

CHAPTER XXII.

Sailing of the Brilliant. Iron plough. Sea-coast near Gaensekraal, Mr. Dashwood's farm. Shells used for lime. Account of the Dünen. Waxberry bushes, and manner of boiling wax. Laatste Stuiver. Brick-making. Visit Papkülls-fonteyn, Wolfskloof, Bürger's post, and Langefonteyn. Sand-flies. Arrival of Gnadenthal masons. Mr. Melville. Second farewell at Groenekloof. Hottentots manner of setting a brick-kiln. Departure from Groenekloof.

SEPTEMBER 15th. My return to Groenekloof was unexpected; but I was again welcomed with much cordiality, both by the missionaries and the Hottentots.

By a letter from Brother Bonatz, we were informed that the Brilliant sailed to-day. The sailing of this vessel raised the first serious disquietude in my mind, as I had very slight hopes of soon following and overtaking her, before she reached England. Pleasant as my stay at the Cape has been, yet, thinking that I had executed my commission, I now felt somewhat restless, wishing to return to my duties at home.

17th. I rode with Brother Fritsch to the Grootte Post, to show him the new iron plough mentioned above, (p. 322), hoping that it might, with advantage, be introduced at Groenekloof, where agriculture is yet conducted after the Hottentot fashion. Mr. Croucher being absent, a serjeant of dragoons attended us. We looked at several ploughs of English construction, and I was glad to be informed, that the manufactory, established here, cannot furnish them fast enough for the increasing calls from the interior. Some have lately been sent to Uitenhagen. This shows an increase of good sense, and a decrease of prejudice in favour of the old, clumsy, wooden, Hottentot plough.

On our road home, we passed through the Klaberfalg, the residence of Mr. Duckett.

18th. Mr. Duckett, jun. called upon us, with an invitation from his father to dinner. As I expected every day to be my last at Groenekloof, we declined it, but in the afternoon, Brother Schmitt took a ride with me to his house. The road leads through the upper or eastern part of the village. After passing the Elephant-stones, the valley is narrow, but rich and fertile, and Mr. Duckett, being an excellent farmer, makes the most of it. The low hills to the right, are adorned with a profusion of wild bushes, with huge blocks of granite, fancifully dispersed among them. Their summits are crowned with assemblages of the same stone, forming broken rocks. We saw Mr. Duckett in his garden, alighted, and joined him. Groenekloof being this year, rather scantily supplied with garden-produce, he kindly offered, out of his abundance, to give us what we might send for.

When we arrived at the house, we were kindly received by Mrs. Duckett, who treated us with the most friendly attention. The conversation turned upon improvements in farming, and furnished an opportunity of removing some misunderstanding. Perceiving, that I was an admirer of natural curiosities, Mr. Duckett presented me with the tail of a pylstort, (arrow-tail), a fish caught in Simon's-bay. The tail itself is slender, and about fourteen inches in length. From the upper part of its insertion into the body, proceed two sharp bones, serrated on both sides, placed above each other, the lower, three, the upper, two inches long, which the fish can turn in any direction, inflicting a most severe and dangerous wound on its enemy. Every tooth of this bony saw acts as a barb, and if once inserted, cannot be extracted without great laceration of the flesh. It attacks sharks and other large fish with impunity, as all dread the experiment of having their throats pierced by such formidable weapons. The specimen given to me, was taken with a shark.

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I was glad to have paid this visit, which seemed, for the future, to ensure the friendship of a very respectable neighbour.

19th. This morning, Mr. Fisher, the mason, with a party of our own Hottentots, and a slave belonging to Mr. Schroeder, began to work at the foundation of the new church. The huge stones, brought from the aloë-garden, now came into use, and were placed in the trench. They form a foundation unusually strong. Though I was much engaged with writing, I could not forbear going out sometimes to see the people at work, and was highly gratified with their cheerful diligence. In the evening, Brother Bonatz returning from the Cape, brought me the unpleasant intelligence, that the Zebra would not sail before the beginning of October.

20th. Though it rained all day, our Hottentot masons went on with their work at the foundation. In the evening, a Government messenger arrived, on his way to Saldanha bay. He had fallen from his horse and hurt his thigh and arm, but found here relief and good quarters. Two plans of the front of the new church, one proposed by the builder, Mr. Schroeder, and the other by Mr. Melville, were submitted to the family. The latter, being the most tasteful, was unanimously approved; a decision worthy to be imitated by parish-vestries and building-committees, in our own enlightened country. I was desired to write to Gnadenthal and encourage the Hottentots, to come to the assistance of their brethren in forwarding the work.

21st. Mr. Melville accompanied me on a walk through the settlement. We conversed with several families, and I thought I perceived a rising disposition for the improvement of their grounds, which deserves encouragement.

22d. A young woman departed this life in the faith of Christ, bearing witness to all present of the happiness of those, who find mercy, and obtain assurance of their being accepted, through His merits and all-sufficient atonement. Her funeral was attended

by a numerous company. Brother Schmitt addressed himself particularly to the young people, whom he exhorted to follow the example of their deceased friend, to forsake the world with its vanities and pollutions, and to press forward to the attainment of that same faith and hope of eternal life, which had supported her during a lingering illness, and in the awful moment of death, and enabled her to leave the world, rejoicing in her God and Redeemer. His serious and affectionate discourse seemed to make a deep impression on the audience. The funeral was conducted with the greatest order and devotion, as described in my account of Gnadenthal, (p. 92).

23d. Having written a letter to the congregation at Gnadenthal, as requested above, Brother Stein set out this morning, as our envoy, to convey our wishes to our Brethren, and to the Hottentots, in that settlement. Immanuel went with him, as groom. The weather turning out fine, the Brethren Schmitt and Fritsch accompanied me to Gaensekraal, near the sea coast, on a visit to Mr. Dashwood. The road is uninteresting, leading through a barren, sandy wilderness, with not a cultivated spot on either side. But the bountiful Creator has likewise here clothed the waste with an incomparable profusion of flowers, which, in some places, cover the sand between the bushes, as with a rich carpet. We discovered several tortoises waddling along, and took up five, being varieties of the same species, but of different shades of colouring. One was new to us, having protuberances on the seams enclosing each compartment of the shell.

To our great disappointment, we found an empty house at Gaensekraal. We therefore left our prey and our great coats with a dragoon, and proceeded through a level country, overgrown with large bushes, to the sea-coast. The mole-holes not a little annoyed us and our horses. Several antelopes started up close to us, and the nearer we approached the coast, the more dense was the thicket, so as to render it difficult to penetrate to the water's edge, which, where nearest, may be about two miles from

the farm. Many speckbooms, olive, and milk-bushes, are intermixed with the rhinoceros bushes, in wild confusion. The coast is not high, but rocky, with a broken beach and sand. A strong westerly wind caused a considerable swell and surf, which, after dismounting on the beach, kept us at a respectful distance from the advancing surges. On their retreat, we discovered a fine hard sand, but durst not venture to walk upon its smooth surface. An innumerable quantity of large muscles cover the coast everywhere, mixed here and there with the beautiful sea-ear and other shells, peculiar to these regions, but all in a broken state. The shells are brought by cart-loads to the farms, and burnt in kilns, as lime for mortar. The rocks are a dark-grey shistus, with narrow veins of quartz.

Finding it too troublesome to lead the horses more than about an English mile over the rough shells and pebbles, we returned to Gaensekraal. The sandy road exhibited the fresh track of a wolf. This bushy coast is infested by wolves and leopards, which commit many depredations in the neighbouring farms.

While we rested at the house, I wrote a letter to Mr. Dashwood, to explain a mistake respecting a strange Hottentot in his service, who pretended to belong to Groenekloof. This fellow having been guilty of pilfering, in his flight, passing through Groenekloof, left the stolen property on the roof of a cottage, which caused the inhabitant to be suspected by Mr. Dashwood, as being in league with the thief, though quite ignorant of the transaction. Mr. Dashwood expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the explanation given, and I felt anxious to remove the unpleasant impression made by misrepresentation, purposely employed by a known enemy to the Mission, in the mind of a man, who always had been well-disposed towards it.

Gaensekraal is a good farm; the buildings are superior to many in the country, and the grounds extensive, but bare of trees. The little wood, which formerly adorned the premises, was cut down, under an idea, that it harboured birds, particularly a kind of star-

lings, that do great mischief in the fields. But nowhere have I seen such flights of these birds as in Mr. Dashwood's grounds. Thus the place had been robbed of its beauty, to little purpose. On our journey home, we did not see one tortoise to add to our collection, but some curious beetles and lizards.

24th. Every morning I am greeted by the pleasant chirping of two swallows, cock and hen, which have a nest in a corner of the room, under the ceiling. There is hardly a room, kitchen, or out-house in the country without these inmates, and it would be thought next to murder to kill them. They build their nests of clay, in the shape of a bottle, the bottom being fixed to the wall, and the neck serving for the entrance. Into these bottle-shaped nests, they convey the softest down. As far as I was able to watch them, both cock and hen assist in the construction, or repairs of the nest, which remains for their use during their emigration. The same birds always return to the same nests, and if it happens, that by white-washing the room, the outside of the nest has been whitened, they carefully cover about half the length of the neck with fresh clay, before they make a new bed.

As the upper half of the room-door, generally stands open during the day, they go in and out whenever they please, but if the door is shut, they give notice of their wish to go abroad, to fetch either materials or food, by a gentle piping and flying about the room, and none think it too troublesome to let them out. At dawn of day, they are heard chirping their morning-song, before they leave the nest. I have often left my bed, to open the door for them.

These birds are shaped like the European swallows, but, under their wings, of a red-brown colour. They leave the country during the winter. They are persecuted by a bird called the wild swallow, black and white in colour, which is said to kill the domestic one, and sieze upon its nest. The wild are on that account shot, or otherwise destroyed by the Hottentots.

This being Sister Schmitt's birth-day, the Hottentots, particu-

larly the girls belonging to her school, did every thing in their power to show their affection and esteem for her, and I was again delighted with the sincere and well-merited expression of their gratitude for her faithfulness and kindness towards them.

We had an agreeable visit from Mr. Stoll, landdrost of the Cape district, Dr. Liesching, and Mr. Gieh, who walked through every part of the settlement with approbation. It afforded a desirable opportunity of giving explanations, and rectifying some erroneous notions.

25th. Having heard much of the singular appearance of the range of Dünen, or sand-hills, along the coast, I rode thither with Brother Fritsch, and was struck with surprise, when we entered among them. Their appearance from Groenekloof is rather unpleasant, and not unlike a low sandy dyke, skirting the waste in a straight line. But I found them occupying a very wide field, extending to several miles from the sea-coast. The fine sand, which is chiefly pulverized quartz, and as white as snow, is here blown about, like sleet on a frozen surface, forming hillocks of considerable height, and in shape, resembling huge drifts of snow. The flats between them are destitute of any verdure, the surface being almost constantly in motion. To-day the south-east wind blew pretty strong, and small parallel ridges were continually forming over the whole surface, by its operation upon the sand. In other parts, especially where deep recesses or glens are defended by the hillocks, the waxberry-bush has found shelter, and grows in great abundance. To a superficial observer, it appears not unlike box. Some of the stems are as thick as a man's leg, and the bushes from eight to ten feet in height.

Our path wound round between the hillocks, sometimes over soft sand, through which the horses waded heavily, and again over a hard bottom, like frozen snow. In a deep glen, we saw several of our people from Groenekloof, diligently employed in gathering wax-berries. They sent a little boy to show us the way to a place surrounded by high banks, where they had erected

a hut, and kept their apparatus for boiling the berries, and extracting the wax. The renters of the neighbouring farms claim a right to this property, and our people were required to ask their permission to gather the berries. Though this had been done, a man had yesterday warned off the women engaged in boiling wax; they had therefore hid their iron pot, for fear of seizure. But on discovering us to be friends, they produced it, and showed us the process, which is perfectly simple. The pot is hung over the fire, by running a thick stick through its handle, which is supported at each end, by a fork placed in the ground, at a convenient distance from the fire. After the berries have boiled some time, the wax appears on the surface of the water, and is skimmed off with a spoon. Two kinds of wax-berry bushes grow here, one smaller than the other. The berries of both, have much the appearance of those of the juniper.

From hence we rode to the Laatste Stuiver, a parcel of land containing much sweet grass, and wax-berry bushes, for the possession of which the missionaries had applied to Government, that they and their Hottentots might have a change of food for the cattle. But it had already been advertised to be disposed of to the best bidder.

27th. In the afternoon, I walked out to see the brick-makers. A number of girls had offered their services, to place the new-made bricks in rows to dry, and as amusement accompanied the work, nothing could exceed their diligence. Some, who think working in their fields and gardens a labour too great to be supported for any length of time, work here and in the quarry, for many hours successively, with a zeal, activity, and good-humour, which surprised me. Hitherto the weather had favoured us, but most of the bricks, in drying, cracked by the heat of the sun. This was afterwards avoided, by different management in mixing the clay.

During the latter days of the month, I spent my time chiefly at my desk, relieved by a daily morning-walk to the masons and

brick-makers, and an evening's visit to the quarry, which proved more and more productive.

October 2d. Brother Fritsch rode with me to Papkülls-fonteyn farm, inhabited by a friendly neighbour. We took the road round Cruywagens-kraal hill, crowned like others, with loose masses of granite, some of which have fanciful shapes. Not finding our friend at home, we conversed some time with the family at the door, without quitting our horses. They showed us a young cub of a baboon, brought from the mountain, which of all creatures I have yet seen, was the most frightfully disgusting object, and in its manners equally unpleasant, squeaking, jabbering, and twinkling its eyes in a head and wrinkled face, too large for the body.

We kept on the north-side of the hills with the immense waste of Zwartland to our right, and beyond it the beautiful ranges of mountains from the Piquetberg to the Hangeklip. At the back of the Lauweskloof hill, is the Wolfskloof, into which we penetrated as far as we were able. The singular rocks or fragments of stone lying, or standing upright, either on the summit or declivity, deserve notice. Cattle were feeding among the bushes, and, as the herdsmen informed us, safely, though the whole region is considered as the haunt of wolves and tygers. Several ledges of rocks, which overhang dells, filled with high bushes, form here snug retreats for wild beasts of every description. Formerly it was a noted haunt, and now and then, one of the above-mentioned animals is seen and hunted in the kloof. From hence we rode to the Burgers Post, and paid a short visit to Mr. Eckstein. On the road, Brother Fritsch was thrown from his horse, and we were thankful, that no harm was done.

In the afternoon, the Governor with his usual retinue, passed through our premises. He informed me that Captain Forbes, in going to Simon's bay, had met with a severe fall, which would confine him for some days, but that the first lieutenant would bring the ship round to Table Bay.

3d. Brother Stein, having returned from Gnadenthal, gave us a

very interesting account of his visit. Many Hottentots, on hearing my letter, had declared their intention to come and help their brethren here in the building of the new church. I much regretted, that I had not accompanied him. During the forenoon, I rode with Brother Schmitt to Langefonteyn, to pay a farewell-visit to our worthy friend, Mr. Dirk Slabbert, but we did not find him at home. The sun shining very warm, we were much troubled with a species of sand-fly, which fixes upon the face, ears, and neck, if not defended by crape or some other means, to the great annoyance of travellers.

4th. Our good-natured Hottentots, perceiving that I had begun to collect serpents, brought me several kinds, among which were the nachtschlange, (night-serpent); earth-serpent; eyerfreter, (egg-eater); schaapesteker, (sheep-stinger); and cobra di capella.

5th. Brother Schmitt went to town, to attend a sale of iron, and several articles, useful for the building. I had the pleasure of Mr. Melville's company, who was still diligently employed in measuring the whole district of Groenekloof. Several Hottentot workmen arrived from Gnadenthal, for whose board and lodging provision had been made. They visited all the missionaries on the

6th, and expressed their willingness to assist in building the church, and their happiness to make acquaintance with their Groenekloof brethren, in a manner, which gave me renewed pleasure, for it was a display of that union of heart, which exists among real Christians of all classes. In their behaviour, that blessed truth seemed, in a great degree, established, that the "fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Nothing surely is more encouraging, than to behold these effects of the preaching of the gospel to the heathen, as sure proofs, that it has been received in faith.

7th. Mr. Melville was obliged to leave us for some time. We parted from each other with mutual regret. I shall ever remember with gratitude to God, by what unforeseen circumstances we were made acquainted with each other, that he might be led to accom-

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pany us on our reconnoitring-journey into the interior. In a variety of ways, his presence afforded us assistance, comfort, and delight, and I pray, that he may be rewarded with a full enjoyment of every temporal and spiritual blessing.

8th. In the morning at two o'clock, Brother Schmitt returned from the Cape, and informed me, that the Zebra was to sail on Sunday next. This made me resolve to go to-morrow to Capetown, to be in readiness. In the forenoon, Mr. Slabbert, in his travelling-waggon and ten horses, passing through Groenekloof to the Cape, offered to take me with him, but the missionaries prevailed upon me to decline it, and to follow in the morning on horseback; nor was my impatience to proceed homeward powerful enough, to repress the rising regret I felt at parting a second time from friends, endeared to me by so many considerations.

I spent the greater part of the day in once more walking through the settlement, and visiting its inhabitants. I was accompanied by one or other of the missionaries in my different walks. The Hottentots, at work at the brick-kiln, gave me a last proof of their attachment to old habits. While I was watching their setting it up, a boor, who is much engaged in the same work, came riding towards us, and began to take them to task: "You must do so and so," said he; "you know nothing about setting up a kiln, your bricks will never get burnt, &c." To every sentence, their answer was, "Ya, Mynheer! Ya, Mynheer!" Having finished his lecture, the boor rode off in a gallop, but was no sooner out of hearing, than they began to make their remarks: "That man," said they, "thinks himself very wise, because he is a rich boor; but we must do our own way, or the bricks will never be burnt. His bricks are accustomed to his way, but our bricks can only be burnt in our way." They seem to have been in the right, for I have since heard, that their kiln answered perfectly well, and their bricks were remarkably good.

In the evening-meeting at the chapel, Brother Schmitt once more commended me to the blessing and protection of God, in fer-

vent prayer, and the congregation again expressed their best wishes for me.

9th. I rose, intending to set out early, to prevent any stir, but in vain. The Hottentots came early to bid me a last adieu, and to show their affection, by every token of good-will. Young and old would give me their hands, and then joined in singing a farewell-hymn. The missionaries likewise assembled, as before, and I truly felt the value of their love and intercession. Every one of them has shown the greatest kindness towards me, and none, with more unabated faithfulness and zeal, than Brother Schmitt and his wife, with whom I have spent most of my time at the Cape. But it is time to set bounds to my expressions of gratitude towards them, which may already appear to some of my readers tedious and impertinent.

About half past seven o'clock, I left Groenekloof, accompanied by Brother Schmitt as far as Brakfonteyn. There I parted from that worthy man, who returned to his zealous and indefatigable labours. May God's blessing attend him yet for many years, with health and strength, equal to his devotedness and desire to serve the cause of his Saviour, either here, or in any other part of South Africa. Brother Fritsch proceeded with me to the Cape. We halted about an hour at Mr. Beester's house at the Riet Valley, and though it began to rain hard, rode on, and arrived, thoroughly soaked, with our friends, at Mrs. Disandt's house, where we were received with their wonted kindness and cordiality.