

RUINS OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS ON ROCKS IN MASHONALAND.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXPEDITION TO MASHONALAND.

IN April 1890 an expedition started from Kimberley to proceed northward to Mashonaland. The pioneers were engaged and equipped by the South African Company, the moving spirit of which is Mr. Cecil Rhodes. This gentleman and his colleagues in the great diamond industry of Kimberley had long regarded, with longing eyes, the gold fields and the fair country of the Mashonas.

Mashonaland forms a part of Matabeleland, the country explored by Baines, and his views as to the richness of the resources of that country have been amply confirmed by the testimony of Carl Mauch, the German mineralogist, and Mr. Selous, the famous African hunter.

Having secured large concessions from King Lo Bengula, Mr. Rhodes and his friends formed the South African Company. A royal charter was granted, and the undertaking being well provided with capital, it was determined to despatch a force strong enough to hold its own against any opposition, with instructions to establish the Company in Mashonaland. The force consisted roughly of two hundred pioneers (mostly farmers' sons and mechanics) and three hundred police. The equipment included agricultural implements, mining gear, seeds, and ample food supplies ; this over and above guns and ammunition, scientific instruments, and the like ; indeed, all that could possibly aid the force or contribute to its efficiency was added to the equipment. Colonel Pennefather, of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, was in command of the column; and leading the pioneers was Major Johnson, experienced in such service. Attached to the column, as intelligence officer, was Mr. Selous, the intrepid hunter. Mr. A. R. Colquhoun, so well known for his work on the Burmah-Chinese frontier, accompanied the pioneers with a view to the establishment of a regular administrative staff, of which he would be the head.

With regard to the area over which the Company's jurisdiction extends, it should be borne in mind that it is practically undefined, except in so far as the claims of other countries and British colonies are concerned. The region of Matabeleland is that with which the present operations of the Company are immediately concerned. Khama's territory, the Bechuanaland protectorate, and other patches of territory between the Crown Colony and the Zambesi, may, if deemed advisable, be committed to the administration of the Company in the future. Already travellers have visited in the north of the Barotse country; and expeditions are, or were, exploring the region between Lake Nyassa and the Upper Zambesi, and making treaties with the native chiefs.

Probably no pioneering force was started better prepared to meet all contingencies than that which left Kimberley in April, and so quickly was the ground covered that the Macloutsie River (the northern boundary of Khama's country) was reached in July. At the camp here only a short stay was made, and in the middle of August the expedition arrived on the Mashonaland plateau. The country and the journey left behind are thus described by the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*:—

“About one hundred and sixty-one miles from the Macloutsie camp we passed the Unanetsi River, a rapid and clear stream, with a bed and banks of huge granite boulders. This river and the Lundi—on which there are

some really fine bits of scenery—are quite unlike the rivers of South Africa that we have seen on our way from the Cape Colony northwards. Either of these might easily be taken for some Scotch or Welsh hill stream, were it not for the slight traces of tropical vegetation here and there, and the occasional ‘spoor’ of the hippopotamus, lion, or other large game. In the country between the Unanetsi and the Lundi there is exceptionally fine scenery, gigantic masses of solid granite piled up on every side, the summits rising to close on a thousand feet above the road-level. Looking to the north-east, the direction we were following, it appeared a hopeless task to trace a practicable track for the use of the expedition.

“Thanks, however, to the able guidance of Mr. Selous an admirable line was found, steering its course with few inconsiderable deviations here and there to right and left. The bush here was exceedingly thick; and not only was the bush and tree clearing for the waggon road heavy work, but large spaces had to be daily cleared for the formation of the ‘laagers’ which had to be formed every afternoon.

“The ‘laagers’ were, in every case, constructed with care and skill, the corners of the square being guarded by two machine guns and two seven-pounders, and the waggons not ranged on end, but overlapping. The electric light, worked by a powerful engine, was held in readiness throughout the night, so as to be available at

a moment's notice should necessity for its use occur. Throughout this dense bush country, until we had reached the high veldt, a double track—according to the circumstances of the ground fifty to a hundred yards apart—was constructed,—an admirable plan, which, though entailing considerable extra labour, secured to the expedition additional safety by enabling, in case of our unfortunately being attacked, a rapid formation of the 'laager' to be accomplished.

“No one who has not accompanied an expedition such as ours through bush country can realize the value of the 'laager' and of the double track of which I have spoken. The 'laager' is throughout South Africa—whether for a military force in actual warfare, or, as in our case, for a peaceable mission, open, however, to the possibility of a treacherous attack from the natives—the mainstay of all expeditions. Any one who has any acquaintance with modern South African history knows that this has been the lesson taught by experience, as witness what has occurred so frequently in the past, whether in the case of a small army under an English general or a band of pioneers on the 'trek' under some Dutch leader. The fact is that without the 'laager' the white man in a broken, hilly bush country such as we have passed through has no chance, and a mere handful of natives can at any time sweep down and 'rush' an expeditionary party, whether in camp or on line of march. As an extra precaution, the teams of

oxen were every evening tied up securely surrounding the 'laager,' thus presenting an additional impediment to any sudden rush. While on march great care was taken to ensure the waggons keeping close together, so that at any time, should occasion arise, 'laager' might be formed as rapidly as possible.

"At the Lundi, which is thirty miles beyond the Unanetsi, the crossing of the expedition with its sixty waggons was found to be by no means an easy one. As the stream runs here very swiftly with a width of about forty yards, from bank to bank being about four hundred yards, it was found that the drift could only be constructed with the aid of sand-bags and large stones laid on a 'corduroy' foundation of felled trees. All members of the expedition, officers and men, whether pioneers or police, threw themselves into this work, as indeed they have done all through, with the greatest energy and heartiest good-will.

"Even with all the labour expended on the construction of the drift, drag-ropes had to be employed, worked by large parties of men, before the waggons safely reached the northern bank. On the banks of the Lundi 'spoor' was plentiful; but the only large game shot were three sea-cows or hippopotami, which seem to be by no means so numerous as we expected. The flesh of these enormous creatures (they weigh from 300 to 400 lbs.) abundantly supplied our natives with food. They were much delighted, and highly praised the skill of the white

sportsmen, as the meat is considered by them the very greatest of delicacies.

“After leaving the Lundi our progress became somewhat slower than it had been, owing to rumours of the unsettled condition of the Matabele. Everything was done to ensure still greater precautions being taken, if that were possible, and the safety of the expedition was assured in case of opposition or attack, which, however, the leaders of the expedition have throughout not believed to be probable. Some twenty-six miles beyond the Lundi is the Tokwe, a stream slightly more tropical in appearance than the others passed. Some sixteen miles beyond the Tokwe a pass from the low country to the ‘high veldt’ is reached. This pass, discovered after considerable trouble and a careful examination of the surrounding country, is some seven miles in length, and here some twelve hundred feet in height is gradually ascended before the highland plateau is reached.

“The country traversed in our march since leaving the Macloutsie River in the ‘disputed territory’ has been exceptionally well watered, and is fertile, more especially that section of our route since passing the Unanetsi, some sixteen miles back. Both for grazing and agricultural purposes the country compares very favourably with the richest and fairest portions of Africa.

“The whole of this, the south-eastern portion of Matabeleland, lying just east and south of the highlands of

Matabeleland proper, has without doubt a great future before it. Every one connected with the expedition is agreed that as a food-producing region it will play a most important part in the development of Mashonaland; for while the mineral wealth of the territory about to be occupied is unquestionable, the problem of food supplies—one presenting considerable difficulties—has had to be faced. The discovery—for ‘discovery’ it may not unfairly be called—of the beautiful and fertile belt of country we have passed through has largely helped to solve this difficulty. Mashonaland itself has, it is true, large fertile agricultural areas, but should the development be as rapid as anticipated these would not be sufficient.

“South-Eastern Matabeleland and Mashonaland will be able not only to support a large European agricultural and stock-raising community, but will be able to contribute to the wants of the mining and commercial population of Mashonaland, which is likely to grow at a very rapid pace. Among the products of the country grown by the natives are rice, millet, yams or sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, tobacco, pumpkins, Indian corn and beans. This supply is naturally at present limited, as hitherto there has been no demand beyond the immediate wants of the natives, which are few indeed. With the advent of the white man, however, a large demand will spring up, which will partly be met by native labour, and partly by the European farming population from the Transvaal

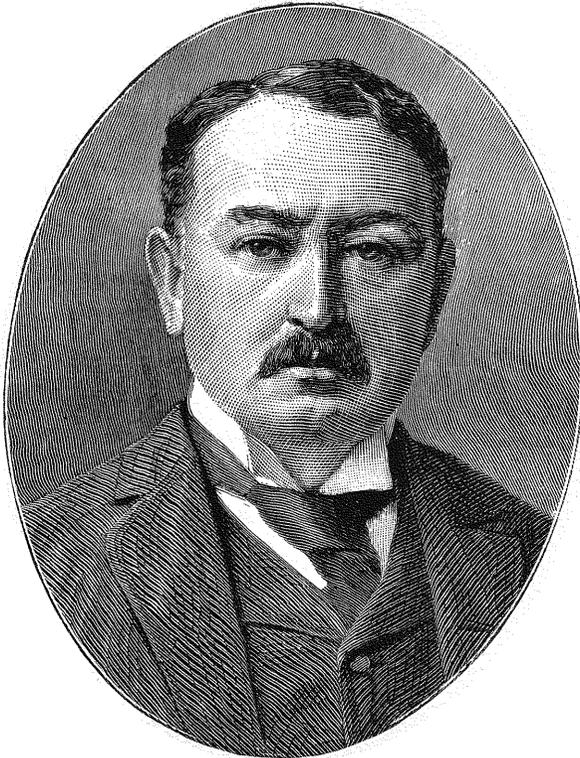
and elsewhere, which will at an early date move forward and occupy this new territory.

“The native tribes along our route, at present in occupation of South-East Matabeleland, are under chiefs subject to Lo Bengula, whose authority reaches as far east as the Sabi River, which is the eastern boundary of Matabeleland. The principal chiefs met with and interviewed by Colonel Pennefather (the officer commanding the expedition), Dr. Jameson (the political officer), and Mr. Colquhoun (the future administrator of Mashonaland) were Sitowtsi, Chibi, and Matibi. Immediately on the arrival of the expedition close to their ‘kraals’ deputations, headed by the chiefs, came to exchange presents and to have what every South African, be he chief or peasant, dearly loves—a palaver. Friendly assurances were given by the Company’s representatives, and the chiefs and the people generally seemed greatly relieved to learn that Englishmen were going to settle in their country.

“While camped on the Lundi we discovered, some six or seven hundred yards from our ‘laager,’ the remains of a very interesting old ruin, in splendid preservation. This ancient ruin, regarding which nothing can be learnt from the natives, except that it was found there when their forefathers arrived in the country, is circular in shape and massive in structure. The walls are of wrought stone, measuring in some places ten feet in thickness. Four openings, at equal distances

apart, serve for entrance and exit. From its position, arrangement, and size, it would not appear to have been constructed for the purpose of a fortification. The conjectures as to its character have been numerous among members of the expedition, but unfortunately we have no one with us competent to examine and solve the problem. An interesting feature still remaining intact is a piece of ornamentation, about forty feet in length, facing the northern side—two courses of stones being laid diagonally, but in different directions. Since our arrival here, a party has gone to visit the ruins at the place called Zinbabyte on the maps, and by the natives Zinbabgye, of which careful drawings, photographs, and measurements will be made, as was done in the case of the Lundi ruins.”





HON. CECIL RHODES.

From a Photograph by Messrs. Russell & Son, 17, Baker Street, W.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MASHONALAND.

“ON emerging through the pass from the low to the high ‘veldt’ a wonderful change occurs. From a hill-enclosed, broken country, hot even at this the cold season of the

year, you step suddenly on to the edge of the tableland of Mashonaland. A clear open country, broken here and there by 'kopjies,' meets the eye. The atmosphere is delightfully fresh and invigorating, the nights and mornings pleasantly cold. The country is exactly like the undulating plateau of the Witwatersrandt in the Transvaal, and is said to be a counterpart of the tableland of Matabeleland proper. Rare patches of timber are to be seen dotted here and there; the grass, naturally luxuriant, has been lately burnt down over large areas, giving these a somewhat bare appearance. In contrast, however, to what occurs in the Cape Colony and Bechuanaland, the grass is already springing up green and succulent. The spring tints, as you ride through the woods, are of the most delicate hues. Altogether, the prospect is refreshing and exhilarating after our long march, at first through the bush, and latterly through heavily timbered country."

The gold prospectors and experts accompanying the expedition pronounce the indications of reefs examined in the neighbourhood of the Lundi to be excellent. The correspondent from whose interesting letter we have extracted the foregoing points out that, though the occupation of the country was, at the time he despatched his letter, on the eve of being completed, all had been done without bloodshed. Not a shot had been fired with hostile intent from the beginning to the end of the march.

The original intention had been to halt the expedition

at a spot called Mount Hampden; but it having been ascertained that there were water difficulties connected with that site, it was decided to occupy ground which was named on the spot Fort Salisbury. And this was done on September 12th, with all the formalities usually and most properly observed on such occasions—the hoisting of the Union Jack, the firing of a royal salute, and three ringing cheers.

The position of Fort Salisbury, which is situated on an open, breezy upland, has been fixed as being in S. latitude $17^{\circ} 54'$ and E. longitude $31^{\circ} 20'$, and at an altitude of 4,900 feet above the general sea-level.

Now that the occupation of Mashonaland is an accomplished fact, it is much to be proud of that a small force of some seven hundred Englishmen has penetrated into the very heart of Central South Africa, and that a vast tract of country, hitherto known only to a few venturesome hunters and explorers, such as Mr. F. C. Selous, whose accounts of a high, healthy, and well-watered plateau, together with vast hidden mineral resources, in these latitudes had for years been received with general incredulity and regarded as so many fairy tales, has now actually passed into English hands.

In the next place, a good serviceable road into this new country, over four hundred miles in length, has been cut, a task frequently necessitating much heavy labour in felling the thick bush, which at times rose to the proportions of forest timber. Substantial “drifts” have

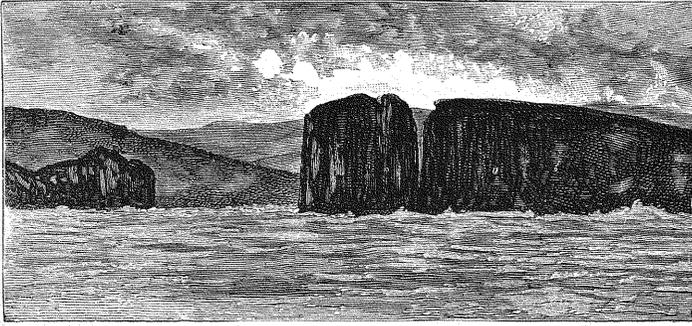
been formed across big rivers, such as the Tuli and Lundi, the latter running at a depth of forty feet during the rains. "Corduroy" bridges have been constructed across smaller streams and boggy places, and the whole work has been accomplished without the loss of one single life either in the hospital or in the field.

These are feats of which all Englishmen must feel justly proud, and prove to the cynic and pessimist that the age of British energy and enterprise has not yet gone by. Again, the daily distance of "trek" compassed by the heavily laden seventy or more ox-waggon's averaged ten and three-quarter miles, an excellent performance those versed in such matters will at once admit. But the one fact that stands out above and before all others is that the expedition has demonstrated the existence of a vast high upland plateau in these tropical latitudes, with a varying elevation, abundantly watered, and, as a rule, well timbered; with a climate, as far as one can judge, admirably suited for Europeans, with a fresh breeze continuously, and with ever-varying degrees of strength, blowing from the south-east, and tempering at times to the degree of actual coolness the rays of a tropical sun.

The main object of the expedition was, of course, to open up and develop the reputed vast mineral resources of the country, and in particular to search for gold. Not a moment, literally, was lost in carrying this fundamental portion of the programme into effect. The Pioneer Corps,

after completing the fort according to the terms of the contract, were disbanded on September 30th, and at once started off in all directions, mainly in the direction of Hartley Hill and the Upper Mazoe River, two districts where gold was already known to exist. But all that is yet possible with prudence to say is that Fort Salisbury is within the region of a gold belt of an enormous extent, the real value of which it must be left for further time and search accurately to determine. From all sides, however, the most promising and encouraging reports come in, of reefs being struck, and shafts being sunk, and other movements indicative of confidence. It is not improbable that a rush will be made soon to these diggings. It is believed there is a banket formation similar to that in the Transvaal.

The occupation of Mashonaland has now begun in real earnest,—not, as in the case of the Portuguese, merely finding expression in the presence of an isolated and solitary official, supported possibly by a retinue of West Coast blacks ; but in the presence of some hundreds of energetic, active Englishmen scattered in every direction, either in search of gold or otherwise actively employed. A regular system of postal service has been established, and it may be as we write that the Mashonas may see that outward and visible sign of civilization on their native heath—the pillar-box.



THE "GATES" OF ST. JOHN'S RIVER.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE "GATES" OF ST. JOHN'S RIVER.

HAVING arranged to meet some friends at Durban, I returned after my wanderings to that hospitable town; and there a few days were pleasantly spent. At the close of the visit I secured a passage to East London on the outgoing steamer, and with my belongings boarded the tug which, with steam up, was waiting to convey passengers over the bar. This bar is a shifting mass of sand, deposited across the entrance of the harbour between the bluff and the point of the opposite sandhills. The depth of water on the bar varies from eight to eighteen feet. Sometimes long-continued, heavy, southerly sea-winds and accompanying breakers bring in and pile up increased accumulations of sand, which are afterwards cleared away during high tides and fine weather.

Why, it may be asked, is so dangerous a bar allowed to

remain? And the answer is that, if patience, skill, and money could have secured its removal, the good people of Durban would have got rid of it long ago; but it has proved a task of tremendous difficulty. They have spent immense sums in harbour works, and it is believed that when those now in progress are completed a sufficient depth of water for the ingress and egress of large vessels will be maintained. There are two piers. The north one was designed to confine the ebb tide to the southern channel, while to intercept the sand travelling up the coast the southern pier was constructed. Already both objects seem likely to be attained, and, if so, Durban will gain immensely as a shipping port.

When the tug with its freight approached the bar, the sea was so rough and the vessel pitched and plunged so much that all passengers were sent below. This was so hot and stuffy that only sea-seasoned people could bear up. Getting alongside the steamer was a work of some risk and difficulty, and so also was the task of putting the passengers on board. Gangways and companion ladders were out of the question, so heavy was the sea in which both the tug and the steamship were rolling. It was necessary to hoist us on board, and this was accomplished by lowering from the steamer a basket in shape not unlike a large pillar-box with a seat inside. Into this ship-lift four or five passengers were placed, the signal was given, and in a few minutes we were hoisted by crane from the tug to the main deck of the

steamer. Need I say that this quite finished off the ladies and the babies, who retired below, and were not seen again? Rough indeed it was, and at our first meal after the ship had entered on her course few even of the male passengers put in an appearance.

Having got my sea-legs and fortified myself with the ship's fare—always on board the Union boats excellent—I soon began to enjoy the sea-breeze and the scenery in-shore. We had on board Major Serpa Pinto, the Portuguese fire-eater, who had made so much noise in the world. And I should say that he is not at all a bad fellow. He was about the most unlikely man you could think of as a military bully, being an extremely courteous and companionable passenger.

The coast scenery interests you. Mr. Rider Haggard sees much in it to admire. "There," he says, "are the deep kloops cut in the hills by the rushing rains of centuries, down which the rivers sparkle; there is the deepest green of the bush, growing as God planted it, and the other greens of the sugar patches; while here and there a white house, smiling out at the sea, puts a finish and gives an air of homeliness to the scene." The coast is marked with "red sandhills, and wide sweeps of vivid green, dotted here and there with Kaffir kraals, and bordered by a ribbon of white surf, which spouts up in pillars of foam where it juts the rocks."

As the vessel steams along the coast of Pondoland, lofty cliffs and table-topped summits come within view. These

are known as the "Gates" of St. John's River. Within these "Gates" the scenery is grand and romantic. The steamer makes no stop, and consequently I had no opportunity of visiting any of the inner reaches of the river, but in terms of the greatest admiration these are written about by Mr. John Noble, Clerk of the Cape Parliament.

From seaward the river mouth is a noticeable object, and so remarkable that any one, having once seen it, or even a sketch of it, cannot fail to recognise it again. A lofty, table-topped mountain appears to have been cleft to its base, leaving a wedge-shaped gap, through which the river flows to the sea. The edges of the cleft, which near the mouth lie about two thousand feet asunder, approach each other, until near the top of the first reach they are about fifteen hundred feet apart. They rise in abrupt, forest-clad steeps, until they attain a height of six to seven hundred feet. From these edges on both sides of the river plateaus extend, until on each side other precipitous cliffs rise, which culminate about a mile and a half from the sea, where they attain a height of twelve hundred feet, and lie only four thousand feet apart—considerably less than a mile. These are the well-known "Gates" of St. John's or the Umzimvubu River.

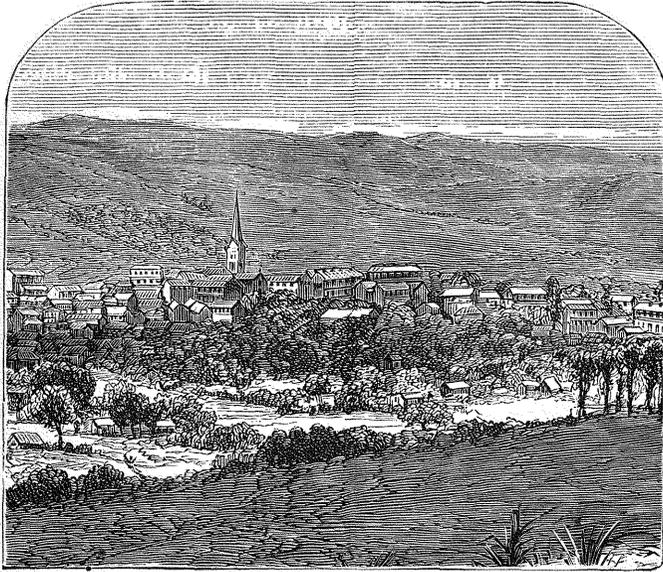
Inside of the "Gates" the river partakes more of the character of a lake or lagoon than a stream. There is an expanse of sky-blue water nearly five hundred yards wide, between stately mountains and luxuriantly wooded hills. The steep, wooded slopes come down close to the edge of

the water, and in many places the thick, tangled forest overhangs the margin, forming beautiful arcades. To appreciate the nature of this river scenery one must witness the indescribable beauties of the spot and its surroundings,—long, silent vistas of forest, with the ripple of water sounding through them; tumbled masses of rock, covered with mosses, ferns, and flowering creepers of all sorts in most bewildering luxuriance, twining in heavy, clustering masses around majestic old trees, whose every bough and leaf find their reflection as in a mirror in the placid waters, until in some places it is difficult to tell where the reality ends and the shadow begins. The exquisite, semi-tropical vegetation, African in its type and almost Brazilian in its beauty; the charms of light and shade over the grand panorama of mountain, wood, and water; and the glimpses of hill and dale forming the highlands in the extreme distance, and seemingly merging into the cobalt sky, furnish a picture of virgin nature untouched by art rarely to be met with. The mouth of St. John's River, like most of the rivers on the coast, is obstructed by a bar of shifting sand, the channel contracting, expanding, and changing its condition according to the volume of water or floods in the river.

Leaving the "Gates" astern, we sail within sight of the coast of Griqualand East, Tembuland, and Transkei; and wonderfully beautiful and fertile coast-lands they are. As you muse on the steamer's deck, you ask yourself whence comes that wealth of verdure which clothes

the coast all along which you have sailed. It is due, I was told, to the moisture carried by the trade winds of the Indian Ocean. The vapour-laden clouds are arrested or caught by the high mountain barriers, upon whose summits and sides these fertilizing showers descend. Inland are masses of mountain, and great stretches of forest region; and still farther westward, their cliffs towering to the sky, loom the Drakensberg Range.

Voyagers usually speak in glowing terms of this coast; it is all so fair and fresh and green, that he would indeed be blind who could not see its beauties; but they are not always in sight; at nightfall they all disappear. Then the rough sea-shaking many of our passengers got off the Durban bar made them, I am afraid, indifferent as to whether they could see the coast or not. At any rate there were very few on deck until the good ship steamed to the mouth of the Buffalo River, on both banks of which East London has been built. Then shore-goers—and I was one of them—got their baggage together, and once more we were in the waters of Cape Colony. East London is another of the bar-plagued ports, but in other respects it is a healthy and delightful watering-place, and this we found on landing.



GRAHAM'S TOWN.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GRAHAM'S TOWN.

I HAD little time to spare at East London; but the hospitable friends to whom I had introductions, and whose branches of business will, let me hope, spread even wider afield, insisted that I should join them at tiffin. Then I went round the town. It is well laid out, substantially built, and the signs are everywhere of an active and enterprising municipality. Being a favourite sea-bathing resort, with many beautiful spots within easy reach, the

visitor is greatly tempted to stay awhile in the place. Picnic parties, excursions in this and that direction, pleasant walks and rides, are arranged for your pleasure; and, if you are leisurely seeing the world, there is no reason why you should not enjoy such things; but I had still much to see in the eastern districts, and not much time to spare left.

The harbour improvement works are features of great interest. These are training walls, forming quays, which narrow the river's channel and increase the scour, practically keeping the passage clear to the deep water inside the bar; also a breakwater of concrete blocks, like that of Portland, constructed in the form of an arm outside, to prevent the sea from checking the river's outflow, and driving the sand back upon the bar. In former years occasional floods or freshets in the Buffalo River served to clear the bar, sometimes to a depth of seventeen feet, and vessels were then able to pass inside and discharge cargo without the use of surf-boats or the delays and risk attendant upon lying at an open anchorage outside. But since the works have been proceeded with no freshets have occurred, and there have been accumulations of sand, shallowing the entrance to the river. To remove the sand a powerful dredger was ordered, and is now at work.

Having seen all that I could well see since landing from the steamer, I left East London by the afternoon train, arriving three hours later at King William's Town, or, as it

is shortly called, "King." The distance between the two places is forty-two miles, and the line is through an interesting piece of country, the town being on the highway from the harbour of East London to the interior. King William's Town is of considerable importance, being the principal centre of the native trade carried on in the border districts, and those north of Basutoland. What pleased me particularly was its home look. You might indeed have fancied you were in an English town. It stretches pleasantly along the banks of the Buffalo River, and is well sheltered.

I had a letter of introduction to a gentleman, who I found was one of the best-informed men I had ever the pleasure of meeting. Let me introduce him to the reader. Mr. Baker, of King William's Town. Colonial history and colonial politics he had by heart, and it struck me that he could give some of our Colonial Office officials a good start at a competitive examination, and leave them nowhere at the finish. With him I had several agreeable drives, and he certainly did all in his power to make my short stay enjoyable.

The prosperous air of the town is noticeable at once. There are indications everywhere of well-spent money. At the western end is the native location. Then the military barracks and officers' quarters. In the business part of the town are public buildings, stores, club-houses, and so forth. Another portion of the town is occupied by the German settlers, in which there are some pretty

thatched verandahed cottages. Beyond are the camp and headquarters of the Colonial defensive force. The town-hall is a credit to the place ; it is large and commodious, and, I may say, satisfies everybody. Between this building and the river are the Botanical Gardens, with an area of about fourteen acres of alluvial soil of the richest description, where everything grows in the greatest luxuriance.

On a rise to the north are the public offices, on which has been erected a memorial clock-tower in memory of the Rev. J. Brownlee, who commenced the first mission station in Kaffraria on the site of the present town. Near this is the handsome and imposing edifice erected by Sir George Grey (and known as the Grey Native Hospital), for the purpose of breaking the belief of the natives in witch-doctors, by placing skilful medical treatment and maintenance within their reach free of charge. It has now been established more than a quarter of a century, and the success of the institution among the natives is proved by the number who travel hundreds of miles to seek medical and surgical aid, showing that the Kaffir people are breaking through their race prejudices, and acknowledging the superiority of scientific treatment of ordinary diseases.

Having dotted down Graham's Town on my plan as one of the places to be visited, I set out on a long and exhausting drive of twelve hours. The conveyance was the post-cart, and in addition to the driver and myself

there was another passenger—a missionary. I was very thankful afterwards that we had the missionary with us. The look on his face was an exhortation to be patient, even at the worst parts of the road. Hard swearing, or indeed swearing either hard or soft, is not an accomplishment of mine; but my back and bones were so sore during that ride that I felt it would be a comfort if I could have big d——d the conveyance, the road, and myself for travelling in the post-cart; but when the desire rose the missionary looked so reproachfully, as though he knew all about it, that I had not the heart to anathematize the concern. Nevertheless, it was a trial. We passed through a well-wooded and hilly region, in which there were many grassy hollows and flowering heaths, where one could have lingered long and happily; but there is no enjoyment in even the loveliest region after sitting for hours in a post-cart.

At last the journey came to an end, and we were at Graham's Town. It has been described as the "Winchester" of South Africa, owing to its ecclesiastical and educational advantages. And these are greater than you would look for, if you had driven with me from King William's Town. Indeed, the social and intellectual activities of Graham's Town are much like those of an English cathedral town, and people of culture will find in the public buildings and their surroundings much to interest them. One's first impression is that the town is a charming English health resort embosomed in green

hills. The roadways are lined with trees, and the houses have well-kept fronts suggestive of English comfort within.

The heights above the town command a magnificent view of characteristic frontier scenery—an exquisite landscape of hills and dales, variegated with verdant slopes and wooded heights, and backed by massive mountains, whose tops fade into the blue haze on the far-distant horizon. Woest Hill on the one side, and Botha Hill on the other, each afford a good prospect; but the culminating point of view is Governor's Kop, an eminence about two thousand seven hundred feet high, ten miles east of the city. Directly in front and north-eastward the dark valleys of the Great Fish River extend; one can discern the towers of Fort Peddie and the sandhills between the Fish River and the Beka, and in the distance the mountains of Kaffraria.

Do not imagine, pray, that I clambered up the heights above the town and feasted my eyes on the landscape. I saw through other people's eyes, being too sore to attempt any hill climbing. And yet it was worth an effort, for one would have seen spread out in all their loveliness the fair gardens of Albany. But one must not forget the town itself. In St. George's Cathedral in the High Street there is a monument erected to the memory of Colonel Graham, from whom the city takes its name. It is a city of bishops. There is the Anglican Bishop, and the Roman Catholic Bishop, and the Wesleyan

Superintendent, as good as another bishop ; and in the different churches and chapels established here may be heard clergymen and ministers of all denominations. There are also law courts, judges, and barristers ; and, as for solicitors, their name is legion. I trouble you with these details in order that you may be quite satisfied that Graham's Town is a delightful place to live in ; and I can adduce no more convincing proof of this than the fact that the Church and the Law have taken deeper root there than in any other town I have seen in South Africa.

I think this is quite conclusive testimony. It is certainly worth tons of any other kind. For where the Law and the Church are, depend upon it they are in clover. That the climate is genial, that the people are well to do, and that they are in beautiful surroundings are facts I see clearly proven in the face of every churchman and every lawyer in Graham's Town. I don't suggest that they keep up appearances in order that rich invalids, either pious or litigious, may be attracted and their substance devoured ; but it did occur to me that it would be wise to leave your cheque-book at home, and make your bargains as though you were spending your last shilling.

The green hills, within the shelter of which the town has been built, are the spurs of the Zuurberg Mountains. The famous Pass of the same name is best approached by leaving the Coerney Station, and making your way

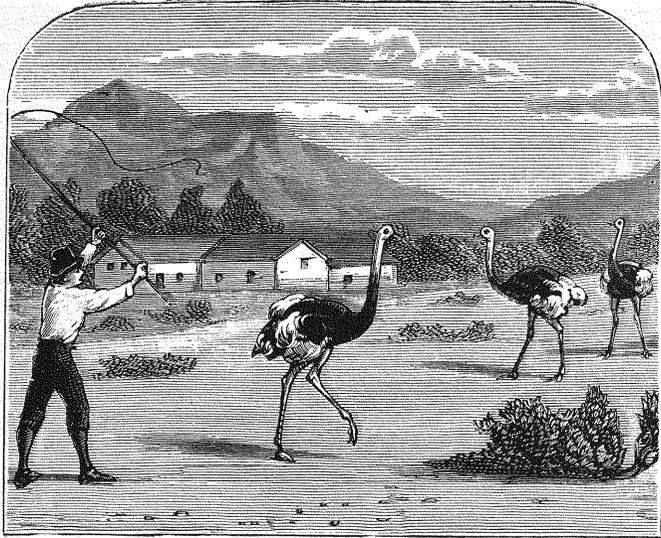
through the Addo Bush—a dense jungle, common enough in the frontier districts. Nearing the foot of the Pass, the mountain heights, clothed with the strange, stiff, gaunt forms of the gigantic Euphorbia, present somewhat of a gloomy aspect. But this soon changes. When the first ascent of a quarter of a mile is made, there is a grand and beautiful disclosure of hill and forest scenery. Above these are imposing, bushy cliffs and weather-stained rocks; while in the valley outstretched below, lofty trees, draped with grey lichens or festooned with convolvulus, wild vine, or monkey-rope parasites, stand up like ancient monarchs, as they are, out of the tangled mass of copse, clustering shrubs, flowering plants, grasses, and ferns which form the undergrowth vegetation.

Through this the road rises, cut out of the solid rock on one side, with deep perpendicular precipices on the other, until it passes through a rocky gateway, and emerges at the top, on what is apparently a tableland of grassy downs, but in reality is one of the several hilly ridges running off into deep furrows and kloops in every direction. It is in crossing these “necks” or ridges that the peculiar character of the Zuurberg is realized and seen to advantage. The scene is thus described by Pringle, the poet of South Africa: “A billowy chaos of naked mountains, rocks, precipices, and yawning abysses, that looked as if hurled together by some prodigious convulsion of nature; while over the lower declivities and deep-sunk dells a dark impenetrable

forest spreads its shaggy skirts, and adds to the whole a still more wild and savage sublimity."

Some part of the range is seen on the way from King William's Town, and you go through a wild and romantic pass called Pluto's Pass; but the most impressive scenery in this mountain region is that which you witness on the way to the coast. Fortunately you have to undergo no post-cart trials on the way down. The Midland Railway conveys you swiftly and comfortably the journey of a hundred and six miles, and I confess to feeling thankful that the iron horse was within my reach, even if the smoke and the steam whistle and the tail of carriages somewhat detracted from the romantic features of the region. But really you lose very little, and the gain in comfort and cheerfulness is immense. There is another line from Graham's Town to Port Alfred, some forty-three miles long; but I had booked to Port Elizabeth, and to that town I journeyed.





OSTRICH FARM.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OSTRICH FARMING IN THE KAROO.

FROM Port Elizabeth to Cradock in the Karoo the distance is a hundred and eighty-one miles. Being wishful to obtain some information about ostrich farming, I thought that it would be as well before leaving the country to visit a spot perhaps the most remarkable for ostrich farming in South Africa, and this more especially as I could make the journey comfortably by rail. What is called the Cradock district is an elevated plateau

about three thousand feet above sea-level to the north of the Winterberg range of mountains. Cradock, the town, is situated on the Great Fish River, and I found it a healthy, well-laid out, and thriving town, in which many English people resided. There is a very comfortable hotel, the Victoria ; and a conspicuous feature, the pride of the Dutch community, is a large Dutch church. The sulphureous springs in the neighbourhood are resorted to, it is said, with much benefit by invalids. But what most people come to see is an ostrich farm.

This industry was originated by two farmers in different parts of the Colony in the year 1864. They had succeeded in capturing some wild ostrich chicks, and it was found there was no difficulty in getting them moderately tame, sufficiently so to allow them to be kept in a well-fenced paddock, and to allow of their being caught twice a year and their feathers removed. Old hunters, however, declared that ostriches would never breed in a tame state, and predicted that the experiments in ostrich farming would end in failure. But it was not so. The difficulties in the way were overcome, and the ostrich, though the shyest and most timid of all birds, is now as easily tamed and farmed as any other domesticated animal.

Having made known the object of my visit to the Karoo, which I should explain is a large tract of wonderfully fertile country, I found information readily forthcoming ; and the following account of a visit to an ostrich farm will, I think, interest the reader.

A VISIT TO AN OSTRICH FARM.

The size of the farm is thirteen thousand acres. The herbage is a mixture of grass, karoo (a sort of heather), and succulent bushes. The rainfall in this part of the Eastern Province is too uncertain to allow of cultivation without irrigation, so the cultivation is confined to a few acres of lucerne, irrigated by pumps, some soft green food being indispensable for rearing the little ostrich chicks during droughts.

On the farm are kept six hundred ostriches and four hundred breeding cattle. The whole property is enclosed by strong wire fences five feet high, and subdivided into numerous camps, with similar fences. Near the homestead the camps are of about a hundred acres each, being appropriated to the rearing of the young birds. Beyond these again are camps of about twenty-five acres each, these being given up to a single pair of superior old birds in each camp for breeding, whilst beyond these again are large camps of about two thousand six hundred acres in extent, with a hundred and fifty birds in each.

Let us take a stroll in these camps, and see what is going on. Here, in the first, we find an old Hottentot with about thirty little ostriches only a few days old around him ; these have all been hatched in the incubator, and he is doing nurse to them, cutting up lucerne for them to eat, supplying them with fine gravel to fill their gizzards with to grind their food, breaking up bones for them, to let them get a supply of phosphates,

and giving them wheat and water, and at sundown he will bring them back to the incubator for warmth, or, should the weather change and rain come on, he will be seen hurrying home with his thirty little children following him to a warm, well-lighted room, with a clean sanded floor.

In the next camp we have a pair of birds and about fifteen chicks accompanied by a Kaffir man, who has been with them every day from the time they hatched to get them tame and accustomed to man. These have been hatched by the parent birds, who will brood them at night in the camp. But great risks are run by this method of rearing, from wild carnivorous animals catching the chicks, as great numbers of carnivorous animals of nearly every known species abound in South Africa, the most destructive to young ostriches being the jackals, a single one of which will destroy a whole brood in a night.

Our host informs us that he is compelled to keep a man constantly employed laying poison and setting traps. The poison is laid by inserting strychnia in pieces of meat, and laying the pieces at short distances all round the camps. In consequence of this wholesale destruction of the carnivora, game abounds on the farm, and as we walk beautiful antelopes of different kinds are constantly springing up and bounding away in front of us, and in the afternoon our host lends us a rifle, and, taking us into some unoccupied camps, we bring down our first buck.

But here we come to another camp, in which we are told there is a nest, and as we enter a heavy thorn bush is given us, and we are told that if the male bird charges we are to hold it to his eyes. But we do not see the cock bird, and have got some distance in, and can just see the hen bird upon the nest with its neck stretched along the ground, making itself look as much as possible like one of the monster ant-heaps that abound in the country, when we are startled by three tremendous roars behind us, and only just have time to put up our bush, when the infuriated cock charges down as fast as a horse can gallop, making every nerve in our body shiver with fear, as we remember having heard of broken ribs and legs and men killed by savage male birds ; but we follow the example of our conductor, and keep the bush at a level with the bird's eyes, when just as he reaches the bush he stops suddenly, his instinct teaching him not to risk his eyesight against the thorns.

Then we move on to the west, keeping the cock at bay with our bushes ; but we are thankful when it is over, as the cock dodges round us, first on this side, then on that, always trying to get his head past our bush, and, should he succeed, he would instantly floor us with a kick from his foot, armed as it is with the formidable horny nail. The kick is delivered forwards and downwards, and with immense force, when at the height of a man's breast, gradually losing its force as the foot nears the ground, in consequence of which many men have

saved their lives when attacked unprepared by lying flat on the ground, thereby escaping with a severe trampling, but no broken bones.

We, however, arrive at the nest without accident, when, to our astonishment, our conductor suddenly lays his bush down and handles the eggs, when we find that the hitherto infuriated cock's nature has quite changed ; he that a moment ago was trying with all his might to get at us and kill us, now stands a dejected, beseeching creature, uttering a plaintive noise, and beseeching us in every possible way not to break his eggs. The nest we find to be merely a scratched hollow in a sandy place, with fifteen eggs in it, weighing three pounds each, upon which the parent birds must sit for six weeks, the cock sitting by night, and the hen by day, the eggs being exposed to many risks of destruction by jackals, baboons, and carrion crows, or by heavy rains filling the nest with water.

The *modus operandi* of the carrion crow to get at the contents of the eggs is very ingenious; their bills are not strong enough to break the shell, so they take a good-sized stone in their claws, and, rising up to a considerable height, let it drop on the eggs ; but, unless there are suitable stones near, they cannot do this, seeming not to be able to carry the stones horizontally. We have noticed the same peculiarity of a want of power in the crow to carry horizontally, when trying to get at a tortoise by letting it fall to break its shell ; in every case where

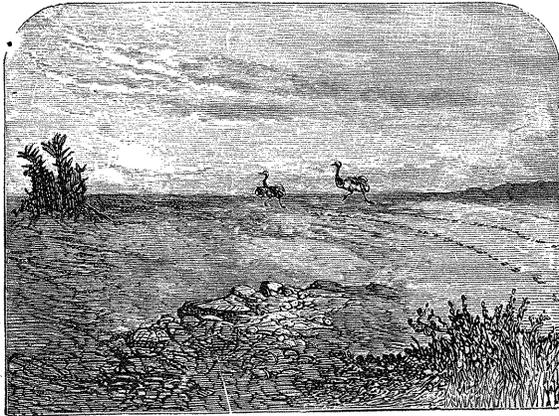
we have seen them do it, they have caught the tortoise on a rock—in no case have we known them to carry the tortoise till they got over a rock.

But now we arrive at one of the large camps with a troop of a hundred and fifty full-grown birds in it, and here, in the corner, we have a planked yard: this is where the birds are plucked, the one end being movable, so that when the birds are in the end can be moved up, and the birds packed in so closely that they have no room to kick. Just as we enter we observe the birds coming over the hill, being driven by ten men on horseback, each man carrying his thorn bush to turn a refractory bird, or to master a savage cock. The birds being yarded, the plucking begins, the tails and long black and drab feathers are pulled out, the white feathers being cut off, and the stumps left for two months, till the quill is ripe, this being done to get the feather before it is damaged, and the quill being left in so as not to injure the socket by pulling it before it is ready to be shed.

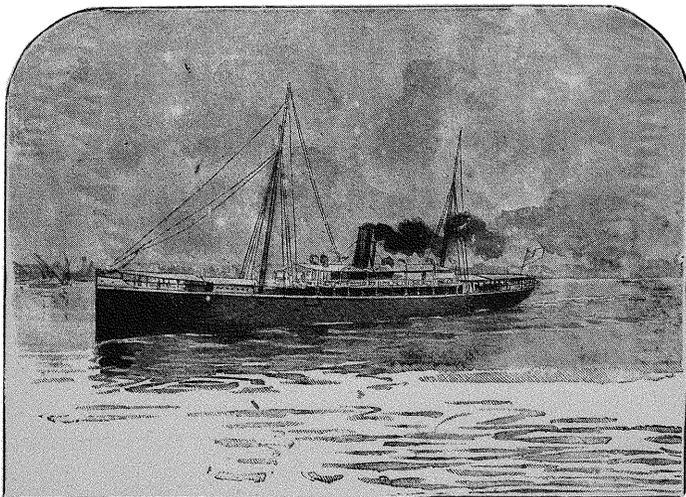
We now return to the homestead, and visit the incubator-room, which is constructed to be as little affected by changes of temperature as possible. The machines used are the "Douglass Patents." Then we visit the feather-room, and see the feathers being sorted into the different qualities, and done up in bunches either for sale in the Colony or for shipment to England. We then visit the kraals, and find some seventy or eighty

cows being milked, as dairy farming can be successfully carried on in conjunction with ostrich farming, the cattle eating the coarse grasses, and tending to keep the bush from getting too thick for the ostriches to pass amongst it.

It was suggested that I should make a return visit to Kimberley by the train leaving for the Orange River Station, but time would not permit of this. So returning as I came, I found a steamer leaving Port Elizabeth, and in a few days more was again in Cape Town.



THE KAROO.



HOMeward BOUND.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCLUDING NOTES.

MY first visit to Cape Town was only a flying one, and, in consequence, I had no opportunity of making inquiries in regard to viticulture. This I now gathered had developed so remarkably that it had become an important branch of cultivation in the Colony. The cultivation of the vine, however, is not, I am told, met with in all parts of the Colony. Most of the wine districts are in the Western Province, the production of wine and brandy in the Eastern Province being comparatively small.

This is not so much due to the fact that the first-class wine-growers settled in the western part of the present Cape Colony, or that for a long time the western part of the Colony formed the principal part of the European establishment, but principally to climatic conditions. There is certainly no country in the world which possesses a climate more favourable to the cultivation of the grape than the Western Province of the Colony. Here we have in spring a sufficient number of fine days with bright sunshine, and also as much rain as will cause a very vigorous development of the buds, and a most luxuriant growth of the young shoots. Towards summer bright sunshine reigns supreme, but the humidity of the air is still sufficient for the further growth of the bunches, which in January and February mature under an almost cloudless sky, and in a tropical temperature. Only certain parts of California and of Southern France enjoy a climate which is similar—but not equal—to that of the Cape.

The enormous production of the vineyards of the Cape is solely due to the climate; it is true the soil is also fertile, but it is not superior to the soil in other wine-producing countries.

The principal wine districts are the divisions of the Cape, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Malmesbury, Worcester, Robertson, Montagu, Ladismith, Prince Albert, and Oudtshoorn; the production of wine and brandy in all these districts is by far the greater portion of the total

yield of the colonial vineyards. They may conveniently be distinguished as coast districts and inland districts, inasmuch as the physical condition and chemical composition of the soil, and also the climatic conditions in these districts, are so different as to compel the winefarmer to adopt two different ways of cultivating the vine in these districts.

The divisions of the Cape, Stellenbosch, Caledon, Malmesbury, and Paarl exhibit a great similarity in soil and climate, and form the group of the coast districts, whereas all the other above-mentioned divisions may be called the inland districts. The rocks which contribute towards the formation of soil in the coast districts are granite, clay-slate, and sandstone. The vineyards, situated on hills or slopes in these districts, are all on granite; the best vineyards in these districts—such as those of Constantia, Bottebary, Moddergat, Jonker's Hoek, Paarl, Groeneberg, and Riebeeks Kasteel—are all on decomposed granitic soil, and there is no doubt that the produce of these vineyards is qualitatively superior to the wine produced in lower situations. The alluvial soil in the coast districts is formed from the constituents of granite, clay-slate, and sandstone, and is found along the courses of the Kuils, Eerste, Laurentz, and Berg River vineyards, on stiff yellow clay, on rich black clay, or sandy clay soil, and even on loose sand. The greatest difference in the physical properties, and in the chemical composition, may be observed in these vineyards; but in all these

districts the soil is distinguished by a very small amount of lime. This want of lime is the characteristic feature of the soil in all the vineyards in the coast districts.

Numerous analyses have been made of these soils, and the results of all show that the amount of lime in these wine districts is deficient, seldom exceeding one per cent. Many wine-farmers have adopted a system of manuring by which they supply the soil with this necessary ingredient, and their method has always been rewarded with excellent results. As a rule, the vineyards in the coast districts are not irrigated, and this must be attributed to another important constituent of the granite soils, the ferruginous clay, which possesses a most peculiar power of retaining moisture; whereas the porous sandy soils, or the loose calcareous soils of the inland districts, readily part with the moisture they contain, and therefore these soils require irrigation. The rainfall in the coast districts is much greater than in the inland districts, and the maximum rainfall is during the winter months. It is evident that this latter circumstance is most favourable to viticulture.

The production of the vineyards of the Cape Colony surpasses, as to quantity and quality, that of any other wine-producing country in the world. This statement will be readily understood and accepted by the reader who pays some attention to the following figures derived from the "Cape of Good Hope Handbook." The average annual yield in the Cape, Stellenbosch, Paarl, and

Malmesbury districts is $1\frac{1}{2}$ leaguers per 1,000 vines; expressed in Continental measures this yield is equal to $86\frac{1}{2}$ hectolitres per 10,000 vines, which are, as a rule, planted in Europe on 1 hectare of land, a square of which the side is 100 metres. If 1,000 vines yield $1\frac{1}{2}$ leaguers at the Cape, 10,000 vines will yield 15 leaguers; as 1 leagner of 127 Imperial gallons is equal to a very little more than $5\frac{1}{2}$ hectolitres, 15 leaguers are equal to $86\frac{1}{2}$ hectolitres, and this quantity is the average yield in the coast districts in the Colony. In the Worcester, Robertson, Montagu, and Oudtshoorn districts the yield is generally 3 leaguers, and even more, per 1,000 vines, which corresponds with 173 hectolitres per 10,000 vines. There are many farmers in the Worcester, Montagu, and Ladismith districts who, year for year, obtain as much as 5 leaguers from 1,000 vines, which amounts to the fabulous quantity of 287 hectolitres per 10,000 vines.

This enormous, and for the European wine-farmer incredible, production of the Cape vineyards is, of course, a source of wealth to the Colony; but if it be remembered that only a small portion of the area which is suitable for viticulture is under cultivation, it is obvious that no country offers the same chances to intending viticulturists as the Cape Colony. If we compare the gigantic production with the yield of the vineyards in other parts of the world, it will become still more evident that the Cape Colony is the wine-producing country *par excellence*.

One or two places I determined to see before leaving. You may perhaps remember that earlier in this narrative I said just one word about Robben Island. This is the isle of lepers. It is a spot of melancholy interest, about six miles from the mainland, and reached by means of a little steamer belonging to the Government, which plies to and from twice a week. You are nearly an hour tossing about while the vessel steams to a dry, sandy, and exposed little island in Table Bay, about three thousand acres in extent. There is no pier or landing-stage, and passengers are carried on the backs of native boatmen from the boats to the shore. The island is covered with a short, thick bush, affording cover to some sorts of game. It is a salubrious spot, as good perhaps for the unhappy people who exist there as any other at present known.

In addition to the leper wards, there are separate buildings for lunatics. These, except the violent and unsafe, are allowed to roam at pleasure about the island. The chronic sick are accommodated in a building with a fine sea view, and nothing appears to be wanting to relieve suffering. In the daytime the lunatics who can be trusted may be seen amusing themselves in different ways. "One is commonly set to watch another; and if you question A., whom you see on a strict and consequential look-out in some part of the island, on what he is so closely intent, with a sly smile he will point to B., and say, 'I am taking care of that poor fellow;' but when you

approach B., and put a like interrogatory to him, he will tell you, casting a cunning glance at A., 'I am looking after him; he is not quite right.'

The leper wards are in three sheds ; but there is a new hospital, and a signal improvement in the surroundings and means of comfort. Visitors quickly pass by ; and is it any wonder ? The poor creatures—thirty or forty of them—are dreadful objects ; indeed, words are utterly inadequate to describe the state in which their bodies are. The hands and feet of some had dropped off joint by joint. To see little fellows hobbling about on padded knees, having no feet, was a heart-breaking spectacle. The hideous faces of those whose eyes and cheeks had gone, and who were barely recognisable as human beings, caused even professional men to turn their heads away.

The total number of lepers on the island is a hundred and nine, of which twenty-six are women and fifteen children. Colonel Knollys, who recently visited Robben Island, distributed a large supply of bonbons which the Princess of Wales had desired him to deliver, with messages of sympathy from her. The scene described by Colonel Knollys touches one deeply. "I offer," he says, "a box of chocolate to yon leper whose limbs are corroding away under the anæsthetic form. Lepers are habitually torpid in their movements and impassive in their gestures, and one would suppose that this patient was almost past feeling ; yet an ejaculation of

pleasure escapes him, and the handless stumps of his withered arms fumble with impotent though eager haste at the prized present. Another case is still more piteous. The whole of his face is a combination of tumefaction and corrosion ; in fact, every feature is merged into a mass of living-dead disease, and scarcely bears the semblance of a human countenance. Yet there seems to flit over him a gleam of gladness at the present and the message. His voice has almost forsaken him ; but as I bend down to catch some scarcely articulate sounds, I learn that he is faltering accents of gratitude and blessing on the Princess of Wales."

Even in the breezy air of the island, and in the sail to the mainland, it was difficult to keep from dwelling on the pitiable and miserable sight witnessed on Robben Island.

When Cetchwayo was in captivity in Cape Town, he stayed in an old Dutch house at Oude Molen. The room in which he received visitors was bare, save for a few chairs, and here "Cetchwayo, a fine, large man, of dignified mien, and sad, gentle expression, dressed in an ill-cut blue serge suit, and sitting ill at ease in an armchair, looked a long way from being at home." Near a brick-built cottage, a few hundred yards away, Langibalele would be found, sitting on the trunk of a tree, shading himself from the sun. Of middle height, blear-eyed, old, decrepit, and almost in rags, he formed a sorry contrast to the dignified majesty of Cetchwayo. To Bishop Colenso, Langibalele

owed it that his sentence to convict labour for life was reduced to twenty years' safe custody on the mainland.

The short time left to me was spent very pleasantly in Cape Town, my friends there being determined that the last impressions of my visit to South Africa should be those of the kindest colonial hospitality. It now only remained to go on board. I had taken my passage in a Union Line boat. I like the accommodation, and the service and cheeriness of the officers and crew. With steam up, the vessel is ready to start. "You will come out again," said my friends, shaking hands. "Don't say no, for we know you will." And perhaps I may.

There was nothing on the homeward voyage I need refer to here. It was swift and uneventful; and when I arrived at home I found all well.

THE END.

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