

CHAPTER XXV.

The Governor's gardens described. Excursion in company of his Excellency, by Sandy-bay, to Longwood. High Peak. Diana's Peak. The Devil's Punch-bowl. Account of Longwood. General Bonaparte confined to his room by illness. Bertrand. Monthollon. Lieutenant Pritchard. Description of Sandy-bay and other parts of the island. Furze. Black-berries. Wild Goats. Houses of English settlers. The Friar Rock and valley. Observations on General Bonaparte's conduct. Departure from St. Helena.

WHEN Captain Wallis of the *Podargus* came on board the *Zebra*, and inquiry was made about General Bonaparte, the captain seemed very unwilling to allow, that he was any longer an object of curiosity at St. Helena, though in England we were all so eager to hear and speak about him. But on landing we found, that his words and actions formed a considerable part of the conversation of all classes. Captain Wallis was first lieutenant to Captain Wright, whose history is well known; and though Bonaparte denies knowing any thing about the torture he is said to have suffered before his death, yet his great wrath at the appointment of Captain Wallis to this station, which, he says, was purposely done to mortify him, shows no very clear conscience. In Captain Wallis he cannot expect to have a sincere friend, unless he conceives him to be a Christian of such consummate piety, that he can forgive and forget all the cruel and insulting treatment which he himself experienced, when taken prisoner with Captain Wright.

Lord Charles Somerset had expressed his wish to Sir Hudson Lowe, that if it were possible, his son might have, if not an interview with, yet an opportunity of seeing General Bonaparte. But unfortunately for us, he was just now not only highly displeased with

the Governor and the English in general, on account of some necessary restrictions put upon him, but truly ill with a swelling of the gums, and a breaking out in the lower part of his face, which had confined him to his room for several days. No hopes, therefore, were entertained of seeing him, but I felt as eager to see his dwelling as himself; for though I might not have it in my power to give to my friends a portrait of the fallen hero, I wished to gratify them with a view of his mansion, and the circumjacent country.

Before we set out, Sir Hudson proposed a walk through his own grounds, part of which I had previously seen. His Excellency pointed out many foreign trees, growing here in great perfection, among which, some have not yet been described by botanists. The Chinese yew; the coffee-tree; cinnamon and clove-bushes; the Norfolk-island-pine, a most beautiful species, growing in its native soil to the enormous height of from three hundred and fifty to three hundred and eighty feet; the gum-tree; cabbage-tree; dog-tree, and goble-keer, bearing a small sky-blue flower; and others, deserve particular attention. Some oaks of vast magnitude and spread, form a delightful bower, under which, in that hot climate, one may enjoy the comfort of a shady retreat, inhaling an atmosphere, perfumed by the fragrance of a profusion of the sweetest plants and flowers. We noticed a peculiar kind of grass, called mat-grass, from its spreading most luxuriantly over the ground, in such thickness, that it forms a cover resembling thick matting, with long tendrils like quick-grass. The Governor ordered a large sod, covered with it, to be put into a tub and sent on board, which I brought to England.

The kitchen-gardens are large and well-watered by springs from the adjoining hills. The water is conveyed in narrow troughs, cut in a red lava, easily wrought, by being in a state of half-decomposition. By this means, the water is saved from being lost in the sand, or loose earth, as it passes along. Where this method is practicable, it should be adopted in South Africa, and in other places,

for the purpose of irrigation. I am confident, that such a measure would greatly increase the quantity of produce in many South African farms.

We now set out for Longwood: the Governor, Colonel Sir Thomas Reade, Lieutenant Pritchard, Captain Forbes, Mr. Somerset, and I, with a dragoon and groom. Sir Hudson proposed first to ride to Sandy-bay, one of the most romantic spots in the island. The views on all sides are singularly beautiful. Many fertile and well-wooded hills present themselves to the right, one of which is called High Peak. Diana's Peak lies more to the left, and is considered the highest point in the whole island. After crossing several hills and dales, by a zigzag road, their steepness never admitting of a strait line, we reached the ridge, overlooking the bay. The view of the valley is beyond description grand. Hills and rocks of most singular forms surround a deep hollow, within which rises a woody hill with two peaks, one ascending considerably above the other. Between them, surrounded by gardens and shrubberies, lies the elegant villa of Mr. Doveton. He was born in this island, and is one of the members of council. Behind the house, seen, from the place where we stood, between the two peaks, rises a huge rock, like a sugar-loaf, called Lot. In the back-ground, is a range of hills, truly volcanic in their appearance, intersected by numerous glens and gullies, of almost every colour, but chiefly violet, with tinges of yellow, red, dark-brown, and a greenish-grey; the summit of the range is crowned with peaks of brown and black rocks, rising in succession. On its most elevated part, a rock, considerably higher than the rest, and leaning towards the right, has the odd name of Lot's wife; the lower row of rocks of different shapes and sizes, are called Lot's children. The whole landscape is the most strange combination of objects imaginable, and Sir Hudson, perceiving that I wished to make a sketch of it, proposed that I should make it the business of to-morrow, as our time to-day was too short.

Leaving therefore this enchanting spot, we turned towards Long-

wood, which, after a ride of a few miles, presents itself over a deep, barren glen, called the "Devil's Punch-bowl." General Bonaparte's premises appear, at first sight, to be placed near its rim. After rounding the edge of the Punch-bowl, we reached the outer gate and guard-house. Sir Hudson pointed out to us the situation of Longwood, as peculiarly calculated to prevent unobserved escape. The grounds which occupy a space of about twelve miles in circumference, lie upon a kind of inland peninsula, the only practicable access to which, is between the Devil's Punch-bowl, and a deep glen to the right, descending towards the sea, or between the flag-staff hill, and the other end of the Punch-bowl. Both these roads are sufficiently defended by troops. As far as the guard-house, and within the twelve miles, General Bonaparte may ride, and amuse himself as he pleases; but if he wishes to exceed those limits, an officer must accompany him. He finds this extremely unpleasant, and requested the officer to dress like a common gentleman, which, however, being on duty, the latter was obliged to refuse.

After entering the gate, we rode up to another enclosure, where Sir Hudson desired us to wait, till he had obtained information respecting the General's actual situation. The interior of the premises, is well stocked with ornamental and other trees, forming a pleasant shrubbery, the rest of the domain being principally covered with gum trees standing singly. In a short time, Sir Hudson returned from the house, with an account, that General Bonaparte was very ill with a swelled face and gums, and could not leave his room. This answer we had expected, and contented ourselves with riding about the park, if I may so call it, and obtaining a good idea of the situation of the dwelling of this remarkable man. He and his friends complain of it, but I can only declare, that in the whole island of St. Helena, I have not seen a spot, more convenient and airy, and where there is so much opportunity for taking a ride in a carriage or on horseback, without interruption. The park is even and grassy, and General Bonaparte frequently rides out in a cabriolet and six, generally in full



Drawn by J. C. G. G. from a sketch by Claridge.

The Barn

Longwood
DISTANT VIEW OF LONGWOOD, STELLENBOSCH,
across the Devil's Punch-bowl.

a Farm

Published 1871 in the 'Illustrations' at K. Abnerman's, just towards London.

Buck's View

gallop. In the shrubbery, near the house, stands a large marquee, in which he commonly breakfasts, and spends a good deal of time.

Bertrand has a separate house, a little lower down the declivity, at a small distance from his master's. We saw him and Monthollon, with their ladies, walking in the park. The mansion itself is rather an assemblage of buildings, than one whole house. The dining-room, with its viranda, is the principal feature, and has three large windows. Connected with it, are General Bonaparte's own apartments, the principal one turning its gable-end towards the entrance. Behind that, if I am correct, follow those of the Captain on guard, Las Casas, Gourgeon, and Monthollon. The latter has four windows. They are all one story high, whitened, with grey roofs.

To the north-east, is a remarkable rock, from its shape called the Barn, rising perpendicularly from the sea to a great height, black, rugged, and without any trees. Farther inland, lies a peaked hill, called the Flag-staff. Towards the Barn descends a narrow vale, covered with gravel of decomposed volcanic matter, in some parts so red, that it furnishes the imagination with the idea of a burning torrent. Here and there are patches of blue, yellow, and violet, increasing the deception. We had no time to fatigue our horses by riding into it; and on our return to the guard-house, Sir Hudson very obligingly directed his adjutant, Lieutenant Pritchard to attend me to any place, from which I might wish to make a sketch of the house and premises. He then returned home, Captain Forbes and Sir Thomas Reade rode to James-town, and Mr. Somerset favoured me with his company.

We went round the north-east end of the Punch-bowl, through the camp of the 53d regiment, but finding no good situation for a view, turned back towards the opposite height. Not far from the gate, I dismounted, and got a good general view of the house, or houses.

When we arrived at Plantation-house, Lady Lowe had taken an airing in a close carriage, and was in the drawing-room, where

we were introduced to her. Her Ladyship likewise attended to-day at the head of her table. Some military and other gentlemen joined us at dinner, My neighbour was Colonel Lister, who having been in the interior of South Africa, as commander of a corps of Hottentots, had visited Gnadenthal, and was interested in obtaining an account of the present state of the Mission. The afternoon could not be but pleasantly spent in the company of men so well informed and intelligent. After they were gone, I retired into my own room, and finished my memorandums.

30th. I rose early, and began my morning's walk by a scramble up the hill to the right, to obtain a general view of the house and premises; then turning through the gates, went down the hill on the road to Longwood. High-knole, with its fort, supported by steep, black, rugged, rocks, only wants trees to make it appear a very picturesque object. Francis-plain camp lies in a very solitary situation. But I have seldom listened with more pleasure to military music, than this morning, though performed only by some fifes, and a smaller and larger drum. The composition, as well as the performance, were excellent. I returned through the gates, and, ascending by the zigzag walks behind the house, to the church-yard adjoining the chapel of ease, a good view of a range of hills from the Governor's grounds to the Barn rock, rewarded my labours.

At breakfast, Sir Hudson proposed, that Mr. Somerset should make another attempt at Longwood, by the good offices of Dr. O'Meara, to see General Bonaparte. I set out in company of Lieutenant Pritchard, for Sandy-bay, taking a different route from that of yesterday. We made halt at a guard-house and flag-staff, and having given our horses in charge of a lad, got over a wall, and obtained a fine view of the valley, but not equal to that from the other side, towards which, therefore, we bent our course. Here I attempted to take a very accurate view of this singular spot.

From hence we made a circuit towards the western coast of the island, passing along a sharp ridge, with beautiful glens on each

side, in which several gentlemen's houses and plantations are well contrasted with the rugged masses of rock in their neighbourhood, and the wild waste around them. Yet even this waste was gloriously decorated with bushes of most luxuriant growth, chiefly of furze, now in full bloom, and both in the size and colour of its flowers, incomparably superior to that of Europe. Blackberry-bushes, likewise, which were first introduced as a rarity in a garden, have now become so plentiful, that they are considered as the worst of weeds, intruding themselves everywhere into gardens and plantations. The summits of some of the hills are crowned with groves of gum and cabbage-trees, but the havock made of the wood, with which this island was formerly clothed, has been such, that, comparatively, but little of it is left. Formerly every passing ship sent men on shore to cut as much as they wanted. Of course no care was taken to prevent waste. The subsequent introduction of goats, which ran wild, and multiplied very fast, was most ruinous to the growth of young plants and sprouts. These creatures proved at last so great a nuisance, that they were hunted, and almost destroyed. There are no quadrupeds here, which may be called aborigines. Rats and mice have been brought hither by ships. Of other creatures, except birds and reptiles, we have no account. Scorpions and centipedes are said to have always abounded.

The houses of the English settlers in St. Helena, are very different in their appearance from those of the Dutch at the Cape. They are neat and cleanly, with lawns and plantations; and prove, that their possessors, whither richer or poorer, are directed by some good taste, and do not always first ask, whether what they build or plant, will bring in money, or afford too much pleasure or convenience to a neighbour, without gain or reward to themselves.

The views on the western shore are equally interesting, though not so wild. Roseberry hill, the villa of Colonel Smith, is charmingly situated. A singular rock, from its shape, called the Friar, and giving name to a valley, presents itself between two huge

masses of stone, about the north-west corner of the island. We had no time to approach nearer. The heat was to-day greater than we had experienced it for a long time. The Governor could not have given me a more agreeable companion than Lieutenant Pritchard, who made it his study to render my ride agreeable and instructive.

After our return, I found his Excellency in the library, busily engaged in preparing dispatches to go by the Zebra. My view of the house and surrounding scenery happening to meet with Lady Lowe's approbation, I finished my sketch for her. Captain Forbes had returned from James-town, and Dr. O'Meara having sent word, that General Bonaparte was too ill to appear abroad, Mr. Somerset was disappointed. Mr. Brook, the Secretary, paid a short visit. We sat down to dinner without any additional guests, and the afternoon was spent in lively conversation.

Every account we heard of the disposition and conduct of General Bonaparte in this island, showed but little of that greatness of character, which he would affect, and his admirers represent as inherent in him. That which belongs to the natural construction of a man's mind will be discovered in every situation of life. Not only in prosperity, but in adversity, it will cleave to him, and generally influence his conduct. But in a day of ease and victory, it is much easier, to support a pretence, and wear a mask, than in a state of affliction. While General Bonaparte was dictating laws to every nation but England, and crowned heads were bowing before him, he could assume a character superior to his own, and affect, in every thing, to rise higher than other men. It would be unjust to deny him the merit of having exhibited a degree of comprehension and skill in military affairs, which has perhaps seldom, if ever, been equalled among ancient or modern warriors. In civil arrangements, also, who will deny, that his plans were vast, and that he had the wisdom to search out and employ the best agents for the accomplishment of his designs! Had these properties of

his mind been accompanied and directed by what constitutes true greatness, by generosity, goodness of heart, a conscientious principle, and religious attention to justice and truth in his dealings, he would indeed have deserved all the praise bestowed upon him, either by those who were dazzled by his meteoric splendor, or by men, who in our own country, set him up, more, I trust, to please their party, than to sound the trumpet, and further the designs of the most determined and illiberal enemy England ever had. But now we see, that in adversity, that species of greatness, which he possessed, will not support him. It cannot indeed be supposed, that he should feel happy in his present situation, and I could not visit his present domain, without feeling pity for a man, fallen so low, and who, had his senses not forsaken him in that (to him) most evil hour, might yet, after all his defeats, by honestly yielding to necessity, and signing the proposed treaty of Chaumont, have been left in possession of more power and military glory, than any other Potentate in Europe. But the old adage, "*Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat,*" was never more completely verified, than in the case of this singular man. He was, no doubt, an instrument in the hands of a just God, to chastise the nations for their apostacy, and laid aside, when his work was done. If any thing tends to lessen or destroy that compassion, which one must feel even for the greatest delinquent, under the lash of well-merited punishment, it is that petulance and irritability, which he shows in his present situation, and which a mind truly great would know how to suppress.

Ever grumbling, finding fault with every person and every thing about him, dissatisfied with his food, peevishly complaining of neglect, when circumstances alone perhaps produced some transient disappointment, and, if not the author, yet the promoter of the most unjust accusations against Sir Hudson Lowe, the Governor, who, though he knows and does his duty to his Sovereign, in guarding the charge committed to him, has, in more than one instance, spared and befriended his prisoner! can such conduct pro-

ceed from what is called greatness of mind! I will quote one instance of the effect of his dissatisfaction about things of minor importance, which came to my knowledge from the best authority. A butcher at James-town, who used to deliver meat for his table, being at length wearied out with continual repetition of complaints, though he furnished the best meat he could procure, directed the following laconic epistle to the Governor: "Sir Hudson! May it please your Excellency, this same General Bonaparte is hard to please. I begs to be excused sarving him any longer with meat."

As he hates Sir Hudson Lowe, the latter does not unnecessarily trouble him with his presence, but delivers all notices to him by Sir Thomas Reade, whose polished manners, good-humoured disposition, and knowledge of the Italian language, which General Bonaparte is said to prefer to French in conversation, makes him a pleasant messenger. Sir Thomas has therefore had more opportunities of becoming acquainted with him in the various affections of his mind, than most Englishmen, with whom he has conversed.

A proof of great meanness is this, that he will not give credit to the English for any great warlike action. He says, that by all the rules of war, *he* ought to have gained the battle of Waterloo, and that the Duke of Wellington ought, if he had been a good General, to have retreated, and not made his stand where he did. Yet at other times, feeling peculiarly indignant at the Prussians, he, of course, will not allow them to have had any share in the result of that action, but describes his defeat to the firmness of the English infantry alone, by which all his plans were disconcerted.

It is not my intention to add to the numberless accounts given of this celebrated captive, who thinks that he has friends and defenders enough among the English nation. Not having seen and spoken with him myself, I can only repeat what has been said by others, and as to those communications, which are made in the course of friendly and unguarded conversation, I am of opinion, that, without special permission, common civility requires, that they should not be published, lest by any unintentional mistate-