

## CHAPTER II.

*Transactions on our arrival at Capetown. Journey to Gruenekloof. Bullock Waggon described. First meeting with the Christian Hottentots. Conclusion of the year 1815.*

**D**ECEMBER 24th. We had not been long on shore, before Mr. Henry Hancke, a friend of Mrs. Disandt's family, came to bid us welcome, and kindly offered to render us every assistance. From this gentleman I have received so many favours during the whole time of my abode at the Cape, that I should not discharge the debt of gratitude I owe to him, did I not, immediately on introducing his name into my narrative, express my great obligations to him, as they regard both the mission and my own person. He had promised our late worthy friend, Mr. Disandt, shortly before his death, that he would not only befriend his family, and assist them with his advice, but endeavour to promote the interests of the Brethren's Mission among the heathen in this colony, to which Mr. Disandt had always approved himself a kind friend and benefactor. Mr. Hancke has in every respect fulfilled the wishes of his dying friend with exemplary faithfulness, and both the family and the mission have derived the most essential benefit from his active services. To find such a friend on our arrival, added to the kind and hospitable reception we met with from Mrs. Disandt and her children, made us soon forget the tediousness of a long voyage, and feel ourselves quite at home in her house.

The first conversation I had with Mr. Hancke upon the general concerns of our mission at Gruenekloof, considerably relieved my mind, and I perceived, that, by the gracious providence of God, things were in such a state of preparation, that my transactions with his Excellency, the Governor, and with the colonial Secretaries, would be rendered much more easy, than I expected. As they have no

relation to the journey and the general state of the Mission, they will, of course, form no part of this narrative.

After dinner, Mr. Hancke proposed a walk, to see the town. Passing through several streets, we entered the Governor's, late the Company's, gardens, which afford to the inhabitants a pleasant promenade. The avenues are planted with oak of luxuriant foliage, skirted on each side by hedges of myrtle. The ground is laid out in squares, enclosed between high hedges. Within a stone fence, several ostriches and other birds, and in a separate building, a lion, lioness, a tyger, and two or three more wild animals were kept. Leaving the gardens, we walked to the foot of Table-Mountain. Already before we landed, we had observed a white mist creeping up from the south, through the opening between the Devil's-Hill and the flat summit of Table-Mountain. This had now nearly covered the former, and was fast spreading along the rocky sides and summit of the latter, carrying with it a blast of wind, which in a short time grew so strong, that we could hardly stem its force. The change from the most clear, calm, and warm weather, to storm and fog, was almost instantaneous; and before we could reach any kind of shelter, we were driven along by the gale, shivering with cold, and glad to make the best of our way towards home. The storm proved also a great annoyance to several groups of males and females, chiefly slaves, and other people of colour, met on the common, carousing, playing, or dancing, as is usual here on Sundays and holidays. The variety of faces, complexions, and dresses, seen among the common people, is very striking. The greater part are black or tawny. Not many genuine Hottentots, but various mixtures between Hottentots and slaves or other natives of the Mozambique shore, Malays, and negroes, have here their residence, and are known by the general name of bastards. Many are Mahomedans; but there appears little religious animosity among them, every one doing what seemeth good in his own eyes. As to the Christian inhabitants, the English, Dutch Calvinists, and German Lutherans, possess the churches; the

two former joining in the use of the great church. The latter have lately obtained permission to build one for themselves.

The streets are laid out in right angles; the houses stuccoed, whitened, and chiefly consisting of two stories, though a few of them exceed that height. Their general appearance is neat and clean. As in the towns in Holland, and some parts of Germany, large carved door-cases, grotesque decorations of gable-ends, and huge gates, leading to small houses, are met with here and there; but, in general, it may well pass for an English town.

I gave notice of our arrival to the Missionaries at Groenekloof, by the usual Sunday's post, forwarded by a dragoon. We were sorry to miss the celebration of Christmas-Eve, in one of our settlements.

25th. Christmas-day. We attended divine service in the Lutheran church, of which the Rev. Mr. Hesse is minister. German hymns are sung, but the sermon is delivered in Low Dutch, a language, as yet, unintelligible to us.

The church is a handsome building, with three aisles; the roofs supported by columns of the Ionic order; the galleries judiciously placed behind them. The organ is new, and of considerable magnitude. The church has no steeple, but a short pyramid is placed on the pediment over the entrance.

When the service was over, Mr. Hancke accompanied me to the house of Mr. Alexander, the colonial Secretary. Here I delivered my letters of introduction, and afterwards called on the President of the court of justice, Mr. Trutter, and on the Fiscal, Mr. De Nyssen. Some missionaries from other societies paid us agreeable visits. With one of them I took a walk towards evening, and noticed several objects, new to me. The mountains were enveloped in clouds, but the sky otherwise clear. We passed by some vineyards. The vines grow without espaliers, placed in rows, like currant-bushes in our gardens. When arrived at a certain height, the upper shoots are taken off, to increase the quantity of grapes. Fences of the large aloe, and of cactus or Indian fig, are common. Of pisang, we saw several large beds.

26th. In the forenoon, we had the great pleasure to see our missionary, Brother Schmitt and his wife arrive from Groenekloof, in a waggon, drawn by twelve bullocks. The unexpected information received of our arrival at the Cape, had made them take immediate steps to meet us. They had also provided waggons for our conveyance to Groenekloof, where the Brethren Marsveld and Bonatz from Gnadenthal were soon expected. Meanwhile, having occasion to call at a watchmaker's shop, we found him to be a lively old German, who entertained us with a narrative of his adventures. He gave us also an account of the dreadful plague of the small-pox, by which this colony was visited about four years ago, and a great number of people of all ages and sexes were carried off. He was one of those, who suffered most severely. Flags were hung out from the windows of those houses where the disorder raged, to mark them as pestiferous; and thus for three months, he lived quite alone, in a dreadful state of mind and body, not expecting to survive. His friends placed victuals at the threshold of his door, but not even one of the family dared to approach or visit him in his affliction. "But," added he, "it was this affliction, that first taught me to know and fear God, and to consider the state of my immortal soul."

27th. I waited on Mr. Stoll, the landdrost of the Cape district, in which Groenekloof lies, and was by him introduced to Colonel Bird, deputy colonial Secretary, through whom permission must be obtained to remain in the colony, and to proceed into the country. He received me and the missionaries with great politeness. Having advised me to present my letters of recommendation to the Governor with my own hands, Mr. Hancke was so obliging as to carry me to Newlands in his sociable. The road lies along the eastern side of Table-Mountain, which here presents itself in shapes more picturesque and wild, than on the western, towards the town. The foot, both of the Devil's-Hill and Table-Mountain, is well clothed with witteboom, (*protea argentea*), oak, and other trees, the verdure and foliage of which were in great perfection. To the left is the bay, and the low hills on its northern shore; but towards the

north-east the magnificent range of mountains of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein form a noble horizon. Various singular plants adorn the hedges and banks on each side of the road, among which the huge bushes of Indian fig in full bloom; the Chinese rose, growing to the height of sixteen or twenty feet; the aloe and pisang were particularly conspicuous. Many elegant houses, belonging to the citizens, with rich plantations surrounding them, lie along the foot of the mountains, precipices and grotesque rocks overhanging them in sullen majesty. We reached Newlands in about an hour, and found the Governor, Lord Charles Henry Somerset, at home. I presented to his Excellency the letters I had brought with me, and had a long conversation with him on various subjects, in which he assured me of his favourable disposition towards our missionaries, and his approbation of their exertions for the improvement both of the temporal and spiritual state of the Hottentots and other heathen tribes in this colony, as likewise of his readiness to remove every obstacle, that might impede the prosecution of their labours.

28th. Having received an invitation from Mr. Schmidt, a gentleman possessing a farm in the kloof between the Lion's-Head and Table-Mountain, our whole party walked to his house to breakfast. It lies about three English miles from the town. Passing through the yard of Mr. Zorn, formerly landdrost of the Cape district, we observed a tame mongoose, or mausehund, from Java, a species of viverra, which ran about, and suffered itself to be handled. It was a beautiful creature, about a foot long, with a sharp snout, from which the body rises, richly clothed with fine long hair, to about four inches in height, sloping off again to the end of the tail. Its colour was dark olive. When frightened or injured, it uttered a quick, jabbering noise. In its wild state, this creature is a most destructive depredator among all kinds of poultry.

Mr. Schmidt's farm lies in a very romantic situation. It is built upon a mass of rock of coarse granite, containing large crystals of feldspath, apparently in a state of slow decompo-

sition. To the left of the house is the bed of a torrent, passing through a deep ravine. After crossing it by a stone arch, the path leads to some huge blocks of granite, which form altogether a singular mass of rock, overspread by oaks and other trees and shrubs, affording shade to the cattle. The grounds are filled with all kinds of fruit-trees and useful plants, every one of which seems to grow luxuriantly. Peach and orange orchards, and beds of pisang and bamboos occupy the slope of the hill.— After some time spent with this hospitable family, we returned, calling again at Mr. Zorn's house by the way. It is a good Dutch building, delightfully situated among shady groves of various trees. The garden abounds with a vast variety of large flowering shrubs and plants. The portico or gallery, running along the whole front of the building, has an espalier roof entirely covered with vines, the grapes hanging down in great profusion and beauty. An aviary contains some curious birds, both from Africa and the East Indies. Mr. Zorn was not at home; but we were hospitably received by Mr. Cloete, his son-in-law. Walking down the hill, the town presents itself very pleasantly, its streets crossing each other at right angles, with Table-Bay and the hilly country in the back-ground; but the want of towers and other prominent features detracts from its beauty. On the road, we noticed some large spiders, red locusts, and grasshoppers, peculiar to the Cape. My time at home was taken up with visiting both the friends of the Mission and some gentlemen in the public offices. Mr. Hancke also made me acquainted with Mr. Melville, Surveyor to the Government, with whom my readers will become yet better acquainted in the course of this narrative.

29th. Finding that waiting for the landing of the whole of our baggage, would detain us too long at Capetown, the Christmas holidays having intervened and caused delay at the Custom-house, we determined to proceed to Groenekloof this afternoon.

Mrs. Disandt's children brought me a cameleon, or, as the Dutch call it, a trapsoetjes, signifying an animal, that walks cautiously.

It is in shape and size like a common lizard, but with a proportionably larger head, and longer tail, which it coils downwards. Its eyes are situated in prominent tubes, easily moved to and fro, up or down, towards any object before or behind, together or separately, in different directions. Its general colour is green and orange, but it changes with the place it occupies among trees, grass, or stones. It has two toes on each foot, with which it clasps the small branches of the shrub or tree on which it may sit, drawing itself slowly along, or climbing from one to another. The whole creature is covered with small protuberances, of various hues.

About four o'clock P. M. we left Capetown, accompanied by the best wishes of our worthy and generous friends. Our caravan consisted of four waggons. The first, drawn by twelve, and the second, by fourteen bullocks, were occupied by our own party. In the third, which was uncovered and drawn by sixteen, a young Englishman, travelling our way, was allowed to have a seat. That, and the fourth, with fourteen bullocks, were appropriated for baggage and stores, destined for Groenekloof and its neighbourhood.

The waggons in use at the Cape have a strong frame-work body, with wheels and axle-trees made of iron-wood, or other wood, equally hard and tough. A travelling-waggon is furnished with seats, suspended by leather straps, to give them play, which, in some respects, answers the purpose of springs, and with a tilt of matting, covered with sailcloth, supported by hoops of bamboo. Curtains, of sailcloth or leather, hang before and behind, to secure the company against wind and rain. The bullocks draw by a wooden yoke, consisting of a strong bar laid across their necks, to which are fixed, in right angles downwards, four short pieces, so as to admit the neck of each animal between two of them. These are kept in their places, by being tied together below the neck with a small thong. A strongly plaited leather thong runs from the ring at the end of the pole to the

yoke of the first pair of oxen, being fastened, in passing, to the middle rings of each yoke. The bullocks, by pushing with their shoulders, seem to draw with ease. The Hottentot driver has a whip, the stick of which is a strong bamboo, twelve and more feet long, and the lash, a plaited thong of equal or greater length. With this, to European grasp, unwieldy instrument, he not only cracks very loud, but hits any one of his bullocks with the greatest surety. But the chief engine of his government is his tongue, and he continually calls to his cattle by their names, directing them to the right or left by the addition of the exclamations of hott and haar, occasionally enforcing obedience to his commands by a lash, or by whisking or cracking his whip over their heads. A boy leads the foremost oxen by a thong fastened about their horns, and they seem to follow him willingly. We were accompanied a short way by our friends, Mr. Hancke and Mr. Daniel Disandt. The weather was clear, and the view of the mountains delightful.

The English have made good roads in the immediate neighbourhood of Capetown, and to Simon's Bay; but we soon left them, and dragged through deep sand, almost the whole way to Groenekloof. No trees, and but few shrubs, adorn the waste, but we noticed many pretty species of heath, and some elegant flowers, unknown to us. The most common plant is the so-called Hottentot fig. From beneath the sand is protruded, most of the way to the drift or fording-place of the Salt river, a porous iron-stone of singular character, appearing here and there perforated, like a honeycomb, or an umber of nuclei cleaving together, the cavities filled with ochre. This iron-stone is found almost in every part of the colony, both in the Cape district, and beyond the great ridges of mountains, in a variety of forms, in pebbles, large lumps, scattered about among the sand, or in veins. About sunset, we reached the large salt pans near the Riet Valley, so called from the quantity of reed-rushes growing in it. The people in the adjoining farm very civilly sent to invite us to the house; but



we excused ourselves, wishing yet to proceed farther, before we took up our night's lodging in the wilderness. In about an hour's time, we unyoked the bullocks, and left them to seek their supper among the bushes. This is always done, if possible, at a place where there is a stream or pool of fresh water. The Hottentots having lighted a fire, a mat was spread on the ground to leeward of a large bush of the poison-apple, which screened us from a sharp south-east wind, black clouds on the horizon threatening us with a stormy, and perhaps rainy night. Coffee was boiled; of which, with some eggs, cold meat, cakes, and milk, we made an excellent supper, sitting round the fire. After our repast, we retired into the waggon to rest. The fire going out, and no preparation for our departure being made, Brother Schmitt, on inquiry, found, that eleven oxen were missing, for which the Hottentots had been searching in vain. To point out to the latter the place of our encampment, as well as to guard against the cold in this dark night, some of us rekindled the fire, keeping up a constant blaze, by feeding it with rhinoceros bushes, a resinous plant with large roots, but easily pulled up. After some hours, all hopes of finding the lost cattle having vanished, a different arrangement was made, and we proceeded with two waggons, leaving the other two to follow us.

30th. We passed by a farm on the Blauberg, belonging to a Mr. Kotzee, and about sun-rise reached a place called Trefonteyn, an appendage to a farm, belonging to a Mr. Kous. Here we made another halt, and breakfasted under a thicket, consisting of different kinds of brush-wood and flowering shrubs. Into this cover, we saw a snake hastening with a young frog, entangled in its coils, but its swiftness was such, that all our exertions to destroy it only rescued the wretched captive. We now travelled through a barren, sandy heath, but the weather having cleared up, the sight of the hills about Groenekloof afforded us much pleasure, and Brother Schmitt pointed out the spot, where, some years ago, he narrowly escaped death, in a rencontre with a tyger. Being about an hour's drive from the settlement, we discerned at some distance a group of Hottentots, men,

women and children, who had come out to meet us, with the missionary, Brother Fritsch, standing on a small rising ground near the road. As soon as the waggons had reached the spot, we alighted, and were welcomed by the Hottentots, who joined in singing that hymn, "*Now let us praise the Lord,*" &c.

To describe our feelings on this occasion is not in the power of words. The various subjects for reflection, which rushed upon my mind at once, on seeing this company, lately a scattered race of wretched, ignorant, and wicked heathen, but now brought together as a people of God, among whom His word dwells daily and richly, made me inwardly exclaim: "Where is the wisdom of the wise! "where is the disputer of this world!" and the visionary theorist! Here is proof by facts, that "the Word of the Cross is the power "of GOD unto salvation to all them that believe." Here is seen the effect produced by the preaching of the gospel of a crucified Saviour, unadorned and unaided by human eloquence! I was greatly affected, beyond the power of utterance, and we all stood in silent devotion, listening to the sweet voices, which formed the delightful chorus. We shook hands with all of them, old and young, while, in the most affectionate and humble manner, they expressed their joy at our arrival. The whole procession now moved forward, some of the Hottentot women in an open bullock-waggon, which they had brought with them; the rest, with the men, partly on horseback and partly on foot. The settlement is seen like a fruitful field in the midst of a desert, and the road to the missionaries' houses lies through a small poplar wood. About five P. M. we arrived at the dwelling-house, and met with a most cordial welcome from another party of Hottentots, who had assembled at the door, and expressed their gratitude, that God had again sent teachers to them, by singing several verses, and by unaffected declarations of their joy.

After dinner, some of us walked out to see the settlement, entered some cottages, and found everywhere friendly faces and a kind reception. In the usual evening-meeting, Brother Fritsch addressed the congregation on the mercy of God, in granting, from time to time, a

supply of ministers and teachers, who were willing to devote themselves to the work of God among the heathen, and especially among the Hottentots; and in prayer commended those who had just now arrived, to the guidance of His Holy Spirit, in all their future labours; praising Him for having brought them safely to this place. I then delivered a salutation from the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, and all our congregations in England, to the congregation of Christian Hottentots at Groenekloof. Brother Clemens did the same from the Elder's Conference of the Unity\*, and the congregations in Germany. The Hottentots, of whom about a hundred and fifty were present, answered by loud thanksgivings. On quitting the chapel, several came to shake hands with us, saying, that they were not worthy, that we should come so far to serve them.

31st. After the forenoon's service, a Hottentot accosted me, desiring to speak with me alone. As I could not understand him, I requested Brother Schmitt to be present. The poor man came to make confession of his having been seduced by an old companion at Capetown, to drink more than he ought to have done; that he had thus overslept himself behind a bush, at the place where we spent the first part of the night, and suffered the cattle to go astray; and that he now came to ask forgiveness. Though his situation at that time was not observed by us, yet it had given offence to the Hottentots; and we represented to him, that he had not only hurt his own soul, but brought disgrace upon the cause of the gospel: that therefore it was necessary, for the present, to exclude him from the meetings of the baptized; to which sentence, Brother Schmitt added some serious and fatherly admonitions. His tears showed the grief he felt, and, as we hoped, his true

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\* The Committee or Board of Bishops and Elders of the Church of the United Brethren, appointed by the General Synods for the superintendence and management of the affairs of the Church from one Synod to another. (See Crantz's History of the Brethren).





*Drawn by R. Cocking, from the Original Sketches of C. Latrobe.*

*Engraved by Stadler*

MISSIONARY HOUSE & CHURCH at GROENEKLOOF,  
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

*London, Published by R. Ackermann, April, 1818.*