some respects the worst blow he received from the natives came down upon him like a thunderbolt, when he had only been eighteen months in the country. It happened on a Sunday—"while we were listening to the sermon." The Company's herd of cattle, forty-two in number, including all the milch-cows and draught oxen, were grazing in the charge of a herd-boy, when the Watermen swooped down, murdered the boy, and drove off the cattle. Herry seems to have been at the bottom of it, for during service he absconded with his family. Soldiers were despatched after the light-footed thieves, but in vain. The Dutchmen sank in the heavy sand of the Flats, just as Almeida's Portuguese had done more than a hundred years before, and the Hottentots and the cattle were soon over the hills and far away.

It was a terrible blow to van Riebeck. "We have lost the pantaloons—being unbreeched," he says in his diary—and by the Watermen too, whom he had kindly treated. "Besides, we have been cruelly deceived in our interpreter Herry, whom we had always maintained as the chief of the lot, who had always dined at our table as a friend of the house, and been dressed in Dutch clothes."

That in moral turpitude in this matter of cattle-stealing the Dutch were on much the same level as the Hottentots, may be seen anywhere in the diary, for van Riebeck is always sighing to be allowed to seize the natives' cattle and themselves as well, and only the commands of the Company and considerations of policy prevented him. But the fact remains that the Hottentots were the first actual transgressors, and this circumstance is made full use of by the Commander. A dozen schemes of revenge flit through his mind and are frankly set down in the *Journal*. "Suitable opportunity" is the burden of them all; but in the meantime the natives must be lulled into confidence again, so that they may be enticed into the trap. "If their cattle be

taken they must be taken also, and removed. Can be easily got within the fort and made as drunk as pigs, the more so as their confidence in us is unlimited."

Then he has another plan to throw a chain of forts across the neck of the peninsula, get the Hottentots inside and keep them there, taking their cattle as required, and allowing a few of them out at a time to get more. But "first to creep and then to go." The Commander waited long for his "suitable opportunity." He waited five years, and during that time he loaded Herry with favours. He allowed him to steal copper on pretence of trading it for cattle on behalf of the Company; he allowed him to become a great man; he allowed him to grow rich in cattle; he allowed him to graze them near the fort; he allowed him to do anything he pleased.

Then at last came the "suitable opportunity." Herry was coaxed inside the fort and made prisoner. The sergeant and twenty men surrounded the cattle. The Hottentots resisted; but one of them was killed and another wounded and the herd brought into the kraal. Besides Herry, van Riebeck had secured a number of prisoners, and the Caapmen were now in his power. Then the Commander drew up a treaty with the tribe, and a perusal of it leaves us with a high opinion of his abilities. The first article is as follows: "Whatever the Caapmen have done to our injury, and whatever we did against them, including the shooting of the Hottentoo yesterday, in the fury of the encounter, shall be considered forgotten and forgiven, as if nothing of the whole had ever taken place, and the dead Hottentoo had never been in the world." The Caapmen were forbidden to cross the Salt River or the Liesbeeck, "as the pastures on this side are too small for us all." If they were attacked by other natives they might come under the shelter of the guns. The cattle of the natives were not to trespass on the cornlands of the Dutch. If

any of the Company's slaves escaped, the Hottentots were to capture them and receive payment for them in copper. They were not to stop any other natives from coming to the fort to trade. They were to supply all vessels with a certain number of cattle and sheep for payment in copper, and they were to have the right of boarding the vessels to get bread and brandy. Thus van Riebeck had his "suitable revenge"; in return for the loss of forty cattle and a boy and some copper and tobacco, he had got 110 cattle, 260 sheep, three prisoners, a title to the lands of the peninsula, and a claim on a large percentage of the tribe's cattle in perpetuity. Besides this, as van Riebeck calculated, Herry still owed him f. 375; and "*moreover*"—so ends this settlement of accounts—"*the murder of the boy is still open—an open question, and not yet forgotten.*"

It is characteristic of our good Commander that this delightful instrument was signed "after the sermon."

But the trouble with the natives was not yet over. The freemen were now extending their corn and pasture lands to such an extent that the Hottentots saw the best of their grazing ground taken from them. "First to creep and then to go." When they protested, van Riebeck sweetly replied that there was not enough for both. The natives began to make reprisals. Their raids made life on the frontier of the colony exceedingly precarious. They killed a burgher named Simon In't Velt, and a servant, and they kept the whole settlement in a constant state of alarm. But van Riebeck was again too much for them. He organised mounted parties who raided the native camps, destroyed their goods and killed them or took them prisoners. He built three block-houses on a line from the Devil's Peak to the shore, so as to cut off the settlement from the rest of the country, facetiously calling them "Kyk out," "Keert de Koe" and "Houd den Bule," which mean "Look out," "Guard the Cow" and "Hold the Bull." These

little forts were garrisoned and linked together by a broad thorn hedge, after the manner of the thorn hedges the commander had seen in the East. The natives were thoroughly beaten, and were at last fain to sue for peace. And now van Riebeck made his titles doubly sure.

Here is his account of the matter:—

This day peace was once more concluded with the captain and chief of the Kaapmen, Herry (who had escaped from Robben Island), and all the principal men and elders. Promises were made on both sides no longer to molest one another. However nothing was left of the stolen cattle that could be restored, but they promised on their part to do their best that as many as possible might be brought down from the interior by other tribes, and from time to time, though they firmly maintained their grievance that we had more and more taken of their lands for ourselves which had been their property for centuries and on which they had been accustomed to depasture their cattle, etc. They also asked whether they would be allowed to do the same thing if they came to Holland, and added that it would have mattered little if we had confined ourselves to the Fort, but that instead we were selecting the best land for ourselves, without asking them whether they liked it or not, or whether they were inconvenienced or not. They therefore urged it very pressingly to be permitted once more to have free access to the same for the purpose mentioned. At first we replied that there was not enough grass there for their and our cattle. They answered, "Have we then no cause to prevent you from obtaining cattle, as having many you cover our pastures with them? And if you say the land is not big enough for us both, who ought then in justice to retire, the real owner or the foreign usurper?" They therefore adhered to their old right of natural ownership, and desired to be allowed at least to collect bitter almonds which were growing wild in large quantities in that neighbourhood, as well as to dig roots for their winter food. This likewise could not be permitted as they would find too many opportunities to injure the colonists, and because we shall require the bitter almonds this year for ourselves in order to plant them for the projected fence. These reasons were certainly not communicated to them, but as they steadfastly adhered to their claims it was at last necessary to tell them that they had now lost the land on account of the war, and therefore could make

sure of nothing else than that they had lost it completely, the more so as they could not be induced to restore the stolen cattle, which they had taken from us unjustly and without any reason, that accordingly their country, having been fairly won by the sword in a defensive war, had fallen to us and that we intended to keep it.

"First to creep and then to go." A little fort on the seashore, fair words and strong drink, a little herd of cattle, a bigger herd, a good cause of quarrel, and now the ancestral owners of the soil are not to be allowed even to dig roots in it for their winter food. It is the natural course of events. Prospero takes the island from Caliban — though even Caliban was allowed to "dig up pig nuts." The higher pushes out the lower, the stronger the weaker. 'Tis thus the world goes round. Another hundred years and over the whole country where once their great herds of cattle had roamed, the Hottentots were mere landless serfs, slave labourers for their masters the Dutch.

But besides this intercourse with the natives, van Riebeck found other means of exploring his new country. Expedition after expedition struck out into the wild waste of mountain and valley, which lay ridge upon ridge, line upon line, between the coast and the great tableland which forms the interior of South Africa. The first of these adventures was a strange affair. It happened two or three months after van Riebeck's landing, when the men were on short rations and suffering bitterly from hard work, cold and wet. Two sailors and two soldiers, the chief of them Jan Blanx of Malines, the boatswain of the yacht, deserted during the night and were not heard of for eight days. They at last returned very footsore and hungry, and from their confessions it seems that Jan Blanx had "dreamed in the yacht of a mountain of gold and such like frivolous things." He and Jan Jansz van Leyden had persuaded the two others to go with him, as he

"understood navigation," his intention apparently being to make for Mozambique, taking the mountain of gold on the road. They got twenty-four miles on their way; but as they had with them only four biscuits and some fish, hunger soon brought them to sore straits. They lived for a while on eggs, young birds, and mussels; they saw ostriches and had to dodge rhinoceroses, "which threatened to attack us." But at last they got to a very high mountain which they tried in vain to climb, and so Jan Blanx and his party returned to the fort to be put in irons. The bo'sun's diary, written with red chalk, "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," is a pathetic little document of exploration—the first into the interior of South Africa. "Alone" (it ends) "I could not proceed, so we decided to return, trusting to mercy in God's name." But van Riebeck was not inclined to mercy: there was too much discontent simmering among his men, and he thought it time to make an example. Jan van Leyden was indeed reprieved from sentence of death which was passed; instead, he was bound to a post and had a bullet fired over his head. Jan Blanx was keel-hauled and got 150 lashes. All four were condemned to work as slaves in irons for two years. Thus ended our first expedition, most unhappily for the explorers.[1]

But except for occasional voyages along the coast, or overland expeditions to Saldanha Bay, it was five years before any serious exploration was attempted. Then Abraham Gabbema was sent with an expedition to reach the "Saldanhars" and to open direct trade with them, the object being to get rid of Herry's officious intervention between the Dutch and the tribes of the interior. Gabbema got as far as the Berg River, over seven leagues from the fort; but could not cross it, and so was forced to return. Next came the expedition

[1] It is pleasant to note that the deserters were released from their irons a few months afterwards.

under the gallant Sergeant Jan van Harwarden with fifteen men, two Hottentots, six pack oxen, and three weeks' provisions. In the words of the *Journal*, the sergeant and his men "found the pass over the mountain range of Africa, against which the Berg River is lying, and through a kloof of which it runs from the far inland. On the other side of the mountains they had found such a large flat that they believed they might travel more than a hundred leagues without reaching another mountain range. The flat seemed to be stony soil unfit for corn, there being hardly any grass for the oxen, and no natives found at a distance of 50 hours. Hence they had returned, especially also because their food was running short and some were sick."

It was an arduous journey. Once a rhinoceros ran through their cattle in its blind way, without doing any harm. They saw an elephant, wild horses (zebras), wolves, leopards, antelopes and elands. They saw lions, sometimes five or six in company. At night "the roaring of the lions was dreadful." Dysentery attacked the little band, and two of the explorers died, Gerrit Benkeren and another, the first martyrs of South African exploration. Once as they were camping on the banks of the Eerste River, while the sergeant was serving out the provisions, a large lion sprang upon one of the men, threw him down, and tore him grievously. The sergeant seized his gun, placed the muzzle against the forehead of the brute, and shot it dead. The skin was taken home and stuffed and placed in the large hall of the fort, where it long remained as a memorial of the sergeant's gallantry. We next hear of Harwarden, now ensign and member of the Council, making an expedition to the Cochoquas, a great tribe of the interior. The officer made himself very popular with Oedasoa, the chief, playing the fiddle merrily as they sat round the camp-fire, "whilst a certain soldier made a lot of fun to the great amusement of all." The ensign,

A large Lion sprang upon one of the Men

who had served in the States' army, afterwards told the Commander "that he had never before seen so many people living on so many encampments all on one spot, all full-grown powerful men, living in large round houses made of mats, 30 or 40 feet in diameter. Oedasoa had three houses for himself, much larger even, and so full of assegais, arrows and bows as if they were armour rooms. His sleeping place was on a very fine mat in a hole in the ground. Like all the Hottentots he was dressed in skins, and so besmeared that the fat dripped down his body. This is their greatest pomp. Their cattle were in such numbers that the end could not be seen. . . . The sheep alone took three hours to leave their kraals, and the cattle not less. The latter were bigger than any oxen ever seen at home, and about 2½ feet broad on the back and the buttocks. They were also so high that he being a very tall person, could scarcely look over the backs of the animals, or reach them with the elbow."

Then came a more ambitious venture. Van Riebeck himself had been dreaming golden dreams. Eva and other natives had been telling him wonderful stories of a great native people that lived far inland. There was an emperor called Chobona, who ruled over all the Cape natives. He was rich in gold, which was taken out of the sand, and his people knew how to coin and stamp the coin, "which they made as big as, or even bigger than the palm of the hand." They had large houses of stone and beams; they sowed white rice and they planted all kinds of vegetables; they wore clothes and kept a standing army. Now what the foundation of these stories was I do not know. Perhaps they had none, perhaps they were a confused rumour, stolen across Africa, of the Arabs or Portuguese; perhaps they were a tradition of a great native people now extinct, who may have built the gigantic ruins of Zimbabwe, which remain to "teaze us out of thought" with their weird

mystery. I do not know; but at any rate these old wives' tales fired our Commander's imagination, and with them in his mind were jumbled up confused ideas of Portuguese Africa, drawn partly, no doubt, from soldiers and sailors, who had either been there or talked with men that had, partly from a wonderful chart upon which were marked fabulous towns and rivers according to the geographer's fancy. So an expedition was organised to go to the "land of the Monomotapers." It was to look for the "permanent towns of Monomotapa, Butua and Davugul, at and in the neighbourhood of the River Spirito Sancto." We have heard of this river before. You may see it in the old maps of Spanish America and East Africa; but here at anyrate it was the river of Romance, the Holy Spirit of Adventure, to lure men on after gold and knowledge till they should fall in the quest and their bones bleach in the wilderness. Jan Danchaert, a soldier of Nynoven, led the expedition, and a brave man he seems to have been, even though he did not reach the Monomotapa—who was, if van Riebeck had only known it, a thousand miles away, with a waste of mountain and desert karoo and savage wilderness between that no man could cross. Danckaert and his twelve men only got some sixty miles on the way, and even this gave them incredible toil. They made attempt after attempt to break through the great mountain ranges, which, one behind the other, bar the way into the interior. Now, in these pleasant valleys under the rocky precipices and in the sheltered kloofs where the waterfalls leap from height to height, you may see farms and vineyards, sheltered among oaks and gum-trees, or in a snow of orchard blossom—

> Fair white homesteads there abide,
> Lustrous glimmering pearls ashine.

But in the days when Jan Danckaert broke his finger-nails in trying to open the door of Africa, the rocks were peopled only by bushmen and baboons, and the

valleys by rhinoceros and antelope. At a river which still bears the name of Elephant's River, Danckaert saw a herd of two or three hundred elephants, and among the cliffs he met bushmen who gave him honey out of their leathern bags or ran from him in fear. For days the men and oxen blundered through the high grass, followed the rhinoceros paths, stumbled in the molehills that riddled the ground, climbed the mountain passes. They were knocked over with dysentery. They became mutinous, and one of them threatened to shoot Danckaert when the leader ordered him to look after the cattle. "At this time," he writes in his diary, "I have not the mastery so as to keep the men in good order, so that I am obliged to put up with every insult, keep my tongue, and get them with kind words to proceed."

So they returned, and van Riebeck sent out another expedition. This time it was made up of thirteen men, led by Corporal Pieter Cruythoff, "master-builder of the Company." After toiling through many a valley and over many mountain ranges, "we saw level country. Between north and west we could see no more mountains." Everywhere were signs of old encampments, but it was not until evening that one of the Hottentots cried out in a voice of terror, "Meester Pieter, Namaqua."

And sure enough twenty-three tall natives were standing on the rocks above them, looking down at the party. They had great shields of oxhide, skins hung over their left arms, they had bows and arrows over their shoulders, and an assegai in each hand. Pieter soon made friends with these savages and was introduced to the king, "a man like a giant, much taller than Cattibou, the biggest slave of the Company." Pieter taught the king how to smoke tobacco, and gave him a sup of brandy—which pleased the monarch much. They were led into the camp, a town of round huts,

where there were some seven hundred people and great herds of cattle and sheep. Then the king entertained his visitors.

"A triumph was blown," Pieter tells us, and then "from one to two hundred people formed a circle, each had a hollow reed in his hand, some were long, some short, some thick, and some thin. One stood in the centre with a long stick and sang, the others blew on the reeds and danced around, performing fine actions with their feet. The women danced round the ring, and the sound was as if one heard trumpets blowing. The king sat on his chair a little distance off. This chair is a round piece of wood three or four fingers thick, beautifully ornamented with beads, and is generally carried with them wherever they go. This amusement lasted about two hours, and consisted of all sorts of dances. They then left off, and the king accompanied us to our camp, where he smoked a few pipes of tobacco. Darkness coming on he went back to his house. The blowing of trumpets then recommenced and lasted about three or four hours in the night, when they went to sleep."

Thus Pieter was happily entertained by these hospitable Namaquas, who were great dandies in their way, in their "beautifully prepared skins of tigers, leopards and rock-rabbits, gorgeously ornamented with copper ornaments," with locks "as long as those of a Dutchman" threaded with copper beads, their necks and their waists hung with copper and iron chains, metal rings round their arms, and plaited skins on their legs. Pieter left them with kindly salutations on both sides, and warm invitations to the Namaquas to visit the fort.

There were other expeditions which brought back tantalising but unsubstantial tales of "gold nations," and pigmies, people who lived in houses, and the town of Vigite Magna.

The last was disastrous. Near the Berg River the party saw an elephant which seemed to threaten an attack. To protect the cattle, the men bore down on the intruder with guns, and a battle royal ensued. In those days, one must remember, there were no explosive bullets and Express rifles, and a rogue elephant, which is counted dangerous even now, was then a very formidable enemy. In this case it charged one of the Dutchmen, named Pieter Roman, and so cruelly mangled him that he died two hours afterwards.

Worse still, when they reached the Namaqua encampment they found that the tribe had left, and their efforts to follow them brought the expedition into a dismal desert where they nearly died of thirst. "The ground there is as dry and barren as a plank and full of sandy molehills, without a green herb or grass, and only here and there a little pool of salt, muddy water, the sides of which were quite white with salt."

This was the end of van Riebeck's exploration. He had done a great deal, showing himself as zealous in this as in all other matters. But he had not found gold nor Vigite Magna, and the conclusion of the whole matter was, "All declare that nowhere a tithe has been found of such good land and water as are found here in this little corner of the Cape."

CHAPTER X

VAN RIEBECK—*concluded*

WHEN the Dutch came to the Cape the English were their chief rivals, and there were, of course, either as open or secret enemies, the Portuguese and the French. Van Riebeck, like a good Dutchman, detested them all, and was always ready to serve them a scurvy trick if he got the chance, taking care, however, to make friends with them when friendship seemed worth while. The great Italian, Machiavelli, who was not nearly so bad a man as he is usually painted, held that it is quite right, for the good of your country, to tell lies or cheat, or to circumvent your enemy in any manner possible. Van Riebeck was a disciple of Machiavelli. To show how he dealt with foreigners, let us take the case of the French sealer which was discovered at Saldanha Bay shortly after van Riebeck arrived at the Cape. The Frenchmen had collected nearly fifty thousand sealskins, besides blubber, before the Dutch galiot discovered them, and the French captain gleefully told his visitors that he "hoped to retire if he got home." When he heard all this, our good Commander immediately sent men overland to Saldanha Bay with letters which the French captain was asked to be so good as to deliver in Holland. He was also told that if he had touched at the Cape he would have been supplied with "sheep, cattle, fowls, geese, ducks, partridges, and all kinds of game, besides

salad, cabbages, carrots, turnips, and all kinds of European garden produce, which we were also inclined to send him if we had had a vessel at our disposal." At the same time as these pleasant civilities were to be delivered, "you are to tempt as many of the Frenchmen as possible to desert, and as secretly as you can, that in this way the captain may become so helpless that he may be induced to sell his ship and cargo to the Company." We are glad to hear that this cheerful piece of scoundrelism did not succeed, as the captain grew suspicious, "trusting us as little as we trust him," and the Dutch were only able to get four Frenchmen who had been marooned on an island for insubordination.

That van Riebeck would have played the English the same trick if he dared is shown by entries in the Diary. Thus when an English ship called at the Cape and took water and fish without so much as asking by your leave, there is the following observation:—

> The Dutch part of the Englishman's crew very unwilling. About thirty or forty of them would have liked to remain here, and we might easily have hidden them inland, but as our masters do not like to be in trouble with that nation, we did not dare to do so; otherwise there would have been a chance of hampering the Englishman to such an extent that he would not have been able to move his ship, and been obliged to sell the whole concern to the Company for a trifle.

Van Riebeck, indeed, had a healthy fear of the English, and was very civil to them when he got the chance, "to show them the kind heart we have towards them without any hypocrisy." Thus on one occasion he "entertained the English officers at dinner; treated them so well that at night they went on board pretty sweet and jolly and well pleased." And shortly after we have the entry: "English officers again dined with us, and at night they were as jolly as before, dancing, jumping, rolling, and happy when they left." Jack ashore is always the same, you see; and he was not to

be outdone in kindness. The captain offered the Dutchmen "anything which the ship might have," and when this large offer was refused, "sent the commander a hogshead of good English ale, a case of distilled waters, a good English cheese, and six smoked tongues." Van Riebeck, in his turn, "to be under no obligation, but rather to leave it on the other side," sent on board a large quantity of vegetables. Very pleasant, is it not? and yet, I make no doubt, they would have cut each other's throats with all the pleasure in the world.

But the Commander had cause to be careful. They were a desperate lot on the seas in those days. The French at Madagascar, for all their backing by Cardinal Mazarin, were little better than pirates. We hear how these gentry "went to the Red Sea to rob the Moors; there they had chased a vessel supposed to be a Moor, but found it to be English, and having sent their small bark and sloop against it, were beaten off with the loss of sixty men." Then we have an account of how a French vessel from Dieppe, with a Swedish commission, lay in the Dutch harbour of Cape Verde for two months, pretending to be a peaceful merchantman, while two Dutch flutes were taking in their cargoes. The Governor gave a dinner in honour of the departing vessels, and ten of the Frenchmen, "secretly armed with pistols under their clothes," were among the guests.

After dinner, when all stood up to drink a parting glass together, the Frenchmen seized the opportunity, and placing their pistols on the breasts of the Governor and some of his retinue, compelled them to surrender as prisoners, together with all who were in the fort and were unarmed or had no idea of evil. At the same time they made a signal to the men of their ships, who at once attacked the flutes, and after a successful plunder they departed, leaving the Governor in possession of his plundered fort, though no one was killed.

Part of the plunder taken by these buccaneers was three hundred thousand guilders in gold; and we need

not be surprised when van Riebeck remarks, "This narrative made us more prudent towards these visitors, though we never trusted them."

Little wonder, too, if the Commander felt alarmed when the French ship *Marechal* was wrecked in the Bay, and a hundred and fifty desperate Frenchmen came swimming ashore on casks and planks and other wreckage. The new Governor of Madagascar — for already France claimed possession of that island — a Prussian named Gelton, was on board, as well as a bishop, Monseigneur Estienne. Van Riebeck demanded that all the arms be delivered up, at which very reasonable request the Prussian used most desperate threats. The Commander was firm, however, and soon brought them to terms, and the upshot was that a good many of the Frenchmen were taken into the Dutch service, while the officers were given quarters in the town tavern.

Those were troublous times, and van Riebeck had need to be careful. For example, we find him sending the following message to "the Admiral and Combined Council of the Return Fleet":—"This serves to inform you that the English have garrisoned Saint Helena, and that the Seventeen have sent written orders that the return fleet shall not touch there this year, because it is not certain whether, in consequence of the tottering Government in England, a stronger alliance or war with that country and our State will be the result." Thus we see the three great Powers had taken up their positions—the French at Madagascar, the Dutch at the Cape, the English at Saint Helena—points of vantage in the struggle for the East, and the reversion of the great Portuguese Empire. Each meant to have it, and the struggle was to rage for a hundred and fifty years before England came out victorious. In this great fight the Cape, as we shall see, was not the least important factor.

But in the meantime our Netherlanders were making

themselves very snug ashore. For all van Riebeck's troubles and perplexities he had his consolations. His garden, we can see, was a perpetual delight to him. He gloats over his cabbages, his sweet potatoes, his parsnips, and his turnips. The first cauliflower grown at the Cape has a special entry to itself. "Everything at the table reared at the Cape," he says, with the true colonial pride; and again, "The horse-radishes grow well, glory be to God!" "The finest heads of lettuce in the world" is another of the entries. And then, later, we can see the joy he takes in his fruit trees grown from seed gathered east and west, his pisangs and pummeloes —his olive trees "doing well"—alas, that they have never since done well at the Cape—his oranges and lemons, medlars, quinces, and currants. "The first cherry grown at the Cape" appears as an entry. But I think the sweetest and most touching entry of all is, "This day the first Dutch rose was plucked at the Cape." I like to fancy that it was a Marie van Hout, that glorious and delicate bloom, pale cream with a flush of pink, and that the Commander himself pinned it over the snowy linen upon his wife's breast. Then we have another entry, almost as delightful: "To-day (Sunday), glory be to God, wine was pressed for the first time from the Cape grapes, and the new must fresh from the tub was tasted; it consisted mostly of Muscadel and other white round grapes, of fine flavour and taste."

Then van Riebeck rejoiced to see his woodcutters bringing down the mighty trees of the forest, and it is plain that lime-making and brick-burning, planning a fort, or building a house were keen delights to him. And he had great joy in his experiments with free settlers and their farms, though here he had many disappointments. He would go and watch the waving fields of corn, and he is in a bitter mood indeed when the south-easter blows the grain out of the head. Then

a hedge to keep out the natives, or a canal to fill the moat, or a redoubt to protect the shore becomes an absorbing interest. And when a "tiger" breaks into the kraal and kills all his ducks and geese there is mourning and lamentation. As for the breeding of pigs, it becomes a passion with him, and we have a "resolution," a yard long, instructing the burghers in pig-rearing. Even rabbit-breeding is not too trifling an occupation, and there is a world of anxiety in the entry: "The last buck sent is worth nothing; he allows himself to be bitten by the others, who chase him about; the black buck is good, but he seems to have forgotten the does."

The scarcity of labour was a great trouble, then as now, and the Commander is constantly wishing for a few thousand Chinese to cultivate the soil. Then comes the *Hasselt* with a cargo of slaves from Popo, in the Gulf of Guinea—"a fine, strong, and healthy lot," says the Diary. They were very useful, and I do not suppose the Cape could ever have become what it is were it not for slave labour. But they were a great trouble also. In some cases, no doubt at all, they were cruelly treated, and they were a sullen, murderous lot, always plotting to escape or to murder their masters. The blacksmith was kept busy making chains for them; but still they escaped now and again, or wreaked dreadful vengeance upon their owners; and the most atrocious crimes ever committed in South Africa were the result of slavery. The geographical notions of these people seem to have been as crude as van Riebeck's own, and they thought that if they could only escape they could walk back to their homes in Angola. Cheerful people they were: "They further stated that they intended to live on Hottentoo flesh, whom they would kill here and there, as they were accustomed to do in their own country, where the victors ate the conquered."

But the Commander had trouble also with his own

people. He was a stern disciplinarian, as I have shown, and he had need to be, for he had a rough lot to deal with. We already know how Jan Blanx and van Leyden were punished; but I did not say that a bo'sun, who was only suspected of sympathising with the deserters, was sentenced, as "a loose and dirty prater," to drop three times from the yard-arm, and receive "100 lashes on his wet posterior before the mast." We hear of others getting "fifty cuts on their dry skin"; but which was the worse form of punishment I leave those of my readers who are schoolboys or schoolmasters to determine. Van Riebeck kept good discipline, that is certain. Every one had to go to church on Sunday, and at meal times it was the duty of the gunner to go round and see that every one said grace. But sometimes a drunken and riotous crew on shore made terrible trouble, slashing about with knives and hangers, and firing their pieces, to the great danger of quiet folk.

Much more serious, however, than such drunken escapades was "the great treason" discovered by the surgeon, Mr. William Robertson, a native of Dundee: "During the examinations before the council it was revealed that four English, four Scots, three Dutch servants, besides two freemen's servants and fifteen slaves, whose intention was first to kill the seamen of the *Erasmus* working in the forest; after that the men at the 'Schuur'; and after that, to scale the fort and murder all in it, the smallest child included; after that to proceed to the yacht *Erasmus* in the boats of the Company or the freemen, to seize her, and depart in her. But the Almighty be thanked, who had been pleased to prevent this murderous conspiracy."

The nationality of these conspirators, who were duly punished and sent to Batavia, shows what a very mixed lot the servants of the Company were. To say that the colony was composed of Dutchmen is impossible after reading the Diary. Some were Dutch, but a great

many were Germans; and there was, besides, a large sprinkling of English, Scots, and Swedes. The Company picked up its men where it could, and the Cape has always been cosmopolitan.

Besides these troubles, great and small, there was usually the excitement of wild beasts to keep the settlement lively. Sometimes it would be a leopard in the fowl-house, sometimes a lion in the cattle kraal. It was no joke to kill a lion in those days, and many a terrible fight at close quarters is recorded in the Diary. Here is one which must stand for all the rest:—

> During the forenoon the Commander saw many marks of wild beasts in the garden, and a little later, about fifty yards off, a lion jumped up and proceeded slowly towards Table Mountain. The sergeant, hunters, and others were sent to kill him, and at once they were followed by about 200 Hottentoos, with all their sheep and cattle driven before them. At the foot of Table Mountain the beast was so thoroughly enclosed in a deep kloof that he could only escape through the flock of sheep, which the Hottentoos intended to be a defence. The lion was lying under a bush, and they remained between their sheep and cattle. When the lion showed itself, and, roaring, wished to break through or seize a sheep, they rushed forward with their assegays over the sheep, making a great noise; the lion then retired, looking round very thoughtfully, but as the Hottentoos could not very well reach him, the sergeant (the hunters and others being about ten yards away from the beast) fired but missed; the hunters, however, sent three bullets through its head, so that it fell down dead at once. Then the Hottentoos became valiant, and tried to give the animal a hundred stabs after death, but they were prevented from doing so in order not to spoil the skin, that, properly prepared, might be hung up in the large hall used for a church.

But I must resist the temptation to quote further, though there is much else that is interesting in this Diary of our first true South African colonists. The whole life of the settlement appears to us, not dimly but quite clear, with detail as precise as you may see in an old Dutch picture, where every thread of the lace on ruff and sleeve is painted in. We see van

Riebeck at his work, directing, praising, blaming, bullying; the woodcutters in the forest; the brickmakers at the kiln; the ensign and his soldiers, sudden and quick in quarrel; a bos'un and his mates from the return fleet with news of the siege of Goa, or the doings of the French pirates; a brace of English sailors rolling along "sweet and jolly" from the Staats Herberg, where they have had a trifle too much bomboe; there are the Company's two hunters drunk as usual, and boasting of the lion or rhinoceros last shot; a fisherman comes up laden with snoek from the jetty the Commander has just built with such pains and trouble; and there is Frederick Boom, the Company's head gardener, a solid man, already well-to-do, and looking forward to a farm of his own. He is walking along with Louwys Rickart, who is a "great pastry-cook, roaster, and cook," and has just been allowed to set up for himself as a baker. And there, sure enough, is Mynheer Mostert, the miller, whose water-mill is click-clacking away farther up the stream. They'll all sit down on the Fiscal's stoep presently and have a glass of wine with him, and smoke a pipe of tobacco, and discuss the latest news from Batavia or Amsterdam. And now along the little street beside the canal comes Vrouw van Riebeck herself, with her little girl trotting beside her, and Abraham, one of the first of the Cape-born, in her arms. He is to be a great man, Abraham, one day,—no less than Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies,—greater than his father, who never became anything higher than secretary of the Council at Batavia. But now, look, there is a fleet of great Indiamen coming into the bay; they make a grand show as they sweep in with a flourish of trumpets and a resounding salute. Yet may be there will be hardly enough men to lower the great sails, and the good Commander makes haste to send them boatload upon boatload of fresh meat and green vegetables, for this is his chief end—the chief end of the town—to be

the tavern of the Indian seas. He was a good man, our Commander, for all his fiery temper and manifold deceits, and he did a great work; few men could have done it so well. He founded Cape Colony, its gardens, its houses, its farms, its industries—all had their start in him. As Mr. John Runcie, the poet of South Africa, has sung—

Yet here the tale beginneth, whatever pride may be
In affluent power and traffic from war and victory,—
With the keen-eyed Little Thornback stepping shoreward from the sea.

CHAPTER XI

THE HOUSE OF VAN DER STEL

AFTER twelve years' rule at the Cape Jan van Riebeck left it, as I have shown in my last chapter, an established colony—a flourishing little baby country. The good Commander went to Batavia where he became secretary to the Council of State, an honourable post, which must have suited the Commander very well. His son Abraham, who was born at the Cape, became in time a very great Company's man, no less a person, indeed, than Governor-General of the Indies—the first in the line of our great South Africans. We see him in his portrait somewhat puffed and liverish, as if he were fond of curry and good living; but a man of authority—and no doubt, like his father, a capable, energetic administrator.

But the van Riebecks concern us no longer. We must pass on, and that rapidly. After van Riebeck came a succession of commanders whose names it is needless to mention. They were busily engaged, like van Riebeck, in provisioning the ships, in writing to the Seventeen, in settling quarrels among colonists and sailors, in bartering cattle and fighting the Hottentots. Sometimes there were bigger matters on hand. The French and the English were fighting for their share of the India trade. The French seized Madagascar as a half-way house, the English St. Helena, and some-

times the Dutch were fighting the one and sometimes the other. We need not trouble about all these little wars, though they caused a great deal of alarm to the Cape commanders at the time. Van Riebeck's fort was thought too weak, and a great stone fortress in the shape of a pentagon was built upon the beach, where it still stands, with the roar of the railway train under its walls on one side and the busy traffic of the street on the other. Nor need I trouble you in detail with the Dutch attack on St. Helena—not a very heroic business. An expedition was sent from the Cape with some three hundred men or more, who surprised and took the English fort. The English fled in a ship and fell in with an English squadron under Commodore Munden, who not only took the place back again, with its Dutch garrison, but surprised and captured the Dutch reinforcements.

All this and much more I must leave alone, and come at once to the great period of the Cape under Dutch rule—the reign of the House of van der Stel. It is a story so moving and tragical that I do not know of any other in our whole history of greater interest; and it displays in its different phases most of the great problems over which South Africans have been fighting ever since.

Simon van der Stel was a colonist and a Company man. He was the son of Adriaan van der Stel, the Company's commander at Mauritius; but he went to school at Amsterdam, then the greatest port of all the world, and we may be sure, he wandered—

> Among her water meadows and her docks,
> Whose floating populace of ships—
> Galliots and luggers, light-heeled brigantines,
> Bluff barques and rake-hell fore-and-afters—brought
> To her very doorsteps and geraniums
> The scents of the World's End.

There he saw bales of pepper and spices and talked

with tawny sailormen about Mauritius and the pirates and the sea-fights in the Indian seas. There he grew to manhood, and there married a great lady, Johanna Jacoba Six, one of the family that bought Rembrandt's pictures, and thus allied himself to the Sixes and the Tulps, merchant princes of his city. There he first served the East India Company, and there in due course he received the post of Commander at the Cape. Eighteen years he governed the Colony, first as Commander and then as Governor, and when he retired on the last year of the seventeenth century, his eldest son, Wilhem Adriaan, stepped into his shoes.

Simon van der Stel was, I think, a much bigger man than Jan van Riebeck. Indeed he might be placed with the greatest of South Africans, with Sir George Grey and Sir Bartle Frere and Cecil Rhodes himself. To begin with, he was a fine gentleman. He would never have descended to the shabby little tricks that van Riebeck was ready to play for the good of the Company. He was a father to the natives in the real sense of the word, protecting them against themselves and the cruelty and greed of the settlers. He planted oaks and built homesteads; he settled colonists; he encouraged agriculture; he explored the coast and the interior; he administered justice; he exercised hospitality—and all that he did bears the mark of the great man and the man of honour working in truth and justice and zeal for his country and mankind.

All this we see in a hundred different ways. Not a traveller visits the Cape but speaks of him with respect and enthusiasm. The account of him I like best is that of the learned Jesuit, Père Tachard, who visited the Cape four times in his journeys to Siam and Indo-China,—for even at that time France had begun to build up her great Empire in the East, and was sending out soldiers and sailors, statesmen and priests in the Imperial cause. When Père Tachard first arrived with his five

brother Jesuits he found at the Cape the Baron de St. Martin, a Frenchman in the Dutch service, who was Major-General of Batavia, the great Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede Tot Drakenstein, Lord of Mydrecht, who had been appointed by the Company as Commissioner, with great powers to inspect and set right all their affairs in the East, and Commander van der Stel. Van Rheede and van der Stel were close friends, and they vied with each other in their kindness to the Fathers. First they entertained them to tea at the castle, talking of a thousand things, and then, finding that the Jesuits were anxious to make astronomical observations, van der Stel put at their disposal a lovely little pavilion in the Company's garden, a building which, as the Father says with enthusiasm, might have been built for the very purpose. The visitors were lost in admiration of the solid building of the fort, with its great hall, hung with trophies of the chase; its beautiful terrace, paved with great blocks of freestone; and its balconies with balustrades of iron. And then, when the Commander showed them the garden, they were surprised, as Père Tachard says, to find it "one of the most beautiful and curious I had ever seen in a country which appeared the most sterile and most frightful in the world." According to the Father it was some fourteen hundred yards long, and two hundred and thirty-five broad. "Its beauty does not consist, as in France, of compartments and parterres of flowers; there were no fountains, though it might have had them if the Company had gone to the expense. For there was a stream of living water which descended from the mountain and traversed the garden. But you saw there alleys as far as the eye could go, of citrons, pomegranates, oranges, protected from the wind by high and thick hedges of a kind of laurel, called 'spek,' always green and something like filaria. The garden is divided by these alleys into several plots, of which some are full of apples, pears, coigniers and apricot trees

and the other excellent fruits of Europe; and in others you see ananas, bananas, and the rarest fruits of all parts of the world, transported here and cultivated with much care. Other plots are sown with roots, vegetables, and herbs, and others still with flowers the most esteemed in Europe, besides unknown blooms of beauty and odour the most rare." At the gate was the great slave lodge for five hundred slaves, many of whom worked in the garden, and in the middle of the garden wall on the side near the fort was the delightful little brick pavilion with its terraces and balustrades in which the good Fathers took their observations. It was a pleasant stay; a great number of Roman Catholic colonists, free and slave, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Flemish, crowded to get the blessing of the priests, and Monsieur le Gouverneur was indefatigable in his courtesies, showing them, among other things, a bowl of gold-fish in which he took delight. In parting he embraced them, "praying God that the designs on which you go to China will end happily, and that you will lead a great number of infidels to the knowledge of the true God." And when they went on board they found a present of tea and Canary wine waiting for them in return for the microscope and burning glass which they had given him. Van Rheede and van der Stel were both interested in science, and the Jesuits met a M. Claudius, a young doctor of Breslau in Silesia, who was preparing a Hortus Africus for van Rheede similar to that nobleman's great Hortus Malabaricus, which is still so much esteemed. Then, when Père Tachard arrived on his second voyage, the Governor treated him as an old friend. "Il nous fit mille amitiez." There were then fifteen Jesuits, and van der Stel placed at their disposal a beautiful house in the country, which may have been Constantia itself. They could not accept it; but when one of their number was ill they accepted the services of the Company's doctor, and van der Stel helped them

with their astronomical and tidal observations, and showed them rare plants gathered by himself in the interior. Altogether, we could not have a pleasanter picture of courteous hospitality; and let us remember, too, that it needed some courage and more breadth of mind for a Dutchman to show kindness to men who were French and Roman Catholic, and not only so, but members of an order associated in the vulgar mind with everything that was Satanic. As a matter of fact van der Stel was severely rated by the Directors for his kindness to the French, and had to defend himself against ridiculous charges because he accepted a miniature of Louis XIV. presented by a French officer to show His Majesty's gratitude. Van der Stel had a shrewd eye for men, and no doubt saw that the Jesuits were what they pretended to be—devotees of knowledge—men after his own heart. How he treated men whom he saw were not what they pretended to be we gather from the work of Peter Kolbe, a mountebank who came to the Cape on a scientific mission, and afterwards wrote a book which is chiefly composed of lies where it is not the work of other men. Van der Stel, he says, "took an infinite pleasure in imposing all the fictions and sotteries he could upon every one. Having the honour, forsooth, to be once in his company at his seat of Constantia, he took it into his head to assure me very gravely that in a journey from the Cape to Monomotapa, he reached at the distance of two hundred miles a very high mountain; where passing the night he ascended to the top, and discovered from thence very plainly that the moon was not so far from the earth as the astronomers asserted. 'For as that planet,' he said, 'passed over my head, the night being very still and clear, I could plainly perceive the grass to wave to and fro, and the noise of its motion in my ears.' 'You set up for an astronomer and a philosopher,' said he, 'what think you of this matter?' 'Think, sir,' I

replied, seeing him very grave and knowing his temper, 'I think that your Excellency's eyes and ears are as good as most people's, and that it would be very ill manners for me to dispute the evidence.' And so the matter dropped."

Such a story makes us love the old man in spite of the author, and there are few who write of van der Stel without enthusiasm. Francois Leguat speaks of his kindness and his courtesy both to himself and to his fellow-Huguenots, and Captain Ovington cannot say too much of him. He describes the garden as "the Paradise of the world, the loveliest regions ever seen"; praises the way in which water is conveyed in narrow channels from the mountain to the shore, and in lead pipes forty feet out to sea, so that the ships' long boats could take it in without any labour; admires the curiously pruned trees, the exactness of the trimmed hedges, and the neatness and cleanness of everything, so that "even in the winter season scarce a leaf is seen upon the ground." And of van der Stel he says that he is a "very kind and knowing person, is maintained in grandeur, and lives honourably." His public table "wants no plenty either of European or African wines or Asian liquors," and groans with its variety of good things, "served in his bountiful entertainments on dishes and plates of massy silver." Before the departure of the fleets, he continues, the Dutch commanders are invited to a public repast, "where they drink and revel, bouze and break glasses as they please, for these frolics are the very life of the skippers."

Then we see another side of his character, equally pleasant, in his dealings with the French and Dutch settlers. When he was new to the country he explored the lovely valley of the Eerste River. Nowadays the sparkling little river is alive with rainbow and Loch Leven trout, and winds through rich vineyards and pleasant orchards of peach and apricot trees, past old

white homesteads buried in oak and fig and eucalyptus. In those days it was full of primeval forest and reedy swamp, the haunt of the lion and the rhinoceros. Here van der Stel pitched his tent under the trees of a pleasant plot of ground surrounded by two branches of the river, and such dreams must have entered his head as came into the mind of Rhodes when he gazed from the Matoppos over the vaster wilderness of Matabeleland. Here was a country fit for white people, who would make of the wild valley among its savage mountains a little Rhine-land of the south. So the country of the Eerste was called Stellenbosch, the wood of van der Stel, just as the country of the Zambesi was called Rhodesia. And the Commander induced families of white settlers, now a little crowded in the confines of the Cape Peninsula, to seek a new home and cultivate the rich virgin soil of the valley. Year after year, van der Stel watched the growth of the settlement with the same solicitude that Rhodes showed towards Rhodesia. He got the settlers church and school, pastor and schoolmaster, and every year he spent his birthday in the growing village; and we have a pleasant picture of him examining the children in their tasks, and giving to each a cake varying in size according to the merit of the pupil.

Now, a little before this time, that great measure of persecution, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had been passed against the Huguenots of France, and these refugees crowded into Holland, where they were treated with a worthy hospitality by their Dutch fellow Protestants. But as their numbers increased, they could not but be something of an encumbrance in narrow little Holland, and they were anxious to find a wider home beyond the seas. So an arrangement was made with the Dutch East India Company, and van der Stel was asked to receive "some French refugees from Piedmont . . . all of the reformed religion . . .

among them you will find men skilled in the husbandry of the vine, and some who understand the making of brandy and vinegar, whereby we anticipate that you will find the want of which you complain in this respect satisfied. It will be your duty, as these people are destitute of everything, to render them every assistance on their arrival until they are settled and can earn their own livelihood. They are industrious people and easily contented." Van der Stel was delighted; he replied with enthusiasm: "If they behave themselves," he said, "as piously and industriously as their fellow-countrymen who have settled here lately, they will benefit and strengthen the country in a wonderful degree, and excite much emulation among the Netherlanders." And so they arrived, the first of them by the *Vorschooten*, which deserves to be remembered as the *Mayflower* of South Africa, and by many other ships, until there were about two hundred of them in the new land.

And now van der Stel had to show what a statesman he was. The Cape was then but a little settlement, with a population in all of but a few hundred whites. Besides, France was usually at war with the Netherlands, and the Huguenots were sometimes not above the suspicion of intriguing with their mother country. They were, besides, not quite the meek saints that some people would have us suppose them to be, but often narrow and pugnacious fanatics. Montaigne remarks in one of his essays that there are just as dark and savage passions on the right side as on the wrong. Whether Calvinism was right or wrong is nothing to my purpose. All I venture to say is that it produced a very stiff-necked generation. But above all, these people were French and not Dutch, and it was the object of van der Stel to make a Dutch and not a French South Africa. His methods have been called harsh; but as far as I can see there is not a tittle of

evidence in support of this view. On the contrary, he treated the French with all the courtesy and kindness characteristic of his nature. He gave them land without encumbrances, he gave them agricultural implements, he helped them himself with labour and wood, and he got the Dutch farmers to lend them their wagons. Then he wrote to Batavia: "The French fugitives sent hither from the fatherland, and established here, will, in consequence of their extreme poverty, be unable to enjoy any fruits of their labours in these wild and desert lands for three or four years to come. In the meanwhile they must be supported by the Company, and assisted from the slender resources of our poor-fund. Already the account for articles supplied them since their arrival has been considerable, and in order to relieve the Company from the burden as much as possible for the future, and assist those people in the most suitable manner, we request your Right Honourables, most humbly, that you may be pleased to allow that for their support and assistance, and likewise for those who are still to come, a collection may be made at Batavia, for which they will at all times be grateful, and we likewise shall feel personally obliged." Now it happened that the Dutch had been compelled by a Chinese pirate to evacuate the island of Formosa, and the poor-fund of that settlement was lying unappropriated in their coffers at Batavia. Perhaps the van Riebecks had something to do with it, but at any rate the whole sum—no less than six thousand rix-dollars—was sent to van der Stel and by him distributed among the Huguenots, as well as a large number of oxen obtained by barter from the Hottentots. When therefore, the Governor wrote to the Chamber, "we shall lend a helping hand to the French fugitives and give them proofs of Christian love, by putting them on their legs," he was saying no more than the truth.

But we have independent testimony of his kindness.

The Marquis Henri du Quesne, himself a Huguenot exile, devised a scheme for placing a colony of the refugees on the beautiful island of Mascarenhas or Bourbon, now called Reunion, one of those glorious emeralds of coral and palm with which the Indian Ocean is studded. It was to be called the Isle of Eden, and was to be governed in a way that anticipated Rousseau's philosophy. The scheme ended in smoke, but it got so far that a private ship, the *Hirondelle*, was sent to spy out the land, and nine Huguenots, the famous François Leguat among them, were landed, not indeed on the island of Bourbon, but on that of Rodriguez. There they lived two years "the people and its rulers," as they say, "in the right haven of blessedness," and might have continued there to the end of their days if they had not been "goaded" by their longing for what they called "the most adorable sex" to build a boat and set out on a voyage in search of wives, true Frenchmen that they were. One of them died in this perilous enterprise, but the rest, after almost incredible perils, arrived at the island of Mauritius, then in the hands of the Dutch, and under the general supervision of the Cape Government. The boat was destroyed, whether by the French or the Dutch is a matter of dispute, the French were accused of trying to steal one of the Dutch boats, and there was soon a furious quarrel with the Dutch commander, that "cruel hangman Deodati" as Leguat calls him. The end of the wife-hunt was that some of the French were imprisoned on the island, and others marooned on a desert rock, near the mouth of the harbour. Into the merits of the quarrel I need not enter; but it may be said in passing, that the learned editor of Leguat in the Hakluyt series, does not seem to have read Deodati's defence in the Cape Archives. Leguat and his friends were afterwards sent to Batavia, and then went home by way of the Cape. This little

story to show that Leguat, being a French Huguenot, and not too favourably disposed towards the Dutch, may fairly be regarded as an independent witness, while it is now generally admitted that he was an acute and faithful observer.

"Every one," Leguat says, "must easily conceive that there are no beginnings without difficulties, and our honest countrymen did not meet with a few at first; but then they were charitably relieved, as I have already observed, and at length God was pleased so to bless their labours that they are at present perfectly at ease, nay, some of them are become very rich. In some parts of the Cape the landskips are wonderful fine, especially where our new inhabitants were settled, and the air is admirably good. Fine and large rivulets contribute to the fertility of the soil, which furnishes wine in abundance with all sorts of corn. The little hills are covered with vines, exposed to the best sun and sheltered from the bad winds. Spring water flows at the foot of these hills, and waters in its course the gardens and orchards, which are filled with all sorts of fruits, herbs and pulse, as well European as Indian. All this considered, 'tis certain the Cape is an extraordinary refuge for the French Protestants. They there peaceably enjoy their happiness, and live in good correspondence with the Hollanders who, as every one knows, are of a frank and down-right humour." Again he says that the French colonists have "nothing to complain of." "The Company maintains a minister and reader for them and affords them every day some fresh tokens of their respect." And he goes on to speak in detail of the way in which they were treated, getting land for nothing, money from Batavia, husbandry tools, victuals and clothes, and provisions at reasonable prices.

All this van der Stel did out of the goodness of his heart, but at the same time he took such measures

as were prudent in the circumstances. He planted Frenchmen and Dutchmen in alternate farms, where it could be done, and placed them as far from the seaport as possible. He allowed them their French minister, the Rev. Pierre Simond, but he refused to allow them independent government of their own church, preferring to leaven it with a Dutch element; and for teachers gave them not Frenchmen, but Dutchmen who knew the French language. In carrying out this policy, reasonable as it seems, he earned the hostility of some of the fanatics among the refugees. Pierre Simond, a learned ecclesiastic, who spent his spare time in improving the psalms of Marot and Beza, was a particularly troublesome gentleman, and when he was not quarrelling with van der Stel, was fighting with his neighbour and fellow Huguenot, Jacques de Savoie. Between Jacques and Pierre there was not much to choose, for of Jacques we find the Directors writing that "his nature can only be effectively altered and improved by time, kind intercourse and treatment." What they quarrelled about is not very clear. Van der Stel puts it down to "sheer obstinacy," and says that it was upsetting every one in the busiest season of the year. No doubt it was on some vexed point of theology or church government, for we find van der Stel saying: "We tried to settle their differences, and reconcile them with each other. For that purpose we called together the Great Church Council, in which the Rev. Leonardus Terwold presided. Moreover, three other ministers were called in, who were on board two ships in the Bay, but all in vain, for both being stubborn neither would give way to the other." Strange to think of those dry and acrid theological controversies raging anew between sour-faced sectaries in gown and bands on the southernmost point of Africa.

It is not easy to understand the difficulty of van der Stel's position unless it is kept in mind that neither the

garrison nor the settlers could be properly called Dutch. Many were Roman Catholics, as we have seen; and many were Germans, French, Swedish, and English. They were not devoted to the flag of the Netherlands and were mercenaries at heart. Van der Stel complains that he has a garrison of only eighty men in the Castle, twenty of whom are engaged in collecting fuel—and of these many would be sick sailors left by the ships. He had to be wary as well as courteous: any sedition in the colony might imperil its existence—and he was always liable to be attacked by the French ships, which in fact intended to attack him. Once the French fleet put in for refreshment and wanted to land three hundred sick at once. The Governor would not allow it, courteously asking M. de Vaudricourt "de se mettre à sa place," and would only permit sixty to be landed at a time. It was only on the supplication of his friends the Jesuits that he relented, "only praying the officers not to suffer anyone to abuse his honesty"; but for this concession he got into serious trouble with the Directors.

But when occasion demanded, van der Stel could be prompt and firm enough. After the war broke out between the Netherlands and France, two French ships, not yet aware of hostilities, put into Table Bay. The story of their capture by van der Stel is told in a rare old French book,[1] by a sailor who went to India with young du Quesne, and who had the story, as he tells us, from an armourer who was there:

"The *Coche* was commanded by a very brave and

[1] My friend, the Rev. H. C. V. Leibbrandt, the learned keeper of the Cape Archives, mentions it in his delightful book, *Rambles Through the Archives*, as one of the books he was unable to obtain. It is, however, in the British Museum, *Journal of a Voyage of Mr. du Quesne* (Abraham du Quesne-Guiton, a nephew of the great admiral). The author is said to be M. Gregoire de Challes of Paris, who was a devout Roman Catholic and hated the Reformed Church and the English. It is a spritely book enough; but disgusting in parts, especially the account of the Cape, and I do not know that it is much to be trusted.

resolute man called Armagnan, a native of Saint Malo. He was returning from India and did not know that war had been declared between France and the States. By misfortune he had on board four Jesuit mathematicians who were anxious to make some observations of longitude. Poor Mr. d'Armagnan had presentiments of that which awaited him. But one cannot conquer one's star! They reassured him and menaced him with the indignation of their society and by consequence with that of the King and Madame de Maintenon, if he should refuse them what they asked. (Here follows a savage attack on the Jesuits, whom the author—though a Catholic—hates.) The *Maligne* (the *Normande* is the name usually given to this vessel) went before and he followed a little way behind. He entered, seeing nothing to arouse his suspicions. The *Maligne* was displaying the French flag and he saw no evil, until he discovered three vessels in movement to take him flanks and rear. He saw it was impossible to defend himself, and desiring to perish and to set fire to the powder he entered the *sainte-barbe* pistol in hand. As he was raising the lid of the powder-magazine a scoundrel of a gunner who saw his design gave him a blow in the back with his partisan which pierced his heart and killed him. The pistol went off, and at the moment the Dutch entered and seized the vessel, which was loaded with merchandise to the value of from two to three millions."

The Dutch—somewhat ungratefully—allowed Mr. Armagnan's fellow-officers to hang the gunner; but a little later van der Stel must have felt inclined to hang the lot, for he discovered a conspiracy between them and one of his own soldiers (a Frenchman) to seize the Castle and the whole settlement, which, the conspirator said significantly, would offer less resistance than was thought.

But more serious quarrels than these were brewing

with the settlers. If you read the Archives of the Colony you will see trouble hatching from the very beginning. It was not only that some of the settlers were the very scum of the earth (drawn into the Company's service from the low spunging-houses of the European seaports), who would have given trouble in any country; but there were points in the Company's colonial system that were bound to give trouble with free settlers. The Government wanted to keep the barter with the natives in their own hands, as was right and proper, for private barter always led to fighting between white and black. The white man robbed the native and the native in return robbed the white man. Then the Company wanted a steady supply of cheap meat and provisions for the ships, and the settlers wanted to sell at high prices. The Government derived a large part of their revenue from the sale of a wine and brandy monopoly, and this led to smuggling and more trouble, Some historians blame the Government. For my part, I do not see what else the Government could have done.

Be that as it may, the troubles which began with van Riebeck had reached a dangerous pitch by the time of Simon van der Stel, and, as we shall see in our next chapter, led to a revolution in the time of his son.

And at the risk of wearying my readers, let me just add that the Company must not be confused with the Cape Government. The Government on the spot knew what was going on, and to preserve peace and protect the natives often had to take measures of which the Company in Holland, not understanding the position, disapproved. To this day we have the same trouble cropping up now and again in our own Empire, when clever people who sit in their arm-chairs at home refuse to trust the man on the spot.

In this case the Company wanted to give up the

cattle-trade and allow the settlers to barter with the natives; but the Governor took the other view, and sometimes was forced into disregarding their wishes.

There were a pack of vagabonds, some of them French refugees, and one of them a so-called Polish nobleman named Jean du Seine, who were up to all kinds of mischief. Van der Stel says of them that "in order to lead a lazy and indolent life, under the cloak of being zealous members and supporters of the Protestant Faith, they had obtained a passage to the Cape in the Company's ships." (Here van der Stel adds that he casts no reflection on the good Huguenots.) "But these others," he continues, "had taken no trouble to find a living or attend to farming, and did not fulfil the expectations of the Company." Among them were the murderers of Corporal Jacob Cloete. They lived in the mountains like brigands, with a price upon their heads, and made a living by bartering or stealing cattle from the natives and selling them to the settlers. They even pretended they were the Company's servants, with the result that the Hottentots became angry and distrustful. Van der Stel tried his best to capture the scoundrels, but the settlers concealed them because they wanted cheap cattle. The natives began to take revenge, and poor van der Stel had endless trouble with them; while on the other side the Directors blamed him for forbidding the cattle traffic.

But for the end of this great three-cornered quarrel between settlers, Company, and Governor, we must wait until the next chapter. Let us first finish with Simon van der Stel. We see the man he was in a hundred different ways. We see him sending expedition after expedition to explore the interior; but more we see him, himself an explorer, penetrating far into Namaqualand, winning from the Namaquas the great secret of the Orange River, which van der Stel was the first to place upon the map of Africa, and

Simon Van der Stel and the Rhinoceros

bringing back with him a sample of the copper ore which would one day become an important source of colonial wealth. It was a great achievement this journey, and van der Stel and his devotion to knowledge may be measured by the pains he took to make his exploration successful. Think of it! The Governor sets out with fifteen wagons, eight oxen in each, eight carts, and his own coach. He takes with him a hundred spare oxen, besides twenty horses and mules, and a boat for crossing the rivers. He has besides over a hundred followers, sixty of them Europeans, and to inspire respect among the natives two small cannon form part of the train. Thus equipped he passes north over mountain range and river valley, travelling slowly but surely, week after week, month after month. The party lived on the flesh of the hippopotamus and the eland that then roamed over country which now supports vineyards and cattle farms. Sometimes they come on a herd of elephants, sometimes on a tribe of bushmen hunting buck with their poisoned arrows. Once a rhinoceros charges the Governor's carriage. He jumps out and the beast makes for him; but is turned aside by a bullet, and charges on in the blind, furious way rhinoceroses usually charge, heedless of the hail of musket-balls that follows him. Always north until the rich mountain valley region comes to an end, and the party enters a country desolate indeed, the parched rocks and sand and aloe bushes of Namaqualand. The water grows salt so that neither man nor beast can drink it; the native guides are sulky and want to turn back. Yet van der Stel presses on, in the drought and heat of midsummer, and refuses to go back until he has found the copper mountains and explored the coast for a harbour. Then only he retraces his steps, leaving the bleaching bones of many of his cattle behind him, and marches for eighteen days over the salt desert, with only bitter water to drink, until he reaches

the first fresh river, the Elephant. It was a journey of five months, and by it van der Stel had learned more than any one ever knew before of the interior.

Then we find van der Stel sending ships to explore the coast as far as Natal; building a new hospital for the sick, and making the poor fellows comfortable by a thousand attentions; looking after the natives; encouraging agriculture; trying to eradicate sheep diseases; making the best wine in the country; building schools and churches; offering prizes to the children; carrying out engineering works to supply the ships with water; irrigating; clearing bush; planting forests of oak; making wise laws; and governing in all ways with the sagacity, justice, and moderation of a great man. Surely we need not—as Dr. Theal seems to do—grudge him his title to fame, or the rewards of his labours in his beautiful farm of Constantia cut out of the wilderness, which remains to this day a monument, not of his greed—as Dr. Theal suggests, —but of his honourable enterprise, and of his love for the adopted country in which he laboured so long and so well.

CHAPTER XII

THE HOUSE OF VAN DER STEL—*continued*

SIMON VAN DER STEL'S wife, Johanna Jacoba Six, for some reason or other did not accompany her husband to the Cape. Perhaps she was too great a lady, perhaps she was timid and feared the formidable sea journey. Whatever the reason van der Stel never saw her again, though he remained devoted to her and frequently sent her money. But he had the comfort that every one of his four sons was at one time or another with him in South Africa. Adrian, his second, became governor of Amboina, and so passes out of our story; the third, Cornelis, was shipwrecked in the *Ridderschaap*, on the coast of Madagascar, it is said, and was either drowned or killed by the savages or pirates; Franz became a farmer at the Cape; and Willem Adriaan, after being magistrate of Amsterdam, succeeded his father as Governor of the Cape.

Now Willem Adriaan has been much abused, especially by Peter Kolbe and Dr. Theal, though fortunately he has had a staunch friend in Mr. Leibbrandt.[1] His period of rule ended in disaster; he was recalled from the Cape in something like disgrace by the Directors; his name, like that of Lord Charles Somerset, is popularly associated with harshness and tyranny.

[1] Cf. Mr. Leibbrandt's *Rambles Through the Archives*, "Defence of W. A. van der Stel," "Journal," and "Letters Dispatched" for the period, translated by Mr. Leibbrandt from the original records.

Yet if the records prove anything they prove that he was as good a man as his father, that he ruled wisely and kindly, and that his fall was due to a wicked conspiracy bolstered up by charges which were, one and all of them, entirely and absolutely false.

When the young man arrived at the Cape, he was warned by his father of the dangers that beset him. The old man drew up a memorandum in which, as he says, he sets down the fruits of his nineteen years' experience, and it is one of the wisest little essays in colonial government ever penned. It is also very beautiful in its modesty and precision, its simple clearness, and the noble prayer with which it ends, "that his son should be granted equity and prudence," "an upright, pure, and stedfast mind," and "that your work may tend to magnify God's Holy Name, satisfy our masters, and preserve and augment your own honour and reputation." It concerns the development of agriculture and especially of wheat growing, which is apt to be neglected in favour of the vine. The settlement of old servants of the Company should be encouraged with the aim of having a respectable class of two thousand burghers capable of carrying arms, "sufficient to meet all attacks of European princes." Then the document plunges into the vexed question of the illicit cattle-trade and the vagabonds, "willing tools of the evil-disposed," who carry it on. The evil should be cured by firm measures, the freemen should be settled together as closely as possible, and care should be taken to plant settlers who are Protestants and Dutchmen, or "members of such Germanic nations as are not engaged in the sea traffic, lest you expose your Government to the danger of a revolution. Should," he goes on, "the colony be populated by other nationalities, each individual would hold fast to his own, and all our defensive arrangements and precautions become futile accordingly. In this respect, those of the French

nation, although settled here and well received, are the least to be trusted."

Then the old man, with a delightful enthusiasm, goes on to preach the great gospel of tree-planting, and speaks with joy of the forest of sixteen thousand oak trees which he had planted twelve years before on the slopes of Table Mountain. Though some four thousand had been destroyed by the baboons, the remainder of them were flourishing and were already thirty-six feet high, so that within a few years they would produce timber sufficient for all purposes. The burghers should be urged to plant, and the forest should be carefully tended.

Then he advises the cutting of three great roads over the mountains, and tells his son how the Company's cattle should be looked after. He passes on to the native question. The Hottentots, he says, "should be protected and governed with great gentleness, and already we have accustomed them not to make war on each other before giving us timely notice and obtaining our consent. Hitherto they have likewise never refused to appear before us to be reconciled to each other, and settle their differences amicably; submitting their disputes readily to our decision. We earnestly recommend you to continue this course."

There follows a humane passage on the hospital, not yet complete, and the treatment of the patients, "those helpless sufferers." Then comes a dissertation on the meat question, with enlightened instructions as to dealing with the virulent disease of scab, and the inspection of slaughter cattle before killing.

And later comes a passage which one might recommend to the statesmen of South Africa at the present day.

"It should also be considered whether those freemen who arrive here poor, are no agriculturists, and simply support themselves by swindling and usury, and

sucking the marrow out of the bones of the farmers, with no other object than to become rapidly rich, and, having succeeded, to return with their booty to the fatherland as soon as their time has expired, should not, before their departure, and in addition to their passage money, pay a certain exit tax to be calculated according to the fortunes made by them here."

The son did his best to follow in the footsteps of the father. He had brought a great collection of plants and young trees with him from Holland; he went about among the farmers urging them to plant trees and improve their methods, he attended to the sick, he appointed examiners of meat, he endeavoured to capture criminals, put down cattle-stealing, and smuggling; on his farm of Vergelegen, he collected woolled sheep in order to start the wool industry, which long years afterwards was to become the staple trade of the country. But in all these reforms he trod upon many toes: the farmers liked smuggling, they liked to get their cattle for nothing from the natives, they objected to quarantining diseased animals, they objected to planting trees, they objected to growing corn. The outlaws also objected to being hanged. All these discontents joined forces, and the colony simmered with sedition. Then came one or two events which brought matters to a head.

The Governor discovered that bands of forty or fifty armed freemen, fitted out by other colonists who shared in the gain, went off on long expeditions into the interior and, after robbing and slaying the Hottentots, returned with large herds of native cattle, which they sold, spending the money in debauch. When the Company's officers went out to get cattle in the ordinary way, they found that the natives had been robbed by the white men and either had no cattle left, or had fled beyond reach. The Governor's efforts to arrest offenders brought all the malcontents about his head like a swarm

of angry bees. There were signs of mutiny everywhere. At the annual parade day of the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein burghers, a farmer drew his cutlass on one of the officers and threatened to "lay his head before his feet." He was severely dealt with; but the mutiny went on. Some of the officers joined in it, and actually, without the knowledge of the Governor, degraded to the rank of private the one of their number to whom the rebel had objected. Things had got so bad in this burgher force, that van der Stel and his council decided to have the future parades in front of the castle, so that the burghers might be kept in awe.

The Landdrost, or magistrate, of Stellenbosch, a good man and a faithful friend of van der Stel's, reported that there was so much mutiny up country that many people had thrown aside "all obedience, duty, and respect." But the conspirators had not confined themselves to threats. They had secretly prepared a memorial which narrated a portentous list of imaginary crimes and tyrannies of the Governor, the van der Stel family, the second in command, Samuel Elsevier; the minister, Petrus Calden, and the Landdrost, Johannes Starrenburgh. This is the document which Dr. Theal elevates into a sort of South African Magna Charta.

What it contained we shall see presently; let us first see how it was prepared, and how van der Stel dealt with its authors. The chief of the ringleaders was Henning Huysing, who had made a large fortune out of the meat contract, and it is easy to understand how he should resent the stopping of the illicit cattle traffic. Then there were Jacobus van der Heiden and Adam Tas, who were known to be behind the cattle robberies, as was made manifest to the Directors many years afterwards. These, and a few others, laid their heads together and drew up the document, and then went about the country obtaining signatures. Their methods

of obtaining these signatures were very clearly set forth in the sworn evidence annexed to van der Stel's report. Adam Tas himself admitted that none of them had laid their grievances before the Governor, admits also that there was no truth in the petition, and says that he wrote it in a "fit of mad passion," for which he was sorry from the bottom of his heart. The next witness says that he did not know the purport of what he had signed; the third witness, that he was not aware of the contents of the petition; the fourth, that there was not a word of truth in the memorial; the fifth, that he had signed the petition because the wine-lease had been given to one man, so that he could not sell his wines; the sixth, because he was afraid to refuse to sign; the seventh signed it "from simplicity and fear, because he had been compelled"; the eighth said he signed it from simple-mindedness, and because he was in debt to Huysing; the ninth said he signed it from stupidity, and because, having seen the number of signatures, he thought there could be no harm in it; the tenth, because he had lost the wine-lease; the eleventh, because he thought it was a petition to be allowed free trade in wine; the twelfth, because the conspirators had threatened to break his neck if he did not; the thirteenth signed in ignorance; and the fourteenth, because he had been knocked down, kicked, and stabbed, a pen had been forced into his hand, and a conspirator had stood over him with a cutlass, threatening him with death if he did not sign it. Not one of these witnesses could bring an atom of proof in support of any of the charges in the petition.

Why does Dr. Theal say nothing about this?

Surely after such evidence I need hardly trouble you with the contents of this document. They are refuted, completely and in detail, by William Adriaan van der Stel himself, in one of the most convincing and transparently truthful documents ever penned. He

writes without heat, calmly and judicially, taking the charges one by one, and answering them with facts and proof of the facts. Among other things the petitioners had charged him with building a palace at Vergelegen "as large as a whole town." Van der Stel answers that Huysing had a "much larger, higher and grander house," notwithstanding that he "had arrived at the Cape as a most insignificant personage, and had for some years been there as a poor shepherd." He also points out that his land was freely granted to him by the Company's High Commissioner, and was much smaller than the portion given to Huysing by Simon van der Stel and himself. The number of his stock and his vines had been vastly exaggerated by his accusers (and Dr. Theal improves even on the accusers' figures), but if he had all that they said he had, he was within his rights and was benefiting the country. In the same way he shows by reference to the Company's books that he had never used the Company's slaves for his own private service in the manner alleged, but had paid for them according to the custom at the Cape. I have said that his defence is judicial; but sometimes he is roused to a righteous indignation, as when "the subscribers dared to charge, not only his brother, but also his old father, with such sordidness.

"The latter, having been during the pleasure of the Hon. Directors, and for so many years, and with so much love from every one, their Governor.

"And moreover, having done so much kindness to all the burghers, especially to Henning Huysing, whom" (and this is a delightful thrust) "he had delivered from the extremest poverty, and given one of his maid-servants in marriage."

Again there is delicious irony in his reply to their attack on his excise policy: "Every one can see from their sweet, gentle and instructive marginal notes how

heavy this matter had lain on their stomachs, though it had no other object than to prevent smuggling."

But the defence rises to higher heights in answer to the charge which is the centre of the whole case, the audacious charge, that he, the Governor, had profited by illegal barter with the Hottentots. He points out that there were men in the colony "who by their deeds had revived the Spanish and Portuguese conduct, at the time of the first discoveries of the Indies." He points to the judicial evidence that forty-five burghers, taking with them forty-five Hottentots, had gone secretly and fully armed into the interior, had robbed and murdered the natives, and had returned with an enormous amount of booty to the colony. He had prosecuted them, he had obtained full confessions, he had sent the evidence to the Directors; but they in their wisdom had reopened free barter and let the atrocious outrage fall to the ground.

But all this is to anticipate matters, for van der Stel had no opportunity to make his defence until after he was recalled to Holland. Let us see what happened before his downfall.

Starrenburgh and other trusty servants kept him informed of the growing mutiny and of the seditious petition. Let us remember that at this time Holland was fighting France in the Indian Ocean. Let us remember also that some of the chief conspirators were officers of the Burgher Militia, and that this Militia was largely composed of Frenchmen who were suspected of sympathy with the enemy. What was van der Stel to do? If he had proceeded against them in the ordinary way, they might have defied him, and either taken refuge in the mountains with the other outlaws, or raised the standard of rebellion. It was a situation demanding nerve and courage, and van der Stel proved himself wanting in neither. He surrounded Adam Tas's house, arrested him, and found in his desk

an unsigned draft of the petition, as well as documents that incriminated others. He called a broad council, making it as authoritative as possible by calling in officers from the ships, took evidence and obtained authorisation to issue a decree against conspiracy and to arrest the ringleaders. This was done. Two were committed to prison, one was sent to Batavia, and three or four, Huysing among them, to Amsterdam for trial. If van der Stel had been a harsh man he might have shot them and ended the whole business at once; but he preferred the mildest possible course, and the one nearest to legality consistent with safety. Indeed, I do not think that he exceeded his legal powers, though hostile historians regard his action as high-handed tyranny. He requested the colonists to sign a declaration testifying to his good rule. Two hundred and forty names were attached to it, against the sixty-three signatures to the original memorial. Dr. Theal would have us believe that these signatures were obtained by force; but of this I have found no proof, though the document is, of course, avowedly, and on the face of it, official. But there is no trace of any such violence or deceit as was employed on the other side. Van der Stel went on with the arrests he thought necessary; but the wily Huysing went home with the petition to start an effective career of intrigue in Holland. How dangerous were matters in the colonies may be judged from the reports of Starrenburgh of Stellenbosch. One morning, he says, he was awakened by the news that a strong body of armed men were approaching from Drakenstein. They had a drummer with them, who was beating furiously on his instrument, and two scolding women, the wives of two of the prisoners, were threatening all manner of mischief. Starrenburgh, however, treated them boldly and tactfully, and they excused themselves on the ground that they had come for the parade, though they had received no orders. A few