under the deteriorating influence by which it is carried on, is aware of the change. Men, without a high degree of religious and moral principle, may be brought by habit and familiarity to tolerate any thing. "When pains, punishments, torture, and death are made the business of mankind, compassion, the joint associate of the heart, is driven from its place, and the eye, accustomed to continual cruelty, can behold it without offence." If these remarks give a correct view of the effect of a familiarity with the natural evils of slavery, they are still more applicable to the influence of the habitual view of its demoralizing tendency—the most objectionable, revolting, and yet infectious part of the system.

We are not acquainted with the abstract views entertained by Dr. Vanderkemp on this question previous to his arrival in South Africa, but the features under which the subject was presented to him when he became a missionary, produced an effect upon his mind which gave rise to one of the most objectionable actions of his whole life, and which gave currency to calumnies circulated against him by his enemies, which otherwise would have never gained credit beyond the circle in which they had originated. During the first years of his residence in South Africa, he redeemed, out of his own private property, seven slaves; and one of these he married,—from a sympathy, I firmly believe, with the degraded condition of that class of people, and from a mistaken notion that he would, by that means, elevate them. His benevolence in this instance is more to be admired than his knowledge of human nature, and he lived to see and regret his mistake. .

And here I may remark, that from the flexibility of the human mind, easily to accommodate itself to its circumstances, arises one of the greatest dangers missionaries have to encounter among uncivilized tribes; and they require all the aid to be derived from the society of cultivated females to preserve unbroken the habits formerly acquired in the intercourse of civilized life*.

* I have been informed by some missionaries, that, after having resided several years among savage tribes, they found on their return to the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, the etiquette of society such a burden to them, that they frequently found it a relief to steal from company, that they might resign themselves to the freedom to which they were accustomed among the natives, who had accompanied them, and who attended their waggons.

Dr. Vanderkemp had faults : his mind was not cast in the common mould ; but “ the front of his offending ” in the eyes of the colonists was, his hatred of oppression, and his uncompromising zeal for the cause of the oppressed. But for this, every thing else would have been easily forgiven ; and he would have been as much the object of admiration among the abettors of oppression as he was the subject of their aversion and hatred.

I feel no difficulty in applying to this remarkable individual the character of a true missionary, as delineated by the late Bishop Hurd, in his sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

“ The difficulties, the dangers, the distresses of all sorts, which must be encountered by the Christian missionary, require a more than ordinary degree of virtue, and will be only sustained by him whom a fervent love of Christ, and the quickening graces of his spirit have anointed, as it were, and consecrated him to this arduous service. Then it is that we have seen the faithful minister of the word go forth with the zeal of an apostle, and the constancy of a martyr. We have seen him forsake ease and affluence, a competency, at least, and the ordinary comforts of society ; and with the gospel in his hand, and his Saviour in his heart, make his way through burning deserts and the howling wilderness, braving the rage of climates, and all the inconveniences of long and perilous voyages ; submitting to the drudgery of learning barbarous languages, and to the disgust of complying with barbarous manners ; watching the dark suspicions, and exposed to the capricious fury of savages ; courting their offensive society, adopting their loathsome customs, and assimi-

lating his very nature almost to theirs ; in a word, enduring all things, and becoming all things towards them, in the patient hope of finding a way to their good opinion ; and of succeeding finally in his unwearied endeavours to make the word of life and salvation not unacceptable to them.

“ I confess, when I reflect on all these things, I humble myself before such heroic virtue ; or rather, I adore the grace of God in Christ Jesus, which is able to produce such examples of it in our degenerate world.”

Dr. Vanderkemp's mind was truly independent in all its movements. He might occasionally assume too high ground, when called upon to vindicate the Hottentots ; his letters to the governor, and other constituted authorities of the colony, might have too much sharpness in them ; but it may be urged in his defence that his provocations were great ; that this very fault arose from his instinctive abhorrence of injustice and oppression ; and that while the warmth of his benevolent zeal occasionally involved him in trouble, it has had the happiest influence in protecting the Hottentots against much suffering, which they must have otherwise endured, and has laid the foundation of those civil liberties which it is to be hoped will be speedily secured to them.

“ Servant of God, well done ; well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained,
Against revolted multitudes, the cause
Of Truth, in word mightier than they in arms ;
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence ; for this was all thy care,
To stand approv'd in sight of God, though worlds
Judg'd thee perverse.”—MILTON.

I shall conclude this digression, if it may be so called, by an observation arising naturally out of the view just given of Dr. Vanderkemp's character.

While the directors of our Missionary Societies should not be wholly indifferent to the opinion of the world, in respect to our missionaries, there are circumstances under which they should be careful how they receive anything prejudicial to their reputation, even through the medium of their professed friends. This remark is particularly applicable where their missionaries or agents are men of eminent abilities, and where their circumstances require a deviation from the humble routine of ordinary life. Like persons standing on an elevated ground, we easily comprehend the situation of those who are beneath us, while we find it impossible to form any suitable conception of the situation of those who are placed in more elevated situations. The conversations, the generalizations, the plans of superior men are unintelligible to little minds; and nothing is more usual with us in common life than to censure what we do not understand.

On the arrival of the deputation of the London Missionary Society, in South Africa, of which I was a member, the clamour against Dr. Vanderkemp was so loud, and so universal,—the stories circulated respecting him, to the prejudice of his character, were so numerous, so minute in their details, and appeared to be so well authenticated, that I was above eighteen months in the colony before the unfavourable impression made upon my own mind was removed. The missionaries, to whom I was introduced on my first arrival in the colony, were not personally acquainted with him; and they had listened to the re-

ports and imbibed the prejudices of his enemies. One or two well-meaning individuals, whom I afterwards met, who had some slight acquaintance with him, thought him a good man, and vindicated him against the calumnies circulated against him, but they could not sympathise with him in his zeal for the rights of the Hottentots.

The missionaries are the only real protectors the Hottentots have in South Africa. At the missionary stations the Hottentots are treated like rational beings, and there they are taught the value of their labour; and these circumstances are crimes as unpardonable in the eyes of their oppressors, as opposition in parliament to the continuance of slavery is, in the eyes of the West India planters, and its other abettors. The proprietors, in our sugar islands, are not more alarmed by any plan proposed for the abolition of slavery, than the inhabitants of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope are by any exertions to improve the character of the Hottentots, and to raise them above their present degradation, so as to place them in circumstances where they might acquire property, and become independent.

CHAPTER VIII.

Remarks on the Colonial Proclamation of 1809.*

To explain the nature of the struggle which Dr. Vanderkemp and succeeding missionaries have had to maintain in South Africa, in their attempts to introduce religion and civilization among the native tribes, and to set in a clear point of view the obstacles thrown in their way, not only by the local authorities, but by the government itself,—I shall, in this and the subsequent chapter, offer some remarks on the laws respecting the Hottentots, which have served to perpetuate and screen every kind of abuse ; and I shall begin with the proclamation of 1809, which has been most erroneously styled the “ Magna Charta of the Hottentots.”

“ General reasonings,” says one of the most acute writers † of the last century, “ seem intricate merely because they are general ; nor is it easy for the bulk of mankind to distinguish, in a great number of particulars, that common circumstance in which they all agree, or to extract it, pure and unmixed, from the other superfluous circumstances. Every judgment or conclusion, with them, is particular. They cannot enlarge their view to those general propositions which comprehend under them an infinite number of particulars, and include a whole science in a single theorem. Their eye is confounded with such an extensive prospect ; and

* For this proclamation, see APPENDIX.

† Hume.

the conclusions derived from it, even though clearly expressed, seem intricate and obscure.”

These remarks have been suggested to my memory oftener than once, on reading the praises bestowed by an intelligent writer on the proclamation of 1809 respecting the rights and privileges of the Hottentots. An individual not well acquainted with the interior of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, would require great perspicacity indeed to be able to detect the lurking mischief which exists in this proclamation, under the ambiguous phrases by which it is concealed.

I shall begin my strictures on the proclamation by giving a brief abstract of its contents in the following points:—It enacts that the individuals of the Hottentot nation, in the *same manner* as the other inhabitants of the colony, shall be subject to proper regularity in regard to their places of abode and occupation;—that no Hottentot shall be allowed to leave the district or field-cornetcy in which he resides without the consent of the landdrost;—that every person hiring a Hottentot for more than a month, shall enter into and sign a written contract with him before a magistrate, in which shall be stated the names of the parties contracting, the terms of their contract, the amount of wages, when to be paid, &c. &c., and each party to be furnished with a copy;—that the person so contracting shall be at liberty to include his wife and children in the contract, who are also to be supplied with clothing and the necessaries of life;—that at the expiration of his agreement the Hottentot shall be at liberty to depart with his family and cattle, or what other property he may have, if he chooses, and enter into the service of another

master, or act in any other manner the laws of the colony admit ;—that in case the master do not pay the wages at the time agreed on, the Hottentot is allowed to lodge a complaint against him before the landdrost and heemraden, who shall not only oblige the master to pay, but shall cause him to forfeit his claim to the rest of the time of the contract, and the amount of such necessaries as he shall have provided ;—that in case of ill-treatment, proved by the Hottentot before the landdrost and heemraden, the master shall be fined from ten to fifty rix-dollars, and the servant be discharged ; if, however, he fails in his proof, and it is found that he has urged complaints wantonly and maliciously, he shall receive such correction as the nature of the case shall require ;—that in case of ill-treatment accompanied with mutilation, the fiscal or landdrost shall prosecute according to the law of the colony ;—that should the Hottentot request it, the master may supply him with clothing, and other necessaries, as part of his wages, provided the value of such supplies shall, at the time they were given, be notified to the wardmaster or field-cornet, who, on the Hottentot's affirming the same, shall keep a register of it, lest any dispute should arise about the payment of wages ;—that spirituous liquors shall not be considered necessaries, nor any allowance deducted for them ;—that in case the Hottentot has been supplied with more articles than the amount of his wages, the master shall not on that account have any claim on the Hottentot's future services, or detain his wife and children after the time of contract has expired, on a pretence of security for what he may owe, but shall prosecute the Hottentot before the landdrost, who, upon finding the claim to be well founded, shall condemn the

Hottentot to pay it, and leaving the master to carry the condemnation into effect ;—that in case of the death of the Hottentot, his wife and children shall be at liberty to leave the service, unless personally engaged ;—that the Hottentot shall be bound to serve his master, during the time of his contract, diligently and honestly, with proper submission, on penalty of receiving (on well founded complaints) domestic correction, by order of the landdrost, confiscation of wages, temporary confinement, and in cases of contumacy more severe domestic punishment, and be compelled to serve the full time of the agreement ;—that in cases of public criminal offence he is to be prosecuted by the fiscal or landdrost in the usual manner ;—that no person shall hire a Hottentot without his having a certificate, either from his master or the fiscal or landdrost, declaring that he is at liberty to engage with another master ;—and, lastly, that every Hottentot going about the country, either in the service of his master or other lawful business, must be provided with a pass, either from his master or a magistrate, on penalty of being treated as a vagabond ; every one to whose house a Hottentot comes being authorized to demand his pass, and in case he is not provided with one, to deliver him to the next magistrate, who shall act, after due inquiry, as he shall feel incumbent upon him.

After paying a just tribute of praise to the character of Lord Caledon, the able author of the “ State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*,” notices three different

* The author of this work, though he has not given his name to it, is well known to be W. Wilberforce Bird, Esq., a gentleman to whose kindness and urbanity I have pleasure in acknowledging myself under many obligations, both in his private capacity and as

measures of his government as deserving of praise, viz. the establishment of the Circuits Court ; the supplying Cape Town with water ; and this proclamation, which he calls the "Magna Charta" of the Hottentots. On the first of these measures we shall not now make any remarks ; and, as we have no concern with the second, we shall confine our attention to the last.

"This proclamation," says our author, "rescued the Hottentots from a system of hardship and cruelty practised towards them by the Boors, which would, in a short time, have extinguished the race : so great was their terror of their barbarous masters, that it was in the dead of night, when, unseen by their vindictive employers, they ventured to communicate their wrongs, and to implore the mercy of the governor, at that time on a journey through the frontier." That the Hottentots applied to Lord Caledon in this manner, and that his lordship intended this proclamation should afford them relief, are facts I see no reason to doubt. In travelling through the colony, I have had Hottentots who have travelled many miles under night to show me the marks of cruelty inflicted upon their bodies, and to plead with me that they might have liberty to join a missionary institution. If such occurrences were frequent during my recent journies into the interior, there can be no reason to suppose they did not take place in 1808 ; and it was, perhaps, fortunate for the individual Hottentots who at that period applied to his Excel-

a public servant of the government ; but on the subject now under consideration, as well as several others discussed or referred to in his otherwise valuable book, I must express opinions altogether at variance with those of the author.

lency, that such a man as Lord Caledon was governor of the colony, and that they could find the means of access to him.

In 1821 above a dozen Hottentots came from a considerable distance to Cape Town, to throw themselves at the feet of the acting governor, to pray for deliverance from cruel oppression; and many more would have followed their example from the same place, had I not prevented them. This circumstance of the Hottentots applying to Lord Caledon, shows that they were oppressed, and, were that benevolent nobleman to visit that colony and make a tour through it, he would find as many complaints of the same nature as those which gave rise to the proclamation of 1809. All the enactments which emanated from the head and heart of Lord Caledon were characterized by wisdom and benevolence; but it is no reflection on his lordship to say that he might be deceived, when he was under the necessity of submitting to the judgment of others. The proclamation of 1809 was a case of this nature: the most important part of this proclamation was suggested to Colonel Collins, his Majesty's Commissioner, mentioned above, by an individual well known to have been deeply interested in oppressing the Hottentots. By Colonel Collins these suggestions were handed over to another gentleman, who claimed to himself, in my hearing, the whole merit of the proclamation, telling me that it was "a child of his own."

Under the Dutch government, the farmers had always a number of Hottentots about them, and, when these left their service, if they did not escape from that part of the country, or meet with protection, they were frequently compelled to return to them; but, while the

farmer exercised an authority of this kind, contrary to law, the Hottentots might occasionally obtain redress, and many of that nation were then allowed to wander over the colony, in a state of freedom, with their herds and flocks. Does this proclamation go to the root of this evil? Does it set aside the unjust claims of the farmers on the Hottentots? The very reverse is the case: it legalizes those claims, and it consigns the Hottentots and their posterity to universal and hopeless slavery.

The preamble of this proclamation states that—
“Whereas, for the benefit of this colony at large, it is necessary, that not only the individuals of the Hottentot nation, in the same manner as the other inhabitants, should be subject to proper regularity, in regard to their places of abode and occupations, but also that they should find *encouragement* for entering the service of the inhabitants, to leading an indolent life,” &c. &c. One might have been led to expect from this preamble, that the Hottentots were to be placed under the *same regulations* with the *other inhabitants*, and that this auspicious introduction was to be followed by a string of regulations, protecting them from oppression, and, at the same time, specifying the encouragement they were to meet with. But whatever were the intentions of Lord Caledon, the provisions of this enactment, it will soon be perceived, were totally inadequate to produce such a result. Had it been intended that the Hottentots should be under the same regulations with the colonists, as it respected their places of abode and their occupations, a separate article in the proclamation on this head was unnecessary; the publication of the existing laws of the colony, having a relation to the colo-

nists, was all that was required : but, instead of being placed under the same laws with the colonists, it will be seen, when we enter a little more into detail, that the whole Hottentot population are, by this very proclamation, placed in a state of the most wretched servitude, and entirely left at the disposal of the colonists.

In the second Article of this proclamation, ordaining that every person having a Hottentot for a month or more, shall enter into a written contract, &c. there are many good provisions ; but, in consequence of the omission to provide for a particular case, much hardship is experienced by the Hottentots under contract among the colonists.

As the law now stands, as established by the provisions of this Article, the Hottentot, in entering into a contract, engages to labour for a given period ; and it not unfrequently happens, that, from some unavoidable cause, as illness, or the meeting with some dangerous accident, he is prevented from actually labouring during the whole period of the contract, but, as no provision is made for such an occurrence, the following practice is usually adopted :—the contractor insists that the terms of the contract have not been fulfilled, and that it is, therefore, necessary that such Hottentot should remain, and work out those days, or weeks, or months, during which he may, from the causes above-mentioned, have been prevented from fulfilling (as it is termed) his engagement. This is a practice, I believe, unknown in other civilized states, and is one of those hardships which is peculiar to the condition of the unfortunate aborigines of South Africa. In colonies, where the working classes are all common slaves, it is impracticable, for, in such circumstances, such losses must devolve upon the proprietor.