

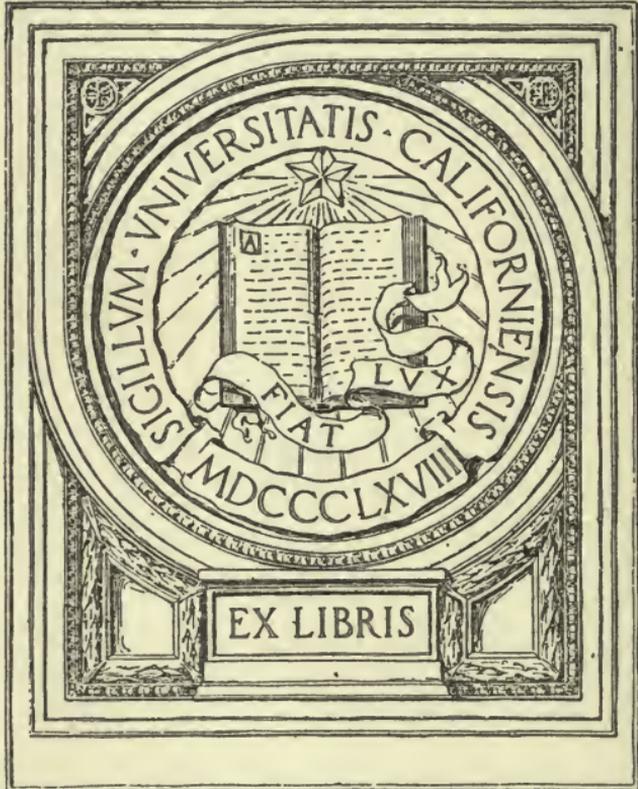
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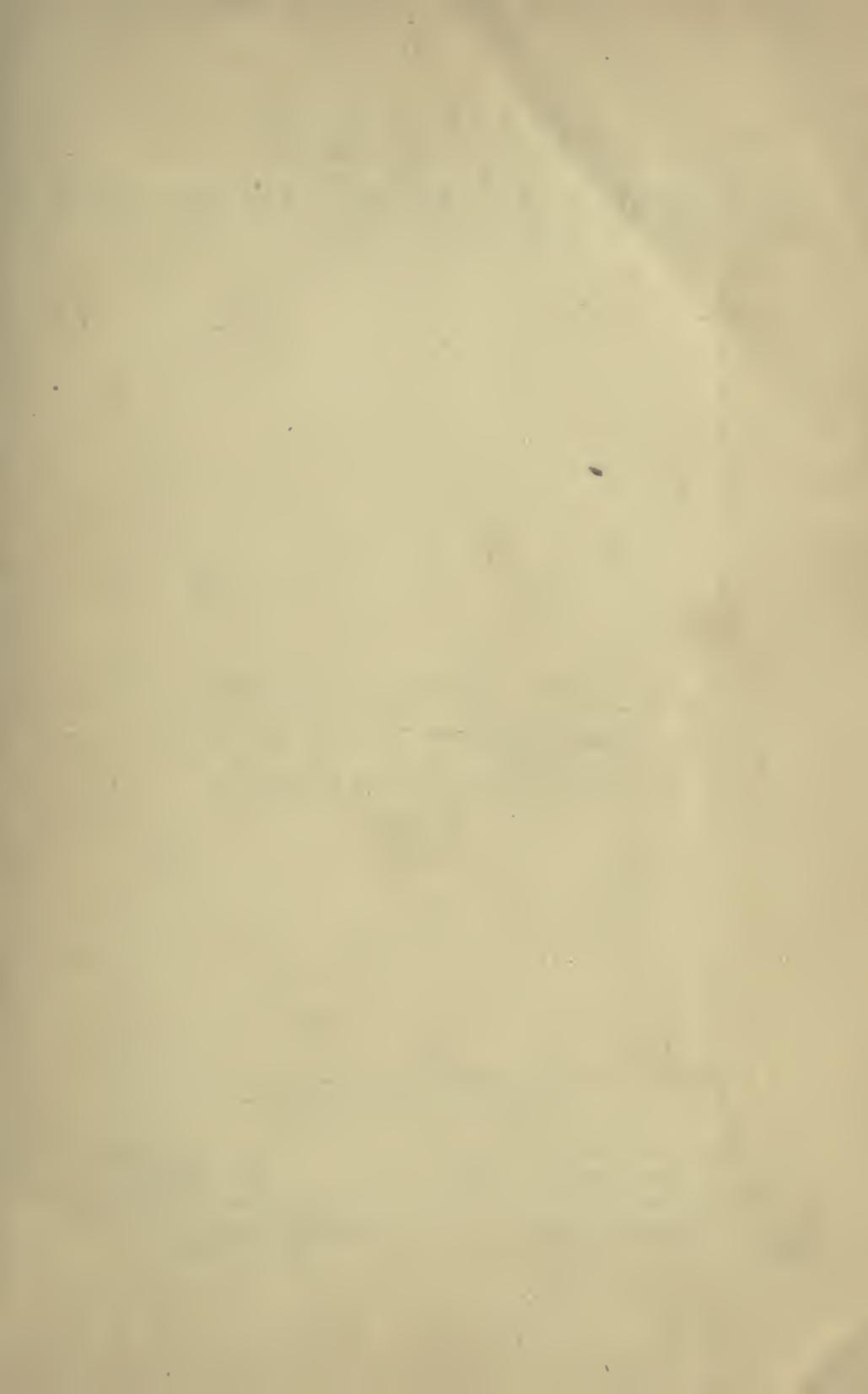
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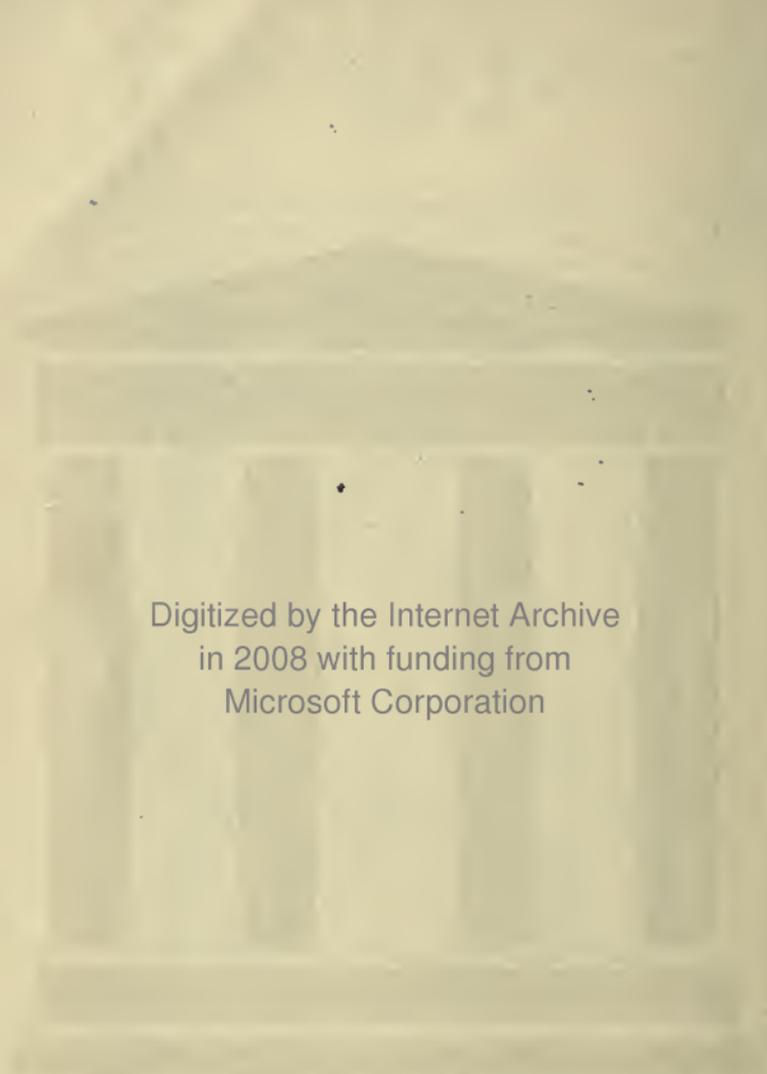
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TRAVEL IN SOUTH AFRICA

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TO THE
ADMINISTRATIVE

Gift

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
FOREWORD	v
TABLE OF NOTABLE SOUTH AFRICAN DATES	vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
 CHAPTER	
I. CAPETOWN—THE MOTHER CITY	1
II. THE HISTORIC CAPE	23
III. IN OLD CAPETOWN	33
IV. ON SOUTH AFRICAN TRAVEL	41
V. THE KAROO	47
VI. THE VALLEY OF DIAMONDS	57
VII. THE VICTORIA FALLS	69
VIII. THE ZIMBABWE RUINS	83
IX. ACROSS THE VAAL	99
X. THE OLD TRANSVAAL	111
XI. PRETORIA	121
XII. JOHANNESBURG	131
XIII. DURBAN	147
XIV. AROUND DURBAN	163
XV. THE NATIVES	177
XVI. PIETERMARITZBURG	197

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII. THE DRAKENSBERG	207
XVIII. THE DRAKENSBERG (<i>continued</i>)	219
XIX. THE ORANGE FREE STATE	235
XX. EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE	249
XXI. MIDLAND CAPE PROVINCE	263
XXII. OUDTSHOORN	274
XXIII. OVER THE OUTENIKUAS	281
XXIV. BACK TO THE CAPE	295
XXV. THE END OF THE TOUR	302

FOREWORD

THIS volume is one which does not fall within any well defined literary category. Such a production is liable to be criticised less for what it is than for what different readers may think it purports to be or should have been.

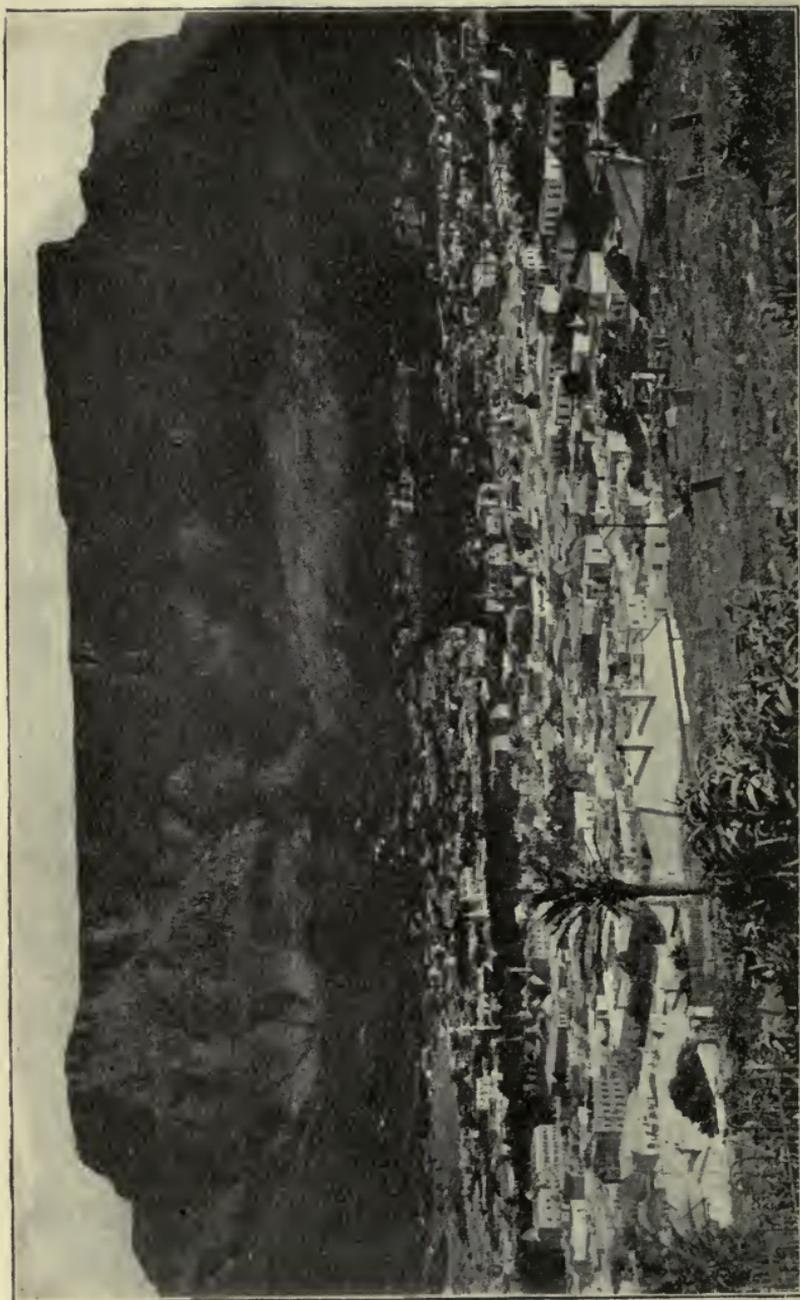
In the circumstances it may be useful at the outset to explain the aim and scope of the volume. It deals with travel in the Union of South Africa, without, however, any pretence of conveying the last word on such travel; indeed the volume is confined to what was seen and felt by only one party of travellers, and they did not see everything.

There has been no attempt to describe the Union in detail. Not much, for instance, has been set down about the remarkable development, and the even more remarkable prospects, in South African farming, manufacturing, and general industries. These are diffuse, complex, and important subjects that should preferably be handled separately by competent authorities. They have therefore been reserved for other publications, and the present volume has been confined to the subject of travel; an account of the tour being given under the "we" of the party whose experiences and opinions are set down.

The only reason for publishing this material is that as the party travelled the Union recently and extensively much that has been set down in these pages will, it is believed, be fresh, at least to readers outside South Africa, and of sufficient general interest to warrant perusal by whoever may be seeking a little-known but remarkable field of travel.

TABLE OF NOTABLE SOUTH AFRICAN DATES.

1487. Discovery of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartholomew Diaz.
1497. Landing of Vasco de Gama at St. Helena Bay and at Mossel Bay.
1503. Discovery of Table Bay by Saldanha.
1580. Sir Francis Drake's voyage round the Cape.
1601. First British East India Fleet at Table Bay.
1602. Netherlands East India Company formed.
1652. Landing of van Riebeck. First settlement.
1688. Arrival of Huguenot settlers.
1820. Arrival of 5,000 British immigrants.
1835. Durban founded.
1836. Great trek from Cape.
1837. Winburg founded.
1839. Potchefstroom founded.
1843. Natal proclaimed a British possession.
1846. Bloemfontein founded.
1848. British sovereignty proclaimed between Orange and Vaal Rivers.
1852. Sand River Convention, recognising independence of Transvaal.
1854. First Cape Parliament.
1855. Pretoria founded.
1856. South African Republic Constitution (Grondwet) established. Natal made a separate colony.
1857. First legislative council in Natal.
1859. First railway in South Africa commenced.
1860. Pretoria established as the seat of Government in Transvaal.
1867. First diamond discovered.
1872. Responsible Government introduced in the Cape.
1884. Barberton goldfields opened.
1886. Opening of goldfields on Witwatersrand.
1888. First mining concession granted by Lobengula. British South Africa Company founded.
1893. Responsible Government granted to Natal.
1899. Conference at Bloemfontein between Sir A. Milner and President Kruger. War declared (October 11th).
1900. Occupation of Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria.
1902. Peace of Vereeniging (May 31st). Death of C. J. Rhodes.
1904. Death of ex-President Kruger.
1906. Constitutions given to Transvaal and Orange Free State.
1909. Passing of the South Africa Act by Imperial Parliament. Death of Hon. J. H. Hofmeyr.
1910. Constitution of the Union of South Africa.



Capetown and Table Mountain.

INTRODUCTION.

South Africa is one of the most attractive countries in the world. Its charm would be hard to analyse, but undoubtedly it exists. This cannot be set down entirely to climate, beautiful though that is, or to the wide expanse of the rolling veld, or to the grandeur of its mountains, or to the charm of its woodland scenery. The real cause lies deeper, and results in the fact that to those who have made South Africa their home, and even to those who have made only a temporary sojourn there, it will always remain the one country to which they desire to return.

—DOMINIONS ROYAL COMMISSION.

PROPERLY to appreciate South Africa—what it stands for and may develop into, one should know something of Africa as a whole, the continent usually known as “dark,” but where nevertheless civilisation had its infancy, and where it may yet have a high manifestation.

Africa was the last continent to be explored, but the first to figure in history. Nine-tenths of it has no authentic record, and until modern times was little affected by civilising influences. But the tenth part—the northern fringe of the continent, what other portion of the world has had so varied and so wonderful a past? This was the Africa of Hannibal, all-conquering in its day; the monumental Africa of the Pharaohs, socially and architecturally spectacular beyond anything before or since; the Africa of the Ptolemies, boasting a rule almost modern in its enlightenment; the literary brilliant Africa Augustine knew; the Africa of Antony and Cleopatra, steeped in romance.



Camps Bay, near Capetown.

But, even in that northern area, the ancient grandeur is gone. Solitude and decay have taken its place. So completely is this so, that, travelling in Egypt or Algeria to-day, it is with something of shock one realises, not only how far Northern Africa has fallen from its old estate, but how little there is even to remind one of the great past.

The very languages in which its history is recorded, the illustrious civilisations of old, are dead. Carthage, "to which three hundred cities paid homage," has been wiped from the face of the earth. Thebes, the hundred-gated, is fallen. Alexandria, that seat of ancient learning and luxury, how different its world-status to-day! And the Africans of old—orators, legislators, soldiers, who Othello-like gave lustre to the society of even Greece and Rome, have gone to their rest and left no successors.

In the march of civilisation, Africa somehow lost step, and from the van fell to the rear, and there lagged farther and farther behind. So that though known through the ages, Africa is to-day really less known than those modern discoveries, North America and Australia; it has on the whole proved less amenable to progressive civilisation, and has been less changed by foreign influence.

Even in Asia, successive tides of invasion have left their mark on the manners, habits, laws, beliefs, features and complexions of the people. In Africa invasion, whether Phœnician, Greek, Roman or Persian, established regimes splendid in their day, but they did not last; they did not even leave a lasting impression. The ancient colonists were failures. Instead of setting their stamp on Africa, slowly but surely it set its stamp on them. They were absorbed.

Behind the veil that shrouds so much of Africa in mystery, they each in turn disappeared. The Dark Continent took them to her pagan bosom, their identity was lost in the identity of the stronger African blood. They have left no clearly recognisable descendants, their works lie buried in ruin, and Africa is again much as originally it was, a continent with problems and possibilities still almost virgin.

Therefore though in size the second, and in possibilities perhaps the largest of the continents, Africa has on the whole contributed much for the edification, but little to the support of mankind. Though fruitful, with large areas under the best of climates, it has on the whole proved impervious to colonisation.

Will this always be so, in a world gradually becoming crowded ?

The problem is as interesting as it was in the days of Egypt's glory, but the scene of the interest has shifted. It is not the north, but the south, that plays the leading role in Africa to-day. In ancient times all foreign influences, all attempts to colonise, entered Africa from the north. Modern colonisation reversed the process and started from the south. And of this colonisation, of European settlement on a permanent, considerable, and progressive scale, the best because the most extensive and oldest example in Africa to-day is found in the southernmost extremity of the continent, in what is now known as the Union of South Africa.

There, through nearly three centuries, European traditions and institutions have been acclimatised, and now flourish and permeate the surrounding country. There white colonists have retained not only a footing but their native vigour and complexion.

Algeria, it is true, has a considerable European population, but neither so large nor so long-settled as that in South Africa. Indeed it is hardly exaggerating to say that the Union of South Africa to-day carries the burden which Egypt, Greece and Rome dropped; for the Union is trying to solve the problem of the African races' proper place in the scheme of things. It is a more important problem than is generally realised. If satisfactorily solved, not only will the native of the south benefit directly, but the solution of the south may leaven, and in time transform, the conditions of life throughout the whole of Africa. It may bring into line with the rest of the progressive world that mighty continent which has lain so long in darkness and in lethargy.

The Union of South Africa is less than one-twentieth the size of the continent of which it forms part, and, relative to area, by no means the most densely populated portion of that continent; but with its equipment for studying and perhaps solving the problems of Africa, the Union, though only a small part of Africa, is an important and most interesting part. Climatically it is much like Australia. Socially it resembles the older communities of the United States, having the same foundation of Dutch, British, and Huguenot blood. Yet in essentials it differs from both in this, that besides its long-established European population it has a large and growing black population, each race preserving its own characteristics yet living in amity and steady progress.

In history this is something unusual, almost unique. Generally either the colonist or the native has succumbed. In America it was the native; in



Views of Grooten Schuur.

ancient Africa, the colonist. In Asia Europeans have never established themselves, except as a small ruling caste. But in South Africa the native flourishes and increases under European colonisation, which gives South Africa a political significance, and international interest, greater even than that of larger Dominions.

South Africa is thus often in the public eye, yet, paradoxical as it may seem, is on the whole little known. Everybody has heard of its mineral wealth and politics, but comparatively few outside the Union have any conception of its other claims to attention. Eulogies, suggesting that were its pleasant places better known they would be thronged, have been bestowed unstintingly, even by those acquainted with the best elsewhere; and for a decade or two the affairs of the country have been prominently before the world. But the eulogies were generally oral, did not carry far enough to make the attractions of South Africa as widely known as those of, say, Italy or Japan; and the world-wide prominence of the country had reference to its gold and diamonds, or the enterprising experiments of its statesmen, rather than to the country itself—its scenery, climate and romantic past.

South Africa, even by those wedded to her interests, somehow was pictured abroad more as an heiress than as a bride; in the contemplation of her riches her beauty was lost sight of.

The time for remedying this has arrived. It is now possible to view and introduce the Union in a way that could not be done twenty years ago. Then it was divided under four Governments—the Republics of the Transvaal and Free State, and the Colonies of

the Cape of Good Hope and Natal. Now it is united by one Government, under the British flag.

It merits mention, too, that twenty or thirty years ago, when neither the railway, shipping nor hotel accommodation of South Africa was nearly as good as now, the country was too remote, entailed too much discomfort and expense on travellers to be popular as a resort ; and the attractions of Europe and the then novel East were still too absorbing for travellers to seek new fields. It is different to-day. The remotest part of South Africa is now reached and enjoyed with ease and comfort ; and not only have the travelling facilities been modernised, but the attractions to which they lead are of the kind for which the demand has noticeably increased. They are fresh and uncommon.

The convenience and charm of European and North African travel resorts, despite the ravages of the war, are such as will probably continue unrivalled. Their popularity is deserved ; but the edge of their novelty wears off. More and more the season in Rome, Cairo or along the Riviera resembles that of London, Paris or New York. Brilliant throngs, set-scenes, functions—all the innovations that money and fashion can contrive to make life super-luxurious, are there. All are good. They make travel doubly enjoyable. South Africa has nothing like it to offer. But a thorough change is also good. It is well occasionally to get beneath not only sunny but new skies, to wander amid fresh scenes and unfamiliar people, to shift the atmosphere and tenor of one's life to parts altogether strange. It is well occasionally to enlarge ideas, widen sympathies, and vary experience by going far abroad.

Change and innovation are however everywhere, and who shall say how soon there may be no going abroad in the true sense? The development of the distant parts of the globe, improved and rapid communication, closer intercourse between the nations, European spheres of influence in Asia and Africa, no doubt tend to material advantage; but increasingly they create uniformity.

As already is so noticeable in Japan, the East becomes Western, in costume and outward semblance, if not in heart. The colonies and dominions model themselves more closely on European lines, distinctiveness lessens, the quaint and the picturesque depart.

So that in time, one may suppose, there will be little variety for the traveller, few national differences except in speech, complexion and climate. Even South Africa is becoming conventional. The etiquette and fashionplate of the boulevard creep gradually to the kraal, and already the buxom Kafir wench of the town knows something of ball gowns; and the native dandy, whose ancestors were content with the skins of the animals they slew, or the cloth of the bark they wove, now enters domestic service that he too may promenade in lavender gloves and patent-leather boots.

South Africa should therefore be seen before in the general transition its distinctiveness also is lost. It has much to offer the traveller. In this belief a few first-hand impressions of the country and its people have been assembled in the following pages.

South Africa as a field of travel is out of the common. Unlike most colonies or dominions, it is by no means devoid of historic interest. Its coast,

as an attempt has been made to show in Chapter II, has associations which, if they lack European antiquity and Asiatic pageantry, still stir memories not only of national but of world events. South Africa, as we have seen, is only a small part of the continent, yet so situated as to reflect in miniature the whole: It has great variety of scenery and interest—nearly every species of foliage from the pine to the palm, a climate varying from the temperate to the tropical, and every type of mankind from the Orient to the Occident.

In the Cape Peninsula are exquisite scenes, woodland, mountain and marine. In the Drakensberg you have not exactly Alpine effects, but a grandeur in its way as impressive. And in Natal and parts of the Transvaal there is the vivid beauty of the sub-tropics.



Government Library, Capetown.

These are the main attractions, but the by-ways also call. Around Pietermaritzburg and Bloemfontein, as around Port Elizabeth and East London; on the upper altitude of the Transvaal and Free State, as in the Bushveld or in the forests of Knysna; even on the arid Karoo,—genial skies, clean breadth of existence, almost daily sunshine, many

interesting people, conduce to a serene enjoyment of this field of travel.

The splendour of the Victoria Falls, the mystery of the Zimbabwe Ruins, the lingering Calvinism of the pioneers, which still invests places like Pretoria ; and the peculiar interest of Johannesburg, that golden metropolis, combine by their piquancy to keep the interest from flagging.

Such is the variety of scene, and such, above all, the delightfulness of the climate, that the least pliant minds may be calculated to yield to the lure of South Africa.

Hence the following effort to convey some idea of what may be expected by those who elect to come sunward—this in the belief that however enjoyable Europe and the East, travellers will be no less pleased with South Africa.



Mountain Drive, Capetown.



Capetown from Table Mountain.

CHAPTER I.

CAPETOWN—THE MOTHER CITY.

English people afflicted at home by a winter climate which year after year grows more intolerable, fruitlessly and at great cost seek sunshine and warmth in the south of Europe amid unsympathetic foreigners.

A three-weeks' voyage [now seventeen days] unaccompanied by hardship or risk would bring them to this lovely spot, the Cape of Good Hope, where among people of their own race, speaking their own language, and thinking their own thoughts, they would find and enjoy the most temperate and equable summer weather, with all the attractions of seaside existence which the earth can offer.

—LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

THE sea-voyage to South Africa is the fair-weather voyage of the world. It alone repays the traveller for coming so far abroad. And if he knows what he is coming to, there is the exhilaration when, sixteen days out of Southampton, Table Mountain looms on the horizon, to welcome the voyager, and to stir him with anticipation of that noble country which lies around and behind the mountain.

When the "Grand Trade" went round the Cape of Good Hope, before the Suez and Panama Canals were constructed, Table Mountain was the principal signpost on the world's greatest highway. At its foot, in Table Bay, the voyagers, after three months at sea, foregathered with relish. Whatever their nationality, or the extent of their travels, few writing from the Cape in those days omitted to record their



The City Hall, Capetown.

admiration for the beauty of the flora, the charm of the mountain setting, the climate, and the attractiveness of life there.

Capetown was then the world's half-way house—a remote outpost of civilisation and hospitality. To-day it is one of the world's fairest cities. It is the mother city of South Africa, from which, without shouting from the housetops, but steadily and effectively, as attractive a country as will be found anywhere has been developed.

As the steamer approaches Table Bay, and the mountains, which rise sheer from the sea, are seen in more detail, the scene is one to hold the attention. Foremost is Table Mountain, its summit sometimes further beautified by the familiar cloth of cloud. Surrounding ranges extend as far as the eye can see. And at the base of Table Mountain is Capetown.



The Esplanade, Capetown.



From Constantia to Muizenberg.

In profile Capetown is not unlike Naples. And from Sea Point to Hout Bay, and then across the isthmus to Sir Lowry's Pass and Gordon's Bay, is a classic and almost Ionian environment, of mountain-girt bays, and fertile mountain-girt valleys, with pine and oak trees in forests, picturesque views between the mountains and the sea, old and romantic-looking mansions in the woods, and vineyards on the foot-hills.

The city is the stateliest in South Africa. The surrounding Peninsula is uncommonly beautiful. On landing one's first-impression is of the familiar. The principal thoroughfares, Adderley and St. George's Streets, present on a modified scale life as it is in the pleasanter towns of Britain. There are the same well-dressed crowds, smart equipages, and suggestions of general culture. The shops are good, hotels, theatres



Section of Adderley Street.

and restaurants plentiful. The streets are well-paved, spacious and clean, the buildings on the whole handsome.

But there the resemblance to a British town of quality ends. The place is as much Dutch as British. Everybody speaks English, but Dutch is freely used in the home and parliament, in the church, law-courts and a section of the press. French is no longer current, and the descendants of the Huguenots approximate nearer to the Dutch than to the British.

At the Cape, as this part of South Africa is colloquially called, there are thus two predominant European types. Each exerts a notable influence on the country, but outwardly at least both types are so alike that whatever their essential differences these are not obvious to the new-comer.

A racial peculiarity that does however at once impress itself, is that, of a population of about one hundred and sixty thousand, nearly half are of Malay or Bantu descent. This colour element, together with the sunny and vivacious atmosphere, the mountain setting, and a foliage of southern richness, combine to give Capetown, in the eye of the visitor, an air that is foreign but cordial. The bay in front of Capetown, on a cloudless day, lies blue as a Pacific lagoon. In the background, so close that its shadows creep into the city, is the mountain. And for twenty miles along the foot-hills are the famous suburbs.

It is a land of flowers. "In an area smaller than the Isle of Wight," the guide-book tells us, "there are two hundred more species of flowers than in the whole of England." Certainly the variety and the



St. George's Street.



Darling Street.

vivid beauty of the orchids and heaths that grow wild at the Cape, attract one at once.

The Cape is noted for its drives. The principal of these is along the circular mountain road, skirting the sea, from Capetown to the Cape of Good Hope, a distance of a hundred and ten miles for the round



Shortmarket Street.

trip, in the course of which one travels along the edge of the Atlantic, and then along the edge of the Indian Ocean, in surroundings more varied and impressive, probably, than will be found anywhere else in a similar area. Indeed, many travelers acquainted with the world's show places have concurred in terming this the finest of marine drives. Sea Point, Clifton, Camp's Bay, Hout Bay, then Constantia,

Kirstenbosch and Groote Schuur, in turn delight the eye, with Muizenberg and False Bay faintly visible on one side of the Peninsula, and Table Bay on the other.

There are several botanical gardens in South Africa. That at Kirstenbosch, half-way across the Peninsula, is the national one. It is destined to attract botanists from all parts of the world for research work.



St. James, False Bay.

Muizenberg, sixteen miles by railway from Capetown, has a perfect beach. The surf-bathing there is one of the holiday delights of South Africa. The temperature of the water is mild, even in winter,



The Bathing Pavilion, Muizenberg.

being seventeen degrees higher than in Table Bay. The beach, of clean firm sand, extends unbroken for miles round False Bay, and slopes gently into the inviting breakers.

Such, briefly, were the surroundings we entered when we stepped from the steamer at the foot of Table Mountain. Capetown won our hearts at once. There was a Californian floweriness, brightness and mountain variety peculiarly grateful to those newly disembarked from a long sea voyage. The café balconies were gay with life. The kerbs were garden-like with blossoms, where the coloured flower-sellers

displayed their wares. A pleasant wind brought coolness to the city, there was a hint of pine in the vigorous air, and the sunshine on pavement and wall lay in warm rich patches.

Capetown is a bewitching city, yet such is the even greater attraction of the suburbs that the bulk of the people live out of town. The result is a heavy suburban traffic. In the early morning, at lunch time, and towards the end of the business day ; as again at night, when theatre-goers and diners-out are afoot, there is the animation so well known in big European cities—thousands pouring from, or into, trains or trams.

Then suddenly comes a lull. Capetown has a breathing space ; for a while it is almost empty. At such a time there is an old-world dignity and repose about the place. This is especially felt in the old East



Houses of Parliament, Capetown.



On the Mountain Slopes.

India Company's garden, at the top of Adderley Street. The ancient oaks there have a venerable aspect; and an air of scholastic calm lingers round the adjacent houses of parliament, colleges and cathedral.

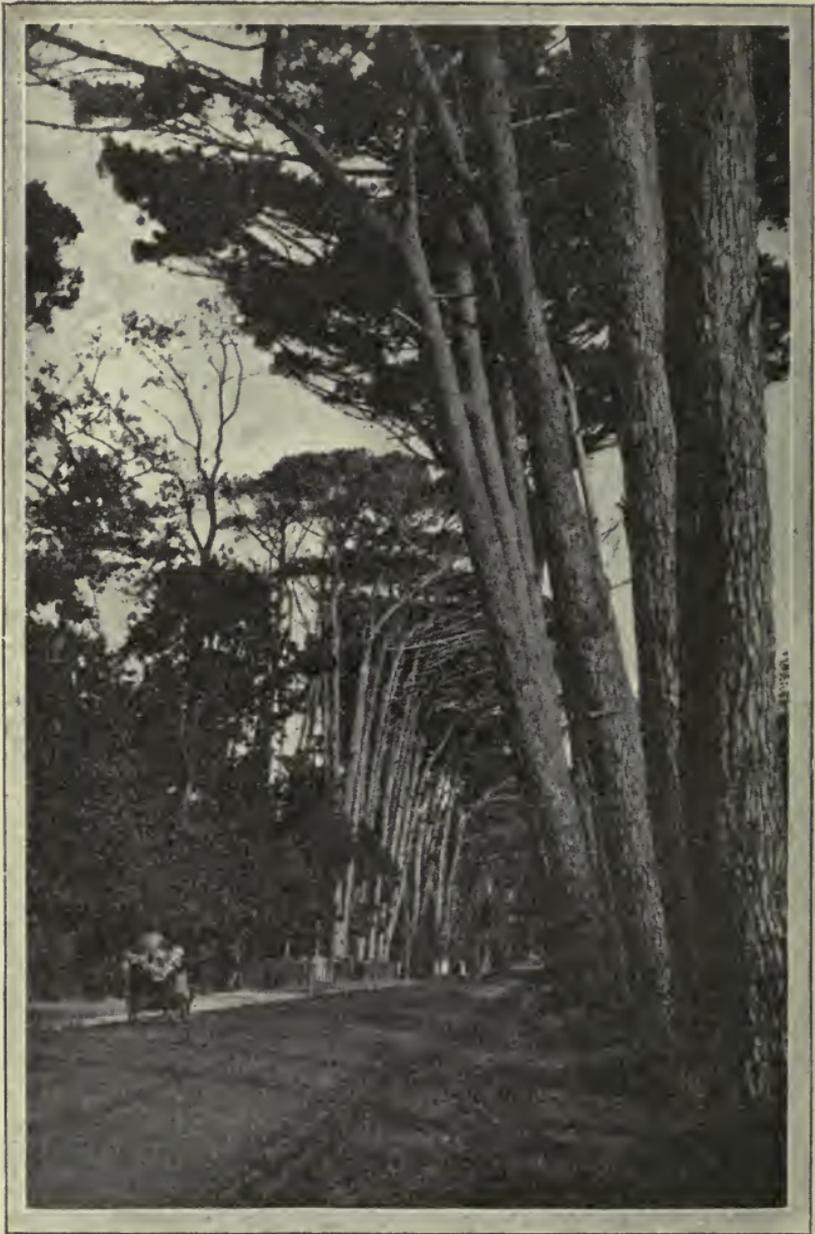
But perhaps the most alluring part of Capetown is Orangezicht and the area known as the Gardens, the foliated residential quarters on the slope of the mountain, overlooking the bay. There we sat through



In East India Company's Old Garden.

the waning southern day, till the valley below lay in shadow. In front, the quick heart of the city was visible, but city sounds were muted. A fishing fleet rocked at the foot of Adderley Street—a great grey liner crept out to sea. Across the bay, the Hottentot Holland Mountains lay blue with distance, and fainter behind them, more and more mountains.

It is a fruitful country behind those mountains.



A Cape Suburban Road.

There, in the hill-fed streams, trout may be had, and fair shooting—antelopes, hares and partridges in the foot-hills, duck and snipe on the vleis.

There most of the wine and brandy of South Africa is made, in rich valleys among the sunburnt mountains. Table grapes, peaches, apricots, melons, plums and figs are grown by the train load, and almonds, walnuts and pears only in less quantities.

Higher up, on the Bokkeveld, where at night you sometimes get a pinch of frost, are the wheatlands and apple orchards. Behind these is the sheep country of the Karoo, with the diamond mines on its edge; and then, the altitude increasing still, the maize fields and cattle farms of the High Veld, some as high as six thousand feet above sea level, with the Transvaal gold and coal mines in their midst.

In inverse order there is much the same series of production on the other side as one descends from the high altitudes of the Free State and Transvaal, to the sub-tropical coastal belt of Natal. A big and rich country! A noble sight, the gate which leads to it from Capetown!

As evening fell we drove from Capetown ten miles to historic Constantia. It was pleasant to speed in the perfumed dusk, through great avenues of trees, past sleepy gardens and vineyards. The electric-illuminated foliage, the dark mountains looming alongside, and a crescent moon above the fir-belt, made a scene to remember. There was a dance at Government House, and it happened also to be a gala night of the famous Cape Municipal Orchestra. Representatives of the naval station at Simonstown, and of the garrison, were much in evidence. Gay motors flashed over the well-kept roads, women in exquisite toilets graced a

scene that few could contemplate without feeling how pleasant life at the Cape can be.

It was a memorable introduction to the Cape suburbs. But we found them even more delightful by daylight. Groote Schuur especially, once the home of Cecil Rhodes, now the official residence of the Prime Minister of the Union, was a place we never wearied of. It is a large estate, situated on the lower slopes



Rhodes Memorial, Groote Schuur.

of the mountain, in noble surroundings. It stirred in us feelings many and varied.

“Sitting among the ruins of the Capitol at Rome, musing on the past, while white-robed friars chanted vespers in the Temple of Jupiter,” Gibbon tells us, the idea came to him of picturing for posterity that tremendous procession of men and events which he subsequently bodied forth in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Excepting associations, there was

in his surroundings little to stir the feelings ; but such were the associations that perhaps the noblest pageant on record rose and was permanently revived.

Something of the same haunting spell is felt at the Doric temple on the mountain slopes above Grootte Schuur. Rhodes felt it. It drew him irresistibly, and made the spot his favourite nook, where he mused and planned and drew much of his inspiration.



The Rural Cape.

Viewed from that point, the Cape Peninsula lies spread like a map, the Indian Ocean on one side, the Atlantic on the other—a woodland idyll of cool majestic colouring, in which the most stately and historic homes of South Africa are found.

They are on a generous scale, those white-walled, sun-splashed residences ; and famed for a hospitality that goes back some centuries. Among them the blood is quickened, and a pulse of lost feeling beats



Groot Constantia—Home of the van der Stels.
18

again. We found it an entrancing place, especially towards sunset, in which to dream away an hour. The spires of evening smoke would curl from the villas below, and all would be quiet save for the rustle of the leaves. Down the long aisles, the pines stood in the heavy shadows, while here and there in the background a peak flushed in the sunset.

So the twilight deepened, we lingered on, and the



Overlooking Capetown.

wells of fancy filled. Steeped, as we had become, in the natural beauty and historic spirit of the place, the imagination of its own volition swung from the present to the past. Even the great gathering of trees stood momentarily silent, as though expectant, and the past crept very near. In fancy the heroic and then the courtly age revived, for of all the Dominions the Cape was most intimately associated with those



In Castle Grounds, Capetown.

ages, and from them has derived something that still lingers in its people. And warrior countenances, and gentle faces in powder and patch, living again, peered from the abyss of time. Wistfully at first, then boldly they trooped in fancy across their one-time stage, among those old historic residences.

And across the Peninsula, where Table Bay was visible as a bow of blue waters, phantom galleons for the nonce sailed for us, and dons and senhors, pursuing still that mythical El Dorado that all men sought and no man found, as it were stepped from oblivion. We pictured them as once they had come to the lonely shadow-world beneath the great scarped rock. And in fancy we heard the sound of tackle running free, and the creak of mighty booms, as though with sails bending to the merry sea breeze, the Spanish conquistadore, and the ship of romance, entered that bay again. The historic associations of the Cape, unexpected to the new-comer, formed one of the main attractions for us. Indeed so broodingly does history linger round the Cape, that while the lens of the eye is busy photographing the natural beauties, the shuttle of the mind is busier weaving romance. To and fro between the ages it goes, shooting the woof of fancy through the warp of what fact we have, till, on the loom of the brain, a kind of mental tapestry is formed, in which the trees, mountains and bays of the Cape are but the background to the even more picturesque lives of the old navigators and colonials. With them passed away a romantic fragrance and colour. Their going left the Cape the poorer. But the gardens, the spacious homes, the leafy walks and the genial life of the place remain,

And the sun with a golden mouth still blows
Blue bubbles of grapes down the vineyard's rows.



Groote Schuur.

CHAPTER II,

THE HISTORIC CAPE.

Our minds can travel back to our beloved land, to her sunny places and amazing history. I have often said to myself that the history of South Africa is one of the true and great romances of modern times.

—GENERAL SMUTS,
London, 1917.

“NOWHERE is there a city more delightfully situated than Capetown.” So says Froude. The tribute is just. And besides being beautiful the Cape is historical. There the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic. There, in 1487, Dias saw the sea-route to India. This incited Columbus, who in his search for India found America instead. It also incited da Gama, the first European to reach India by sea.

Few discoveries have more influenced the affairs of nations. They form an outstanding decade, those discoveries between 1487 and 1497. Any account of South Africa, what it has stood for and has become, should therefore give at least a passing glance to the personages and events of the great era from which Cape history dates.

There have been eras of greater military and religious leadership; of greater culture—literary, artistic and social; but the era which inaugurated world-wide navigation was the most beneficial.

It was the true dawn after the Dark Ages; and it

was at the Cape that the first rays of that dawn lit, when Dias saw the way round.

About the Cape there is thus that dignity and moving suggestiveness which age and tradition give. Over those pleasant scenes an air of antiquity lingers, that recalls with peculiar charm those stirring days, when the Portuguese and Spanish sailed heavy with the spoils of Mexico and Peru ; when the Dutch and



Where van Riebeeck Landed.

English grew rich on the treasure of Asia ; and when most of the great voyagers either called at or sighted the Cape, which Drake described as the fairest cape in the whole circumference of the world.

Commerce was adventurous, maritime conduct intrepid, in those far off days. The Cape became a half-way house for much of this. If not exactly the Venice of the new order of things, it became the pivot

around which, as previously around Venice, the Grand Trade between East and West revolved.

Until the close of the fifteenth century, the products Europe drew from Asia were carried to the ports of the Mediterranean. From there those products were distributed through Europe, mainly by the merchants of Venice.

This rich trade was a monopoly—first in the hands of the Asiatics, who levied what toll they liked; then in the hands of the Venetians, who took those fat profits which made the little republic on the lagoons so considerable a world-power.

Fortunes were waiting for whoever could trade direct with the Asiatic centres of production. Hence the many expeditions along the west coast of Africa to find a waterway. Little was known about that continent, which centuries later was still termed "dark"; but clearly if it terminated this side the Pole, one could get to India and China by sea.

So, hardly realising the magnitude of the enterprise, the mariners of that age, the greatest discoverers in history, sought the "land's end." Their equipment was often pathetically inadequate; obstacles were appalling, failures plentiful. Yet expedition followed expedition, each going a little farther than the previous one. Then came Bartholomeu Dias.

He set out with two small ships. Week after week he sailed into the great unknown, where no white man, perhaps no man had gone before. In time supplies ran short. Disease and discouragement increased among the crew, and still the tiny vessels pitched on their lonely course, sometimes through tempests of unprecedented violence.

At last a point on the South African coast, a little



Hout Bay.

beyond what is now Port Elizabeth, was reached. The adventurers had rounded the Cape. The road to India lay open before them. But Dias, though he had some inkling of the truth, failed to persuade his stricken crew to go farther.

He had discovered twelve hundred and sixty miles of hitherto unknown coast. Valuable experience had been gained and five years later Columbus, also



Knysna Heads.

seeking a sea-route to India, thrilled the nations by unexpectedly finding America instead.

There was apparently more beyond the horizon than Europe had even dreamed of. A fever for discovery ensued. In 1497 Vasco da Gama started on that epoch-making voyage which set in motion influences that radically changed the relations between the nations of the world.



The Castle.
Commenced 17th Century.

His equipment was superior to that with which Dias had sailed, and the heavier misfortunes which had attended the latter held aloof from da Gama, who not only rounded the Cape, but continued to a point near the mouth of the Zambesi River. There anchor was dropped at last, "where eastern palms hung over the flat-roofed houses, and a Moorish fleet rocked on the sun-kissed waves."

Thus West met East in eastern waters. Even at that date the eastern sea-board of Africa had for centuries been under the influence of civilised nations. For centuries it had been exploited in turn by Egyptians, Phœnicians and Greeks, followed later by Arabs, Persians and Indians. And when da Gama arrived, a considerable Oriental community was established there.

For da Gama's party, however, the main object was India. They stayed on the eastern coast of Africa only until a pilot was secured, who showed the way to Calicut, where da Gama arrived ten months after commencing his voyage. Sixteen months later he was back in Portugal.

He was then in a position to confirm the reports of Asia's riches. A fleet was soon dispatched by Portugal to benefit from his discoveries, and in time other countries also sent fleets.

Results were rapid. Ceylon was occupied. Trading posts were established along the Indian and African sea-boards. A Portuguese viceroy was appointed. Spain conquered Mexico, and a few years later Peru. The first French settlers in Canada landed in 1539. Japan was discovered to Europe in 1542. By 1565 the first town, in what are now the United States,

was founded. And in 1577 Drake commenced the first voyage round the world.

On the Cape the effect was that the Grand Trade between East and West passed via Table Mountain, instead of as previously, via St. Mark's.

Thus was started a struggle more widely spread than the campaigns of Alexander, richer in booty than the Napoleonic wars, and in ultimate beneficence, to Europe at least, great beyond computation.

It was the beginning, in eastern waters, of that great semi-religious, semi-commercial struggle, which shaped for centuries the fortunes not only of Africa, America and much of Asia, but radically changed conditions in Europe itself—a struggle which gave to Christendom the ascendancy over Mohammedanism and by elevating to leading international rank, in turn Portugal, Spain, Holland and Britain, determined the fluctuating balance of European power.

History must be searched closely before another so striking an example is found of beginnings so small leading to ends so great. Nations surrendered to a few ship-loads of Europeans. Continents were dominated with less sacrifice of life and treasure by the conquerors, than had been spent on many a campaign between European principalities.

Change, glamour and bustle spread quickly East and West, to and from the new seas and lands opened by the discoveries of da Gama and Columbus. In this change a part was played by the Cape. It was the place for which Cabral was searching when he accidentally found Brazil. It was the point at which the adventurers swung from the old to the new; a refuge from storm and scurvy, where mariners obtained cattle and sheep from the Hottentots, sweet

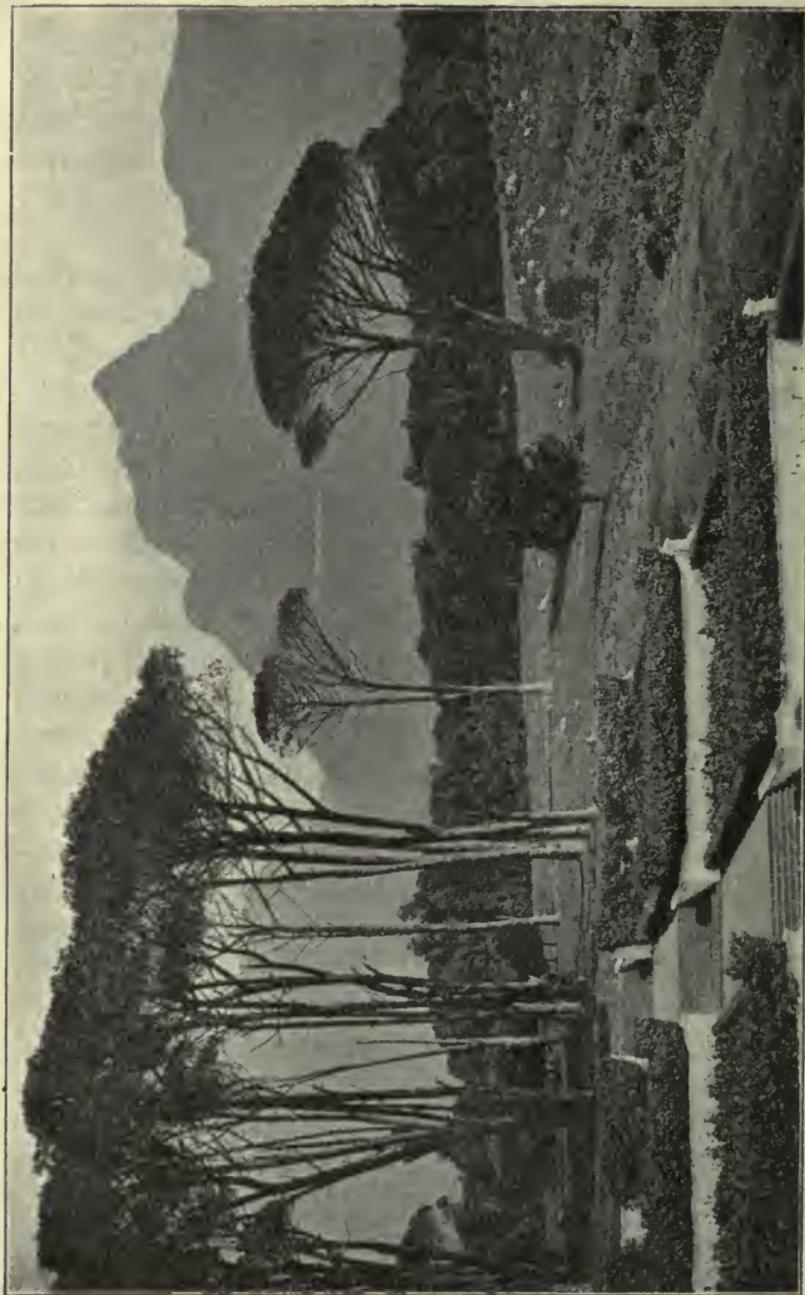
water from the mountain torrent, strength and encouragement from the healing surroundings.

The Portuguese and Spanish did not make the use of the Cape which the Dutch and English subsequently did. But all nations called there. Indeed, the first Portuguese viceroy in India, on his return journey, died at the Cape. The King of Spain was anxious to turn the place to permanent use. Had he carried out that intention, the history and destiny of South Africa might have been the same as much of Spanish America.

It was not however until naval supremacy passed from the Portuguese to the Spanish, and then in turn from the Spanish to the Dutch, that a permanent settlement was made at Capetown. The traffic with the East had exceeded all expectations, great though they were. The India Companies of Holland and England grew more powerful than any companies before or since.

Those companies employed administrators, commanders, and retinues of minor civil and military officials, who voyaged to and fro in the ponderous East Indiamen. Anything up to six months was then a fast trip to India. And as the art of preserving food and of catering on ship was still much what it had been in the sixteenth century, the need for improving the refreshment facilities in Table Bay was urgent.

Had they known it, they were rounding a land that was richer in wealth—diamonds and gold—than those more distant lands to which they voyaged so feverishly. But this they did not know. They saw only the advantages of growing cabbages at the Cape. So in 1652 Commander van Riebeeck came, and a party of about a hundred came with him to farm.



In a Cape Garden.

CHAPTER III.

IN OLD CAPETOWN.

Capetown holds a high, and in some senses almost unique, place among the cities of the Empire.

—LORD MILNER.

VAN RIEBEECK came to a noble environment. Mountain-ranges towered before him, forest trees darkened the ravines, and a tempting valley invited attention.

Over all was the comforting sunshine, and the wistful colouring, of a typical autumn day in the Cape Peninsula.

Seen from the sea, the prospect cheered the settlers. On landing, however, impressions changed. The valley, after the long dry summer, proved to be parched, windswept, and unyielding. And when the rains of winter came, they were torrential, inundating everything.

The lot of the newcomers was therefore a hard one. But they lost no time in wrestling with nature.

In the virgin forests of the mountain slopes, the wood-cutters plied their trade. Daily the song of the axe was heard, in the æon-old silence of lonely ravines. Great trees were dragged to the camp, where the colonists hammered and hewed. Lime kilns were built, brickfields worked, and soon there grew the little pioneer village from which Capetown sprang.

And as they warmed to their work, interest bit in, the life grew congenial. Fields and livestock throve



Newlands Avenue.



In Stellenbosch.

after a while, vines began to yield, and instead of the frugal far-fetched fare with which the settlers started, there was in time a local plenty.

On the surrounding seas, the days of romantic voyaging were almost over. Portugal had succumbed to the dominance of Spain. Spain had by England been reduced as a naval power, and by Holland had been almost ousted from the trade with the East.



Near Wynberg Park.

More vessels sailed round the Cape than before, but the trade, being so largely in the hands of the practical Dutch, had been regulated, and wore more the aspect of routine than of adventure.

In 1679 van der Stel replaced van Riebeeck. Nine years later the Huguenot immigrants arrived. Instead of being merely a refreshment depot for the fleets, the Cape became a colony. English, French,

Danish, Spanish and Portuguese ships increasingly called there. Many of them, unlike the rigorously controlled Dutch ships, had latitude in trading.

They made a world-mart of Capetown. Almost anything produced in Europe or the East was obtainable there. And goods of the greatest variety and most costly 'description, an old chronicle records, commanded ready sale.



Main Street, Paarl.

It was the turn in the tide of fortune. The place became a kind of international rendezvous. Ships of every flag creaked outside Capetown. Men in all stations of life were acquainted with its amenities.

From the founders of empires, such as Clive and Hastings, to the rawest victims of the pressgangs, every degree of power and poverty, on its way between West and East, passed through Capetown.

Many no doubt were swashbucklers, some were cut-throats. But all were men of affairs, who had done or seen the things that mattered; and all contributed something to give variety and interest to the life of the place.

It was a notable epoch. The outside world was full of strife to establish the independence of the United States, the republic of France, the Indian Empire which Clive won and Hastings consolidated. But through all the Cape remained tranquil. In fact it became the idyllic oasis between the wars in the East and those of the West. There was little interruption to its peace, even in 1781 when a French garrison occupied the place as a measure of precaution.

This French occupation, though brief, and by subsequent events rendered politically insignificant, had a lasting effect on South Africa. The new garrison came not only as Frenchmen but as friends of a community already containing many cultured French Huguenots.

They were soldiers of the most brilliant court in Europe, exiled indefinitely, and bent on easing their exile. With their arrival, fashion and manners began to receive some of the attention previously bestowed on trade and administration. An elegant mode of living set in. "All strove," an old writer says, "to have handsome houses filled with costly furniture, and as imposing a retinue of slaves as possible."

The slaves at the Cape were imported. They came largely from Mozambique and Madagascar, but some came from the Far East, olive-skinned creoles, and Malay women often of delicate beauty.

They made good butlers, chefs and coachmen. Some were expert musicians, others capable workers in wood, leather, metal and stone. They relieved the



Near Stellenbosch.

Europeans of the rougher more tiresome tasks, and thus the Cape colonists lived on the whole probably smoother, pleasanter lives than people of their station then enjoyed in Europe. Their lot was comparatively a spacious one. The placidity of the Dutch was gradually tintured by the vivacity of the French. Fashion and manners occupied the manliest minds. The Cape beaux modelled themselves on Marly and St. Cloud, rather than on Virginia or New Amsterdam.



A Cape Farm.

Thus, to an extent not usual in a colony, the Cape was in touch with, and was influenced by, much that was best in the outer world, to which must be largely attributed that love of culture—art, literature and music, so noticeable in its people to-day. Even at the time of which we are writing, when life in a colony was generally rough, the settlers at the Cape, we read, were often considerable seigniors, who lived in houses as stately and beautiful as those of good families in Europe.

Changes were however afoot. New continental alliances were formed and the French garrison departed. That they remembered the Cape long and fondly, their diaries and letters show.

In 1806 the place was finally occupied by the British. The change was political rather than social. "Capetown," the historian records, "had become



Church Street, Wellington.

known as Little Paris." It had a society and amenities. People of taste and means, in passing, stayed a while, were captivated with the place, returned when they could, and stayed longer.

Of the elements, therefore, which make history, give a country its traditions, and shape its people, the Cape had a fortunate share. Across the international stage, fate pulled the tangled threads of war and intrigue. Nations rose and fell, the Cape passed from one to the other, and so passing became the place of distinctive charm it is to-day.

CHAPTER IV.

ON SOUTH AFRICAN TRAVEL.

We travelled for thousands of miles together. Heaven knows if we had one common thought or fancy, or whether our eyes beheld the same world out of the carriage window.

—ACROSS THE PLAINS.

THE variety of outlook and opinion on what one sees in travel to which Stevenson drew attention, is especially experienced in South Africa, more particularly on the Karoo.

“Visitors,” it was recently affirmed in a book of South African travel, “on going afield will be disappointed to find that the country is not as per sample in the Cape Peninsula.”

Diners, it might as justly have been urged, will regret to find that the menu on the corridor train consists of more than one course.

Travel, like successful dining, is a kind of epicurism ; for the one we require not only digestion but taste ; for the other mental as well as optical vision.

A little imagination, a little appreciation not only of scenic and historic, but of topographical, racial, climatic, social and industrial interest will soon make it apparent that, though the Cape Peninsula attractions are the best of their kind the country has to show, yet the attractions of the Orange Free State, Transvaal, Natal and Rhodesia are in their way as worthy of attention.

The most notable feature about inland South

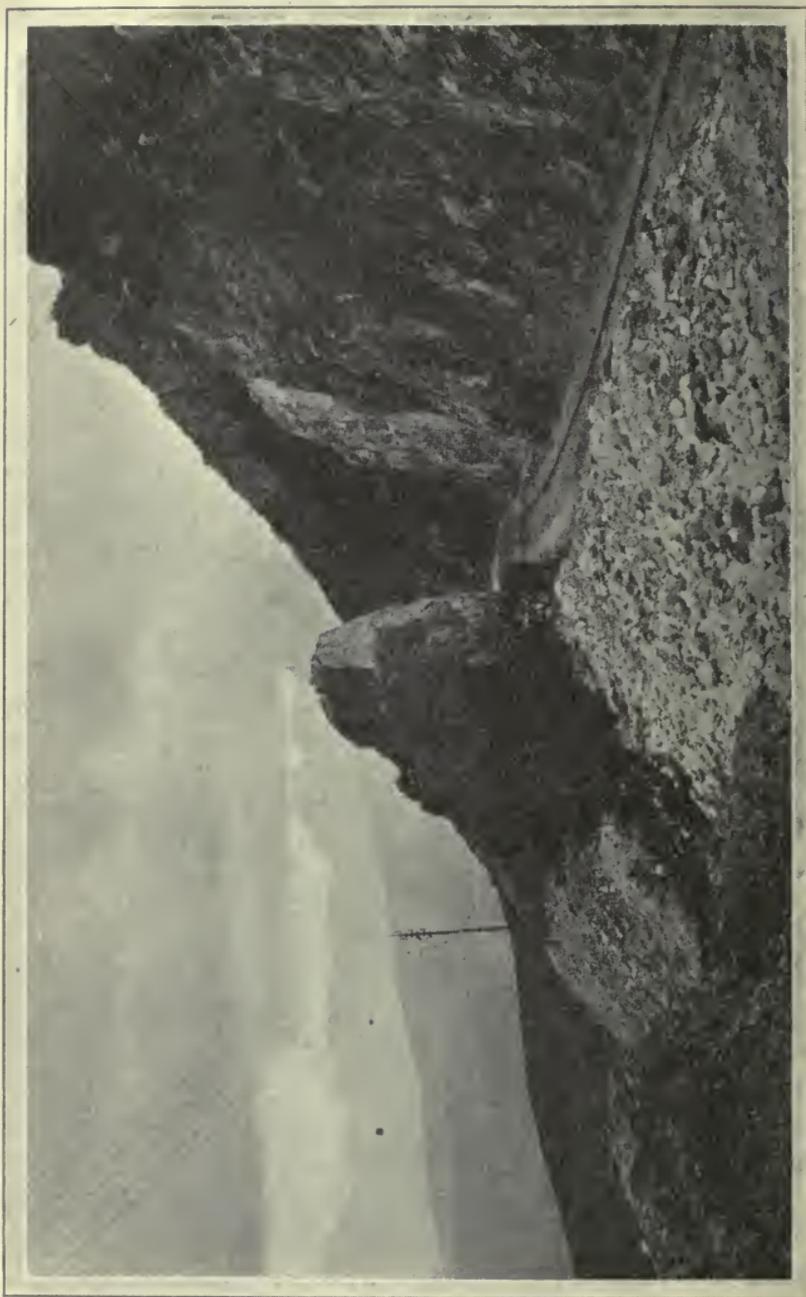


A Mitchell's Pass.

Africa is the abundant sunshine. It is tropical in its brilliance and persistence, without being tropically enervating; for the prevailing summer winds which refresh South Africa come straight from cold Antarctic seas. This gift of climate makes life in South Africa peculiarly genial, so that, as the Dominions Royal Commission pointed out, it will always remain a country to which those who have known it will desire to return.

The attractions of the Transvaal, Natal, and Rhodesia may not be quickly apparent to the newcomer. South Africa does not reveal itself with the orderly sequence of a stage effect. It is a large country, its places of outstanding interest are generally far apart, and often that part of the intervening territory traversed by the main line of railway may to the casual glance appear uninviting. For miles the eye of the uninitiated detects little to kindle enthusiasm. Nothing apparently stirs, not much grows. The hills soon cease to attract attention, the great sparsely-peopled plateaus oppress by their monotony. Here and there a lonely farm is seen, here and there perhaps a drooping horseman, and at intervals a discoloured stream coaxing a sun-wearied wood from a sun-baked earth.

Much of the Great Karoo, the Transvaal High Veld, and internal Natal is of this description, as is much of America, Australia and Asia. The plains of Nebraska, the Desert of Wyoming, the Ridge of the Rocky Mountains between New York and San Francisco are in monotony of aspect quite equal to anything in South Africa; yet who, for that reason alone, is deterred from enjoying California? Who in Spain is kept from Grenada and the Alhambra because



Sir Lowry's Pass.

la Mancha is a wilderness ; or who in Italy is kept from Rome because the campagna wearies the eye and mind?

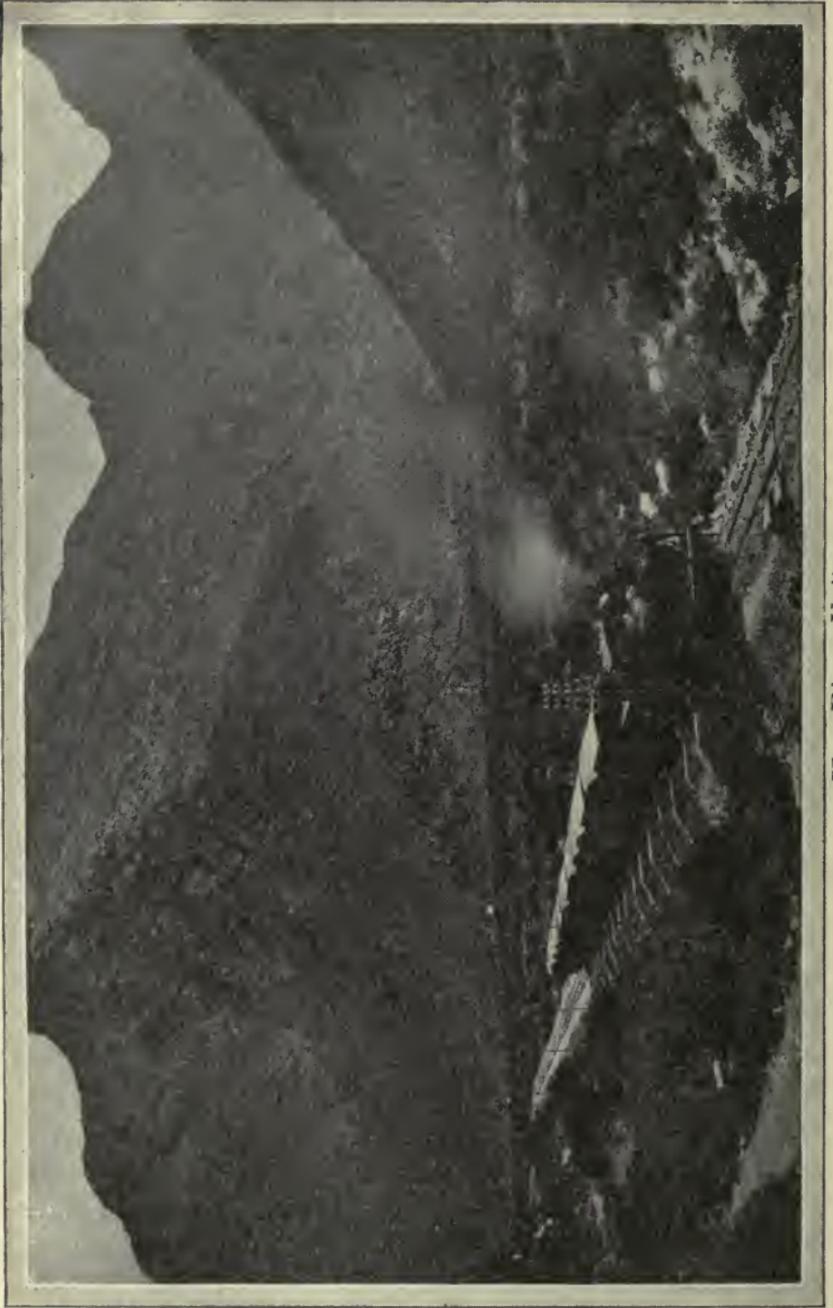
Similarly the Karoo and the arid portions of the High Veld, though of considerable area, are after all only a portion of South Africa, and moreover the undeveloped industrial, not the advertised scenic portion. No doubt the Karoo has been considerably



South African Railways, Dining Car.

developed here and there, and is rich in possibilities, but in the main it is still only the highway to the mines, farms, and pleasure resorts—the road that leads to the wealth and beauty of South Africa ; only the uninitiated mistake it for a specimen of that wealth or beauty.

Yet even the Karoo, properly regarded, has its interest, as we shall try to indicate in the following chapter.



Hex River Valley.

CHAPTER V.

THE KAROO.

They have cradled you in custom, they have primed you with
their teaching,

They have soaked you in convention through and through ;
They have put you in a show case, you're a credit to their
preaching,

But can't you hear the wild—it's calling you ?

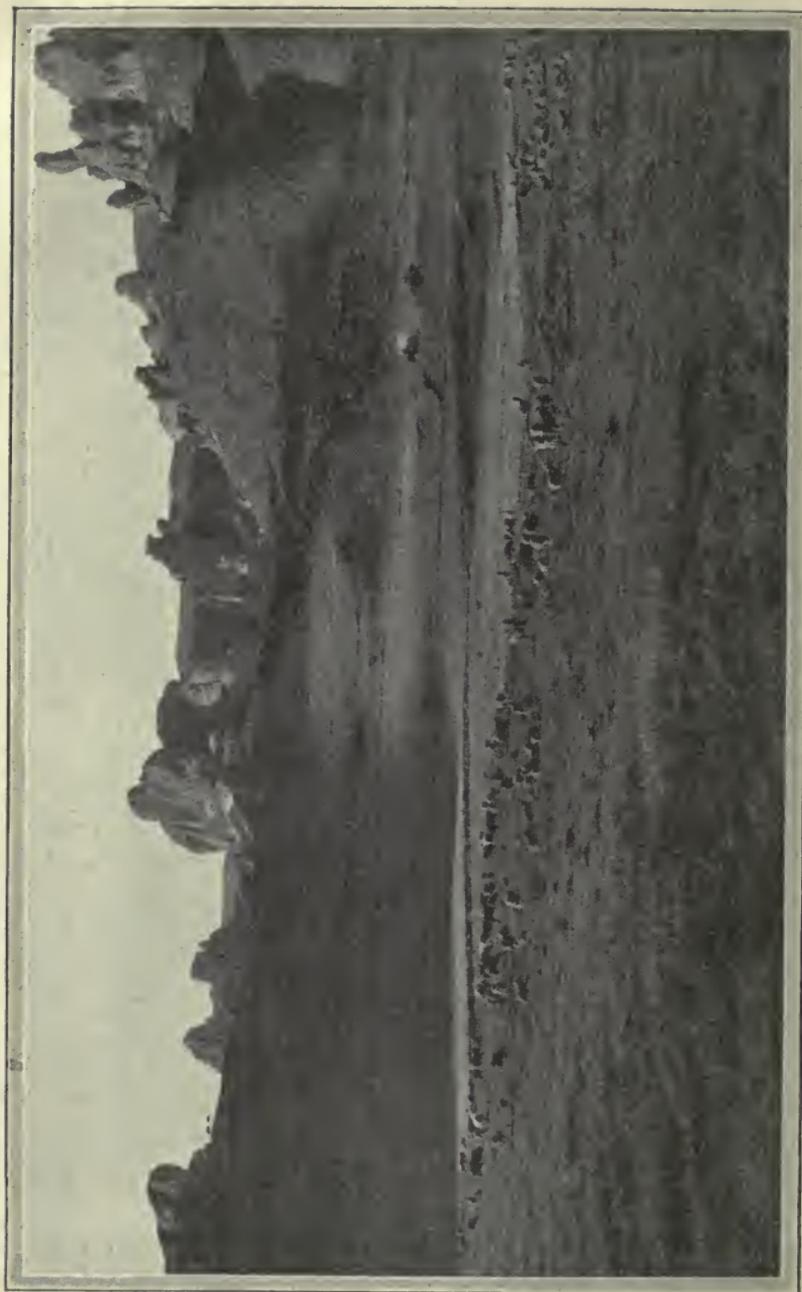
—R. SERVICE.

AT dawn, on the second day after leaving Cape-
town, we were in somewhat desert-like
surroundings. Around us was the Karoo.

The mist-wreathed peaks, the aromatic woods,
the glint of the great Cape combers were far behind ;
and now the rails gleamed across the lonely, drab,
but health-giving plains, where the pure air invigor-
ates, and the spaciousness and peace soothe.

The corridor train of the South African Railways,
doing up to thirty-five or forty miles an hour on the
3' 6" line, swung past huddled sphinx-like kopjes,
in an environment treeless and sterile but enlivened
by wonderful atmospheric tinting and in a subtle
way impressive.

The railway sleeping arrangements were comfort-
able, and, though we had travelled all night, we awoke
refreshed. After coffee and a somewhat cramped
toilet on the train, there was breakfast in the refresh-
ment saloon while still we continued the journey.
The service, appointments and cuisine on the train were
as good as those of an English railway. Appetites



A Karoo Pasture.

were sharp, and though there was nothing spectacular about the Karoo as seen from the railway window, there was joy in the clean-born day, exhilaration in the splendid sunshine, and a lung tonic in the dry thin air of those upper altitudes. It was an experience in well-being.

In time we became votaries of the Karoo. Undoubtedly it has its good points. Though in the



Tulbagh Kloof.

main undeveloped, it has yielded large returns for such development as has taken place. Many of the best mineral deposits of the country are there, and its soil contains a fertility accumulated and untapped for æons ; the diamonds were taken from the Karoo, the world's principal supply of mohair comes from it. Large fortunes have been made out of its ostriches, and millions of sheep thrive on its stunted herbage.

The Karoo, according to Professor Schwarz, was a flower garden two or three hundred years ago, "supporting vast herds of game, the present dry rivers running throughout the year."

To that condition the Karoo may return, when the conservation of water is more thoroughly understood and practised in South Africa. Given increased conservation of the rainfall, together with scientific



Bain's Kloof.

dry-farming to make the most of what rainfall is conserved, many thousands may find excellent livings, and some fortunes, on the Karoo. Peach, apple and orange orchards may one day stretch from its horizons, green fields wave with corn, prize cattle stand deep in lucerne.

Sometimes even the little rain the Karoo normally gets is withheld a season or two. Then the streams

dry up, cattle and sheep starve, and much financial loss is the result. But, after even successive droughts, the rainfall of one season need be only a few inches above the normal, when all that was previously lost is regained. Given water, anything might be done with the Karoo. This has been proved at Oudtshoorn, where the waters have been led to the Karoo soil, and where in consequence the farming community is normally one of the richest in the world.

As one of the few remaining patches of the earth, which are both virgin and healthy, and which may support lusty mining and farming communities of European race, the Karoo merits notice. There is in it food for thought, there is money : there is even a degree of charm. The Karoo has its admirers. Just as the life on ice-bound Canadian rivers has a compelling attraction which the lumberman and hunter feel, while the townsman sees only discomfort ; just as the spacious solitudes of Sahara will repel nine but irresistibly draw the tenth, so life on the Karoo, though sometimes rough, is not without its congenial side ; and many acquainted with society at its best, and with travel in the widest sense, have found the influence of the Karoo alluring and durable.

The Karoo has been described as a " waterless wilderness having neither beauty nor loving kindness." It depends on the point of view. For the Karoo, to those who care for it, is a very different Karoo to that gauged from the railway carriage. The denizen of the Karoo knows what he has to face, trains and fits himself to face it, and either succumbs early in the struggle, and then drifts back to town, or in his surviving fitness finds, not only profit, but

pleasure, in a contest the rules of which are often severe, but never corrupt.

The life is a kind of game in which the sporting instinct gets full scope. And the charm lies, not in "beauty or loving kindness," but in freedom and independence. Whether on the farm, or around the transport-rider's fire, or in the prospector's camp, there is the sense of well-being which follows laborious



A Karoo Town. (Victoria West.)

days usefully and perhaps profitably spent; the struggle may be hard, but it is straightforward and healthful.

We liked the Karoo especially towards evening. Gradually the stunted bush grows dusky, a smell of thyme and trodden veld-herbs hangs in the cooling air; the dust-trail which followed the home-coming cattle has vanished again, and afar, from the smoky

huts of the Kafirs, the disconsolate notes of a concertina come, like a sob through the desert night. An air of pastoral peace pervades the scene. The Kafir fires blink in background, where blanketed figures lie stretched on the warm soft dust. For a while drowsy voices come from the verandah, then these too cease and sleep rules the farm.

Oppressed by the solitude of it all, the little jackal slinks across the lonely plain. In the starshine the springboks graze on the dewless scrub. And you awake, in the crisp fresh dawn, to the note of the partridge coveys calling around the solitary hills.

It does not amount to much, on paper. The charm of the life is more easily felt than expressed. But when profits and losses have been counted, and time has softened the impression of hardship, it is with longing that the erstwhile farmer, prospector, or even the invalid who has regained health on the Karoo looks back on the old life.

It is with something of a thrill that he recalls stout battles with drought and pestilence, and with something of wistfulness that he remembers the homely hearths and comforts of the veld.

The fruits of success are sweet, but good too was the herculean task, and, at its end, the heavy humour and kindly hospitality of the wilds, when to festivities all in the district came, in the best approved style of the veld, at a hand-gallop and often for moments on one wheel, careless of lives within or without the Cape cart. For the shadeless Karoo is the scene of much whole-hearted merriment, when the sad-coloured little clumps of gums or willows round the lonely homesteads stand silhouetted against the rose flush of the sunset, and all the land lies violet

and gray, and shutters are opened to the cooling evening breeze.

The Karoo too is ground in places appropriately funereal. It was the scene of some of South Africa's greatest battles, and is the graveyard of some of her finest men. To thousands all over the world it is still full of memories of the Anglo-Boer War.

They are not much to look at, those hills of Talana, Elandslaagte, Colenso, Spion Kop, Magersfontein or Paardeberg; there is little outwardly imposing about such places as Vryheid, Modder River, Dundee, Mafeking, or Kimberley. But their names will live, as long as the toll of that war is remembered on the lonely farm of the veld and the ranches of the Australian bush; in Indian messes and Canadian homesteads; in the Highland hut of the crofter and the mansion of the peer; for all took a part, and all paid something toward the final reckoning.

One can now look back on that war without passion or prejudice, mourning the fallen whatever their side. Especially is this so on the ground where they fell. The veld has reclaimed its own, and with drift-sand and weed has covered the trenches and the ravages of shot and shell. Nothing now marks the battlefield except an occasional grave, or a block-house crumbled in ruin. No bugle call, no sentry's challenge, nor clank of battery harness is now heard; the bivouac fires are dead, the tents all struck.

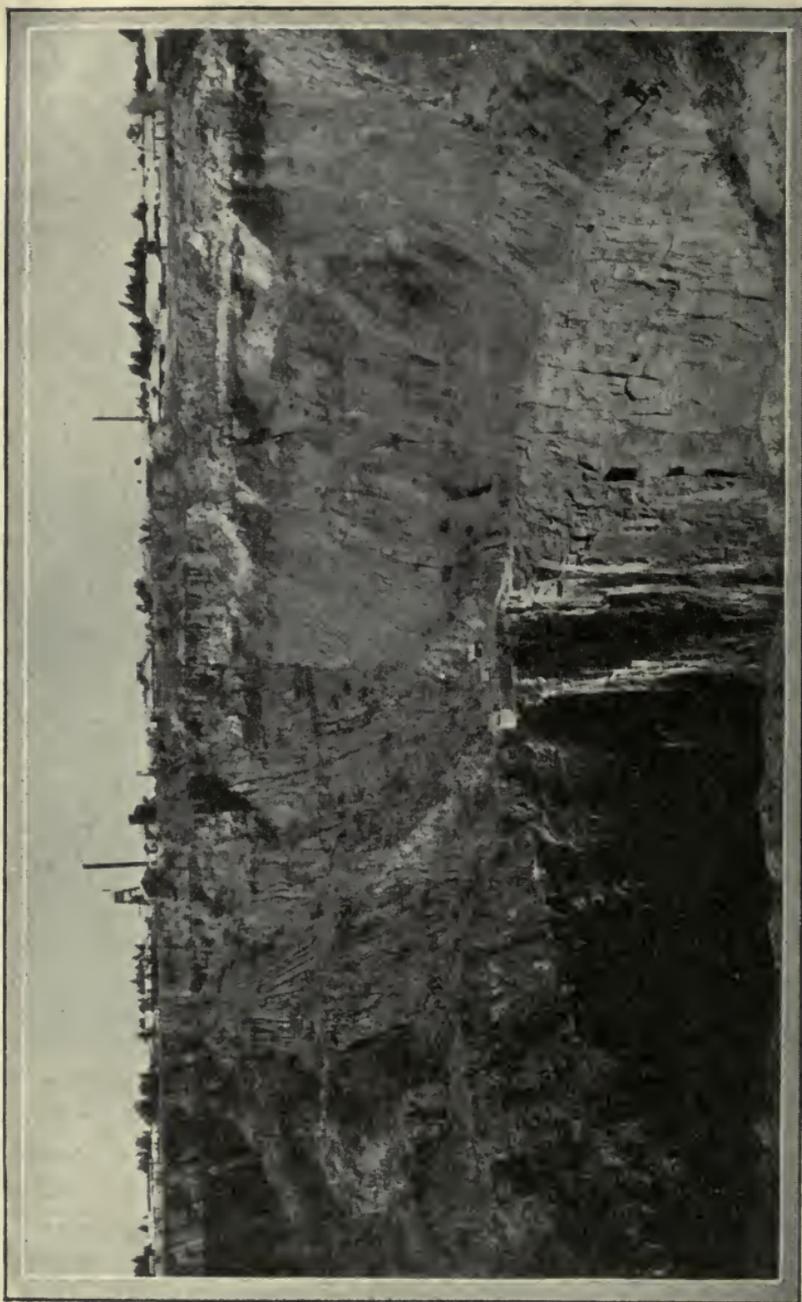
It is all very peaceful and touching. The only sound is the sighing of the wind through the short rank scrub, the only shadows are those thrown by the clouds and ridges. And in the tomb-like silence of the kopjes, where in any spot maybe a warrior lies, nothing more vibrant is heard than the ring of one's

boot heel, nothing more disturbing than the echoes
the hills throw back. Hot passions have cooled. hot
wounds have ceased to ache, and round the unmindful
dead only echoes and memories linger—

Solemn echoes which seem to cry
Here let the discord with them die.



Flood-time on the Karoo.



Section of Kimberley Mine.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VALLEY OF DIAMONDS.

There have been few events in South Africa which have had consequences more important and far reaching than the discovery of diamonds in 1867.

—SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY.

On the edge of the Karoo, six hundred and forty-seven miles from Capetown, is Kimberley.

Probably nowhere else has so much wealth been won from so small an area as at Kimberley. From four mines, the aggregate dimensions of which are under two hundred acres, diamonds worth over two hundred million pounds sterling have been taken in just over forty years ; and taken, it may be believed, not without incident.

The ancients, with some show of reason, ascribed to the diamond all sorts of mystic powers, seeing in it the manifestation of the purest, most lasting beauty ; and seeing in it at the same time springs prompting the most reprehensible depravity. Certainly of all forms of wealth the diamond is the most compact, and therefore peculiarly liable to stir man's cupidity, as the illicit diamond buying records of Kimberley show, and they show only a moiety of what took place.

Murder, and all kinds of minor roguery, heralded most of the older historic diamonds to their final setting. While this cannot be said of modern diamonds, social vigilance being what it now is, still the

winning of the wealth of Kimberley constitutes a drama in which failure and success—great failures and tremendous successes—figured; and to which, consequently, the lights and shades of nearly every human passion gave colour. The story of Kimberley, if ever fully told, should form an entrancing chapter of colonial history.

Like so many outstanding South African events,



Du Toit's Pan Road, Kimberley.

the discovery of diamonds in 1867 was accidental. A travelling trader attracted by the lustre of one of a number of stones with which a farmer's children were playing, conceived the idea of having it identified. It proved to be a diamond. The few farmers on the frontier were informed, the native herd-boys kept an eye open for the "shining stones"; a little semi-official prospecting was even

undertaken. But nothing resulted, and gradually the opinion that South Africa had a diamond field began to get discredited. Occasional diamonds had in other parts of the world been found without leading to extensive deposits. Successive ostriches, it was contended, might have carried the South African diamond in their crops for thousands of miles. A year passed and nothing happened. Then the country

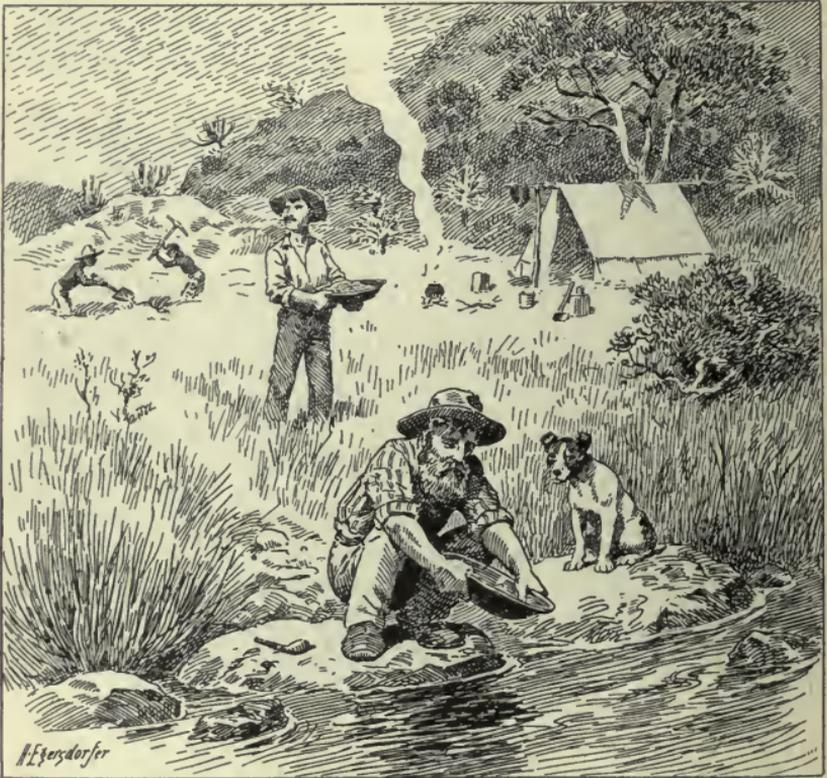


Uncut Diamonds—£15,000 worth.

thrilled from end to end. Another discovery had been made. The "Star of South Africa" a superb diamond worth £25,000 was picked up on the banks of the Vaal River. In what other country have such fortunes been had for the stooping?

This proved to be the veritable "valley of diamonds," and from Durban and Capetown thousands of people flocked inland, sped by the lust for wealth.

Durban was nearly five hundred miles, and Cape-town nearly seven hundred miles from the diamond fields; and there were only a few miles of railway in the country. Yet by 1870 hundreds were eagerly delving on the banks of the Vaal River, and by the



The Valley of Diamonds.

end of that year the number was estimated in thousands.

It was a striking community. The prohibitive cost of transport, the necessity for provisioning themselves indefinitely, and the uncertainty of the

returns, required of those who went in the earlier days that they should have means ; and some of the earlier Vaal River diggings, unlike contemporary mining camps in Australia and California, accommodated mainly the well-to-do and educated. University men on vacation, officers on pension or furlough, civil servants and professional men out for a breather,



A Bend in the Vaal.

were attracted to the diamond vaults. Other classes were added later, but at the outset the banks of the Vaal were as select almost as a Mayfair drawing room. Hands more accustomed to signing cheques, or plying lancets, or untying briefs, for once sorted gravel or even wielded picks. Habitues of club and mess room slept in the craziest shelters. Externally the place was rough, internally cultured. The garb

was that of a mining camp, the manners those of Piccadilly and Rotten Row.

It was a life to move the heart of a man. Every moment of the working day, when any handful of gravel might hold a competence, was full of mighty possibility, and tense as around a gaming table. Then the almost Sabbath lull of evening, the lack of conventionality, the delight of a remoteness which yet



Typical Head-gears, Kimberley Mine.

held congenial companionship. Expectations beat high, muscles hardened, tempers grew less brittle than in towns. It was a life of quiet picturesqueness, long-remembered by those who had known it, and in other days, amid other scenes—on the parade ground or judge's bench, in the scientist's sanctum or the forum of the senate—the lilt of the river must often have disturbed those whose brains later found em-

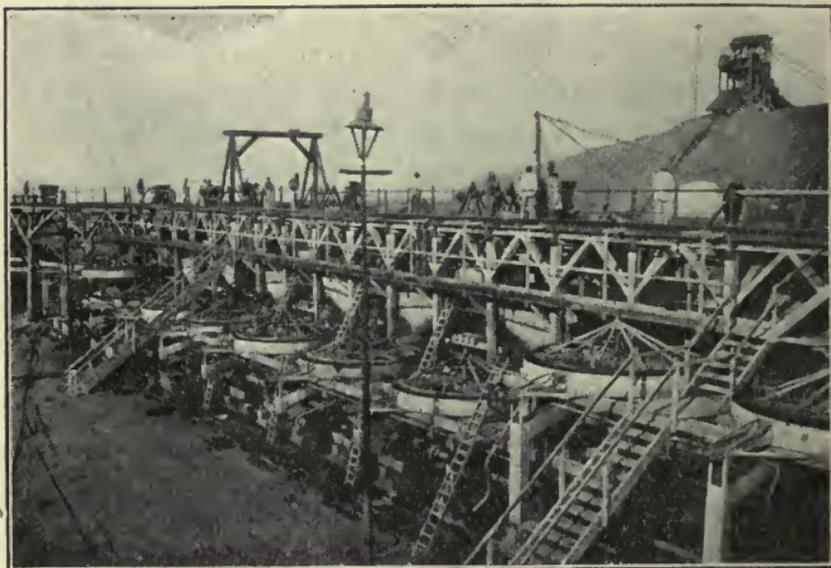
ployment in wider spheres, but whose hearts still remained in the gulches.

Such was the happy summer of 1870. Unfortunately the little luck which all expected did not come to all, did not in fact come to many. There were plenty of diamonds on the river diggings, but not the quantities at first supposed, and then so distributed as to result in the greatest inequalities for the diggers. Therefore when rumours of far richer fields at Kimberley, about forty miles away, began to filter through, the exodus from the river was rapid, and by the end of 1871 it was almost complete. The healthy life with its moderate gains was exchanged for the dust and misery of the dry-diggings with their promise of rapid fortune; and loneliness again settled over the claims at Hebron, Klipdrift and Moonlight Rush.

The dry-diggings, it soon transpired, were rich, and in proportion to their richness, proved or imagined, was the cosmopolitanism of the crowd the diggings attracted. Every race and type of character was represented, every vagary of fortune experienced. But vice, though of course not absent in so mixed a community, had its manifestation in sharp practice rather than in lawlessness. The duels were of wits, not of revolvers.

It was a different life to that of the river. The vastness of the diamond deposits was unquestioned. New claims were daily opened, diggers arrived by the hundreds, and in a few months the surroundings were changed beyond recognition. An ocean of ramshackle structures spread in ever-widening circles. Canvas tents, the improvised lean-to, galvanised-iron huts, and great barns for provisions sprang up. The trees the place originally boasted were quickly used

for firewood ; the soil, when not actually disturbed for diamonds, was plowed to powder by the heavy traffic. Water was dear almost as wine, retailing at one time at two shillings a bucketful. There were few recreations except gambling, and they gambled on anything ; on the rapidity with which respective



Diamond-washing Plant.

candles would burn, on the eccentricity and endurance of pinned mosquitoes.

The main technical difference between the river-diggings and the dry-diggings was that in one the diamonds carried by flood, were widely scattered, so that the claims extended for miles, with apparently no uniformity of richness ; whereas in the dry-diggings the diamonds, gathered probably by volcanic action, lay in compact pipes or funnels running into the bowels

of the earth. These pipes now form the diamond mines—the largest holes on earth.

In time, as the Kimberley excavations grew and retaining walls between the claims caved in, millions of tons of fallen diamondless reef began to bury the workings and costs increased. Gradually the individual was eliminated; only the well-capitalised could continue under such conditions. But even



The " Floors "—Pulverising blue-ground.

their difficulties were growing insuperable. The claims became more flooded with reef, the proportion of diamonds to the quantity of earth handled decreased, selling prices threatened to fall as there were no means of regulating the market, and amalgamation became necessary.

How on the one hand to buy out vested interests at reasonable prices, and on the other hand convince investors that the interests were worth buying out and working, was an undertaking that might well have appalled the promoters of amalgamation, in which

case Kimberley also would have become a deserted mining camp. Its fate was to be happier. The occasion produced the man: Cecil Rhodes not only convinced the investing public, but succeeded in reconciling the apparently irreconcilable local interests affected.

Then open pit mining was abandoned for the underground methods of to-day. The huge craters which had roared with so much activity, and had been the scene of so many failures and successes, grew silent and apparently deserted, and the miners, now working



Memorial Road, Kimberley.

in tunnels lit by electricity and ventilated by compressed air, delved out of sight, gradually deeper.

Gradually, too, the minor details of diamond finding improved till it does seem that human ingenuity has done its utmost to eliminate risk to life and limb, to reduce working-costs by labour-saving devices, and to make the most of every ton of rock and earth dislodged. The tunnels and shafts, more spacious and cleaner than in gold or coal mining, are one of the world's sights. The machinery employed is perhaps the costliest and finest mining plant as-

sembled in one place. The precision with which each cab of earth is handled, till only a moiety of concentrates with an occasional diamond is left, is almost miraculous, yet simple when the details are considered; and the sight of the diamond emerging from darkness, and finally isolated in all its splendour, is as thrilling almost as a horse race.





Eastern Cataract, Victoria Falls.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VICTORIA FALLS.

. . . I read and was sceptical ; beautiful photographs left me without enthusiasm. Then I came, saw, and was conquered. The majesty and mystery of these gigantic gorges, these foaming torrents, these wonderful atmospheric effects, these clouds of water, masses of rock, and rich ravines of foliage, all this came upon me with a force and power as though I had never read a description or heard a statistic in connection with the Victoria Falls.

—A. COLQUHOUN.

FFIFTY miles from Kimberley, after crossing the Vaal River, the railway branches on the one hand east through the Transvaal to Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Natal ; and on the other hand, north to Rhodesia. As several chapters will be necessary for the Transvaal and Natal, it may be convenient first to glance at Rhodesia.

Rhodesia was opened for European settlement in 1892. Its climate, soil and mineral riches seemed admirably to fit it for colonisation. To make it the home of a large European population was the project nearest the heart of Rhodes. What is perhaps not so generally known is that Rhodesia has also much to interest the traveller.

The attractions of the Victoria Falls are especially notable. They are unique, for though waterfalls are the commonplace of travel, those of the Zambesi are the most splendid of their kind.

Compared with other waterfalls they stand out as Nature's masterpiece. Their grandeur is varied and



“ The Corridors of Time.”

distinctive, their impression on all beholders is a lasting one. They form one of the few really great spectacles that no subsequent sight-seeing ever quite effaces from the memory. In fact, although the seven wonders were all the works of men, if without immodesty Nature might claim a similar recognition for one or two of its best works, the Victoria Falls might justly be termed the eighth wonder of the world.

Perhaps most people arrive at the Victoria Falls with rather a mistaken idea of what there is to see. It was so with us. We expected that on stepping from the train we would find ourselves in a scene extraordinary for its floral display—primeval forests such as those of the Amazon; a hot-house luxuriance in the matter of clustering ferns, gorgeous orchids, and festooned tropic growths of every kind. The reality was very different. Seen from the train, the country on the whole was much like the rest of Rhodesia; that is to say, well clad with trees, but pending rains there was an aspect of drought about the place, and wide spaces were barren even of grass.

Many of the walks between points of outstanding interest are therefore not in themselves attention-compelling, but this is perhaps rather an advantage than otherwise; they form a contrast that enhances the beauty to which they lead.

Our first feeling on stepping from the train was one of disillusionment. Nothing remarkable was in sight. But by the time we reached the modern hotel this feeling changed. There was a warm stillness and tropic subtlety of perfume in the air, and the general spirit of the place was so debonairly charming, that after we had made our first excursion, leisurely



The Zambesi River.

exploring the river in a typical African canoe, the spell of the place had us under its sway.

The waters of the Zambesi River are in that part of the country clear, cool, and deep; and for the seven miles above the waterfalls they average a mile and a quarter in width. The banks are low, and square-cut, fringed with bamboo or reeds. In places however the banks are naked save for a rich grass, while in yet other places they are wooded; and in the distance, seen over those mighty waters, is the dense green of the teak forests: not a teak such as you see in Burma, but still a picturesque tree.

And as slowly the canoe glides on, the scenery becomes more and more arresting. The great river gleams between beautiful islands, that lie on the sunlit waters in splashes of rich colour. Here and there a palm, raising its crest sheer from surrounding foliage, gives to the scene an Egyptian air until, landing on one of the islands, the illusion is dispelled by the suspicion that this is the Congo, and that one is among the tangled growths of the equator. Huge gnarled trunks of twisted forest monarchs stand in shadowy solemnity; and in some instances, lured too far by the attractive waters, have weakened at the base and toppled over, yet in that prolific land thrive and outlive in greenness if not in vigour, their less recumbent neighbours.

Scarlet, purple, and white convolvuli festoon the heavy branches. Here and there a parasitical growth, climbing like a great glistening snake, coils its tendrils round some forest giant, until in time strangulation ensues, and the withered branches raise their points to heaven as though in supplication. It is a vegetable

tragedy. Drawing its nourishment abundantly from the same generous soil, lacking only the backbone to support itself, the parasite clings to the nobler growth and finally stifles it. There is something very human about Zambesian flora.

Some such reflection is apt to come to whoever walks with Nature, as Ruskin puts it, "having no thought but how best to penetrate her meaning." For them especially the Zambesi will be full of interest, for them it will seem a river of variable moods. A river, moreover, with the power of transmitting its moods.

There is optimism where the sunlit waters ripple over the shallows, and despondency where, between abysmal walls, the waters of the chasm lurk in gloom. On lonely Kandahar Island, the air is charged with longing, as though, from the whispering palm crests, the barbarian spirit of Ages-that-were recalled to the sighing river memories of a mighty past, æons of time ago, when the world was young and perhaps more joyous. In short, the Zambesi is a river of endless charm that lures one always on

For whenever the way seems long,
Or the heart begins to fail,
She sings a more wonderful song,
Or tells a more marvellous tale.

The course lay long and lonely as we penetrated the upper reaches. The shadows lengthened as we crept along, the waters lay unruffled, and in the silent woods no leaf stirred. But over the waters came the throbbing of some distant drum, where a Barotse festival was afoot; and in the kraals the evening beer-drink pended. It was for this the warriors had

rested all day, the better to do themselves justice at night ; and as we got nearer, the dust of long-pent energy, and the din of honest rejoicing, rose on the tropic air, and ruffled the calm of the river. For the warriors stamped, and narrated what terrible fellows they were, and slew whole but imaginary *impis* ; and the women encouraged their prowess with shrill shouts, and sustained their energies with much Kafir beer.

And thus as a preparation for the great and final charm of the falls themselves, we drifted idly on from island to island, seeing continuously something picturesque or unusual, until the time for returning arrived. Then the canoe was turned, and before us lay the loveliest sight imaginable—the Zambesi at sunset. Into the transparent waters deep shadows sank and lay. The perfume came from hidden orchids, strange odours of a foreign land ; and something of the barbaric spirit of the place pervaded especially the woods, and one felt that here one looked on a corner of the world that is much as it was in the beginning, unconventional in its beauty and freedom, where by the mighty river the antelopes still come at dusk to drink, and the teak still stands in trackless forests, and the wild turpentine mingles with the acacia to scent the languorous air with old-world odours. Through the glossy green tree tops the slanting rays filtered faintly, save where some solitary palm, stark in the flare of the sun, diffused the failing light, as the canoe glided swiftly and softly through the gathering southern night.

And so to dinner. The cuisine was good, the attendance and general appointments at the Victoria Falls Hotel quite in accordance with the best tradi-



View from the Palm Grove.

tions. This is claiming much. It is however worth mentioning because it helps to make the trip the pleasant experience it is, as after a day of sight-seeing one is glad to return to the baths, the electric fans, the ice and the many solid comforts of the hotel. Glad, in the dusk, thankfully to enjoy the cooling breezes on the spacious verandahs, to form one of what in the season is often a most interesting gathering from all quarters of the world; and, remembering one's environment, glad that all this has been made possible and congenial in what till recently was a corner of Darkest Africa.

The features of main interest at the Victoria Falls are four: the river and islands above the gorge; the palm grove below; the rain forest; and the actual falls.

The palm grove is an exquisite nook. It is as though the gods, designing for themselves an adequate playground on earth, had conceived, for the recreation of their leisure, the greatest of all permanent spectacles—the Victoria Falls; and had then gathered, into one glowing whole, scenes for which the Orient and the Occident had been ransacked. The fashionable throng in the hotel grounds during the season suggests a European spa of note. Parts of the river might be the Nile. Some of the islands, as we have said, resemble the Congo. And the Palm Grove might easily pass as a slice from beautiful Ceylon.

The Rain Forest is a wood in which day and night rain falls almost continuously, so that for this part of the trip one comes in a mackintosh. It is a light warm rain, the spray from the opposite falls, which descends gently through the brilliant sunshine, into



The Chasm, Victoria Falls.

bright airy glades, where it burnishes every leaf, moistens every trunk, refreshes the banks of moss and ferns, gives twinkling eyes to tiny blossoms, more purity to the lily, added magnificence to the orchid; dew-gemming all, till from the sun and moisture rainbows rise, and tremble over the place all day, and even on moonlit nights.

At last one turns to the falls themselves; they eclipse all that went before; they are really superb. One cannot but be fascinated by a sheet of water, not a few hundred feet but a mile and a quarter wide, falling four hundred feet in a splendour of life, light and sparkle. Such a spectacle would be impressive anywhere. What makes its appeal so irresistible is that, unlike Niagara, this spectacle, this glorious cascade tumbling in cool white purity, is presented with a tropical environment, with never a chimney or house or other work of man in sight.

Without haste, without pause, solemnly grand and impressive, the great waters descend. It is the most teasing yet most satisfying of spectacles. Teasing in the thought that so much grandeur should without stopping be pouring itself away for the entertainment often of only one traveller; but satisfying in the reflection that, nevertheless, it will not exhaust itself. It is a moral in stone and water on the wastefulness yet permanence of Nature. "Nations fall, arts fade, but Nature never dies." When Nero fiddled to the burning of Rome, those waters probably poured as they still do, and as they will probably continue to do through the centuries—a spectacle of lavish beauty, to furnish which half a continent has been drained of its life-giving waters.

These falls are the centre of extremes; like a vast

curtain let down from heaven, they partition mighty contrasts.

Indeed it is more than a contrast. It is a shock. Imagine a tropical plain through which one of the world's great rivers flows languidly. Suddenly the peaceful scene is turned to pandemonium. The river, as it were, stands abruptly on end. It consigns its whole vast volume, not to another plain, but to a



Conveyance at Victoria Falls.

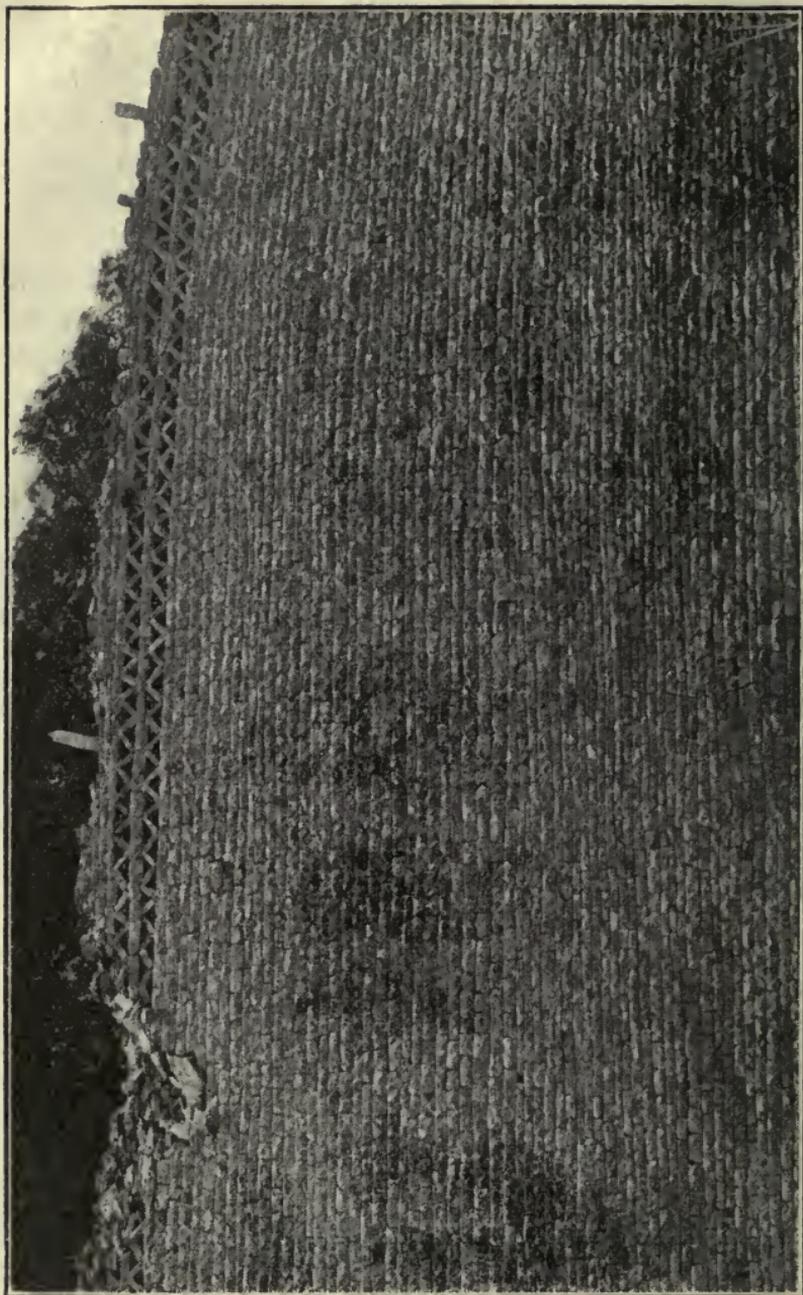
narrow chasm four hundred feet down, where the mighty waters leap and smoke in their frantic endeavour to escape. There in the depths, great airs roused by concussion moan to the tortured waters, and gloom abides with discord. It would be an awesome place were it not that the Master Artist has by this dramatic contrast so contrived the repellent and the attractive, the forbidding and

the entrancing, that out of the chasm at one's feet one of the greatest spectacles on earth arises, on the one side the precipice over which the Zambesi plunges, with a shock like that of a world gone askew; and on the opposite side, haloed by rainbows from the leaping waters, the dazzling Rain Forest is perched.

The falls are seen from many points. Each has its own attraction and novelty. The full view from the centre of the Rain Forest is perhaps the most impressive. But a view, probably because it was our last, that moved us most, was the one from Livingstone Island, the spot from which Livingstone first saw the falls. On a bank of papyrus, in cool solitude, the whole of tropical Africa pulsing around, he must be a singular spectator whose heart and mind remain unstirred there. The long quiet afternoon wears on. The great churned waters descend in ineffable beauty to the ineffable gloom of the shadows below. And so the twilight deepens until

Royal the pageant closes,
 Lit by the last of the sun,
 Opal and ashes of roses,
 Cinnamon, umber, and dun.

And one sits on in the gloaming, a human atom amidst mighty forces, saddened, one knows not by what, but loath to leave, perhaps for ever, that strange and lonely African scene.



Wall of the so-called Temple at Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ZIMBABWE RUINS.

Tell us ye dead,
Will none of ye return,
Disclose the secret ?

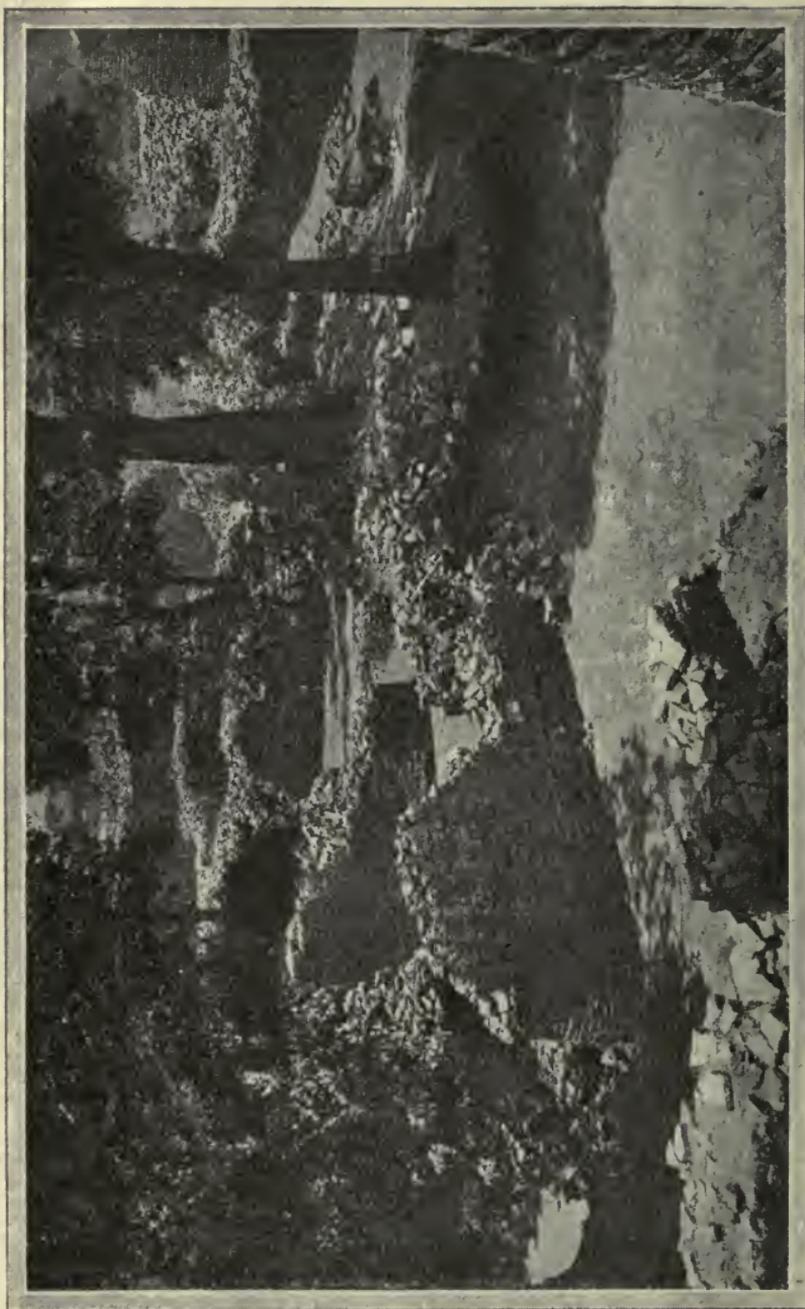
O ! that some courteous ghost would blub it out !

UNLIKE the Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, the place second of interest to the traveller in Rhodesia, is not spectacular. There is indeed a wild southern beauty about it, but mainly it attracts by suggestiveness ; it is a mystery, a place with a hidden but probably romantic past.

After entering Rhodesia from the south, the first place of importance is Bulawayo. From there the railway has been built, on the one hand north-west to the Victoria Falls, and on the other hand north-east to Salisbury. From the Victoria Falls the railway connects with the Belgian Congo, and forms a section of the Cape to Cairo project. From Salisbury the railway turns south-east to Beira, a port in Portuguese East Africa.

Less than half way between Bulawayo and Salisbury is Gwelo. From that town a branch railway has been built, also south-eastwards, to Fort Victoria ; and seventeen miles from Fort Victoria is Zimbabwe, several hundred miles from the coast, but in a straight line with the old East African port of Sofala.

There in the wild heart of Mashonaland, buried by a heavy foliage, amid secluded hills and valleys where probably no modern white man had previously



General View, Temple Interior, Zimbabwe.

trodden, great granite ruins, many believe of a vanished civilisation, were in 1868 discovered by a wandering hunter.

There were several edifices. The largest was in the form of a rough oval. Between its extreme points it was two hundred and ninety feet in length, by two hundred and twenty feet in breadth; more than half as long and nearly as broad as St. Paul's Cathedral, with walls in places thirty-five feet high, and sixteen feet thick at their base. The whole had been constructed of small, well-chiselled granite blocks, cleverly fitted together without mortar.

Adjacent there was an ingeniously built hill citadel, also of granite, and between these two main structures there were traces of minor ruins.

All the buildings were roofless. Many of the walls were partly razed but others stood firm, so little affected by the passage of time that the chisel marks on the granite were undimmed, suggesting either a comparatively recent origin or a singularly preservative climate.

Who built those structures? When were they built? What became of the builders?

Nobody knows. Archæologists are unable to agree, and many picturesque theories about Zimbabwe have in consequence arisen. In the main, however, opinion is divided into two schools, both of interest not only to the antiquary but to the general traveller with a taste for the mystic.

On the one hand, there are those who hold that the structures at Zimbabwe are not only old, but ancient, a legacy from a civilised people, probably foreigners. On the other hand, there are those who look on the

structures as at most medieval, and the work of local natives.

Each theory opens up a field of fascinating speculation, the one implying that away in antiquity, when what are now Britain and France were still barbaric countries, a foreign civilisation flourished at Zimbabwe; and the other theory, if the structures are of medieval origin, implies that the natives of Central and South Africa, who have been looked on as a people always rudimentary, had, as a matter of fact, once knowledge, skill, initiative and a mode of life comparing not unfavourably with that of medieval Europe.

Each school makes out a good case, and we shall not here attempt to judge between them. What the medieval school overlooks, however, is that in the nature of things there cannot at present be finality of view on the matter. They consequently weaken their case when instead of marshalling their points as possibilities, or at best probabilities, they proclaim them as if they were demonstrable facts, and speak with certainty about what is at best doubtful, proclaiming any theory but their own as fanciful, absurd and audacious.

Yet the theory that the Zimbabwe structures are probably ancient is by the medieval school not only rejected but thrown out with contempt. This judgment of the matter, apart from its impressive forcefulness, has little to justify it. It is based on evidence that is not only inconclusive but wholly negative. Medieval objects, this school says "were found in such position as to be necessarily contemporaneous with the foundations of the buildings." Nankin china of a medieval period was indeed found

by some excavators, who from this decided that the edifice was built after the importation of the china.

But subsequent excavators found soda water bottles, and if on a similar hypothesis they had reasoned that everything found in the excavations must necessarily have been left there by the original builders, they in turn might have treated the medieval theory as "absurd and audacious" and assigned to



Section of the Ruins.

the buildings a date subsequent to the date on which soda water was first bottled.

Having thus, to their own satisfaction, settled when the structures were built, the medieval school draws attention to the absence of inscriptions, from which they argue that the builders were unlettered; and they point out that the buildings at Zimbabwe, except that they are of greater dimensions and more

solid build, resemble similar structures in other parts of Rhodesia ; from which it is concluded that the builders were local natives.

This view of the matter deserves respect, but not the exaggerated respect that its authors demand for it. It may be the right view, but it is not demonstrably right. In fact, a good deal can be urged against it. For instance, in North Africa the presence or absence of inscriptions proved little, until the word " Cleopatra " was first deciphered by Egyptologists ; while the discovery of not dissimilar ruins along the Persian Gulf, in Mesopotamia, and in Southern Arabia, all without inscriptions, suggests that a builder's literacy cannot always be safely judged by the presence or absence of inscriptions. And if the building of what now are minor ruins throughout Rhodesia really was designed and supervised by local natives, which is by no means certain, it is at least as probable that those local natives got their idea of such building from Zimbabwe, as that they introduced it there.

Although, therefore, the case which the medieval school makes out is an important contribution to the subject, it is by no means the last word. However, even they do not go so far as to ascribe the erection of the Zimbabwe structures to a date later than the fourteenth century. Starting from this basis, those of the antique school proceed. They point to the generally accepted belief that within historical times, but prior to the advent of Europeans, what is now Mashonaland was occupied by Bantu tribes. But the Bantus, as far as has been ascertained, were not builders in the larger acceptance of the term. They or their descendants may indeed have erected the more

inferior, less durable stone structures found in different parts of Rhodesia ; but these, both in size and workmanship, were mere huts compared with the structures at Zimbabwe or Inyanga. That these inferior structures were imitations of those at Zimbabwe ; that the Bantus, if they were the builders, got their idea from Zimbabwe and did not introduce it there, seems the more probable when it is recalled that, as far as can



Modern Native Dwelling near Zimbabwe.

be ascertained, the Bantus never built superior stone structures elsewhere in Africa.

Having thus set up a rebutting theory to show who did not build the Zimbabwe structures, the antique school turns to a consideration of who may have been the builders ; and here one of the most fascinating fields of speculation opens before the enquirer.

If the builders were not natives they must of

course have been foreigners ; and if they were foreigners, why out of whole huge Africa did they pick on so remote a spot ?

The mineral riches of that part of the country may be a clue. Throughout what is now Rhodesia and the Transvaal, hundreds of old workings have been discovered in which somebody once mined gold. Modern metallurgists, who have examined these workings, agree that the vanished miners, whoever they were, knew a good deal about metallurgy, and throughout the country successfully handled hundreds of thousands of tons of rather intractable ore. In fact, although only some of the old workings have so far been discovered, it has been estimated that the gold extracted by the miners of old would to-day be valued at not less than £75,000,000.

If it be urged that those workers, or rather the designers and supervisors of those works, were South African natives, then in the general opinion of South Africa it was a native very different from the one known to-day, or from the native of whom history has any trace. He must have been a man not only with the ability to design and supervise mining, which is a very different thing from merely working in a mine ; and with the vision to see the necessity for mining, and the energy and resolution to pursue that necessity ; which a pastoral people like the Bantus generally lack.

Hence the weakness of the medieval theory. It takes a people like the Bantus, who during their intercourse with Europeans have on the whole remained almost as rudimentary as when first discovered four centuries ago ; and it assumes, because its theory requires such an assumption, that six hundred years ago the Bantus were a people highly

developed in the mechanics and chemistry of mining, in structural and military engineering such as there are evidences of in the hill citadel at Zimbabwe, and in the ramifications of what must have been a considerable commercial system to have absorbed so much gold as was taken from the old workings.

It is hard to accept such an assumption. It seems at least just as probable that a foreign people,



A Section of the Acropolis.

sufficiently developed to have a use for gold in large quantities, regulated or controlled the Rhodesian workings in the old days, and did so through an organisation of outposts, which would account for the minor and more distant ruins, and from a central depot or metropolis, which would account for Zimbabwe.

If then we admit the possibility, or rather the

probability, that the gold taken from Rhodesia was taken by foreigners, it remains next to consider when it was taken, and by whom.

When closely examined, the Zimbabwe structures do not seem of great age. The granite shows so little discoloration or mouldering, the very chisel marks are so little weather worn, as to suggest almost a modern origin. But however much they may disagree on some points, archæologists agree at least on this, that the Zimbabwe structures are probably at least six hundred years old. Even the medieval school admits this on evidence we need not examine in detail here.

This admission is important, for if, in the six centuries allowed by the medieval school, the weather effect on the granite has been so slight as to be almost imperceptible, twelve or twenty centuries might pass without the weather effect being very striking. So that fresh though the granite seems, nothing in its appearance alone is sufficient to prove whether it was cut and placed in the fourteenth century, or at an earlier or later date. This gives an increased interest and importance to certain hints in old Arabian and Persian, and in later Portuguese manuscripts. These are very vague, and perhaps misleading, but seem to imply that the Zimbabwe structures were not only in existence but disused a thousand years ago.

If this possibility be admitted, and the evidence in its favour is as admissible as the necessarily fragmentary and circumstantial evidence on which the medieval theory is based, then it is only a step further to connect the Zimbabwe structures with the Phœnicians; and all the barriers are then down, which prevented the imagination from wandering in

a field more picturesque perhaps than strictly archaeological, but not altogether fanciful or improbable. We refer to the theory that those old workings in Rhodesia are the veritable King Solomon's mines of romance; and that Zimbabwe was the depot, or metropolis, where the gold from surrounding workings was gathered, under military protection, for dispatch by caravan to the coast, most likely to Sofala, there to be shipped perhaps to Palestine and Babylon.

At one time great quantities of gold came to Palestine and Babylon, nobody knows where from; and great quantities left Rhodesia, perhaps at the same time, nobody knows where for. Hence the contention, of the archæologists previously referred to as the antique school, that there may be some connection between the gold of ancient Ophir and Rhodesia, and that perhaps the structures at Zimbabwe were built by Phœnicians, Chaldean or Sabeen colonists, sent to procure that gold, or by their descendants, or pupils; and this seems more plausible than that Zimbabwe was the spontaneous conception and accomplishment of uninstructed Bantus.

Those races, but not the Bantus, were sun and star worshippers. Sacred hawks, emblematic of Venus, Star of Maternity, were used by them. At Zimbabwe similar birds of soapstone, crudely carved as one might expect among colonists who included the engineers but not the sculptors of the nation, have been found. And as the sun engenders the fruitfulness of the earth, it also became an emblem of the sensual nature worship, being represented by symbols of generative power, similar to those once carried in the Bacchic processions of the Greeks. What, without much violence to the imagination, may be

identified with these symbols has been found at Zimbabwe ; and the temple itself, if it was a temple, is on the whole not unlike, in essentials if not in finish and detail, ancient ruined temples in the Near East. These it resembles more closely than it does anything in Central or South Africa. One feature especially, the interior cone of the Zimbabwe temple, corresponds to the sacred cone in the ruins of the Phœnician temple at Byblos ; and it has similarities also to the "two very large phalli, about thirty cubits high," described by Lucian as standing in the temple of Hieropolis in Mesopotamia.

To have extracted £75,000,000 worth of gold from an ore that taxes even modern methods of extraction, and to have done this by hand crushing, must have entailed much labour, even though many years were occupied ; and therefore considerable organisation in directing, controlling and provisioning that labour would have been required ; hence the necessity for founding a colony, if the people who handled the gold were foreigners.

Military protection would be the first requirement, throughout the country wherever gold was mined or carried by caravan, but especially at the central site, where the gold was collected for shipment ; hence the hill citadel at Zimbabwe.

That central protection would gradually become the hub round which the whole organisation would revolve. There the higher military and administrative officers, with their staffs and attendants, would establish themselves. This central site would become the place of call, and of temporary sojourn, for all minor functionaries travelling to and fro ; it would also become the terminus to which caravans

from the interior would go, and from which caravans for the coast would start. At that central place, too, would be employment for all who catered for the needs or pleasures of the colonists, and for the thousands of slaves who quarried, trimmed, carried and placed in position the granite required for those great structures; hence the belief that Zimbabwe was a metropolis.

It could not have been a city in the sense that Jerusalem or Babylon were, but was at best the utilitarian abode of colonists who regarded their stay as an exile—an exile to be endured only till they were relieved by their successors.

The structures at Zimbabwe lend colour to this view. They are not ornamental, or even strictly symmetrical. They appear to have been built for use rather than show. Still they are impressive in their proportions, the more so considering their situation; and notable by reason of the skill with which the granite was chiselled and fitted, in such a manner as to suggest that little in the building line would have been beyond the builders had they deemed it worth their while.

Such a community, if foreign, not Bantu, would require religious ministrations; hence the so-called Elliptical Temple, outside whose walls, as far as can be judged, the main residences were placed.

Hence the theory that Zimbabwe was not only a metropolis but populous; and not only populous, but probably Phœnician, Chaldean, Sabeian, or Persian. That theory is not adduced here for general acceptance; the evidence is such that no theory about Zimbabwe should be advanced dogmatically. But whatever theory one holds, Zimbabwe is worth a visit. Seen from the citadel, the valleys and hills

are inviting. In the distance the Cotapaxi mountains stand, rugged and sharp. Nearer lies the blue Beroma range. On the right, the white walls of the temple rise ; and in front, straight in the path of the sun, is the Valley of Ruins.

There is a haunting influence about the place. It is not the scenery which is like that in other parts of Rhodesia. It is not any splendour or magnitude of the ruins, which like even the very pyramids are as a matter of fact stultified rather than enhanced by the setting. The fact is that as a spectacle the Zimbabwe ruins leave one cold. Many who have visited them, not to gratify curiosity or indulge the imagination, but merely to see something, have left unimpressed, as in the same spirit they would come away unimpressed even from Pompeii or the Coliseum.

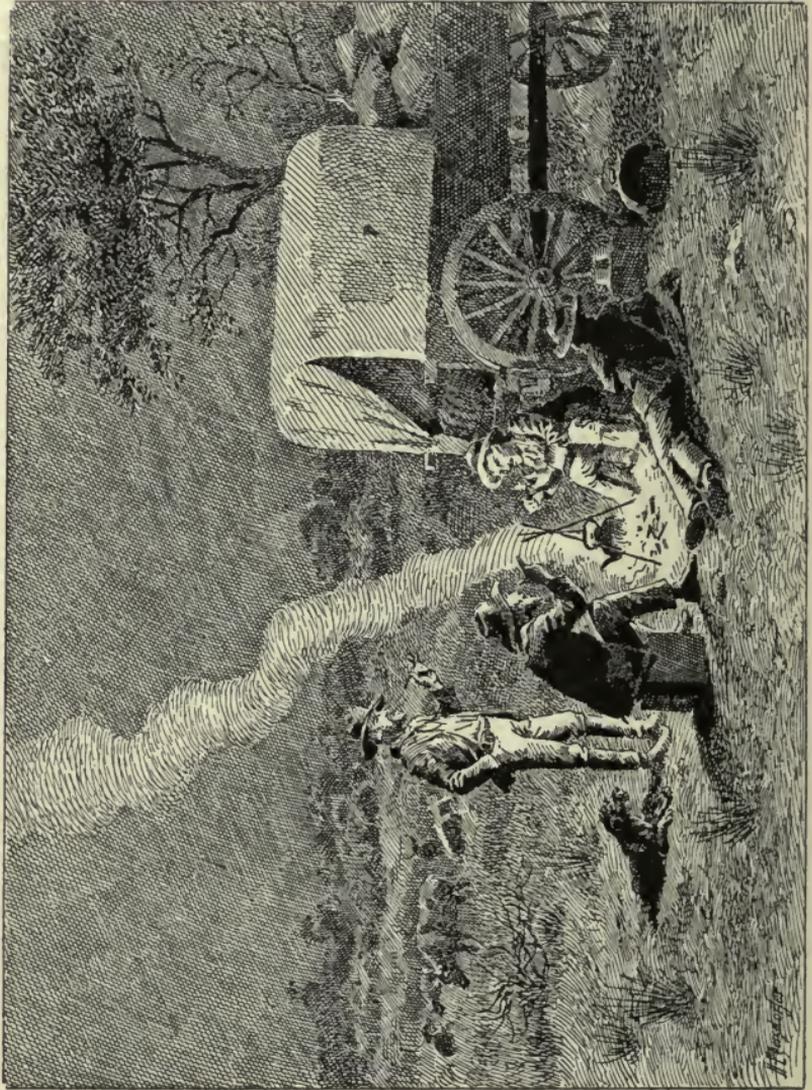
But for those with a little imagination, Zimbabwe is a fascinating place to muse in. There is a brooding atmosphere about it, suggesting tragedy and conducing to the melancholy but fascinating task of speculation about the past, on a strange spot, where probably the past was strange. Maybe anointed worshippers, practising old, old rites, once thronged those floors. Maybe the incantations of strange priests once rose upon that tropic air, calling on unheeding gods. It may be that to the sound of conch and cymbal white-armed slave girls, from Tyre and Nineveh, danced there to regale the leisure of their lords.

But silence now reigns with the sepulchral shadows, over the sombre ruins, among the lonely valleys and hills. It is a city of the dead. And when the sun has set, and the valleys have ceased to flame ; when the foliage rustles faintly, and light breezes murmur

and moan through the empty corridors, musing among the shadows of the temple walls one feels the spirit of the place, time seems to pause, the years roll back, and one turns expectantly at every rustle, as though it bodied forth an antique robe, and at every murmur, as though it were the echo of a vanished voice.

- " Into the darkness whence they came,
 " They passed, their country knoweth none ;
 " They and their God without a name,
 " Partake the same oblivion.
 " Their work they did, their work is done,
 " Their gold, it maybe shone like fire
 " About the brows of Solomon,
 " And in the house of God's desire.

 " The pestilence, the desert spear,
 " Smote them, they passed with none to tell
 " The names of those who laboured there ;
 " Stark walls and crumbling crucible,
 " Straight gates and graves, and ruined well,
 " Abide dumb monuments of old,
 " We know but that men fought and fell
 " Like us, like us, for love of Gold."



The Outspan.

CHAPTER IX.

ACROSS THE VAAL.

Before Man made us Citizens, Great Nature
made us Men.—LOWELL.

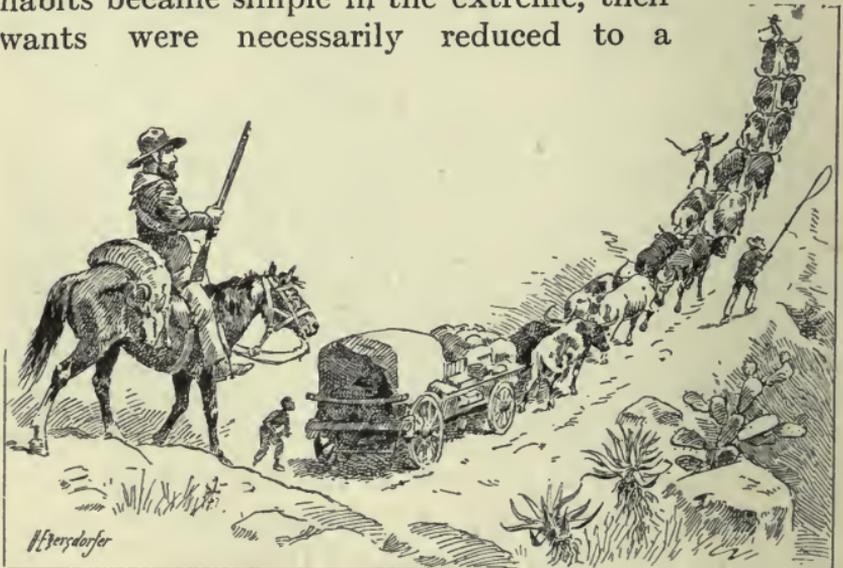
SOUTH AFRICA has not the bitter winter that in some countries makes life harsh, nor summer so intense as to be enervating. Frost is severe as a rule for only about two months in the twelve, and then only on the higher altitudes. Snow is rare. Indeed the South African climate is on the whole so argeearable that outdoor life is attractive all the year round.

To this must be attributed much that was peculiar in the development of the country. Its early colonists were lured by the delightful climate into becoming wanderers. They scattered over the country, each when and where his fancy suggested, at the peril of life, no doubt, as the native tribes of that age were warlike and treacherous; but without the necessity, so drastic in harsher climates, of first preparing a home. The frontiersman and his family left the settlement more or less casually, with the knowledge that a roof and shop supplies were not essential to life in the South African wilds of his day. Handiness with the gun, a sound digestion, and courage were the only really indispensable requirements.

Consequently as far back as the Van der Stels, the tendency was to roam. Even those colonists whose ancestors had been accustomed to the staid village

life of the Netherlands, France, Germany or Scandinavia, in astonishing numbers acquired a taste for the wilds, which drew them from the comparative ease and security of the settlements at the Cape. Nor were they drawn by the prospect of wealth so much as by a passion for space and solitude, which something in the air or soil of the country bred. This passion grew until in time the wanderers felt crowded unless miles separated each from his neighbours. Ostensibly they were all farmers, but the status of a farmer came to be judged, less by what he produced, than by the area of his often unproductive holding.

Thus the frontiersmen became landholders rather than farmers. They wandered to where land in large blocks might be had for the taking. They wandered far from their kind, cut themselves off from civilising influences. They produced little, sold less. Their habits became simple in the extreme, their wants were necessarily reduced to a



minimum. The tent wagon, oftener than a fixed abode, became their home. They learnt to furnish their table and wardrobe largely, and at a pinch exclusively, with the aid of the gun, for game was plentiful.

In the development of South Africa there thus arose a distinct people known as the Trek Boers.

They formed the first outposts of civilisation in South Africa. They were however more a bulwark between civilisation and barbarism than a developing force. As a bulwark, behind which others were enabled to develop, they did great service to the country, facing many ordeals, and facing them well. But as a developing force (if by national development is meant greater access to material comforts instead of keeping in the van of progress, where heredity and the natural excellence of the country should have placed them, they fell to the rear. They grew independent of towns, and as gradually they lost touch with the outside world and the current thought thereof, so gradually they developed ideas and traits of their own; ideas and traits so simple as perhaps to seem crude, but, like those of the Spartans, so virile that they endured.

Such a people, in a country so full of difficulties as South Africa then was, face peculiar hardships, and face them alone. In times of crisis, outside aid is not easily summoned, or readily given when asked for. Self-reliance becomes necessary to a degree little known in more settled communities, and mortality, under the hard conditions, is high; only the fittest survive. The result is a stalwart people, asking neither for help nor sympathy, and therefore



tolerating no interference from outside—a people invaluable as pioneers and frontiersmen, but high-tempered and little amenable to what the townsman habitually bows to as lawful restraint and discipline.

In the early days a considerable number of South African colonists acquired those traits. To them must be credited much of the opening up of the country, but they must be debited also with much of the conservatism which delayed or tempered the development of much of the country. While there were wilds to conquer, the Trek Boers were admirable. When the wilds had been subdued, the barbarian tamed, the savage beasts destroyed or driven north; when all the pains had been suffered, and all the penalties preliminary to opening up new country had been paid, those who in the main had suffered and paid claimed their just prescriptive rights; and sometimes they claimed more than it was convenient, or safe, for the authorities to concede. The Dutch governors up to 1806 had much trouble with the colonists on the frontiers; their successors, the British governors, had more.

The European communities on the frontier were small and widely scattered. The Kafir tribes were many and aggressive. And in those days the Kafir was a fighting man—powerful in physique, well-exercised to sustain exertion, and not without discipline and tactics in battle. War was the object



of his life—to defend his herds from other blacks when compelled, to augment them by looting from whites or blacks when possible.

The Trek Boer was by temperament and habit peculiarly fitted for dealing with such an enemy. Fighting for his life with weapons in his hands, he was a match for many natives; fighting for family and wife—the latter like a modern Deborah helping in the affray, his performances were sometimes marvellous. He always gave a good, and generally a successful, account of himself in border warfare. But the odds were often against him, massacres at times occurred, and at best he and his family lived in jeopardy.

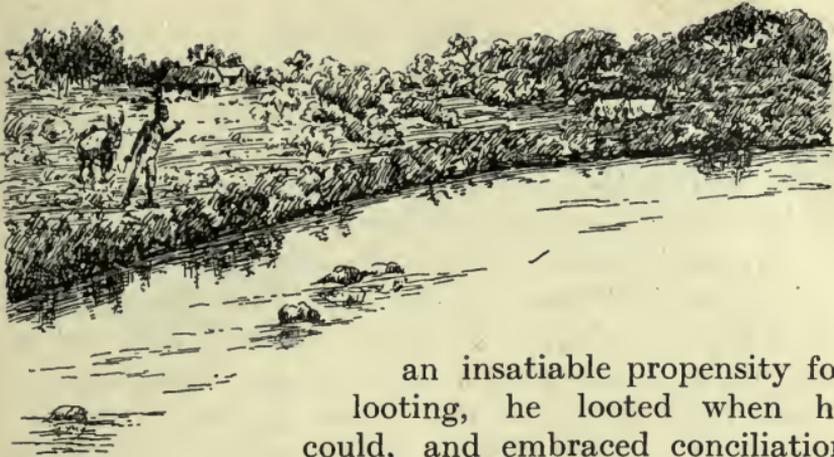
Yet military assistance from the authorities was as a rule neither offered nor expected. The European military resources of South Africa were admittedly insufficient to cope adequately with native depredations in so sparsely Europeanised but large an area as the roving instincts of the frontiersmen had caused them to spread over. Those resources could be made adequate only at a cost out of all proportion to the revenue and apparent worth of the regions affected. Not having the means for putting a forcible restraint on the natives, the authorities sought to restrain

by precept—to conciliate rather than fight the natives.

The frontiersman had wandered into his plight of his own free will, and the authorities, conscious that that plight might disturb the settlements nearer the capital, instead of attempting the foredoomed task of rendering life and property in the wilds so safe that others would be tempted to settle in those always troublesome regions, felt that resources could better be devoted to securing peace, at whatever cost, for the development of the larger and more stable settlements nearer the towns.

Left to himself, as we have seen, the frontiersman was always in jeopardy, but able sometimes to get in a shrewd blow, and sometimes to recover herds and other property that the natives had stolen.

Such liberty of action, though precarious, was jealously valued by the remoter settlers, as their only means of redress against the natives. But as it involved not only the border, but the safety of the whole country behind, it was a liberty of action which few Governments would have delegated. The authorities at the Cape claimed the right of interference and veto in the affairs of the frontier. In the circumstances of the case, unfortunately, such interference however well-intentioned and promising in theory was in practice likely to prove irritating and futile because as it brought no accession of strength to the arms of the unprotected white man, was likely to hamper more than it helped him. It kept him back on the occasions when, with the enemy out-generalled, he felt he should pursue his advantage and teach a useful lesson; and it did so without advantage to the pacifists. For as the native had



an insatiable propensity for looting, he looted when he could, and embraced conciliation only on such occasions, and for such periods, as suited him to put that shield between himself and the just and imminent vengeance of the frontiersman.

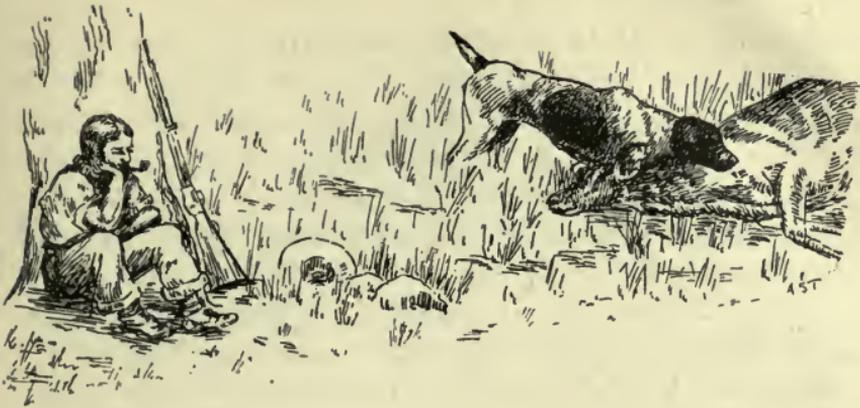
Therefore despite the longstanding policy of conciliation, so well-intended and admirable in theory but so impractical in the then condition of the border, the depredations continued, unrest spread throughout the country, and fainter grew the prospect of goodwill, not only between whites and blacks, but between the authorities and the frontiersmen. And to crown the discontent, that admirable but badly administered act, the emancipation of slaves, was authorised.

In the South Africa of that day, as in the southern parts of the United States and throughout the East, most Europeans, certainly all the upper classes, were slave-holders. In South Africa the slaves, especially those of Asiatic descent, were often highly intelligent and skilled. About the desirability of emancipation there can now be no two opinions, and even at that time many South African slave-holders were enlightened enough to admit and even to urge that

desirability. But as emancipation was rightly a national measure, so, it was urged, its cost should be a national burden. The compensation ultimately accorded, however, was not only far below the value which the owners set on their slaves, but in order that no cause for irritation might be lacking, it was made payable only in London.

It must in fairness be recalled, that the methods by which colonisation is made successful were not as well understood in those days as now. But even in those days it might have been apparent, to any reflecting mind, that this was not the happiest way to effect a very delicate and far-reaching social reform.

The townsman, as well as the frontiersman, soon smarted under a treatment the ineptitude of which galled even more perhaps than the injustice. Discontent with the native policy of the country; faced not only with the loss of slave labour, but with the responsibility of keeping the released slaves in order till they grew accustomed to the restraints as well as to the pleasures of freedom; and embarrassed as many were by the monetary losses entailed by the ill-starred slave compensation regulations, the settlers felt that the time for a change had come. Large numbers decided to leave what is now Cape Province, and to establish their own rule elsewhere. North of the Orange River the land was practically unoccupied. They decided to go there. The Great Trek, or exodus—probably the most dramatic incident in the history of South Africa, commenced in 1837, gained impetus, continued for some years, and drained thousands of people from the Cape which already was but sparsely populated. And this movement, as it appealed not only to the habitual rover and adventurer, but also

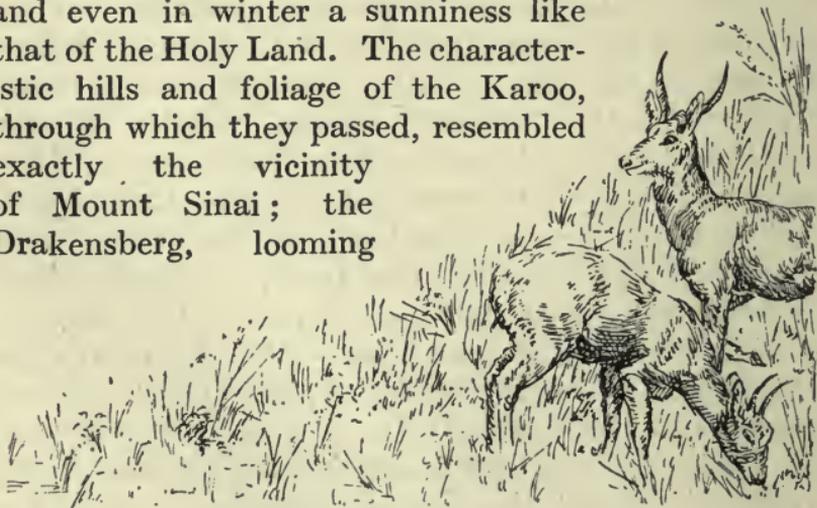


to men of culture whose motive was an ethical one, attracted people of many types, and of many nationalities besides Dutch. The *Voortrekkers* differed from the *Trek Boers*, in that they included not only many of the best families in the country, but representatives of nearly all the leading nations of the world.

Like the chosen people of old, the *Voortrekkers* "wandered northward from their homes," a somewhat cosmopolitan band at the start, with great variety of trait and tradition, but a people united in aim, and in time united also in speech and blood. And as months passed into years, and the old ties and conditions behind receded farther and farther, so gradually the *Voortrekkers* changed their habits and outlook in conformity with their changed condition. Being beyond the reach of book-sellers, newspapers, and outside gossip, the Bible became almost their only literature, and their main medium of instruction. It became the object of their assiduous study, and their guide in the management of affairs. So that when they again came in contact with international politics, they had grown into a people who

in many respects stood closer to the Biblical world than to the world they had left.

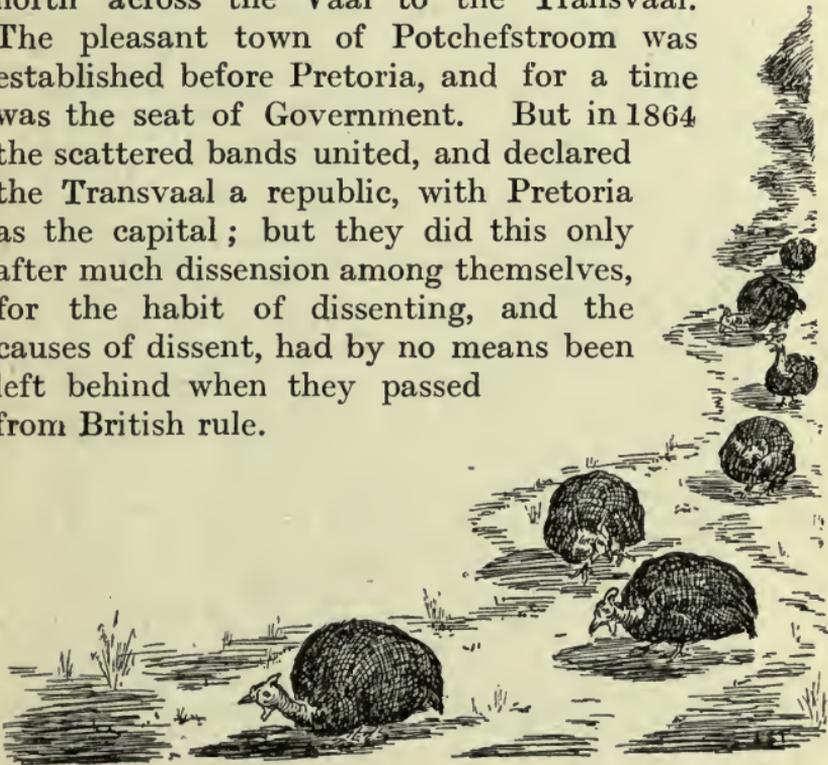
It was a very natural development, for they found in their Bibles not only the antidote against the despair which frequently must have dogged their wanderings, but also precepts that with singular felicity suited their hourly and even mundane needs. Indeed the analogies to be drawn, especially from the Old Testament, fitted exactly not only their situation, temper, and the patriarchal mode of life which they adopted, but also the physical features and climate of the land into which they passed. When they reached what now is the Free State, there, as once before in the history of a wandering people, was the wilderness between them and neighbouring civilised peoples; there was also the Ethiopian, who harried the stragglers; there was the lofty steppe-plateau, with a rain-fall which also began in November and ended about April, like the "former rains" of the Old Testament; and even in winter a sunniness like that of the Holy Land. The characteristic hills and foliage of the Karoo, through which they passed, resembled exactly the vicinity of Mount Sinai; the Drakensberg, looming

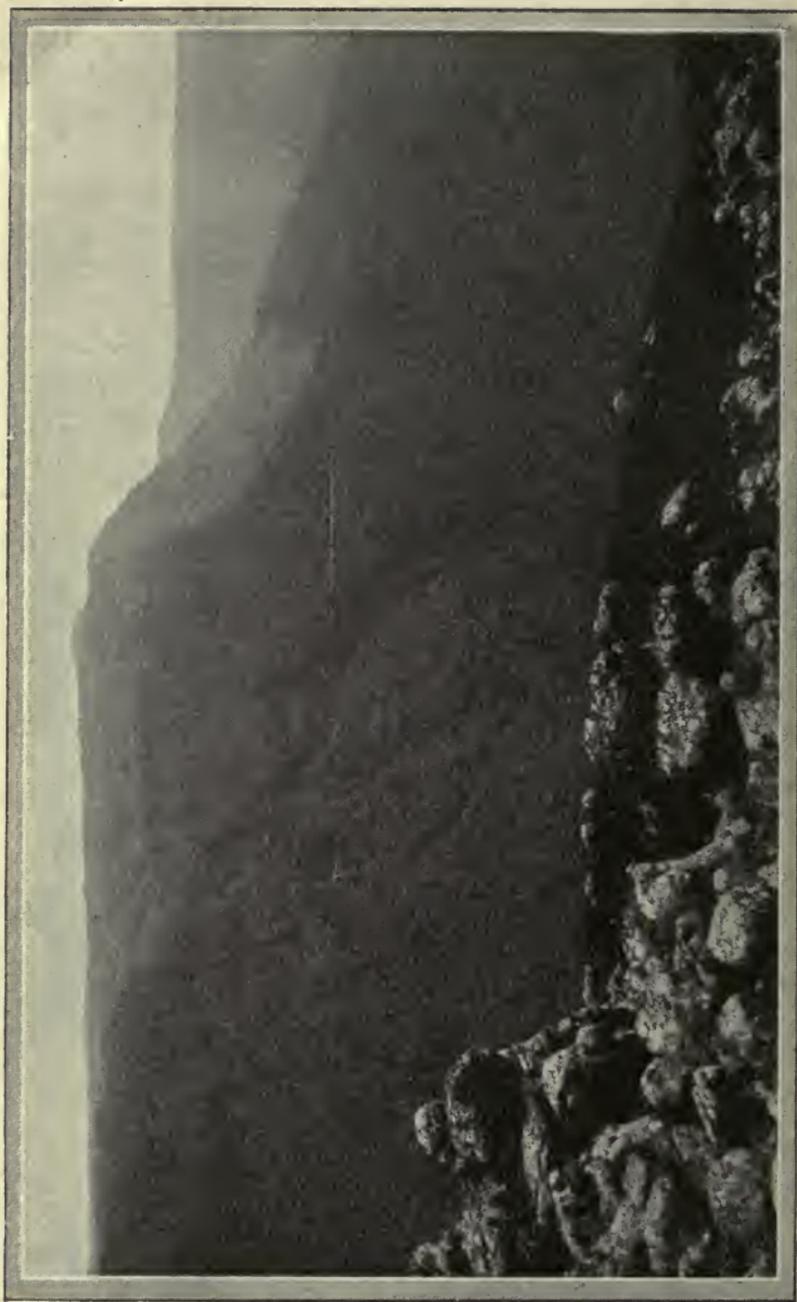


in the distance, might have been Lebanon; the grassy plains, beneath the bright African stars, suggested those other plains where "shepherds watched their flocks by night."

Perhaps the analogy struck them. Anyway it was fitting that when they named their villages they gave a number of them Biblical names—as Bethel, Hermon, Bethulie, Bethesda and Bethlehem.

After some notable skirmishes with the natives, in one of which the Zulus were routed, the *Voortrekkers* established Winburg as their seat of government in the Free State. And as more and more immigrants came from the Cape, numbers passed further north across the Vaal to the Transvaal. The pleasant town of Potchefstroom was established before Pretoria, and for a time was the seat of Government. But in 1864 the scattered bands united, and declared the Transvaal a republic, with Pretoria as the capital; but they did this only after much dissension among themselves, for the habit of dissenting, and the causes of dissent, had by no means been left behind when they passed from British rule.





The Edge of the 'Berg.

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD TRANSVAAL.

The sun is up, so come with me,
And take the chestnut mare,
It matters not what man may be
If God alone be fair,
And makes the veld so good to see,
And lets us breathe its air.

—JACOBS.

THUS arose the two South African Republics, and the Boer Nation. The troubles of the immigrants were however not over when they founded the Transvaal Republic and made Pretoria its capital. They were now under their own rule, could shape policy to their heart's desire ; but there was little on which to shape a policy. Independence they had indeed, but independence, though precious, will not alone support the wants of life ; and unfortunately the new republic lacked the material assets and neighbourly exchanges so necessary for developing a country. Minerals, both precious and base, the republic had in abundance, and the farming prospects were good. But the minerals had not yet been discovered, and in the absence of railways and trade connections with the outer world, few markets for produce were accessible.

Farming was ostensibly the business of the people, and catering for the social, religious, and political needs of the farmers was the business of Pretoria.

But though all held farms there was little farming, demand for produce being low; and as there was little production there was little wealth, either for those public works which embellish a state, or for those domestic comforts which tend to refine a people.

The fare of the Boer was as a rule plentiful, but being restricted mainly to what he shot or grew, it was little varied. His wardrobe was through necessity more serviceable than elegant. His house and its appointments were plain in the extreme. Even the President lived in a cottage. We do not urge that a President should not live in a cottage. Manius Curius, the great Roman, after subduing the most war-like nations, and driving even Pyrrhus out of Italy, was content with a small farm, and a few simple rooms, when he might have lived in Roman splendour. And this no doubt entitles Curius to our increased respect. But many, judging only by externals, mistook him for a working farmer, when really he was the man of his day.

Something of the kind happened to the early Boers. Their simple way of living, and their informal manners, led to misapprehension. Coming little in contact with the outer world, except through its traders and speculators, and by these (not always discerning or impartial judges of character) being too often superficially judged, the Boer of that day was on occasion caricatured, for his alleged cunning, or for his ignorance, generally according to whether he got the better or the worse of a deal. Individual members of the nation no doubt deserved the epithets, but collectively there was no mental, moral or physical inferiority about the Boers. Though not

then adepts in the usages of polite society, they were on the whole neither contemptuous of true culture, nor unduly duped by the many imitations of it which they met with among the Uitlanders.

There is an anecdote of the missionary Lindley, who, when teaching one day, was annoyed by a Boer pupil of noted size and strength. This fellow bragged of his capacity to floor the teacher, but was so soundly thrashed by the lighter but better-trained man, that he cried for mercy. So far, however, from being



Venster Rock, Graskop.

abashed and sulky, the Boer venerated the memory of Lindley. He took his lesson to heart, and accepted his defeat like a gallant though unlettered gentleman; and not only bore no malice, but with true sportsmanship extolled the victor's superior prowess.

That appears to have been a characteristic of the Boers of that day. Culture, in its higher manifestation, they may have lacked, but they did have aptitude, experience and intuition of quite a remark-

able kind. Few books but the Bible were read, and that more and more laboriously as the children of the *Voortrekkers* grew up with the few educational facilities the scattered farms afforded. But the book of nature lay open before them, and in it their practised eyes read more than many find in libraries. Confronted always with the sterner realities of life—frontier warfare, drought, flood, fire, pestilence; yet combating these successfully, and in the end emerging triumphant, the character of the early Boers was formed in a hard school that knew little of finesse, but that did inculcate such qualities as strength of body, courage of heart, and balance of mind. Descended from the Reformers, they had in them the seed of those characteristics that made great their ancestors of the European Reformation—the patience that knew no peevishness, steady persistency under every discouragement, and disinterestedness that set an ideal, as their ancestors had set the Reformation, before personal comfort and security. The ideal may at times have been unworthy of the sacrifice; but the spirit of the sacrifice was generally admirable. They were warriors, all of them; but from necessity more than from inclination, fighting when apparently only fighting would serve, and then fighting well, whether for individual or national rights; but at heart they were a people loving peace.

Such a people rightly have a claim to be considered among the salt of the earth. Unlettered many of their descendants no doubt were, as they grew up on remote farms, but more of them developed characteristics requiring only a proper situation and exercise to fit them for the highest public or private office. Especially as soldiers and statesmen, the

descendants of the *Voortrekkers* held their own amply in practical and essential matters.

Despite their unostentatious ways and simple wants, such a people cannot be considered peasants, any more than Abraham Lincoln was really a peasant. Given the need, they were able always to produce a Potgieter, Retief, Joubert ; a Kruger, Brand, Hofmeyr, Botha or Steyn ; public men all of them who were remarkable enough to attract respectful international attention.

Such then were the *Voortrekkers* and their early descendants, the advance guard of civilisation in South Africa, who bore the heaviest brunt in preparing the country for European settlement, and transmitted to South African life many of its most admirable traits ; the forefathers to whom we must look for the key of much that is characteristic in the South Africa of to-day.

Thus in the factors that develop a nation, the Transvaal Republic when newly formed was well off, but of negotiable wealth it was short, and it became increasingly necessary to find new means of support. There was in particular one occupation for which the country gave scope and the people had a peculiar talent. That was big-game hunting. Many of them therefore took up hunting as a trade.

It was a grim life of danger and of suffering. Claw, fever or assegai threatened at every turn. A bad aim, a little carelessness, unpleasantness with unpleasant natives, might mean violent death or lingering disablement far from aid. Yet though the hunter ran curious risks, he was not obsessed by the fact ; though he was cut off from his kind for long periods, he was far from lonely. South Africa was then extra-

ordinarily rich in fauna of all kinds, a sportsman's paradise. The veld was thronged with large and small game, and so full of interest, to the discerning, that often it weaned its votaries from other occupations, and hunting became an occupation, often a profitable one. The need for white companionship and communion, so outstanding a feature of modern life, was after a while little felt in the wilds. Speech fell into abeyance, gesture with brow or shoulder or hand largely took its place.

There in time grew up a body of strangely reticent men not morose or stupid, but, from long contact with nature, lacking expressiveness; men accustomed to action rather than speech; in fact what Service calls—

The nameless men who nameless rivers travel,
And in strange valleys greet strange deaths alone.

The quantity of ivory, skins and horns secured before the teeming wild life of South Africa nearly vanished, and before scarcity and Government restrictions made hunting unprofitable, was enormous. These trophies, in the 'sixties and 'seventies, were the main Transvaal products that would bear the cost of transportation. They were therefore practically the only exports from the young republic, being despatched by ox wagon to the coast, and then distributed to the world for the adornment of premises oversea. And in return, the Transvaalers received trade commodities.

Thus arose that characteristic South African institution, conveyance by ox wagon. What the camel caravan was to the development of North Africa, and the canoe to Canada in the early days, the straggling ox teams and great tent wagons were

to South Africa before the railway ; and the cohorts of the transport riders boasted many a picturesque personality.

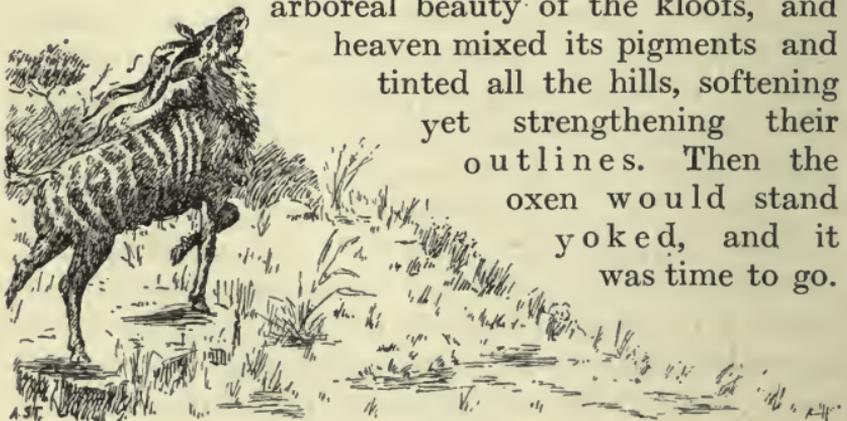
Their life was often humdrum, and generally arduous : humdrum when, loads being heavy, travelling was at the slowest ox pace ; arduous when fly or tick weakened or reduced the team, or when heavy rains turned into quagmires the tracks that served as roads. At such times the ponderous wagons sank to the bed planks, and every few yards had to be dug out and buoyed with logs ; and the willing labouring oxen, bred in some quiet pasture, struggled till they sank, worn out or broken-hearted. Nights of sleeplessness and worry for the transport riders followed long days of toil and suffering ; and after weeks of this, when the journey was at last at an end, when one by one the bulk of the team had perished, or loads had been damaged by flood or jettisoned in quagmires, it not infrequently happened that the transport rider found himself ruined, travelling back, maybe on foot, to start all over again, biting on the bullet stoically, and generally without complaint.

As an off-set there was also much of the picturesque, and sometimes even considerable gain, especially in the 'eighties, the great days of the gold boom, when all stores and machinery had to be brought inland hundreds of miles by ox wagon.

Before mid-day the transport riders would outspan, if water and grass permitted ; often, as on the Karoo, beside a stagnant pool, amid desolation. But they travelled far, saw varied scenes, and sometimes, as in the vicinity of Barberton or Marico, the camp was in some fair spot where the river ran swiftly between wooded

banks,
 mountains
 gave variety to
 the scene, and the
 shooting was good. In
 such surroundings there was
 much charm about the restful
 halt, especially when a light shower
 refreshed the air and brought the antelopes feeding
 down the forest glades. And then the wild crisp dawn,
 when the African sun peered from behind the ram-
 parts of the hills, and a faint blush quivered across
 the silent veld, and the life of the forest stirred like
 dreamers coming out of sleep. Life for the transport
 rider was bright at such times. It was good to idle a
 while, beside the wild clematis, when the eastern horizon
 reddened, and the smoky orange of sunrise lit the
 arboreal beauty of the kloofs, and

heaven mixed its pigments and
 tinted all the hills, softening
 yet strengthening their
 outlines. Then the
 oxen would stand
 yoked, and it
 was time to go.

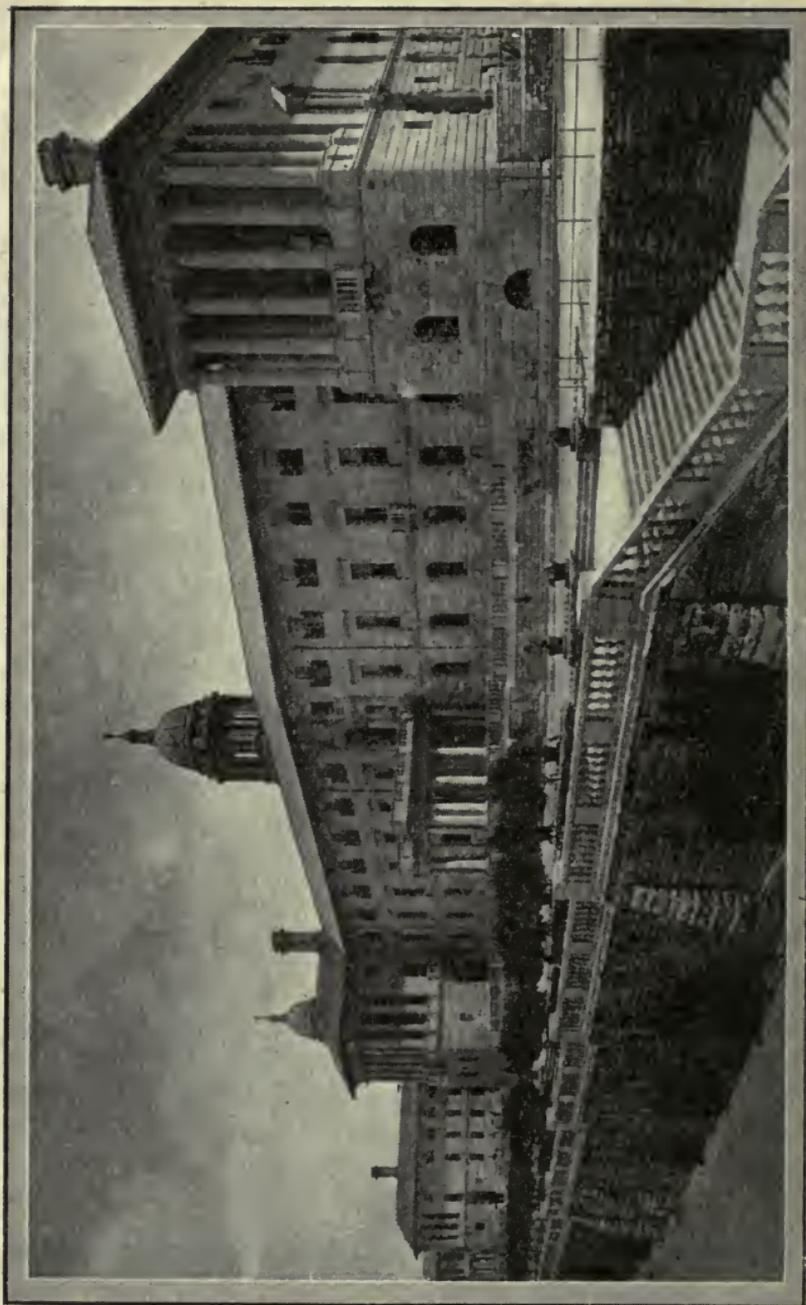


By the next dawn, a dozen contingencies might have arisen. Lions might have been fought off. A rampant rhinoceros, running amok, might have charged the camp. Veld fires, by their smoke judged to be distant, might unexpectedly have swept round a hill, with swift and breathless death, and taxed every energy to ward them off. Or a river, low and loitering at the ford, might quickly have come down with a roar, making the way impassable.

It is only when occasionally one meets an old pioneer, that one realises how great a change has come over South Africa in the last forty years. Modernity has overtaken the Transvaal. Life became tuned to a higher key after gold was discovered in payable quantities at Barberton, and especially when, in 1886, it was discovered in undreamt of quantities on the Witwatersrand. The development that followed was so romantic, and so rapid, that it has hardly a parallel.

At first Lydenburg, then Barberton, and then with a hundred-fold intensity Johannesburg, attracted. People of all kinds came from every corner of the world to the goldfields, and Pretoria, from being a village, began to acquire that influence in the affairs of the whole country which made it the administrative capital when the South African colonies, and the late republics, united in 1910.

To-day Pretoria is a town with considerable cultural and architectural pretension. Its public buildings and institutions would grace a European capital, but the main charm of the place is perhaps that, more than in any other important South African town, one catches still something of the atmosphere and tradition of the *Voortrekkers*, and of those others who helped to make the country.



The Union Government Buildings.

CHAPTER XI.

PRETORIA.

No land of your sons has bereft you,
No magic can make them forget,
For those who have loved you and left you,
They dream of you yet.

—M. BYRON.

PRETORIA, in the 'sixties, had a European population of only a few hundreds. Each little home was set generally in a tangle of rose-garden and orchard, each householder took his ease under his own fig-tree, and life ambled leisurely, at an agreeable gait.

That is all changed. Pretoria has developed, yet in parts of it one occasionally gets a reminder of the old atmosphere and picturesqueness, as towards Fountains and Waterkloof, where, as in the romantic old transport days, there are still patches of bushveld—that Bushveld with its strange fascination, especially in summer, when the wild clematis assumes its softest green, and the merula ripens its fruit.

Simple and rustic though those surroundings be, with little of grandeur such as the Victoria Falls or the Drakensberg possess, they still invest the old leisurely life with a charm that is peculiarly alluring when looked back on from these present days of world-wide unrest, uncertainty and anxiety.

As the Dominions Royal Commission has said, it is a charm keenly felt though hard to describe. Under its influence one learns to judge by new

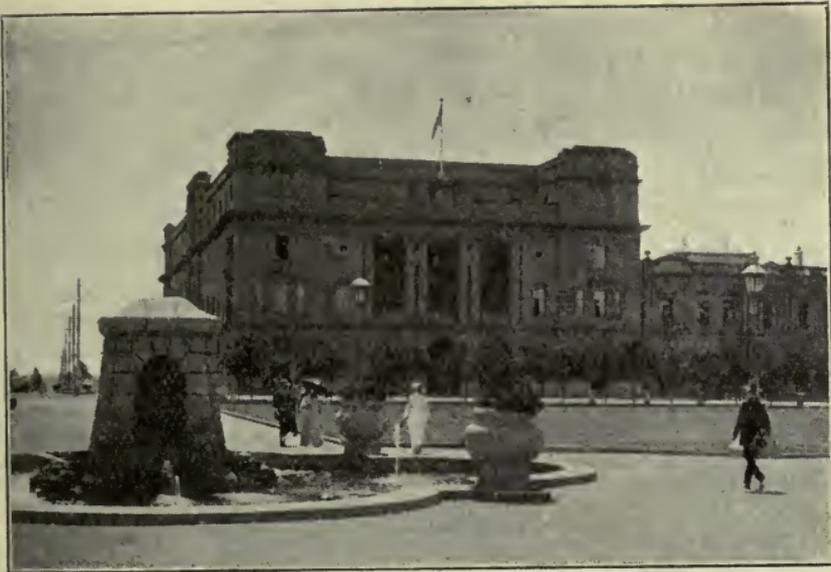
standards, till places, like men, become interesting less for outward show than for what they stand; and thus even certain cottages in Pretoria assume a new interest, at least for South Africans—humble but historic cottages, fallen on evil days, their rose-garden gone, their orchards in decay, but once the dwelling of some unpretentious but notable hunter, explorer, fighter, politician or writer.



The Railway Station.

Jess's cottage, the scene of Sir Rider Haggard's romance, is such an one. But in particular we have in mind a place in Church Street West, a simple tree-shaded bungalow. This, in the days of the republic, was the Pretoria home of Paul Kruger.

His Honour was an early riser, and little addicted to formality or state trappings. It was his custom, from about five in the morning till breakfast time, to meditate and take the air on his verandah facing Church Street. There, with coffee urn and tobacco jar at elbow, he had an open ear for anyone with a



General Post Office.

grievance or a plan worth discussing, and much that was to have the profoundest effect on South Africa was informally set afoot there, in the early morning hours.

That verandah is now little noticed by the passer-by, but historically it is perhaps the most interesting spot in the Transvaal, where for years that forceful personality drew his daily inspiration and exerted an influence the effect of which will be felt for generations to come.

As however befits a place of affairs, which to-day plays a by no means unimportant part in world politics, Pretoria has on the whole become modern. It is now the centre of South African officialdom, where the governor-general, ministers of state, and the principal permanent officials reside for most of the year, and where consequently the policy of the

country is administered and largely shaped. - Indeed Pretoria, with a population of 41,000 Europeans and about 22,000 other races, though much smaller than either Capetown or Johannesburg, in its way exerts on South Africa perhaps as great an influence as either of those places. Pretoria has developed much in recent years. Already, westward, there is a considerable and increasing number of factories and workshops. Eastward, there are fashionable suburbs, Arcadia, Sunnyside and Bryntirion, with their fine villas, wide lawns, and roads lined with jacaranda and plane trees ; and in the centre is the business area.

The climate of Pretoria is noticeably different from that of Johannesburg, and so is the social atmosphere, though the two places are only forty-five miles apart. Johannesburg, the largest, wealthiest, most cosmopolitan, and socially the gayest town in South



Section of Church Square.



Grounds and Loggias, Union Buildings.

Africa, besides being at an altitude thirteen hundred feet higher than Pretoria, is exposed to all the winds of the High Veld. Pretoria has been built mainly in a hollow; and is sheltered by low surrounding hills. It has a distinctly southern climate, and a social life tending towards the placid.

Much has been done in recent years, by the landscape gardener and the architect, to beautify Pretoria. Its zoological garden is a place of striking sylvan beauty. An interesting and educative national museum has been well advanced. Of the several parks, one at least is wholly delightful. And in the centre of the town Church Square commands attention. The red soil of this square, once such an eyesore, has been covered with lawns and surrounded by a granite balustrade of classic design and majestic proportions, with pylons at the four entrances, and on one side the beginnings of an avenue destined to be one of the promenades of South Africa—the whole giving a good architectural effect, flanked as the square is by such effective structures as the law courts, provincial government building, and the post office.

But even if Pretoria had nothing else to be commended for, it would still be worth visiting to see the Union Building. It is as noble an edifice as will be found in the Southern Hemisphere; and to South Africans it is especially a heartening spectacle as showing that some of the wealth of the country is at last going into permanent embellishments.

The Union Building has been built in cream and red freestone on a base of local granite. It provides offices for some fifteen hundred officials, and has an auditorium capable, on public occasions, of accom-

modating about nine thousand people. The building, a little over a mile from Church Square, is commandingly situated on Meintjes Kop, overlooking the town. The charm of the building lies not only in its majestic proportions, but in the variety of artistic effect contrived. The many pavilions, loggias, and stately columned court-yards with fountains playing, have an Alhambra-like effect, heightened by the surrounding terraces, lawns, gardens and woods; a noble structure in a pleasant setting.

Even this accommodation has already been out-grown by the country's increasing business. Pretoria is therefore still expanding, and in a decade or two should be a large and beautiful town. It has a future full of promise, for apart from its official and educational eminence, it is becoming increasingly important industrially. Its immediate hinterland is a remarkable



Old Government Building, Church Square.



The Premier Mine, Pretoria.

one, rich in minerals, especially coal and iron, and even richer in agricultural possibilities. Blast furnaces for the production of iron—the first in South Africa—have already been established in the vicinity of the town, and will probably lead to the development of a considerable steel industry in the vicinity, just as the Premier Mine, thirty miles from Pretoria, started from small beginnings, is to-day the largest of open-worked diamond mines. The largest white diamond ever known was found in this mine. This was the “Cullinan,” which weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ lb. and measured $2\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 by 4 inches. It now forms part of the British Crown Jewels.

In the adjoining districts of Rustenburg, Lichtenburg, Waterberg and Zoutpansberg, citrus, tobacco, cotton, wheat and general field crops are already

being widely grown, and will in time be produced on a great scale as more land is cultivated; and in the remoter areas of 'those districts hundreds of square miles of excellent ranching land is being gradually stocked for beef production.





Residential Johannesburg.
130

CHAPTER XII.

JOHANNESBURG.

Men have a touchstone whereby to try gold ;
But gold is the touchstone whereby to try men.

—FULLER.

SOUTH AFRICA, in some distant epoch, was considerably disturbed geologically. Portions of the granite floor on which it rests were burst asunder ; and, in the upheaval, huge sections were turned on end, and forced upwards, to form in places those curiously shaped sloping mountains one sees when leaving the Cape, while in other places the sections of inverted floor, though also of mountainous size, are in the main still buried, and only just perceptibly crop out of the upper soil.

On a plateau, nearly six thousand feet above sea level, and forming the summit of the watershed between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, there is such an outcrop. This is the world-famed Witwatersrand, or “ ridge of white waters.”

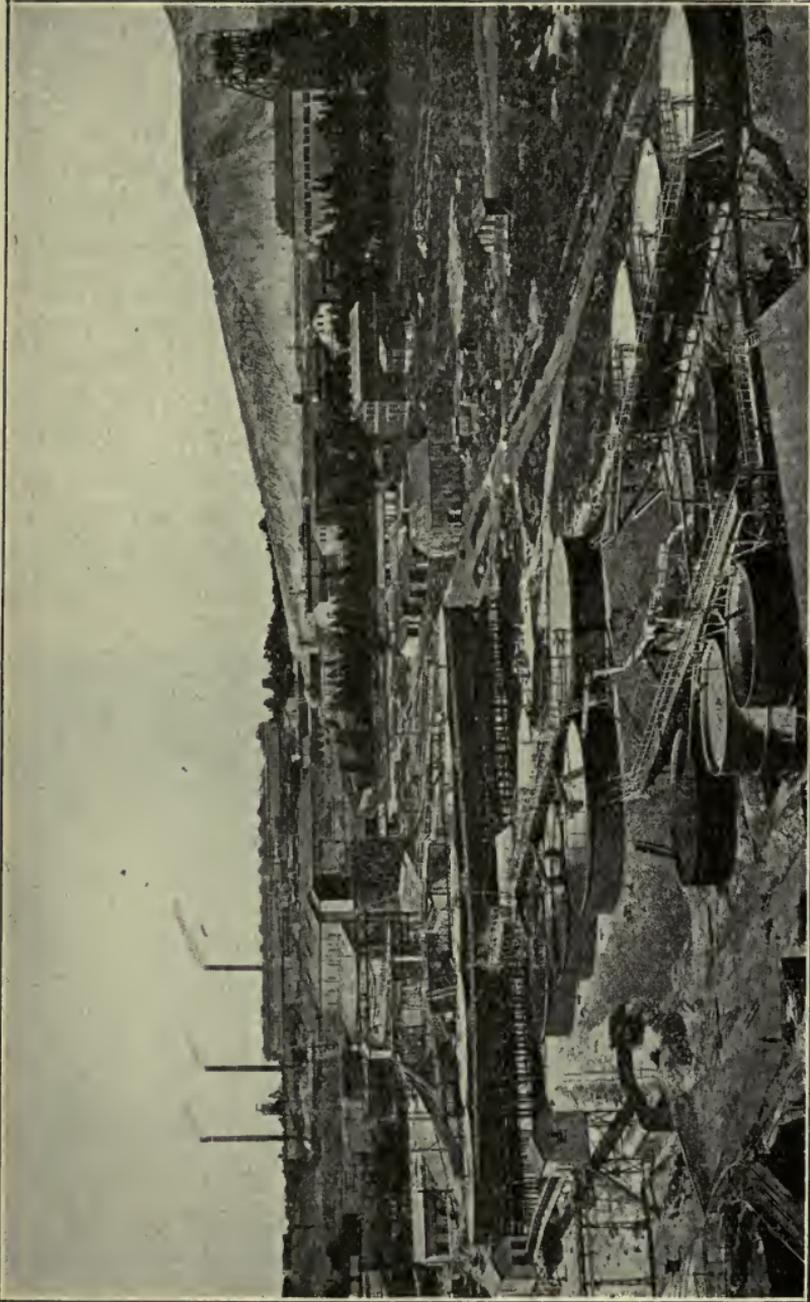
That ridge, or rand, is famous, not for its white waters, but for its gold. For by a happy chance there runs through it a vein, composed of quartz pebbles and silicious cement. This vein dips to depths of from a few hundred to several thousand feet below the surface. It has a thickness varying

from a few inches to twenty feet, and averaging about five feet; and it extends through the rock, practically unbroken, for sixty miles, like a golden thread carelessly drawn. This is the greatest gold deposit known, from which at present forty-three per cent. of the world's gold supply is drawn; the once mythical El Dorado, for which through the ages men searched all lands, discovered at last, in modern times in the Transvaal.

To reach that golden vein, shafts were sunk, and thus for sixty miles there is a string of gold mines, in the centre of which is Johannesburg, on the site where the first shafts were sunk.

Just as this El Dorado of real life, when discovered, proved to be in a locality quite different from any suspected in the old days, so the manner of recovering the gold is in practice quite different from what the old treasure hunters assumed it would be. The gold is there in an abundance greater even than the wildest fabulist dreamed of, but in a form never imagined by romance. The gold-impregnated conglomerate of quartz pebbles and silicious cement is on the whole of low grade. As a rule only about one particle of gold is won from every hundred thousand particles of rock handled. And the gold is in such fine particles and so closely incorporated with the matrix, as to be invisible to the naked eye.

This means that, to get about a third of an ounce of pure gold, a ton of rock must be blasted, hoisted to the surface, crushed to powder, and thereafter variously treated with chemicals. In 1919, the average cost of this was 23s. per ton of ore milled. At nominal value, viz., 84/11½ per fine oz., the gold



General Surface View of a Gold Mine.

recovered was worth 28/8, so that the average profit, excluding the premium obtained in the latter half of the year, was 5/8 per ton of ore treated. Gold produced subsequently to July was sold at an average premium of 21 per cent. as measured in currency. Some mines make a larger, some a smaller profit. In either case there is little margin for waste, but great danger of waste, as the gold is in such an elusive form that it might easily escape extraction.

Upon the dexterity with which this is prevented, practically the whole success of the venture depends; and Witwatersrand gold mining has therefore developed into so exact a science that the particles of gold, inextricably incorporated with the rock though they appear to be, are now so successfully extracted that less than four per cent. is lost.

At one time such a high extraction was considered impossible. No methods were then known by which more than about half the gold in the rock could be recovered, and to have handled the lower-grade ore in the deeper mines, now so successfully worked, would then have cost more than it was worth.

Those who predicted for Johannesburg a golden future of long duration, were therefore generally ridiculed. The gold was admittedly there, but so securely stowed away by nature that it seemed impossible for man to remove it profitably. But at last the problem was solved, with a thoroughness that exceeded the utmost expectations of even the optimists. And like the solution of many great problems, the process hit upon, once it was demonstrated,

proved to be a simple one, but it took some of the best brains to discover it. It is a process worthy of a brief description.

The gold-bearing vein is blasted, and in the blasting some of the surrounding formation is unavoidably brought down. All the rock mined is therefore not gold-bearing. When hoisted out of the shaft, it is crushed, washed and sorted, and the gold-bearing rock, usually after further crushing, goes to the mill, where it is powdered as fine almost as flour.

This powdered rock, in a fluid state, then flows thinly over copper plates that have been coated with mercury. The particles of gold released in the milling adhere to the mercury. The amalgam of mercury and gold thus formed is then scraped off the copper



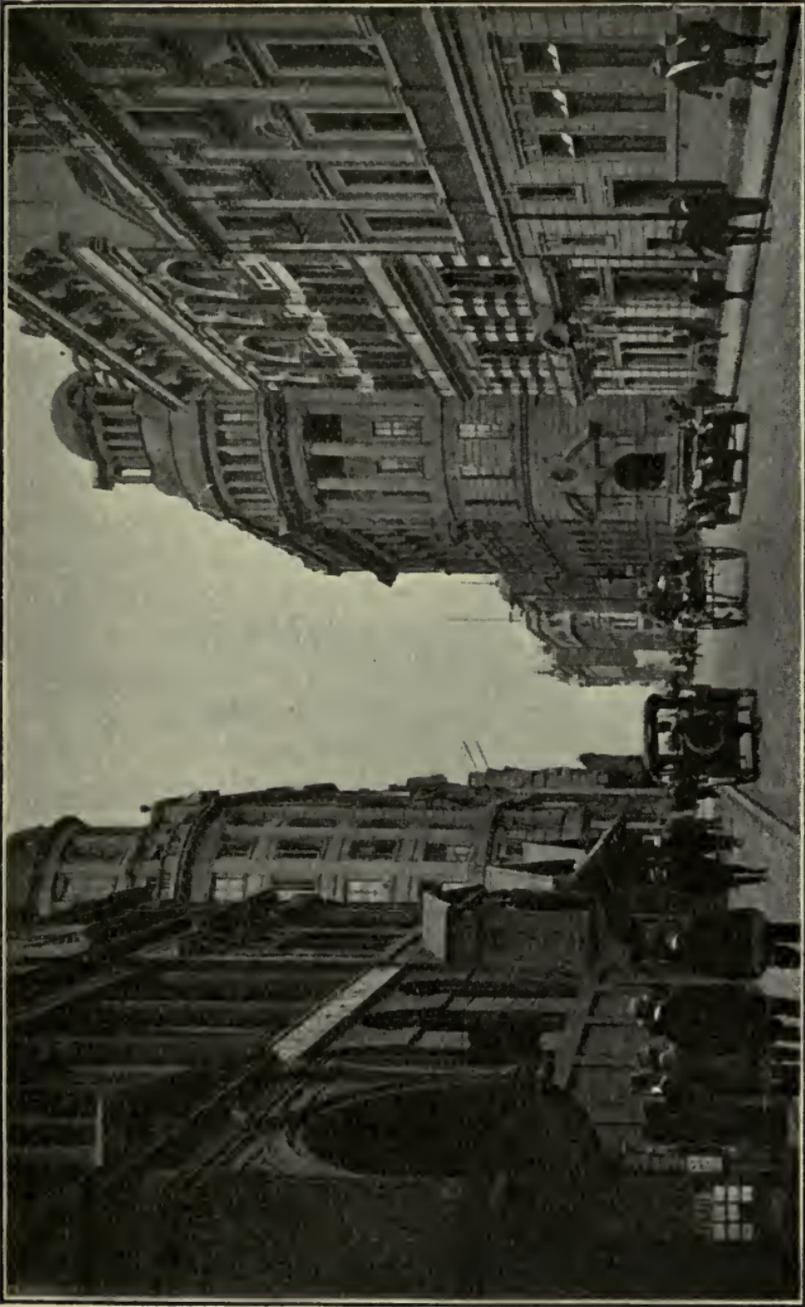
Kerk Street.



Section of Eloff Street.

plates and heated in a retort, where the mercury is distilled and the gold remains.

But the milling does not release all the gold. Fine though the particles of rock have been ground, there are even finer particles of gold so tightly incorporated in the particles of rock that the mercury has no effect on them. In fact about thirty-seven per cent. of the original gold contents still adhere to the rock. That is to say, after the powdered rock has passed over the mercury, it still contains gold (if we take say a month's working over the whole of the Witwatersrand) worth about a million pounds sterling. To recover this, the powdered rock, by hundreds of thousands of tons, is next poured into vats with a weak solution of cyanide, where, when sufficiently



Fox Street.

agitated, the cyanide dissolves the minute particles of gold, and takes them up in solution.

The cyanide is then passed over zinc, to which the soluble gold adheres. The zinc is treated with sulphuric acid, to release the gold from it, and the slime which passes off is finally filtered, calcined and smelted.

In all there is thus recovered about ninety-six per cent. of the gold which originally the rock contained. And as over two million tons of rock a month go through these processes on the Witwatersrand, the accumulation of powdered rock, after it has been chemically treated, is an enormous one; hence the co-called cyanide dumps, white hills, like mounds of damaged flour, which abut on Johannesburg and extend for thirty miles on each side.

From the pulverized rock of which these dumps are formed, gold to the value of six hundred million pounds sterling has been taken. They are the talismans which in thirty-three years have transformed an uninhabited, naked, and not particularly prepossessing piece of veld into the largest and wealthiest town in South Africa—a town with a well-built area of eighty-one square miles, containing just over seven hundred miles of streets, and a population of over a quarter of a million.

But if Johannesburg owes its fortunes to the cyanide dumps, it also owes them a grudge. They are the most prominent feature of the landscape, and they are an unlovely feature, surrounded by smoke stacks, mean-looking galvanised mine buildings, and all the drab paraphernalia of industry, with the ramshackle dwellings of the poorer classes in the foreground,



Suburban Johannesburg.

and generally an atmosphere of dust and squalor over all.

Unfortunately the railway runs parallel with this area so that on arriving the first and on leaving the last impression one receives of Johannesburg is through this unfavourable medium. And if, as happens in winter and spring, the prevailing wind from the south is blowing strongly, the dust of the dumps and the smoke of the stacks hang like a pall over the sky of Johannesburg, and one's last and perhaps most lasting impression of the place is apt to be a gloomy one.

The rather drab mining area is however only a part of Johannesburg, and no index to the wealth and even beauty of the other parts. Much though it forces itself on the notice of anyone coming to or going from Johannesburg, the mining area by no means overshadows the place as a whole. Indeed, in so large a place, a resident might live for years without



Pritchard Street, Johannesburg.

having the squalor of the mining area obtruded on him. Just as in Paris one might live, if not unconscious of, yet at least unirrⁱtated by, its equally repellent industrial side.

Johannesburg is nine hundred and fifty-seven miles from Capetown, or nearly the same distance that Chicago is from New York. It is one of the few African towns of which at least the name, if not the fame, is known throughout the world.

In the days when the gold-mining industry was in its early growth, with all the uncertainties—the alternate optimism and pessimism attending the development of such an industry, the daily scene on the Johannesburg stock-exchange, “between the chains,” was as stirring and almost as interesting, if



Residential Johannesburg.
141

not as important, to the financial world as a busy day on Wall Street. That is a phase of Johannesburg life which has changed.

Fortunes are no longer made or lost as easily as they were ; the investor has replaced the speculator, with the result that the gold-mining industry has been stabilised ; and with the further result that besides being the centre of gold-mining, Johannesburg, being the natural clearing house of a large and rich farming area, has become a town of considerable and growing manufacturing and commercial importance. More and more the country round Johannesburg is being put under cultivation, especially by the small-holder, who with his market garden, poultry-farm, orchard or dairy is transforming what a decade or two ago was treeless veld into an area of great productiveness and considerable sylvan beauty.

The production of meat is going to be one of South Africa's great industries, and with the growth of that industry packing-houses, and more factories for working up hair, horn, fats and hides, are likely to be started in places like Johannesburg ; also factories for turning out maize-products.

There are already a considerable number of such enterprises well established, and Johannesburg is therefore as strenuous as ever—it will always be a bustling place ; but now it is the worker, the worker with hand and brain, not the gambler, who sets the pace ; and from being merely a place of temporary sojourn, in which the least possible was spent on permanent conveniences, Johannesburg has become the home of a large population—a very well-appointed and in many respects even elegant home.

It is to-day a town of considerable wealth and solid comfort.

Eloff Street, the principal thoroughfare, and a radius of about half a mile around its centre, notably portions of Pritchard and Commissioner Streets, form an area particularly well-equipped with great and fashionable shops, residential flats, modern hotels and restaurants. Within that area there are nine theatres and similar places of amusement, four large and popular clubs, and in fact general amenities and appointments worthy of any large centre. Farther on are the more fashionable clubs, with the offices of the mining companies, engineering and other firms, and the larger banks—as a rule spacious modern buildings, with here and there, however, a shanty of the old days.

On the outskirts there is the Country Club. The famous Wanderers Ground, and Joubert Park, lie between the commercial centre and the residential portion of the town, and Auckland Park and Turffontein, Johannesburg's two race-courses, farther out.

The ridges and valleys occupied by Johannesburg lend themselves to picturesque effects in landscape gardening and architecture. Indeed it is no exaggeration to claim that there are more beautiful gardens in Johannesburg than elsewhere in the Union, and perhaps a greater variety of pleasing styles in architecture.

Johannesburg is subject to severe frosts in winter, but rarely to snowstorms. The piercing cold winds are then trying, aggravated as they are by dust, though not as much as before trees were extensively

planted and the roads properly surfaced. But as a set-off against these drawbacks of altitude, there are marked advantages. The winter days are generally sunny, and made doubly delightful by the sparkling mountain air, an air a little dry perhaps until you get used to it, but thereafter remarkably exhilarating.

The suburbs in the north and north-east, Melville, Richmond, Westcliffe, Parktown, Houghton, and Orange Grove, to mention only some, are especially delightful, perched as they are on pine-clad ridges, and reaching far down into the valleys. They are so new that the residences have all been built on approved modern lines, which though it affords great diversity of architectural style, ensures a collective excellence and elegance not often found in older places whose designing has been more haphazard. And any suggestion of rawness, such as this lack of age might imply, is counteracted by the nature of the building material used, which quickly mellows; and by the rapidity with which lawns, gardens, and even plantations of trees grow there. It has been truly said that the rose gardens of these Johannesburg suburbs are as delightful as those of the Cape; the lawns as trim and smooth as those which border the Thames; and the plantations of firs, pines and gums as flourishing as though indigenous.

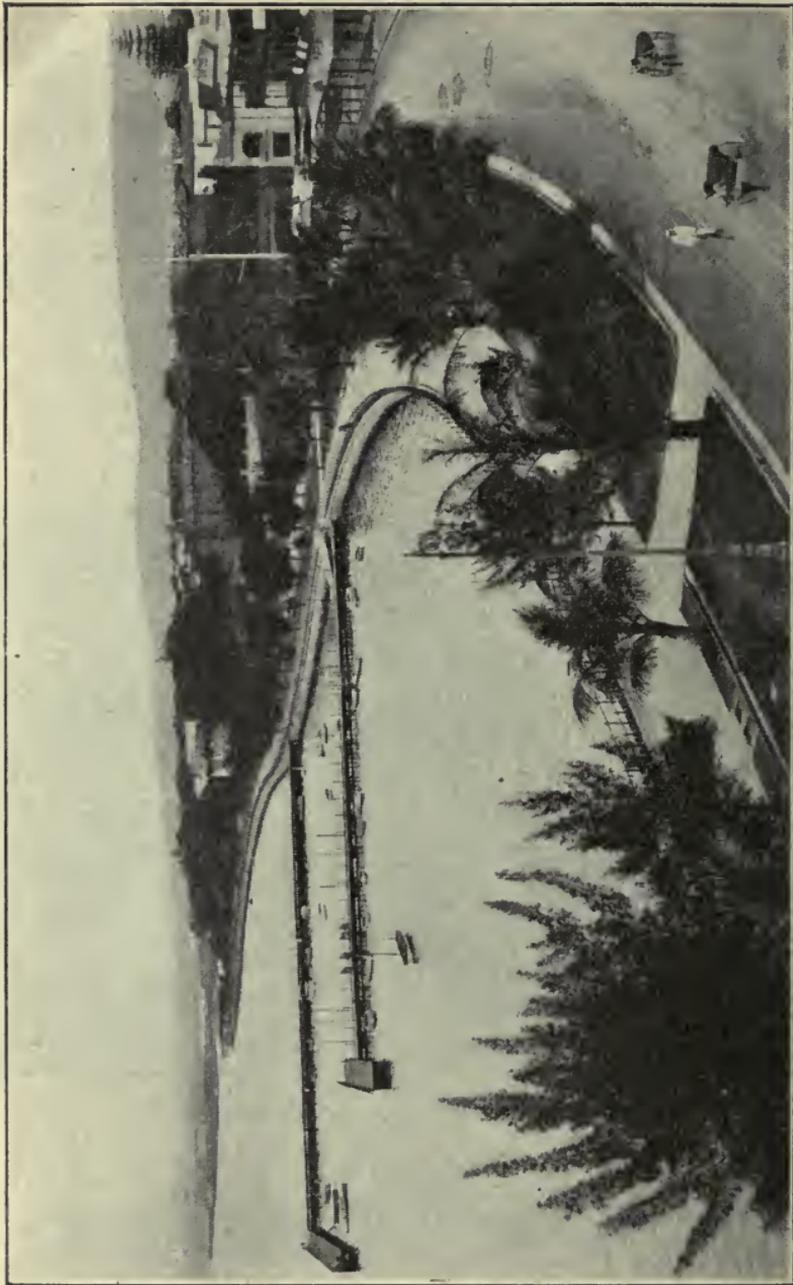
Moreover unlike the rather flat landscapes around, the northern and eastern outskirts of Johannesburg are diversified by hill and dale. Woods now sweep through the valleys and crest the hills, through gaps in which one gets a glimpse here and there of the great plain of the High Veld beyond, in that clear mountain air visible for long distances as it rolls away

till lost on the blue horizon, or among the distant hills.

There, away from the southern industrial area, the pleasant side of Johannesburg life is found, in its villas, bungalows and mansions, each with its garden or large pleasure grounds, with never the sight of a cyanide dump or the noise of a mining battery, but the sparkle of the sunny day and the calm of the High Veld night.



Boksburg, near Johannesburg.



The Esplanade (Bay).

CHAPTER XIII.

DURBAN.

Something she has which compels
Wonder and worship through pain.
Vainly her lover rebels,
Striving to loosen his chain.

Lo ! she is stronger than he,
Great is her magic and wide,
Stretching its spell o'er the sea,
Drawing him back to her side.

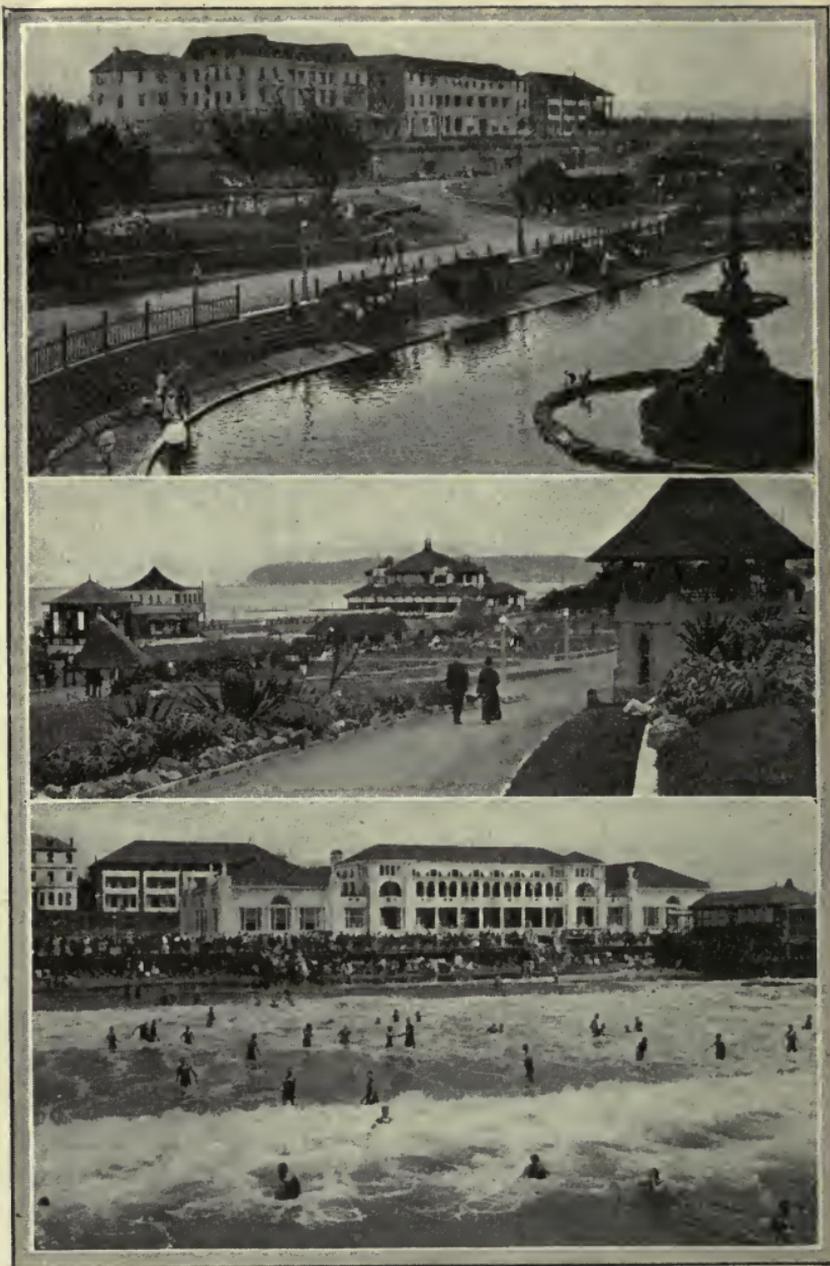
—WALROND.

DURBAN, which is four hundred and eighty-two miles, or twenty-three hours, by rail from Johannesburg, abuts on the Indian Ocean. It is the principal winter watering-place of South Africa, and its busiest port.

Passengers to South Africa from Europe have the choice of two routes—the one along the west coast of Africa, for which Capetown is the first landing place; the other through the Mediterranean, Red Sea, and along the east coast of Africa to Durban.

Round the west coast the voyage takes less time, and is cooler, than that round the east coast. Most of the passenger and mail traffic to South Africa is therefore via the west coast. But the east coast route is the more picturesque. It affords an opportunity for seeing en route the quaint half-Asiatic, half-African coastal towns, and even Uganda, not to mention Egypt and the Mediterranean; and as some of the boats are now specially fitted for tropic travel, this route is becoming deservedly popular.

Those who come this way disembark at Durban.



Views of Ocean Beach.
148

It is not a large town compared with places like say Bombay, Calcutta or Marseilles, but it is the most important town on the east coast of Africa, and with its up-to-date equipment of sanitation, electric lighting, railways and tramways, good hotels, clubs and general paraphernalia of western civilisation, it is the most European place the traveller touches at after leaving Naples.

The sea reaches Durban on two sides. The one side, known as the Ocean Beach, faces the full roll of the Indian Ocean. On the other side the sea runs inland, through a very narrow channel, and forms roughly a pear-shaped bay.

Along this bay is by far the most beautiful esplanade in South Africa, a work of considerable art, flanked by several fine buildings, and shaded by palms.

For the visitor, however, the Ocean Beach is the main attraction. At Muizenberg, that other outstandingly popular South African sea-side resort sixteen miles from Capetown, the beach, except for the bathing pavilion, is much as nature made it—an alluring beach with mountain peaks around it.

At Durban, as at the more fashionable resorts along the Mediterranean, the landscape gardener and the architect have brought their art to bear. They have embellished the beach with lawns, terraces, arbours, fountains, ornamental gardens, and miniature lakes. Everything has been planned for effect: the large modern hotels in the background, the other places of refreshment and entertainment on the beach, have all been built to fit the harmonious scheme. Even the winding paths enhance the scene, being generally gay with smart motor equipages.

In such surroundings, especially during the South



West Street.

African winter, which at Durban is sunny and mild, a fashionable assembly recuperates and enjoys itself—though the recuperation is on the whole perhaps subordinate to the enjoyment.

The fishing is good, from the semi-circular pier enclosing the bathing place, and the sandy coves and rocks farther on. Cape salmon weighing sixty pounds, and skate up to ninety pounds, have been taken there. In the season the "Panther," comfortably fitted with saloon accommodation, cruises to sea for those who want a good day's deep-sea fishing.

Motor-boating is a vogue at Durban, the land-locked bay providing a picturesque course that is safe; yachting too has its votaries, there being no less than three yacht clubs, the Royal Natal, Congella, and Point.

The excursions around Durban are interesting. Whether one goes by tram to Umgeni, Musgrave Road or Stamford Hill, or by motor car farther afield to Isipingo, Sea View, Illovo, Sarnia or Amanzimtoti, sub-tropical scenery in great variety, and quaint phases of Native and Asiatic life, enliven the way.

The town itself is not without beauty, especially in the vicinity of the Town Hall, one of the noble buildings of South Africa, with the public gardens adjoining.

Durban Berea, a low-lying range of hills behind the town, is the fashionable residential quarter. It is luxuriantly foliaged, with fine vistas over the Indian Ocean, vivid tropic gardens round the residences, and a brilliant sunshine enlivening all. Gorgeous flowers such as one is accustomed to see only in hot-houses, here grow as lustily as cabbages elsewhere, and with less attention. The native fruits—papaws, guavas,



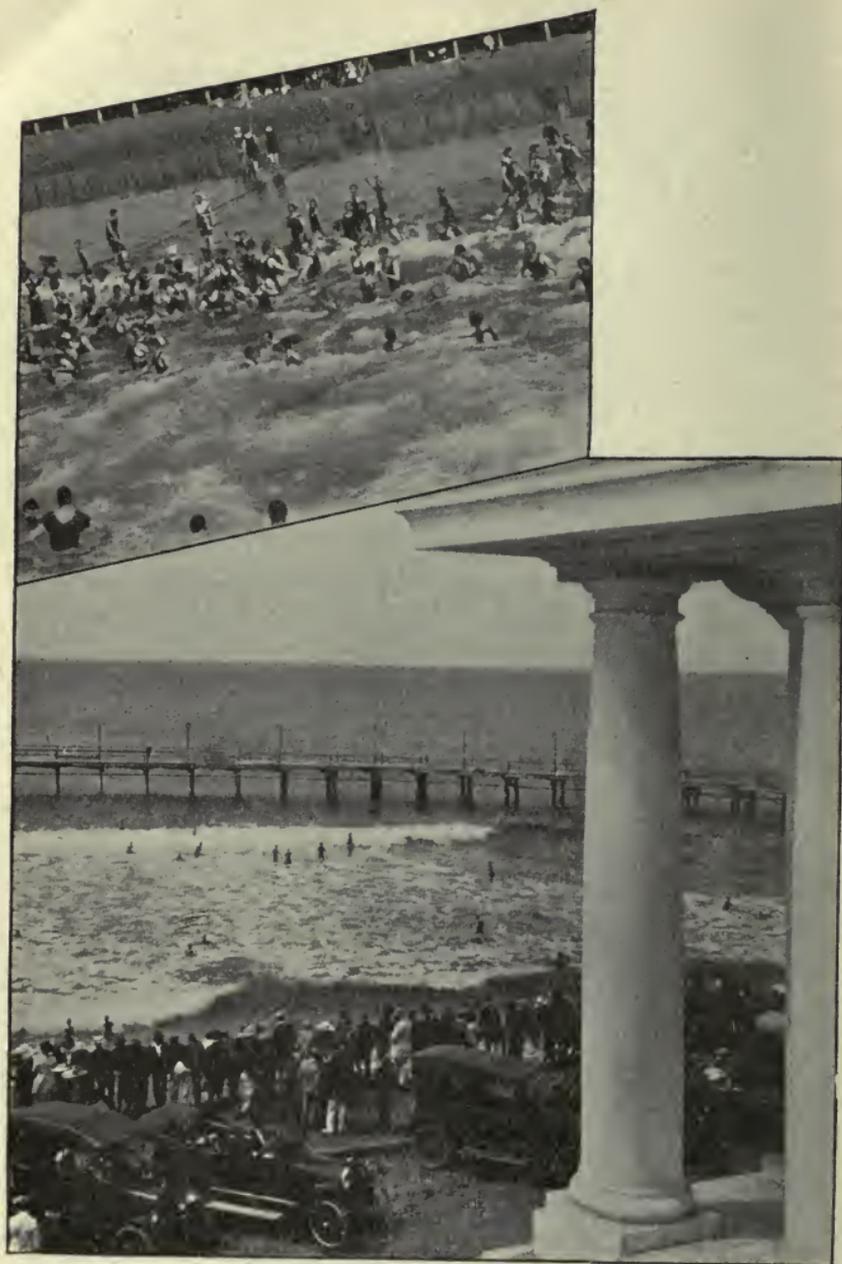
Town Hall, Durban.

mangoes, grenadillas, tangerines, pineapples, are strange to the new-comer, but so fragrant and subtle of flavour that the smell and taste of them long haunt the memory, and when one comes across them again, as centre-pieces on European dinner-tables, they revive happy memories of sunny Durban.

The Durban Berea is as distinctive, and in its way as full of appeal, as the Cape suburbs. There is nothing quite like it elsewhere in the Union. It is one of the country's unique and most charming features. Indeed, though Europeanised, Durban presents to the eye of the visitor much that is novel.

The dominant note of Durban is the glossy greenness of an abundant vegetation. The day is generally a golden day—blue sky, bright sunshine, with just a touch of tropic languor in the air. There may be carnival on the beach; there may be incident enough in the busy streets, but the picture that lives in our mind, with the memory of the tropic day, is the picture of the white-sailed yachts gathering for a regatta. They are small unpretentious craft, but picturesque when seen through the faint blue haze of distance, as they skim the quiet waters, on a bay fringed with palms that wave lazily in the soporific air, like the palms in some eastern tale.

In fact, to the visiting eye, there is about Durban, despite its European ways, more that is foreign than familiar. No doubt the streets are modern—the architecture of the buildings, the contents of the smart shops, the occupations and recreations of the city, such as one might find anywhere in Europe. Even the sunshine is much what one expects, but does not always get, along the Mediterranean. But the foliage and the Orientals are flamboyant; and



Midwinter Sea-bathing at Durban.



Durban Club.

robust Zulus, in native garb, add a further fantastic touch to the scene. And though on the hills, where the fashionable residences are, the purr of many motor cars and the clang of the tram are heard, the note that strikes the fancy is the tinkle of the ricksha bells.

The story of Durban is a brief and simple one, the place has had too few rufflings of fortune to have many annals ; but viewing the scene from the Berea, one is reminded of Christmas Day, 1497, when the first European ship to enter those waters passed that way. It was summer, and Natal, idle and waiting for inhabitants, lay in its fullest and loveliest dress. Forests stood to the ocean edge : here and there a verdure-clad bluff hung high in the air, its inverted image reflected in the clear lagoon-like sea below. The hills were green, the valleys filled with game, and from wild fruit and innumerable blossoms per-



Esplanade.

Gardiner Street.

Towards Berea.

fumes—strange but grateful to European nostrils—blew from the lonely strand.

It was a land inviting occupation. The voyagers however passed on, but they esteemed it so highly that they troubled to christen it Natal.

These first Europeans sailed under da Gama and, as mentioned in a previous chapter, went to the Zambesi and peopled parts. But others, hardly less adventurous, followed. Natal was never a port of call for them ; it was too far off the highway between Asia and Europe ; but between it and the old voyagers there was a sombre association, for they sometimes paid a heavy reckoning, and sometimes paid it on the coast of Natal.

Shipwrecks were plentiful. The historic "Grosvenor," with its gallant band, foundered in the vicinity, one of a long list of ships that found a grave in those seas.

Indeed, the early annals of Natal consist mainly of extracts from the diaries of the shipwrecked—poignant extracts describing the helpless "wind-jammer," out of control, and straining till its timbers opened ; the work at the pumps ; the rocks and the dark shore, so inviting under happier circumstances, so threatening to those in peril on the sea. Then the dangers of landing ; the camp on the beach ; the anxious consultation, the preparations for the march to the nearest European settlement, then nearly eight hundred miles away ; the brave attempt to carry the women and sick in litters. And, as they got farther into the wilderness, the dwindling of the party under the combined attacks of hunger, thirst, exposure, exhaustion, savages and wild beasts ; the anguish of women and children staggering on as best

they might among hardships such as one reads of only in the fictions of a Victor Hugo.

The coast of South Africa, from Capetown to Natal, was the scene of many such tragedies in the early days.

Indeed until recently there was visible on the sands near the Umzimvubu River a touching memorial of the kind—the mouldering ribs of the great galleon “Sao Joao,” which after being buried for generations



View of Beach.

was disclosed by the drifting of the sands in a gale. And many a mound along that shore maybe covers some other ancient rover or her crew. From the Durban beach, therefore, or from the Berea, the imagination requires little incentive before, like the brave galliots and galleons, it too sails the seas of adventure—sails with the dons and senhors of old, under the great gold and crimson flag, into strange and wondrously fascinating waters, away over the horizon, to crowded river mouths and gorgeous isles.

Except for such occasional shipwrecks, Natal, for over three hundred years after being discovered and christened by da Gama, remained little disturbed

save by the natives, who in time came to pasture their cattle there, grow grain, and practise arms. Even in the 'sixties of last century, Durban was a pioneer village. For streets it had mainly sandy paths cut through the bush, or trails winding across the dunes. The nearest European neighbour by sea was still several hundred miles away : the descendants of the *Voortrekkers* across the mountains were



Post Office Corner.

widely scattered in small bands. And in between were warlike, turbulent tribes.

All that is changed. A considerable traffic with the Transvaal and Free State grew up when these countries developed, and the rich soil of Natal attracted planters of coffee, tea, sugar and cotton.

The coffee industry was in time abandoned, some think without sufficient reason ; cotton is coming into its own again ; a large commerce in coal and merchandise is handled.

But most important of Natal's production is the growing of sugar, and wherever you go along that coast the reapers and tillers will be seen in sugar plantations that extend for hundreds of miles. Night and day, dimly heard in their sylvan surroundings, the factories crush the cane, filter, condense and crystallise the sap. It is one of the most heart-



Umgeni River.

ening spectacles in South Africa, this evolution of the wilderness into intense productiveness.

Farther inland, there are large wool, cattle and grain farms, and coalfields. These together have combined to develop Durban. It has grown rich, and besides growing important commercially, has become a holiday resort, especially popular in winter. For when chill winds blow across the High Veld, and inland mountains are capped with snow, and the Cape coast is stormy, the Durban climate is at its

best—mildly warm, bright, alluring. So alluring that South Africans in thousands then flock down the great slopes of the inland plateau, from the dry sharp air of the Transvaal and Free State to the moist warmth of the Natal coast; from the brown winter herbage of the highlands, past the beautiful valleys near Pietermaritzburg, then downwards by train or motor car three thousand feet in five hours, to the papaws, the pineapples, the sugar plantations



Yachting on Durban Bay.

and perpetual greenness of the country around Durban; to the palm-fringed bay and stately embankment, than which even the Mediterranean has few finer; to the beach, improved by the landscape gardener, and thronged by fashion; to a climate so sunny, and an ocean with a temperature so mild that throughout the winter bathing in the open is a pleasure; and to the Berea, with its gardens and pleasure grounds, its flame bright poinsettias, its mimosas and syringas, below which lies the city, a picture in green and gold, its parks and domes and steeples touched with beauty.



Amanzimtoti.

CHAPTER XIV.

AROUND DURBAN.

And this our life exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

—"AS YOU LIKE IT."

AS the climate of the Natal coast is subtropical, summer in and around Durban is more conducive to languor than effort; it is at times oppressive, yet not without its enjoyable features; especially is this true of the south coast, from Durban to Port Shepstone, where about a score of little rivers are easily accessible by rail.

There on the edge of the sea the jungle lies, sixty miles long and in places a mile wide. And round the lagoons the holiday-makers have set their bungalows, winter hotels have been established, and there is a considerable influx of visitors during the cooler months. But it is questionable whether a visit in summer is not the more interesting. The glaring sands, the quiver of the hot moist air, the brazen sea may be trying in summer; but the silence and the shadows of the jungle are then particularly inviting. There the fan-palm and the tree-fern throw a twilight of their own, in which faltering sunbeams wander, stencilling little sun-pictures. Sharp shadows lie across the outer paths, the long green corridors are dim, and in that half light of the jungle's heart a great peace reigns. It is a place for relaxation.



Umkomaas River.

Heavy odours steal from the orchids like a drug, distance-borne and heard as in a dream, the surf booms dully on the bar.

There are no majestic cocoa-nut palms such as one finds farther up the East Coast of Africa, nor are there any lofty, wide-girthed forest giants such as one sometimes sees in Rhodesia. But the palm-like wild banana, the variety and beauty of other trees, the profusion of blossoming climbers, and in summer the ferns and occasional orchids, form a very pleasing combination whose appeal is added to by the quiet lagoons, and a Pacific-like surf on a Pacific-like bar.

Such we found Umkomaas. It was a typical South Coast summer day. Like an opiate laid on heavy lids, the slumberous sunshine steeped the land.

It was a veritable land of nod. Then the petrol launch commenced to voyage noisily, someone shouted a message from the bank, the echoes carried

it loudly abroad, and the spell was broken. A thirsty monkey slid from its bough, the pelican resumed its fishing.

The Umkomaas is not without interest. Certainly it repays one for the trouble of taking the short railway journey from Durban. Anyway it is a change, something off the beaten track of European travel.

It is a shallow tidal river, about half a mile wide at its mouth, and navigable by small boats for about



Boating, Natal South Coast.

eight miles. It flows between on the one side sugar plantations and banana groves, and on the other side picturesque hills and territory reserved for the natives. Suddenly, as you round one of the hills, the right bank rises loftily and heavily wooded with trees which in summer stand wrapped in blossoming creepers. There the anvil bird sounds its metallic note, the violet cuckoo glints in the sunshine, and the tiny honey-sucker darts its blue and scarlet head into the fragrant chalice of the moonflower. There,



A Jungle Scene.

too, the little gray monkeys have their home, and in neighbourly not to say meddling fashion make the freest use of adjoining banana groves, little being beneath the notice of their burning inquisitiveness, or beyond the reach of their small grubby hands.

If you sit still enough, first one little black face, then another, a third, and, finally, perhaps a score, peep from behind the stems, with great stealth, until some flippant fellow upsets a graver friend, when a quarrel ensues and like shadows they fade away. When all is quiet again they reappear, maybe at the water edge, in spousal couples or whole troops, the females with their young slung round their waists, the males with nothing but their natural levity. And always their behaviour is almost human, whether when waggishly showing off in company, or sitting hunched in solitary meditation, back bent and look of preter-natural wisdom on the little wrinkled face. They are especially human when laying siege to each other's hearts, the little male obviously self-conscious, embarrassed and apparently wishing the business well over; while the winsome one twiddles her toes and peers hard at nothing in the distance, with a fine affectation of indifference.

Farther on you reach the ford, where signs of human habitation appear; on the one side the Indian labourers give a gay splash of colour to the sloping fields of sugar cane, especially the female workers whose taste in garments favours yellows, greens and crimsons; on the other side, an occasional Kafir hut is perched on its own little hill.

The ford is the scene of quite a pedestrian traffic. All day the natives come and go, wrapped only in a

loin cloth or rug, making courtesy calls or on shopping bent. Up and down the hills they stalk, taking the heavy slopes without perceptible effort, the men walking lightly as becomes their greater dignity, the women carrying the burdens—buxom women who with as much as eighty pounds on head climb the gradients with swinging strides, chaffing or singing without a catch in the breath.



Then the river narrows, and one reaches the reedy island and finally the glen. By this time the shadows were lengthening to the setting sun. In the failing light an occasional roebuck came to the water to drink, moorhens wheeled with low discordant cries, green pigeons sought their roosts, and the fruit bat sallied forth in the dusk.

Then a huge pink moon swung itself lazily over the horizon; dogs in distant Kafir kraals settled themselves squarely on their haunches, stuck muzzles straight into the air, and whined with great solemnity. And on the opposite bank a muffled drum, like some prophetic spirit boding ill, throbbed its sad message through the heavy air.

There is something inexpressibly touching in the melancholy, something more moving than melody in the monotony, of an Indian tom-tom, on such a night, in such surroundings. It fits exactly the spirit of the place. Both are remote from modern

ways. It is reminiscent of old, old creeds, and musty distant times, as it calls on its unheeding gods. Yet not altogether unheeding, perhaps, for you almost hear the response, as who should say—

We be the gods of the East,
Older than all ;
Masters of mourning and feast,
How shall we fall ?

Assiduously at first the muffled drum-beats came, then faintly and more faintly as the Hindu player tired.

They are not without suggestions of the picturesque, these Natal Indians.

From an ethical point of view much may be urged against the importation of Asiatics. Indeed, so much has been successfully urged that in South Africa further importation is forbidden. In a country like South Africa, designed by Europeans for Europeans, the Asiatic remains unassimilated, does not easily fit into the scheme of things. But however objectionable, socially and in commercial competition, a comparatively low standard of living makes the lower caste Asiatic, there can be no doubt that from the purely spectacular point of view their presence gives to those parts of South Africa where they are numerous an increased interest for the traveller. Nothing could be more in harmony with the blue of a southern sky and the green of sub-tropic vegetation, than the glint of the minaret or the cool white arches of some little Jain temple, even if on close examination they prove to be only cheap plaster affairs ; nothing more picturesque in a tangle of bamboo—the sugar cane is a kind of bamboo—than the rich glow

of Asiatic habiliments, even if on closer view they be dirty.

This we felt was so in Natal, where the Indians, like the Malays in the Cape Peninsula, have become a considerable section of the community. They are of many castes, but chiefly artisans and labourers, and many creeds, as they or their ancestors came from all parts of India, and brought with them something of the atmosphere of the places of their origin.



Along the South Coast.

Their life in Natal is in some respects different to what it would be in India. There are no thronged, gossiping, bustling bazaars; no temple-lined holy Ganges, with shrines and sacred waters and worshippers seeking absolution. Hence perhaps backsliding. But on the whole they are fairly orthodox, somewhat ceremonial in dietary, and not altogether without punctilio in such matters as the colour of a turban, the placing of a caste-mark, or the lay of a shoulder-cloth.

Many of even the lower castes recite beautiful tenets about predestination, gratitude, justice, truth and honesty ; but, like other poets, do not always practise what they preach. Like the superstitions of the Kafirs, the religions of these Indians are many and diverse ; but unlike the Kafir's lively belief, their salience is quietism, which engenders in the devotees a gentle tolerance that enables them to live on the whole in amity and even charity.

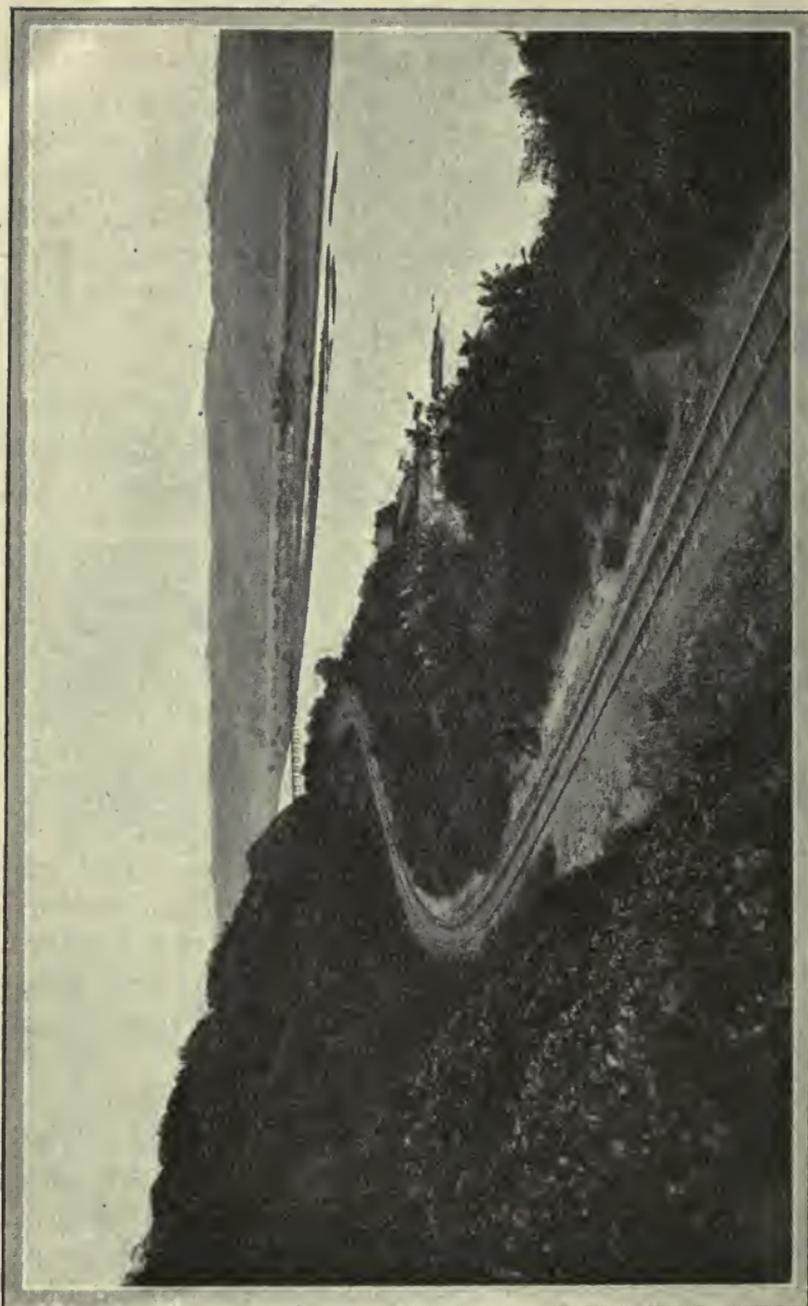
Casually, on casual saunters, you meet them in the by-ways. We rejoiced especially in the philosophy of a Jat follower of Vishnu, and his friend a Sikh.

“ A fat land, as the Presence may perceive,” said the Jat, speaking as a cultivator.

“ And a most just law,” added the Sikh. “ For all as much as the stomach may safely hold, and of observances and fast days not too many.”

For a while they squatted in the comforting shadows, to catch such ground currents as were moving, for the day was hot. A sabbath peace lay over the land. And from a little church, lost somewhere in the bush, the clang of a bell called the heedful to prayer. With it the East had no concern. But the Jat explained that it had long been on his mind to celebrate the festival Dashra, misadventure in his vegetable garden and lack of facilities alone having prevented him. All who cared, he courteously added, might now listen to the true tenets.

As to the efficacy of Vishnuism, the Sikh was openly sceptical, but with the kindly tolerance of the East to all religions that do not cut unduly across the purse strings, he was prepared to hear an argument. So, when a handful of incense had been thrown on a smouldering aloe cone, till it burned like



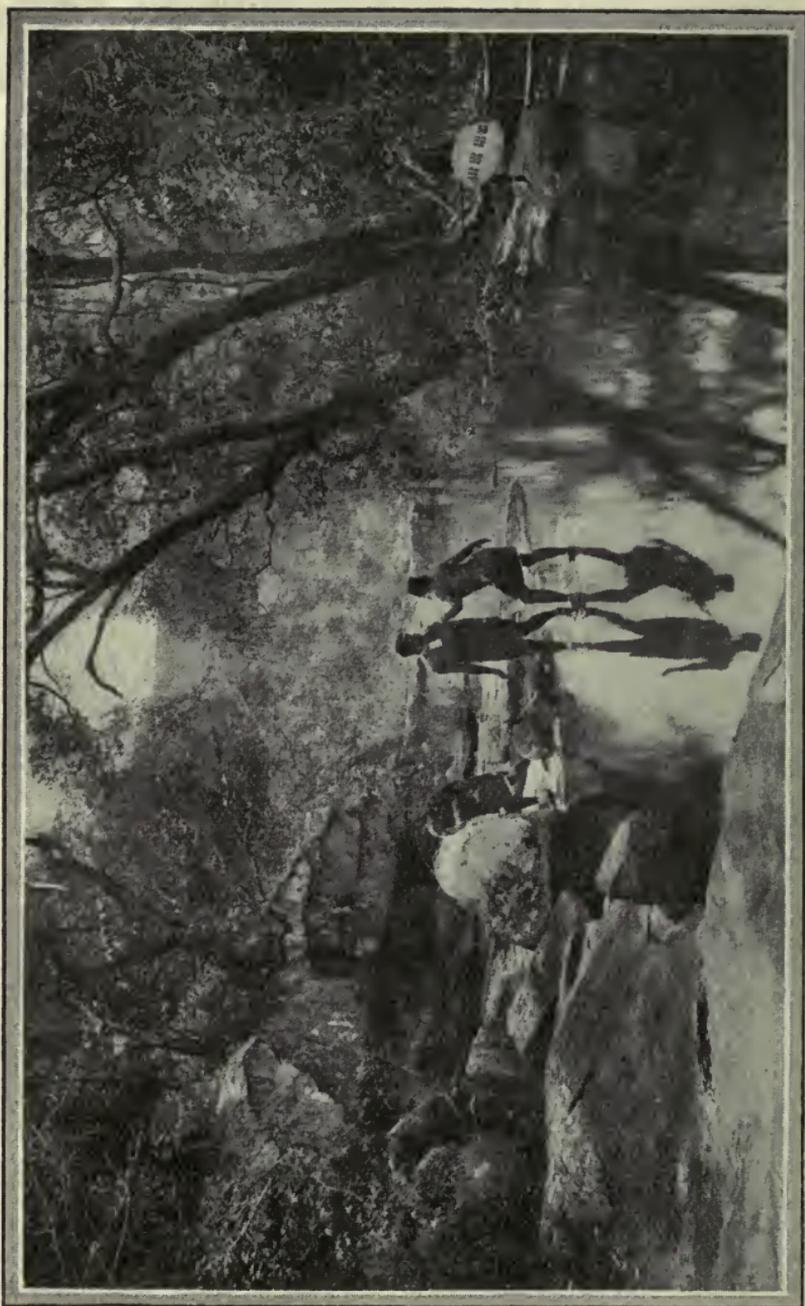
Illovo River.

a scented pastille, they sat ceremonially. Oriental-like their minds opened to the wrangle like flowers to the sun. But there was no heat, no recrimination. Dispassionately they "searched into the truth of things," freely but without emphasis handling the eternal verities. It may have been a misdirection of mental energy, but, touched by some faint sense of underlying beauty, one slipped from the borderland of practice to that of precept, felt the peace and simplicity of it all, forgot the faulty practice, overlooked the mistaken premises and felt only the touching ideals of those dim old creeds.

Thus diverted we wandered along the South Coast, round little bays, over the lagoons, up the rivers, and through the jungle; among people sometimes quaint, and scenery often beautiful; in a delightful climate.

The charm of the Umkomaas, on one bank at least, is its wild environment, a touch of that somewhat sombre South African primitiveness which, with the advent of civilisation and the plow, is fast disappearing. The charm of the Umzimkulu River is different. It is in places like a forest-topped bend of the Rhine, in other places like a meadow-lined Dutch canal. Anon the scene changes to a glimpse of the East, mystic and solemn where the tall bamboos throw their heavy shadows, and the crane, like a lone gray anchorite, lives in solitude; but gay and flamboyant along the sun-steeped stretches where the humming birds flit among the narcissi.

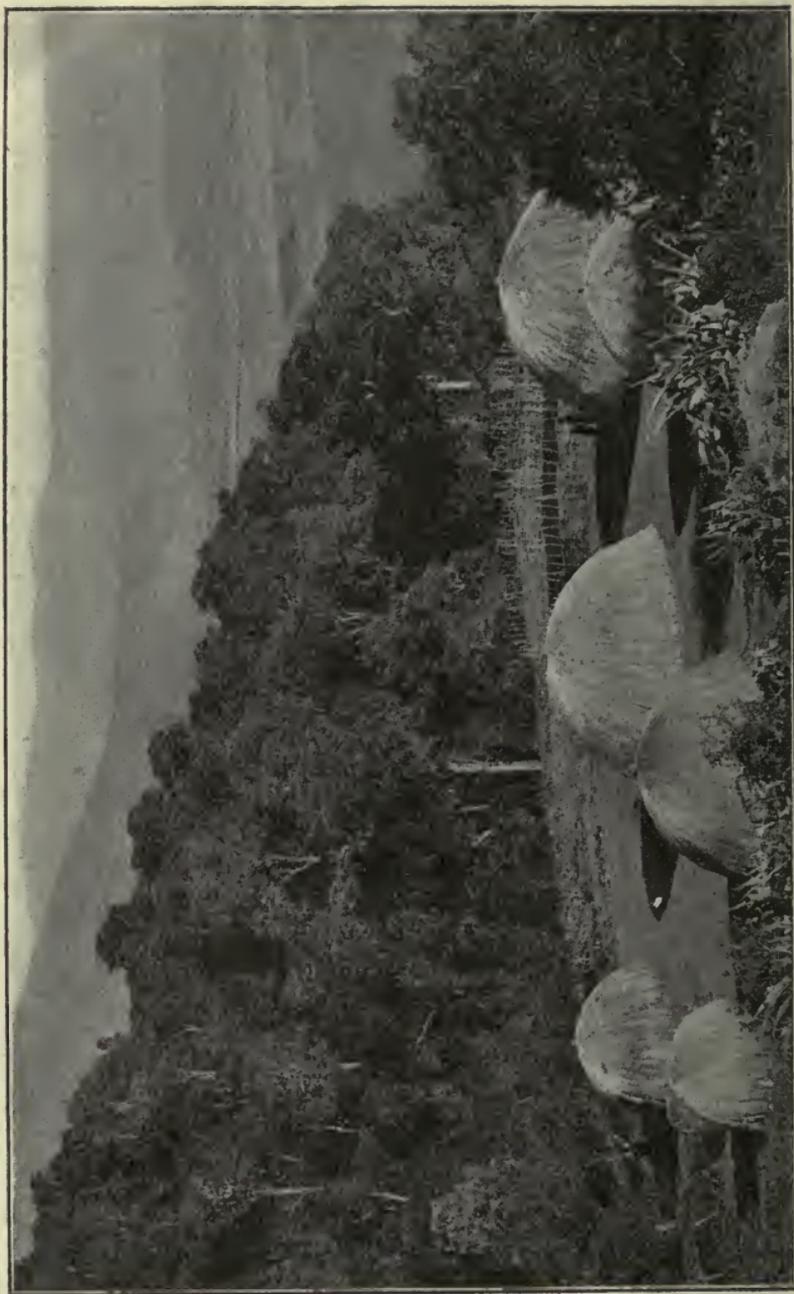
Woods sweep up the headlands, and give here and there a peep of a villa loftily perched on a crest. Then you round a bend and the scene changes. Abruptly the banks lower, and on either side outer



On the Natal Coast.

hills overtop each other, smooth hills that refresh the eye with the green of sugar cane, tobacco plantations and occasional citrus groves. Thereafter for a stretch the river wears the livery of servitude, but a pleasing livery, for the airily flung suspension bridge spans the waters like a gossamer, wholly in keeping with its environment ; and the barges, laden with sugar or marble, their bargemen squatting like huge brown bats, pass softly with a quaintness of their own.

Then to the nostrils comes the scent of orange blossoms and the heavier musk of the mimosas, which latter stand like guardian naiads of some sylvan deity, flinging their incense abroad. Here doves coo throatily, the bulbul has its home, egrets skim through the sedges, and an occasional rose-coloured trogon is seen. Here bamboos wave their elegant tendrils against the blue of a summer sky, and from afar, faint and faultily, the plaintive notes of some Eastern song are borne, from the bank where, like Rebecca of old, slim Indian women carry the water-gourd on head.



A Native Kraal.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NATIVES.

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan ;
The proper study of mankind is man.

—POPE.

THE north coast of Natal, at least in the vicinity of the railway for about a hundred and seventy miles from Durban, is perhaps not as diversified in interest as the south coast ; but it has a very special interest, particularly in Zululand, as there native life may be seen, if not unaffected by civilisation, then at least unspoilt.

Of the five main races—white, yellow, brown, red and black, into which mankind has been divided, the black race is the product of Africa. It is one of the largest, and in many respects most curious, of the five. Perhaps it is the least understood race ; certainly the influence it has on Africa, and the problem it presents to civilisation, are profound.

And as of this race there are in the Union of South Africa over five millions, in a total population of under seven millions, more than passing reference will be not only justified but necessary if the visitor is to have some conception of the various people among whom for a while he will travel ; for wherever he goes in South Africa there will be natives, as they are distributed throughout the country, not localised in any part of it ; and in choosing Zululand as the

site for our narrative, we do so merely for the convenience of focus.

The known history of the South African natives is remarkable neither for antiquity nor for profusion of reliable detail. It goes back only a few hundred years, and has to be substantiated in many essentials. Such as it is, however, it indicates that of the main types of South African natives—Bushmen, Hottentots and Bantus, the Bushmen and Hottentots first occupied the country, and the Bantus came from the north, probably not more than three hundred years ago. They came from central and east Africa to the south and south-east, namely Natal and the Cape Province; and in doing so swept the now practically extinct Bushmen into the mountains and deserts, and the Hottentots—some to the coastal belt, some into the more virile life of the new-comers, where identity was soon lost by the Hottentots. So that to-day the South African natives are nearly all of Bantu blood. Of these the Zulus, Basutos and Fingoes are the tribes to which allusion is mainly made in this volume; other tribes are the Swazis, Matabeles, Mashonas, Bechuanas, to mention only some.

Of the natives who live in and around the towns, many have found useful and respectable niches in the European scheme of things, as chefs, waiters, porters, coachmen, gardeners and navvies. In their dress and households they copy the European.

Generally, however, the South African native is a backwoodsman. He may serve a term on a farm or mine, or in a town, but generally shows little trace of the experience after he has resumed life in the native kraal. Most natives however never leave

home, know the outer world only by repute. Living thus, the native has affairs supervised and regulated by European magistrates and officials, but the old tribal customs and influences remain, except those repugnant to the usages of civilisation, and on the whole therefore the native lives much as his forefathers lived. He is not indeed the robust soldier or skilled hunter, not the man of practical resource and great endurance his ancestor was. He is, however, less a brawler and swashbuckler. Though generally too undisciplined to endure daily toil all the year round, he is on the whole more industrious and better living than of old. In many respects he is a likeable fellow, presenting ludicrous limitations, no doubt, but generally superb of limb and, especially out of towns, not without dignity of bearing.

His character is an impulsive one, amenable less to reason than to fear, guided less by a regard for right or wrong, than by respect for expediency.

He has his moments, and is then often just and courteous, stoical and even heroic when facing dangers he knows. His disposition is often a kindly and



A Ricksha "Boy."

hospitable one. If he is not strong in truth for its own sake, it is largely because in his figurative speech and mind fact and fancy are not rigidly distinguished, especially when, in the face of custom and the dictates of nature, to be over scrupulous about statements of fact may be neither expedient nor profitable.

These, of course, are the qualities of the immature,



Zulu Women.

rather than of the untrained, brain of a child. And the South African native has this in common with children—his observation is good, his memory retentive, his power of detecting idiosyncrasy and mimicking it, keen to a fault. Also he is generally unable to reason logically, and lack of contemplation sends him frivolously along the line of least resistance.

These are limitations which have left the average South African native on a low plane socially. Unlike any other important race, not excepting even the American Indians who under Montezuma enjoyed a considerable civilisation, the South African natives appear never to have advanced beyond the rudimentary. As they were away back in the dawn of history, so in the main do they still appear. Other races have

risen or fallen. The natives of Africa appear the only large race who have stood still.

Is this the result of poor opportunity, or insuperable defect? Given the proper opportunity, can the native develop? A few, Dingiswayo, Chaka, Moshesh, have become notable generals, statesmen, and even philosophers. But with them it was a matter not of opportunity but of merit. Each rose unaided. Each rose superior to his opportunities, not through them.

Such cases are so abnormal as to be no criterion. And though in the present generation there are some highly educated, one might say highly cultured natives, the effect of such education on the native character, and the influence of character so formed, has still to be proved.

On the whole, therefore, the native's capacity is an unknown quantity. It is still uncertain how and in what direction he can best be developed.

The present is a period of transition. Education, in the circumstances rather experimental education, is being extended to the natives. They have in places their own press, their native teachers of European learning, their own Christian ministers, their own carpenters, masons, bootmakers, tailors, printers, and even graduates in law and medicine.

But when the average native returns to the ancestral kraal, there is a tendency to slide back, to the blanket and the care-free ways of the kraal, perhaps because the backwoodsmen still form the bulk of the race, and its most virile section; and the backwoodsman, especially of the old régime, has little patience or respect for innovation. He is still a pagan at heart, loving merriment and good living, looking on a

man as a man, and woman as woman, with no impulse for the higher thought.

In his hot pagan heart there are many likeable qualities, in his bearing there is often dignity, in his downright ideas, characterised though they are by extreme simplicity, there is much that is quaint and interesting. The Zulu language especially lends itself



A Zulu Chief.

to this. It is strikingly euphonious, with a copious and flexible vocabulary; a language which often polishes and refines even a poor thought, and gives to the utterance of the better class Zulus touches of poetry. But the white man's language penetrates everywhere, and English and Dutch trade and industrial terms are now current even in Zululand.

Zululand is not exactly a tourist resort, but we found the trip, partly by rail and partly on horseback, extremely interesting. The scenes were pleasant, the people unusual. It is a country of crowded hill-tops and green valleys, all on a small scale.

In and out the dusty path which we followed wound snake-like, now dipping to a gully, anon passing through a mango grove, where the Sykes

monkeys sleep through the long hot hours, or walk in procession through the steaming air.

Sometimes a flamingo flashed to the lakes beyond, sometimes a hare or antelope streaked from its lair.

Perched on the hills were the little thatched huts of the Zulus, hills sometimes separating a dwelling from its neighbour, always separating the kraals.

It is a patriarchal land, in these native reserves,



Typical Interior, Native Hut.

where each man receives for tillage such soil as his needs suggest, living in solitary estate on his own little hill, or as a unit of the more clannish life of the many kraals.

As far as is consistent with humaneness, old native customs and laws prevail, modified and supervised by the Union Government only to the extent necessary to prevent tribal and village feuds, cattle raiding and

crime generally. Authority centres in the head of each family, next in the headman of the locality, then in the hereditary tribal chief assisted by his *indunas* or counsellors, and finally in the paramount Union Government, the Zulu king having been deposed for the peace of the country.

It is an arrangement comprehensive in its regard for civil rights, and secures to the native a code of morals and ethics adequate to his present needs, and a degree of peace and prosperity seldom known under the old régime.

The result is an unusually happy people. But there are, of course, exceptional natives, whose early days under a native king were spent in blood-letting and rousing predatory excursions; tottering old veterans, these, whose fast-fading minds now glimmer only at the thought of war, and "the good old days."

Mentally, but by no means physically, the women are generally inferior to the men. But again there are exceptions, and one sometimes comes across a self-assertive old dame accustomed to rule her husband, his other wives, all relatives within reach, and even the kraal as oracle or caster of nativities.

It was the affliction of the first headman we met to have such an one amongst his plurality of wives; who, mistaking us perhaps for the periodical tax-gatherer, frankly presaged from our visit nothing but evil for the tribe.

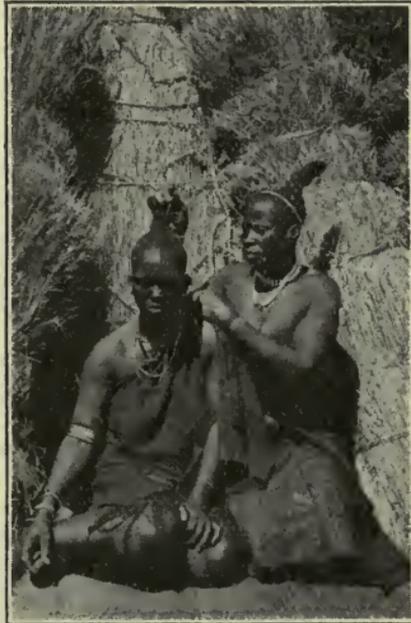
In front of her hut she sat, reviewing the simple annals of the kraal. Nobody was exempt, and quips and grim jests were hurled with great freedom, over great distances, at passing pedestrians. In fact, delicacy was not the foible of her mind. Her pleasant-ries were downright, even in allusions to the most

intimate affairs of passing village maids and matrons. Her costume was scant and malodorous, her manner peremptory, but, when in the mood, she was well worth listening to on matters of current politics.

“Gone,” she explained in reminiscent vein, “are the mighty days, when did the rains hold off or sickness come, the diviners saw and told who wrought the evil, so that someone suffered greatly.

“But now the law forbids this. The law! And what does the law but pry, hampering men and working evil with this tax and that tax, seeking always peace and money, money and peace? And to what end? See how the people toil. And what avails it? The cattle kraals are empty, the crops grow scant. But in the days of long ago, when no true Zulu worked, if aught were wanted we need but cross the border and find it there. Cattle in plenty! Corn ready ground! Women for barter and toil!

“What matter that the weak were slain, and that for miles the Fingo smeared the face with ashes? What matter, so that we the victors lay fully fed? Wow! those were the days when kings were truly



The Toilet.

kings, eating whole tribes at will ; and men were very bulls, prancing with ill-pent vigour. While now, Inkos, behold the men ! ”

Sometimes our company was different. Once, stalking superbly along with great driving strokes, a ringed *induna* came, club and shield in hand. His snuff box flapped from the lobe of one ear, his snuff spoon from the other. A stalwart Philistine of haughty mien, wrapped in a worn kaross and true African dignity. And behind him came his three lithe wives, padding soft-footed in Indian file.

Their possessions, excluding livestock, were worth perhaps ten shillings ; but apparently they were content. Theirs is an animal or ideal condition, according to whether we hold with Voltaire that the foundation of the millenium must be enlightenment and reason, or with Jean Jacques Rousseau and primeval simplicity.

Soon the *induna* and his wives were far behind, and we travelled in the quiet of the African country-



Thatchers.

side. The day was hot, the road long, so we halted at a kraal to water the horses. It was not over clean, but a place to warm the heart of an Arcadian—lazy laughter, song and labour ranking in the order here



A Zulu Veteran.

set down. It contained as primitive and contented a community as any to be found. Wants were few and apparently easily satisfied from the untidy little fields around.

At the first blink of dawn we left, and a little way

out were nearly unseated by the horses shying at a prostrate witch doctor, whose sorcery had been publicly overcome on the road by the more potent Kafir beer.

His profession, in a land drenched with the grossest superstition, is a profitable one. The raw native believes, and knows not what he believes. Spirits there are, good and bad ; especially bad. The woods are full of them. Some even live under water. A few bring rain, but others, and these have the ascendancy, are occupied in keeping it off ; in binding the soil, so that hoeing is doubly hard ; in tampering with cattle ; and in carrying evil between man and man.

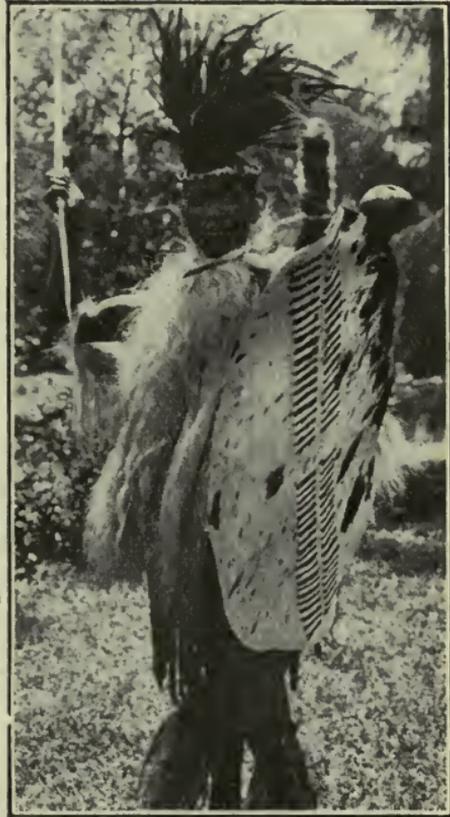
If you have an enemy, it is necessary only to invoke one of these spirits against him. Therefore, though in many respects shrewd, the raw native is spiritually tormented. Tell him that there is a dignity and manly satisfaction in labour, and he sees the fallacy at once. Speak about a benign God whose goodwill reaches to all men, and his interest wanders. But once get started about some new and peculiarly malignant devil, and you have him spell-bound, fascinated beyond all thought of time or reason.

Hence the Zulu gods or spirits are many, and the witch doctor juggles with them all ; and though witchcraft is prohibited by law, does a brisk trade in charms for curing impotency in field or stock, compounds love philtres for destroying opposition in young women coveted by the aged polygamists ; and with great dexterity manipulates certain bones, which when cast permit omens to be deduced from the fantastic dreams and visions that on hot nights beset overfed people sleeping in stuffy huts.

The witch doctor—that helpless vehicle of a sorcery more downright than his own, slept on as we passed. It was a perfect day, such as one seldom meets with out of Africa. Later it would be burning hot, but now in the dawn the land lay fresh and fragrant. Cool, wandering breezes came fitfully, and on the horizon hovered the miracle of an African sunrise.

With the sun came life. Householders on little hill-tops stretched themselves,—smoke curled from a hundred fires, and when the dew had been quickly sucked up by the rich sunshine, the cattle were turned out to graze. The herders are usually youths, but two we came across were anything but that. They were bags of merely skin and bone, pitiable in their extreme old age and general emaciation. So we gave them food, and added some tobacco.

“Behold a feast! Lo, it is meat!” the elder croney admitted, rubbing a slim and leathery stomach. One by one with the hesitancy of full



A Zulu Warrior.



The Water Carriers.

enjoyment, the tinned sausages were despatched, with many a guttural "Wow!" And when the last scrap had been licked from fingers and tin, and any remnant of grease had been carefully rubbed on scant beards pipes were lit. The strong tobacco heartened the courage of the veterans, reserve thawed, and they talked with us a while, like men of the world, "meat-fed" men, as the elder explained.

Merry fellows and shrewd withal, they proved, with many a jest, and many a sage saw pointed well. Time passed and the pipes were fully smoked.

"Leave now my soul in further peace, my father, and deign another fill," and the old and trembling hand held out the still warm pipe.

Under its relit influence his tongue was further loosened, and he told of the good old days and many wars, speaking as a slayer of men. It was a tale in which victory and women, cattle and blood, strove each for ascendancy; a tale of stirring times, when he "pillaged and gave to the sword," none chiding. But the tale was long, the day was growing hot, so we took our departure.

He had however been right. Times were stirring in the South Africa of his youth.

Properly to appreciate what at that time the native, without outside help or suggestion, attained to, it is necessary to hark back. At one time there lived the chief of one of the many clans then occupying part of what is now called Zululand. He had two sons, Tana and Godongwana.

Their temperaments fitted them for something more hazardous than the pastoral life of Zululand in times of peace; their ambitions were towards empire and deeds of derring-do. They plotted the murder

of the old chief, in order that, as his probable heirs, they might arrange matters more to a warrior's liking. The plot miscarried. Tana was killed. Godongwana, badly wounded, managed only just to escape. For some fifteen years nothing was heard of him: the old chief died, a successor took his place.

Then happened an event, trifling in itself but destined to affect the whole of Kafirdom profoundly. From afar, in that rapid and mysterious way news travels amongst the South African natives, a tale of wonder reached the Zulu kraals. A young chief was approaching, who should say from where? bringing with him two such animals "as no man had previously seen," and "carrying thunder and lightning in his hands." Like Cortes in Mexico, some centuries before, the traveller gained from the wonder his mounts and weapons elicited, an advantage no power of his own could have compelled; for in Zululand no one had previously seen or heard of a horse, or seen or heard of a firearm; and no one could rightly foretell the resource of one who could dabble with such creations.

As a god among men, therefore, the horseman advanced by easy stages, little prone, remembering his long and menial exile, to forego an iota of the awe he created, yet letting it be gradually known, that though now peculiarly favoured from the spirit world, he was really none other than Godongwana returned. He was proclaimed chief, and assumed the name of Dingiswayo—the Wanderer.

It is believed Dingiswayo's exile had been spent in the vicinity of white men. There his astute mind no doubt found opportunities for appreciating the superiority of an army using firearms, properly

officered for the maintenance of discipline, divided into regiments and companies for prompt handling, and even in times of peace regularly drilled to maintain efficiency. Firearms, except the one he possessed, were beyond his command ; but the other novelties he as far as possible proceeded to introduce.

He quickly set about shaping an army, the prowess of which soon exceeded anything previously dreamt of in Kafirdom. Thereafter his career was one succession of conquests. But besides being an able general, he proved a clement conqueror. He conciliated and won over, rather than destroyed or enslaved, those he conquered in battle. Unlike most natives of his age, or of any previous age, he fought not for the lust of fighting, but rather when the interests of his people demanded it, and then fought irresistibly, but not vindictively. A large and prosperous nation consequently owned him master, over which, till his death, he reigned benignly.

Meanwhile tactics not unlike those of Dingiswayo's own hotheaded early manhood, had embroiled the youthful scion of an adjoining tribe ; who about 1805 fled to Dingiswayo for protection. The stripling joined the renowned army as a cadet, and was destined in time to become its most brilliant, and its most terrible leader ; a man whose military talents far exceeded those of even Dingiswayo, but whose character lacked the delicate balance, and whose motives were savage. This was Chaka.

He was a natural soldier, and not only quickly imbibed, but in time much improved on all Dingiswayo could teach him. In five years he was a leader of veterans ; though not the rightful heir to the chieftainship of his tribe, he succeeded to it through

Dingiswayo's influence; eight or ten years later Dingiswayo died.

By a chance accession of tribal strength Chaka, from being a comparatively minor chief, acquired the control of a powerful combination. He made the fullest use of it. War, ruddy beyond any previously known, raged through the land. The battle field became the practice ground for Chaka's troops. Rapid, numerous and crushing defeats were inflicted on all pretending to any degree of independence.



The Shopping Expedition.

Probably over a million victims succumbed violently to that terrible reign.

Musing on such a past, when travelling through Zululand, one cannot but marvel that the nation should have survived so well; that scenes once so turbulent, so full of pain and horror, should have become so happy. A genial atmosphere of peace and prosperity has now settled over that sunny country.

It is amidst such rural and peaceful surroundings that Chaka, assassinated at last, lies buried; and

around him, spread wide to distant borders, the million beings, over whose lives he stepped to power, moulder and are forgotten.

Yet not quite forgotten. A century has passed, but to the chronic superstition of the native mind much for awe still remains. At dusk, especially, belated men hurry through the shadowy valleys with many a backward glance. All day the bush is cheered by the sound of insect and bird; and the most watery courage is sustained by the heartening sunshine. But at evening it is different. Twilight is a brief and impressive affair. The almost tropic night comes swiftly. A tense, expectant lull ensues. Even the river grows strangely still. The darkening waters slink by, and then, the sable veterans hold, strange things happen. A strong impulse, according to the tales in the kraals, is felt. The river spirit calls from its oozy bed, and wandering maidens rush shrieking to a watery grave.

And from that lonely tomb, where the "Child of Night and Evil" lies, who knows but that the sombre storm-tossed soul then issues forth, through the phantom moon-shot shadows, to a waiting death-wrapped army; carrying the magic which once slew nations, and with it stirring new life into the bleached still limbs; lighting new courage on the fierce dead faces; drawing from the dusty throats the war-cry's brazen thunder; and from the women and children who died, the wail of a terrible mourning.

"Who knows?" the *indunas* ask.

"Therefore in the dark," they say, "it is not well to be abroad, even for a wielder of clubs."



PIETERMARITZBURG.
Provincial Council Buildings. Colonial Office. Town Hall.
196

CHAPTER XVI.

PIETERMARITZBURG.

Pietermaritzburg is essentially a place in which to reside, and it is as such a place that I think it will have a future.

—SIR MATTHEW NATHAN,
formerly Governor of Natal.

AFTER the long jaunt of sight-seeing in the sub-tropics of coastal Natal, a day or two in a well-appointed train, where the catering is good and the attendance trained, is a rest rather than a bore. The journey to Bergville or Ladysmith, en route to the Drakensberg, has consequently the attraction of comfort and change, especially if a stay be made at Pietermaritzburg. So one settles down in the corridor saloon with satisfaction and with a growing anticipation as the train winds over the flats from Durban.

Along those flats, in the days of the ox-wagon, the worn teams used to flounder with their heavy loads to and from places as distant as Pretoria. That is completely changed, and trains now carry the country's produce. It has become a rich produce, and the trains steam night and day to carry it; long trains from the plains and hills, with coal from local Glencoe, Dundee and Dannhauser; trains of mixed cargoes, especially wool, hides, meat, and wattle-bark and timber from highland pastures and plantations; grain trains from the maize-belt; and trains fragrant with fruit.

In out-of-the-way places, under all conditions—on barren volcanic ridges, in densely wooded valleys—through warm light mists in the lowlands, or beneath the frost-rimmed stars of winter nights on the plateau, you meet them, as from Durban the mail winds from height to height up into the hill air of Natal. The bougainvillæa, the azaleas and the roses of the Berea ; the tree-ferns and the



Krantz-Kloof.

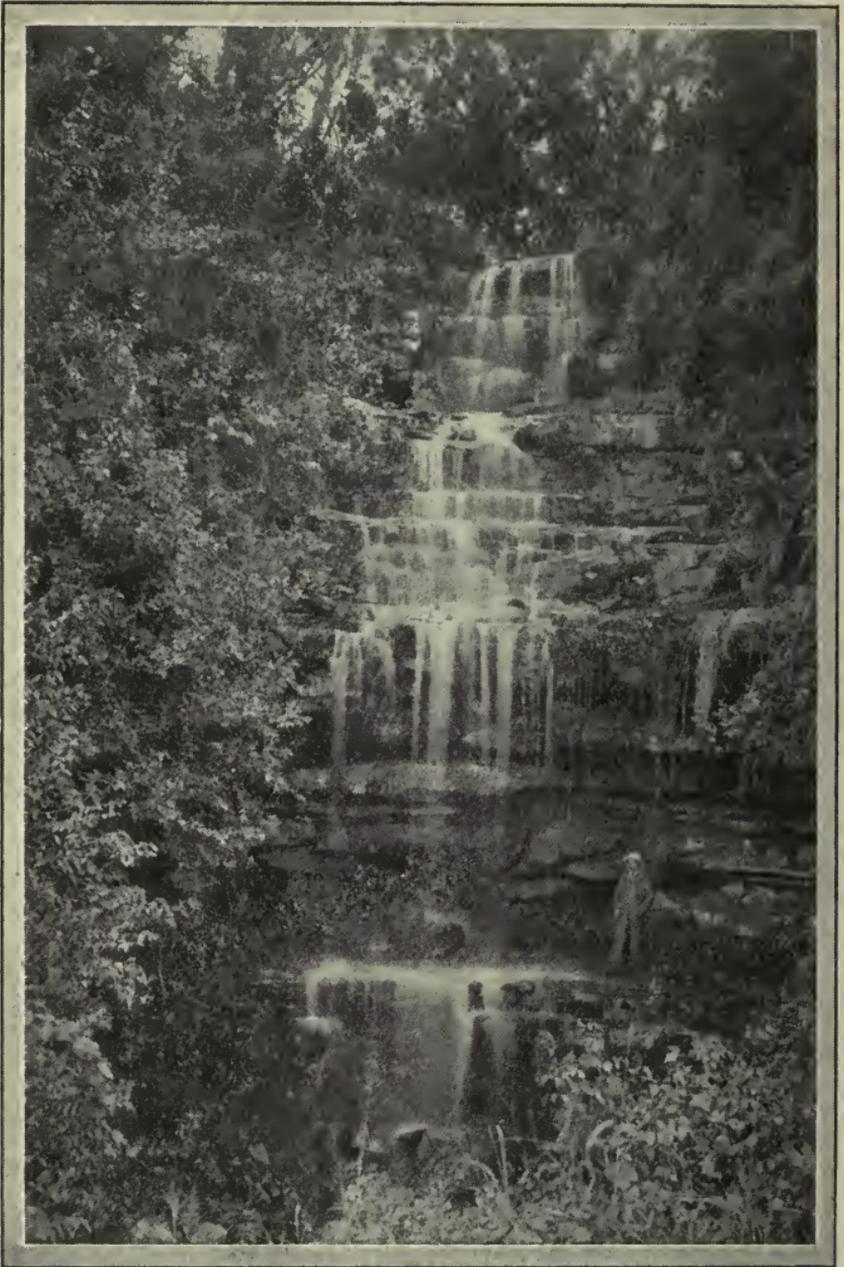
papaws of Bellair, the groves of bananas and tangerines of the thirty-mile radius soon lie below, and the hills close round you as the train ascends ; not the little green foot-hills of the coast, but granite masses, great cañons, and lonely ravines, with which the fleeting passenger train, aglitter with plate-glass or electric light, forms an exotic contrast.

Thus between meal and meal the scenery changes. It comprises much of the best in Natal, but of a kind very different to that of the coast. Parts of the route are somewhat sterile, and at best volcanically fantastic; but other parts, as around Northdene and Sarnia, are wholly inviting, and from Fields' Hill onwards the panorama, if the light be right, is worthy of close attention. In one place a waterfall comes elegantly down the precipice, and the sun at times dusts it with gold and pearl. As if for effective contrast, Krantz-kloof, a series of shadowy cañons, follows, rugged and grand. And then there unexpectedly bursts on the delighted eye the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

Not far off lies Pietermaritzburg, seventy-one miles from Durban.

Since 1914 economic conditions have changed so much for the worse in Britain and Europe, and, changing, have so adversely affected most countries throughout the world, that it would be too much to expect that the Union of South Africa should have escaped. On the contrary, it has suffered much. The cost-of-living problem is an acute one, but in the Union it is still possible for the average person to live comfortably, even happily.

To the traveller with recent experience of the, one hopes temporary, discomforts of Britain and Europe, this alone makes a place like Pietermaritzburg attractive; for Pietermaritzburg is in the enviable position of being close to, though beyond sight of, great and busily-worked coalfields; and it is the centre, or within easy reach, of extremely rich farming areas where sugar, tea, meat, maize, cotton, tobacco, dairy products, wool and many



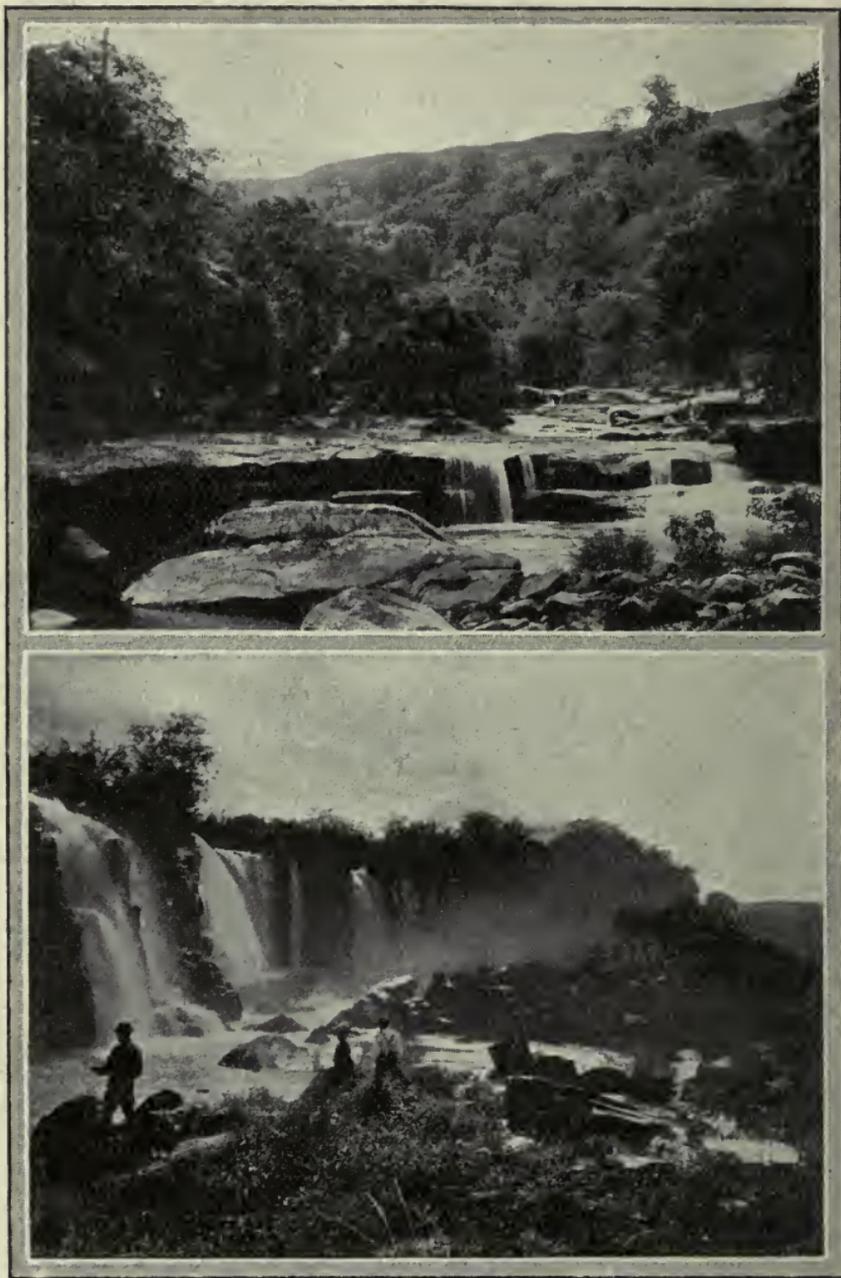
A Glen near Pietermaritzburg.
200

kinds of fruits—all the necessaries and a notable portion of the luxuries of life—are produced in abundance. Indeed many of the finest estates in South Africa are in the vicinity. Some of them may have taken half a lifetime to develop, but now their owners are mostly well-to-do, living in delightful surroundings, with occupation that is not only profitable but congenial.



Pietermaritzburg: General View.

Travelling around such places one cannot but be struck by the reflection that though we live in a highly civilised age, though all the wilds have been tamed and there are no more Klondykes to exploit, still in young countries the money-making opportunities, the scope for brains and courage and energy are as great as ever. The natural resources



Albert Falls, Natal.

of South Africa, for instance, are really only on the eve of exploitation. That fact makes travelling in the Union more than ordinarily interesting: there are open on every side so many possibilities—commercial, industrial and agricultural, so many points at which the traveller is constrained to pause and consider whether this would not be a good country in which to settle or at least to become financially interested.

Hence the significance of Sir Matthew Nathan's prediction, for to-day, more than ever Pietermaritzburg as a place of residence particularly merits the attention of people of means who find British or European conditions, economic as well as climatic, increasingly trying. To the new-comer, accustomed to the populous towns of Britain, Pietermaritzburg though it is one of the principal towns of South Africa may appear neither large nor pretentious. But after all it is not only the amount of brick and mortar in a town that counts. Amenities, atmosphere, are even more important, and Pietermaritzburg is a bright, well-cared-for town with all modern conveniences and many quaint local features that on riper acquaintance prove lovable. It is a place of sunshine and plenty, where neither the dull grey cold of the North nor the hand of the Food-Controller is known; a place having much of the picturesqueness of the subtropics with, however, on the whole a comparatively cool and agreeable climate, for though the summers are sometimes sultry, they are generally cooled by thunder-storms, and the winter is wholly delightful.

Socially and educationally, Pietermaritzburg has much to commend it. It was the capital of Natal before the South African provinces united in 1910,

and is still an important scholastic centre, the seat of a Provincial Council, and of a bishopric. Its situation, well over two thousand feet above sea-level, with Hilton Road, Fox Hill, and Sweetwaters, which are practically suburbs of Pieter-

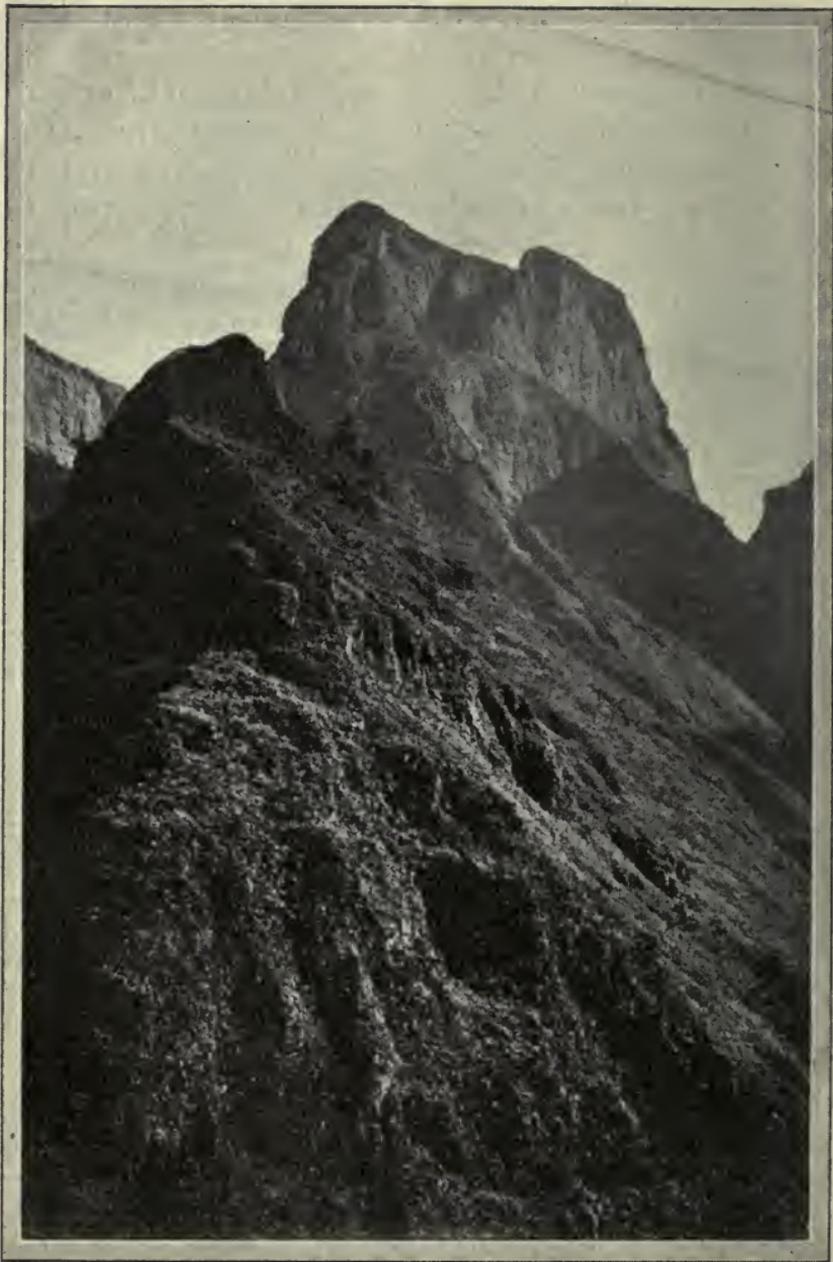


The Market, Pietermaritzburg.

maritzburg, fifteen hundred feet still higher, in a district which if not uniformly beautiful is in parts of rare beauty, makes the town popular not only as a place of residence, but as a holiday resort, and when the heat haze hangs like a hot blanket over the coast, it is to Pietermaritzburg, and the little

hill stations nestled above it, that the Natalians themselves flock for relief.

For those who with rod, oar, haversack, or gun desire recreation amid pleasant surroundings, the trout streams, mountains, and valleys around or within easy reach of Pietermaritzburg are a source of contentment. And for those who like a touch of the romantic about the places they visit, there is much about the associations of Pietermaritzburg that are tragic and even dramatic. Few towns have made bigger sacrifices in the cause of civilisation; few deserve a warmer regard, whether from Boer or Briton. As a sort of buffer against the barbarian, when to live outside the three or four comparatively populous South African centres was to live constantly in jeopardy, it has time and again stemmed native invasion. In the battlefields, which so plentifully dot South Africa, no town, size for size, has paid a heavier toll, or had more fateful issues settled in its vicinity. Go beyond the timbered slopes of the Maritzburg Berea, pass the Karkloof Range, and beyond lie Fugitives' Drift, Rorke's Drift, and Isandhlwana. Take the train north from Pietermaritzburg, and soon you come to Frere, Chieveley, Talana, Estcourt, and Ladysmith, and there see again Cæsar's Camp and Wagon Hill, the cairn where the Devons charged, and Spion Kop; and in the farness, Majuba.



Champagne Castle, Drakensberg.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DRAKENSBERG.

England ! thy beauties are tame and domestic
To one who has roved on the mountains afar.

—LORD BYRON.

FROM Capetown eastwards, and then northwards right through the Transvaal, there is a more or less continuous chain of mountains, extending for over twelve hundred miles. Of this chain the most important section is the Drakensberg, or “Mountains of the Dragons.”

The Drakensberg are to South Africa what the Himalayas are to India and Thibet, or the Rocky Mountains to North America. They form a rampart six hundred miles long, which separates Natal on the one side from Basutoland and the Free State on the other side. The highest peaks, Giant’s Castle, Cathkin Peak and Mont aux Sources, are far apart, but all are in Natal. Giant’s Castle rises to about twelve thousand feet above sea level, or more than seven thousand feet above the surrounding country, and therefore is perhaps of most interest to the mountaineer ; but Mont aux Sources, 10,600 feet, is the most popular resort in these mountains, partly because it is comparatively easy to reach, but mainly because of its remarkable surroundings. The Tugela Gorge below Mont aux Sources, the Goodoo Pass adjoining, and the foot-hills and valleys one skirts to



Bed of Tugela River.

reach these, form together, especially in summer, a panorama that for interest and beauty is unexcelled.

There is a modest but well-managed hostel at the foot of the mountains, where accommodation, guides and ponies are obtainable. The thirty-mile road from the railway is in places bad, but horse-drawn vehicles, and even motor cars, regularly



Main Tugela Gorge.

pass over it for the five months in the year when little rain falls. But in the rainy season, from October to February, the Tugela River, which in that locality is not bridged, is sometimes unfordable for days.

Therefore until the mooted transport improvements to Mont aux Sources are effected, visitors should make their arrangements well ahead, either for a motor conveyance straight through from Ladysmith, which

is the better arrangement; or if they come by rail to the branch-line station at Bergville, they should previously have arranged for the manager of the hostel at Goodoo to have transport ready at the railway station.

This we did. The train from Pietermaritzburg skirted wooded ravines, the whiff of wattle blossom occasionally came from a plantation to the carriage window, breakfast and lunch were served, and still the train climbed higher and higher among the plentiful hills.

We were only a hundred and fifteen miles from Durban, but the scenes of the Natal coast were now five thousand feet below us, and already the last of the tropic days had crept softly away.

It was with a pang that we realised the fact, for the tour below had held many happy hours. But, as someone from the heats of India has said, a breath of the snow blows away twenty years of a man's age, and makes a boy of the veteran when again he smells the hills. There was at the time no snow on the Drakensberg, yet undeniably it was exhilarating to travel at that high altitude, in a rarefied atmosphere that had a distinct mountain tang; for we were now in the environs of the mountains, and mist-wreathed peaks stood on the horizon.

To the plainsman this meant little. Even through his field-glasses he saw nothing to quicken interest; and it is worthy of mention that from the railway the Drakensberg, though in places seven thousand feet above the surrounding country, appear very much lower. They rise behind so many foot-hills, that, on a distant view, the eye is trained from height

to height so gradually that by the time the highest peak is viewed, a proper perception of its vastness is swamped by the intervening distance. Thirty miles away, as from the railway, one might all day travel parallel with the Drakensberg and hardly give them a second glance, and therefore to the plainsman the scene, though not unpicturesque, held nothing more than hundreds of other scenes through which we had passed on this tour.

To the hillman, however, it was like coming home. For him there was the promise that, behind the sterile outer ridges, there would be the refreshment of green mountain meadows, cool valleys, crystal streams; forests, like those in books of adventure, where the wild grape, the saffron, the elder, the yellow-wood, and the monkey rope grow; cañons rich in the unique and grand; and over all a sunny air.

In the early morning of a summer day, beneath the bluest of rain-washed skies, we left Bergville for the mountain hostel. It was an interesting though shaky trip. For fourteen miles, to the ford of the Tugela, that historic river over which Botha and Buller fought, while White was besieged in neighbouring Ladysmith, the going was easy. Then the road became tortuous, in places precipitous, and the surroundings more and more grand.

The road as it nears the mountains winds round the painted foot-hills—who shall write of those foot-hills and do them justice? Then over miles of meadow, which, as it was early summer, were green and smooth as lawns. Anon there is a dip through never-to-be-forgotten valleys, soft in colouring and

varied in outline—and when at last you emerge over a hummock, suddenly and at close quarters the main range stands revealed.

It is magnificent beyond anything that words or photography can convey. On the journey the valleys and foot-hills had interested us amply to pass the time ; but now the eye had something even more entrancing to contemplate in the colossal ramparts that overtopped and subordinated everything else in the landscape, and the high and lonely peaks that loomed in such austere beauty.

Even the plainsman caught his breath and thrilled at the sight.

Our party assembled before dawn, and in Indian file took the trail for Mont aux Sources.

We travelled leisurely at the prescribed walking pace, halting for long spells over the more striking views in silent mood as befitted the place ; so that by sunrise we had covered only two miles.

It was seven before we reached Breakfast Rock, where a meal had been prepared, and was eaten with mountain appetite. There the ponies were left, and the journey continued on foot. We were then well into the six-mile long Tugela Gorge, or, as it might better be called, the Grand Cañon.

By now the sun was beating hotly down one side of the cañon, but soon the trail turned to the other side, and then wound along a narrow ledge through the cool depths of a wood.

Woods are a feature of the cañon. They in places drape both its sides, and give grace and variety to the scene—a beautiful framework of foliage through which the farther peaks look down.

There we wandered in a cool twilight, among the

yellow-woods and wild elder, where the tree ferns grow, and a type of vivid lily glows on the banks of moss. And occasionally a wandering sunbeam added a new delight, and occasionally a fountain in a bower splashed us as we passed. It was the very place in which to idle away a summer day. Looking from a casement on the traffic of the city, the memory of those woods still comes to



A Mountain Path, Drakensberg.

us, and stirs up longing, and a lingering hunger for the mountains.

The woods were soon traversed, and then for the moment were forgotten, for now the true ascent began, through wild and romantic scenery.

Breathless we found ourselves where to the crash of chaos, æons ago, the Titans of wind and frost and sun had wrought, in solid rock and celestial tintings,



Northern Gorge, Drakensberg.

to create the truly impressive. The changing colourings in the changing light were marvellous—polished black and variegated granite, sandstone in pearl-grey and red, the various greens of the coppice



Near Breakfast Rock.

which filled the gorge, the brilliant and at that time of the year, abundant scarlet of the " bottle-brush " ; and over all, Mont aux Sources, royal blue on its lower slopes to where, lit by a blazing sun, its fluted peaks glowed, literally glowed, in pink and bronze.



The Spires, Mont aux Sources.

Such colouring we had never seen. But the wonder of it gave place at last to the greater wonder of the enormity of all around. Gigantic boulders strewed the way in wildest confusion. Riven rocks towered loftily on either side. Great shadows fell athwart the defile and deepened where they fell; precipices, to the bottom of which the sun reaches only from the meridian, yawned far below.

And always visible, sheer in the background; and ever impressed close on our consciousness, was Mont aux Sources. Rugged and broad above everything it stood, *a solitaire* in the great mountain shadows.

The party now found the cañon walls closing in around them. Indeed at the so-called tunnel, which is really a defile, so narrow was the passage that, high above, the sky appeared only as a slit. And as we wound our way up those little-trodden recesses of the mountain, a silence, so deep as to be disturbing, brooded over the place. Sometimes a stone, carelessly dislodged, rushed down the abyss, awakening echoes; but these disturbances, instead of dispelling, seemed only to emphasise the solemn silence.

Perhaps some idea of the extreme solitude and impressiveness of the place may be conveyed by mentioning that, as the party threaded its way through the lonely defile, far above us, out of the clear blue sky, but carried by the rocky walls as by a sounding board, came the cry of a mountain eagle; and as one man all stopped, so out of place was even that slight sound.

We were now in the heart of the mountains. The air grew colder, the surroundings wilder and more

grand. And still the trail rose higher and higher, and as the eye followed it up, peak peeped from behind peak, and Mont aux Sources loomed in a solemnity that somehow awed. It was like entering the sanctuary of some waiting deity; as though the looming peaks and silent ravines watched our intrusion. And some moiety of the lofty spirit of the place communicated itself to the climbers and caused them to tread softly and with reverence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DRAKENSBERG (*continued*).

“ When all thy mercies, O my God,
“ My rising soul surveys,
“ Transported with the view, I'm lost
“ In wonder, love and praise.”

THE trip to Mont aux Sources, through the Tugela Gorge, ordinarily occupies two to three days, though if one be pressed for time it is possible to do it in fourteen hours, as we did. But we missed much. Indeed this trip alone is well worth spending a leisurely week over, so much is there to enjoy, especially if besides the spirit and atmosphere of the place one takes an interest in botany, geology, serious climbing, painting or photography; and more especially if the recent stocking of the streams with trout proves a success.

Therefore on some of the long excursions one cannot return to the hostel by dark, but must sleep in the mountains. Huts erected in convenient positions and simply but suitably furnished would therefore be a convenience; and as has been mentioned, they will probably soon be provided. Meanwhile there is the ruder shelter of the caves.

Night in a mountain cave is a novel experience, and as bedding, food and attendance are provided from the hostel, it is an experience that even the fastidious will find tolerably comfortable. This advantage of not being tied to any particular spot for food and bed, enables one to explore so wide an

area, that at the time of our stay visitors who had been there a month were only partly through their programme, and had booked for a further period.

With so many places worth visiting in the vicinity, and so many opportunities for a daily picnic on the grand scale, it is not possible in the space at our disposal to even indicate all. We shall therefore allude to only one other excursion, and then leave the photographs to speak for themselves, though it cannot be too strongly emphasised that a mountain photograph, as it leaves out the colour and compresses miles into inches, can convey little of the beauty and majesty of the scene.

Our second trip was through the Goodoo Gorge. This route takes one from Natal to the corner of Basutoland and the Free State; and it is also another way of getting to Mont aux Sources—not to the front and base of Mont aux Sources, as when one goes through Tugela Gorge, but to the back and top of the Mont, 10,600 feet above sea level. It is like going up the grand staircase of the continent.

The pass at the head of Goodoo is one of the main outlets in these mountains. It is a miniature Khyber, with an interesting and considerable traffic in the season when the Basutos—the mountain tribe of South Africa, stalk through in their picturesque patches, bringing grain or wool on their shaggy ponies. These ponies are a distinct breed—pot-bellied, hollow-flanked and somewhat unkempt owing to an almost exclusively grass diet and an entire lack of grooming. But what they lack in appearance they make up for in prescience, endeavour, and even a shame-faced friendliness. And as it is on such mounts that one explores the place, one

grows to love the breed, with that mixed feeling felt for a dear but disreputable-looking friend.

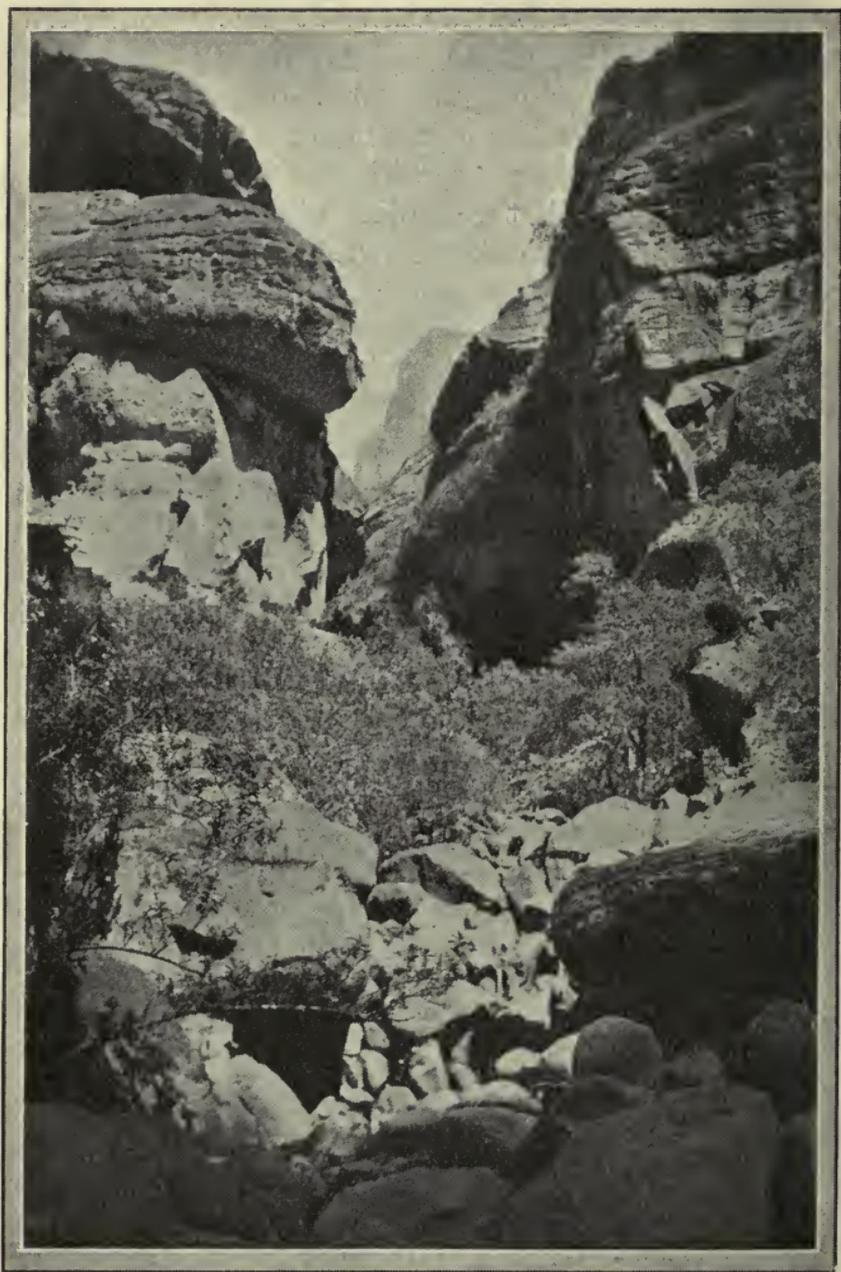
These Basuto ponies, with goat-like agility, walk for preference on the edge of things, whether to show what they can do, or merely in the hope of one day falling over, is still the subject of debate. And as they have done so for generations, and have a pioneer's lust for the untrodden, the result is a wealth of paths, that hang precipitously over the gorges, and twist and rise and dip with great abandon.

It is along these paths, on horseback, that the visitor does his climbing of Goodoo, and from them that he sees the mountains at so many angles, and in so many changes of light and shade, that there is always the charm of variety, always an aspect of new interest to pause and view.

That is the attraction of Goodoo, it has not perhaps the grandeur of Tugela Gorge, but it has so many windings and perspectives that the eye is constantly intrigued; and when you get on top—why! "distance lends enchantment to the view."

In the present simplicity of the place, one keeps early hours. The coming of day is fresher than in town, one rises from sleep without reluctance, and after an early breakfast, to which all sat down sufficiently hungry, it was usual to saddle the ponies and be off without delay.

Down from the heights, as we ascended, there came a full-flavoured mountain air, with a tang of mist and heather in it, that tasted good in the nostrils. There was a sparkle in the sunshine; warm colours lay on the nearer rocks and lit the peaks. And over the scene lingered a summer haze, that softened the



Tugela Gorge.

air and tinted the valleys—the long blue mountain valleys round which our little procession filed.

It was a golden day, sunny yet cool; so tempting that the deer grazed far down the glades, beyond their usual hour; and, as we ascended, occasionally a duiker or rhebuck would glide from the scene, with more than the ordinary grace of even a wild thing.

At times a rider and his horse, like pigmies in heroic sculpture, would be perched on some mighty hummock, shirt flapping and mane streaming in the merry breeze; or, round buttresses where hardly a zephyr came, they would creep on the utmost edge of precipices. There was all the illusion, to one



Bushman Rock Paintings.

looking on, of great physical energy strenuously expended and perils bravely encountered. But really the exertion was insufficient to tire even the languid, or the danger to deter the timid, so easy was the going, so sure-footed and docile the pony.

The illusion was however only one of several encountered as we ascended. What, for instance, out of deference to the feelings of the guide, we had called woods, though when seen from below they appeared only as scrub on a ledge of the cañon wall, now proved to be a forest; one of the few South African forests in which tall native timber still flourishes—a really stately thing piled somehow in



Ascent to Goodoo Bush.
224

among the mountain crags, and sweeping up a steep defile to a cascade and grotto ; the whole forming as alluring a spot as a poet could desire.

It was a scene such as Scott would have loved to limn—an appropriate setting for a lay on some vanished minstrel, or the background for some old border ballad ; the sort of scene one would associate with troubadours, border alarms and excursions, and such trappings of romance.

Unfortunately for the picturesque, however, veracity compels the admission that these mountains have apparently had only one tenant. That was the “ Child of the Mountains ” as the Bushman was aptly called ; and even he has gone, and all that remains as a memorial to him are a few rock paintings and a singularly bad reputation.

Of the two, perhaps the rock paintings have proved the more durable. They are not without interest.

Generally they are crude, such as an untrained hand might idly trace. Yet there is much that is surprising about those paintings. They are the conceptions of rude but observant minds, and ungainly on the whole though the drawing may be, the artist at times contrives a happy touch, that gives subtlety to attitude and expression, and hits off the animal or scene most justly.

Even the best of these painters, however, were noteworthy, not for their delicacy or point, but for the fact that of all South Africa's untutored natives, the lowest in the social scale was the only one in whom, through the ages, artistic promptings stirred.

Of all mankind the Bushman was the lowest. He was detested and hunted by surrounding peoples, white and black. He was an outlaw because of his murderous and marauding habits, and more an animal than a man, living in a lair or cave, dispensing

almost entirely with utensils or other property, and possessing social and family instincts hardly more developed than those of the baboons.

Yet the fancy and impulse of an artist sent him laboriously to chip on the living rock, and cunningly to colour in pigments he had contrived from roots and minerals, such pictures as floated through his prehistoric brain. Perhaps ages ago he brought the talent from Egypt ; but whatever the explanation for the Bushman, of all people, being singled out for the pains and pleasures of artistic creation, the result is apparent throughout South Africa.

As therefore in travelling the country one meets much allusion to the Bushmen and their paintings, a word or two about this strange and vanished people may be in place here, especially as the Drakensberg was one of the large fastnesses in which the Bushman found refuge—a refuge strangely congenial, a fastness wild, lonely and remote as the little man himself.

One admirable trait the Bushman always had—a passionate love of freedom, for which he deemed no



sacrifice too great, preferring, as happened in the end, to die rather than serve, or even live, under the European regime. Always, as civilisation spread through the country, he managed to evade its influence, living often out of touch with even his own fellows, alone in the wilderness with his diminutive mate and their naked brood. There, as a tracker and hunter, he was without rival; some hold that he was even on speaking terms with birds and beasts; certainly he knew all that went on in the wilds, being a wild thing himself.

Had the Bushmen been content to remain merely picturesque they might have flourished to the present day. But in time they became banditti. Like the Border moss-troopers of old, it became

Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night
O'er mountain, moss and moor.

They became a scourge to white settlers and Kafirs alike, sweeping off livestock with a dexterity so uncanny as suggested to many that animals would follow the voice and directions of a Bushman as of a blood relation.

Such raids naturally led to reprisals, and as the Bushmen shot their poisoned arrows on sight, it became a warfare without parley or quarter. It was warfare to the death, and slowly but surely, to their robber forebears, the Bushmen passed over, with arms in their hands, and battle in their hearts. And all that now remains of them is a memory, recalled, as in the Drakensberg, when one comes across a weathered daub that speaks of the past—speaks so insistently that it is not hard to imagine the little bandit back again, oppressing the world below, and perhaps more cruelly oppressed by the spirit-world which his fancy pictured above; a little man of bronze and gloom, lonely in vast surroundings.

Such, or nearly such, was the tale the guide related in the quiet noon. For a while we meandered with the river, through a shadowy mountain ravine. Then, curiosity being stirred sufficiently for the exertion of reaching the Bushmen's paintings above, we left the horses for a while and entered the forest. Through strata of light mist, and a cool air of old mould dampened by a recent shower, we climbed for



A Lonely Peak.

perhaps thirty minutes, in among the big trees, where the Berg bamboo tangled the paths, and the monkey rope hung derelict, dripping like ships' cables.

The spirit and atmosphere of the place were somehow reminiscent; they fitted exactly the theme to which we had listened below; and as at last we entered the grotto, this we felt was just the dramatic setting for such a tale—just the place for the little people whose favourite nook it may have been.

We were soon surrounded by a square of rock and

wood. And though the shower of rain had now passed and the sun was again shining strongly, so narrow was the grotto, so lofty and sheer its surrounding walls, that only a subdued light entered, which gave a strangely mystic radiance to the falling waters, the polished rocks, the pool and surrounding foliage.

Such was the Bushmen's grotto, once their home, now perhaps their sepulchre—a kind of Valhalla, hall of the slain.

It is known as Goodoo Bush Fall, but such a name misses the spirit of the place. Indeed we even travelled in thought down the years, and pictured some little bronze figure lingering there, in the solitude and grandeur, far from the haunts of men; some wild maid of the mountains, the last of her race.

It wants that human touch—the rude beauty of rounded limb and glistening copper skin, perched say on some great polished boulder, the curtain of ever-falling water for background, and the pool and its reflections framed by the forest and grotto, to make a picture even more haunting in its appeal than the Bushmen paintings we had come to see.

The horses, when we returned to the ravine below the forest, were grazing quietly, though baboons were clearly visible on adjoining slopes. A native from the hostel had kindled fire, and after lunch, to the drowsy cooing of mountain doves, we spent a restful half-hour on the grassy banks of the stream. Then girths were tightened and we mounted again. The rest of the ascent through Goodoo Gorge was done on horseback.

In winter Goodoo Gorge can at times be desolate enough. There is then often snow at that altitude, a biting wind whistles from above, and the hard cold splits even the rocks. But now we travelled along



Drakensberg, The Summit.
230

the edge of valleys melodious with running waters, the slopes were bright with grass and flowers, and the air mellow. And so, travelling beneath huge battlements and turreted walls, the hours slipped past unnoticed as steadily we ascended. Then



A Defile in the Drakensberg.

unexpectedly the aneroid showed an elevation of 10,000 feet. We were on top. It was the intense moment of the trip. There we sat like gods, limitless in our outlook; yet, unlike gods, hypnotised by the vastness of the view that filled the eye.

Great prospects seen from such a height fill the

spectator with elation, and he must be cold in heart who failed to warm to such a view. Across the darkening peaks we gazed, into what is not merely empty immensity but, at that time of the year, a very lovely part of Africa—an amity of woods, waters, pastures and mountains, a realm varied in the renewal and promise of nature. And if you see it in the glow of a summer sunset, far along, from peak to peak, the glorious colouring burns, as the sun holds colloquy with the mountain, till at last the level rays dip over the horizon, night comes on, and the cold creeps down.

So you gather in the cave, round the mountain camp-fire, where the shadows deepen, and the hungry flames lick round the cooking pots. Boots and clothes, from contact with the flora, exhale the pleasant odour of grass and herbs. And in that air, food—and then tobacco, taste doubly good, as after dinner one idles round the camp-fire, listening to mountain tales and transport yarns of the “good old days.” But at last the fire dies down, each seeks his bed of blankets spread on bracken, the darkness creeps up closer round the cave, peace lays a gentle caress on the camp, and one by one the drowsy minds, remitting care, sink into sleep; and soon nothing but quiet breathing is heard in the hush of the mountain night.

It was midnight when we woke. The sky was very full of stars. It may have been the altitude, standing as we were so far above earth exhalations, but those stars, we thought, burned more brightly than any seen before,—pendant stars so lustrous, and so large, that they seemed quite close to us and friendly, closer and more friendly than the darkened earth below.

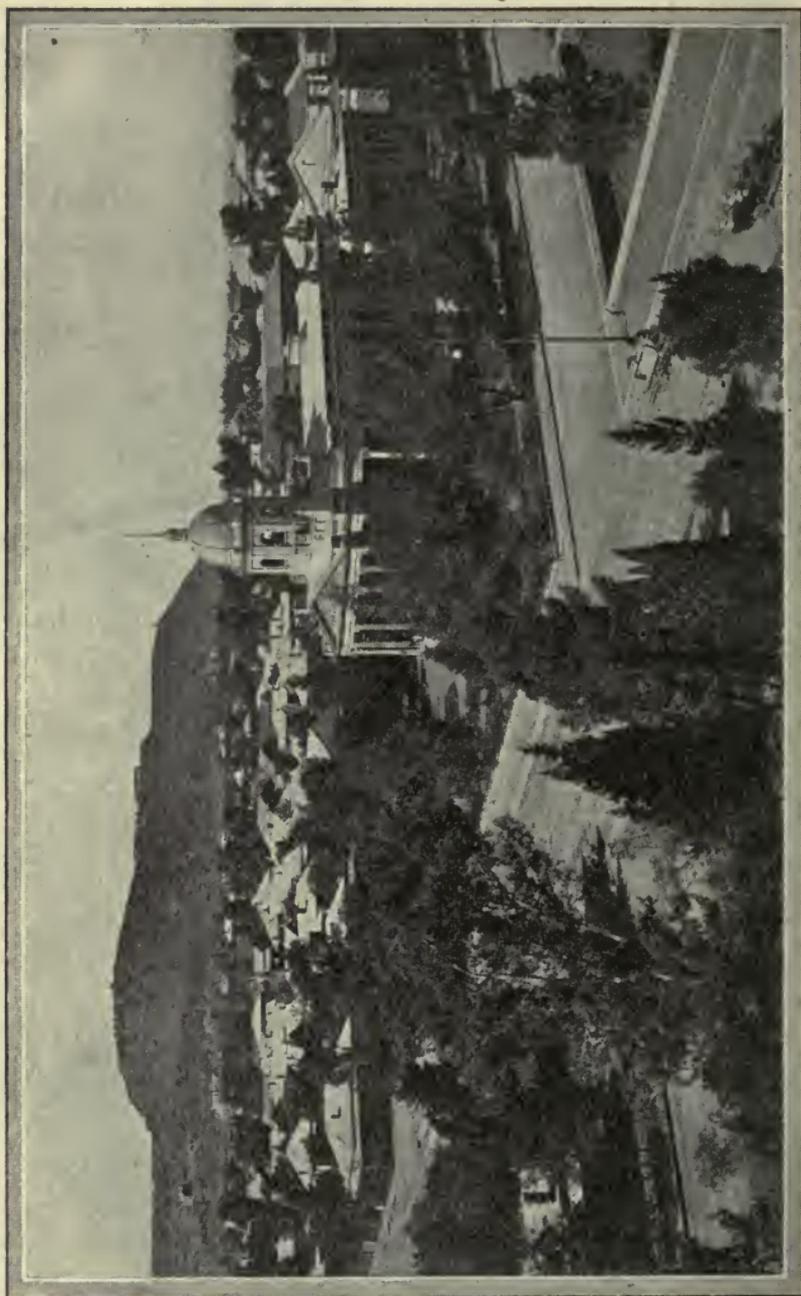
There was an appeal in the heavens that dispelled all further thought of sleep.

Even the mountain in the starshine had a new splendour of its own. And when at last the moon rose and gave a clearer view, we realised something of the inner feeling of Keats when he wrote—

Then felt I like a watcher in the skies,
When a new planet swims into his ken.

Indeed there was in the situation something of what one would probably feel if while still conscious one could be transferred to another planet. For as the moon lifted itself above the horizon, and poured its silvery light, all sense of time and space was lost. The vastness of the view eclipsed that seen by day. The lower peaks appeared only as silver points in the ether; far down below us, great clouds hurried by in ragged procession, and blotted the plains from view. Only the moon and the vapour held sway, and we, as it were cut off from the mighty shadow-show of rock and vapour below, like beings above death and decay, seemed detached and circling, as on some dead and distant planet.





Central Bloemfontein.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

- “ Ah, but the clear light of dawning !
“ Ah, but the freedom it spelt !
“ The limitless view of life’s morning,
“ The call of the veld.”

FROM the Drakensberg we went to the Orange Free State, travelling by railway via Lady-smith ; and soon, at a point a little north of Mont aux Sources, the rocky escarpment which buttresses the great inland plateau was again before us. Up this, like a fly in a cup, the train climbed out of Natal. It was a laborious ascent until Van Reenen Pass was reached. There we were again on the plains—the high plains that lie at from four to five thousand feet above the sea.

Natal and the Indian Ocean were now in the background. On our right was the Transvaal, with Swaziland tucked in one corner, and Rhodesia further north. On our left was Basutoland, and then the Cape Province. And westward, straight in front of us, was the Orange Free State, the central Province of the Union.

The situation, as we waited in that lofty pass, was appropriate for reflecting a little on what we had seen of the country and its resources. Wherever we had gone there were signs of progress ; manufacturing was increasing, better farming methods were being employed, more of the base metals and minerals were being turned to account than was the case in

even 1914. South Africa had taken its part in the war, yet so far from being shaken by the after effects, it was on the whole prosperous. The cost of living, as everywhere, had risen as a result of the war, but not nearly so much relatively as in oversea countries. In spite of a protracted drought, food-stuffs were abundant, so were fuel, clothing, and even luxuries. Taxation was comparatively light, the public finances were sound, and industrial disputes, though hampering, were by no means as acute as in most countries. Indeed opinion everywhere concurred that the Union was not only highly prosperous, but in the present condition of the world one of the happiest countries in which to live.

These things merit mention ; they have an appreciable influence on travel. Waiting at Van Reenen for our car, we recalled the hundreds of miles of maize fields we had passed on the tour. The coastal belt of Natal and Zululand had been a waving sea of sugar cane. Great apple orchards were coming into bearing on the uplands, and still greater groves of oranges in the warmer regions. The south-west portion of the Cape was bright with innumerable vineyards, and orchards of peaches, pears and plums. And everywhere we found sheep, cattle or ostriches, in increasing numbers and of improved breeds.

Thus besides being attractive residentially, the Union offers scope for capital and enterprise. This is especially true of the Orange Free State, which to the casual glance may not appear very productive but in reality is one of the most fertile areas in South Africa.

The eastern portion of the province is well watered, and produces on a large scale wheat, maize, oats

and potatoes. As one proceeds westward the countryside is seen to be drier, in parts very dry and liable to long spells of drought. Yet the Orange Free State is on the whole exceptionally good cattle country, with an output of about a third of the butter and cheese, and a large percentage of the wool, produced in the Union.

Indeed no South African province has made more notable progress in the last twenty years than the Orange Free State; and even greater developments are before it, notably in the irrigation projects, large and small, which promise to revolutionise the productivity of the drier regions.

The South African abroad must often be astonished by the scant knowledge which people in Britain, America and Europe have of South Africa. Generally however they do know something, if only by repute, of its climate. The reputation is deserved. No country has a perfect climate. That of South Africa can at times be trying, especially in the dusty season. But on the whole it is probably as delightful and beneficial as will be found anywhere. How delightful, is perhaps realised by South Africans only when they have been away from their country some time. It is a splendid asset. In time it must largely attract that body of monied people anxious to escape the European winter. They may find the sun in other places as near or nearer their homes; but they will hardly find it shining over such a variety of travel attractions as in South Africa.

Situated on a high plateau almost in the subtropics as the Free State is, there is a warmth yet crispness in its atmosphere. The air, even in so large a town as Bloemfontein, is pure and sparkling—a dry,



Views of Bloemfontein.

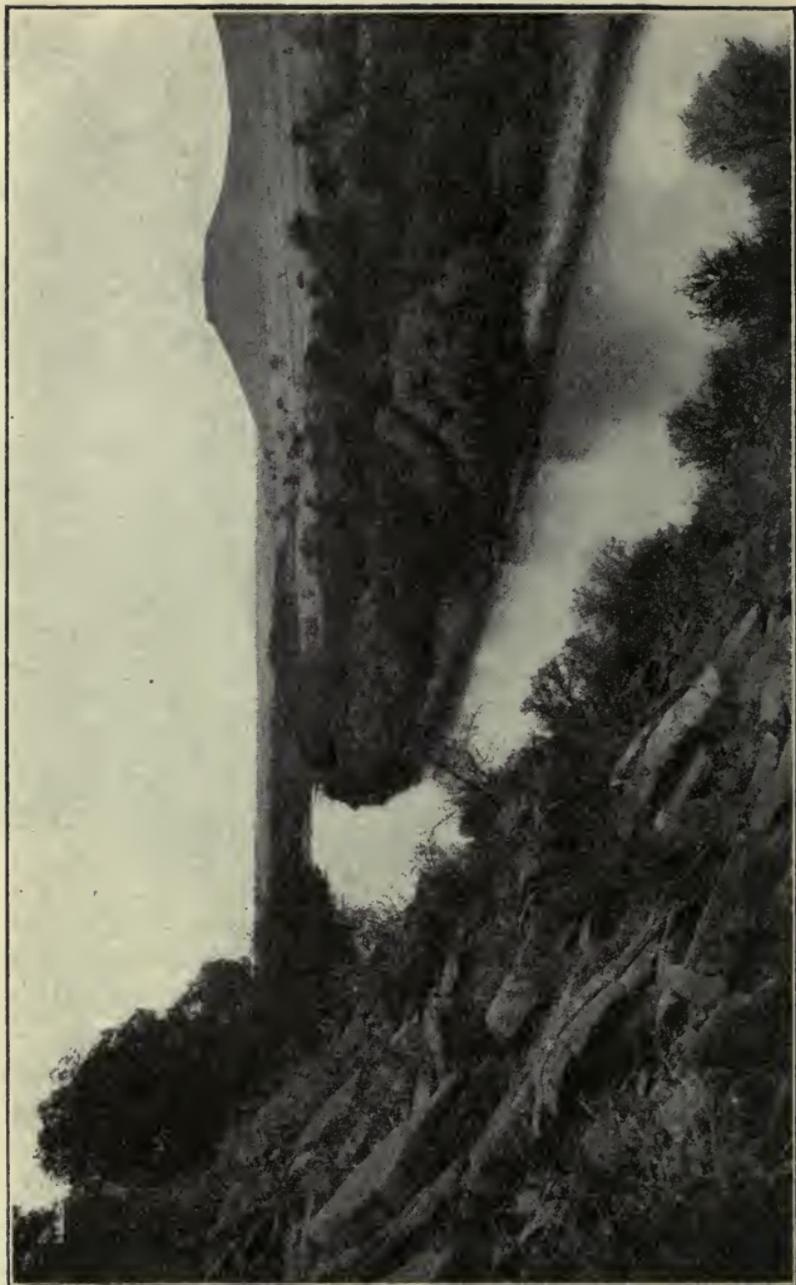
bright mountain air, very invigorating. It is worth while going to Bloemfontein just to breathe the air. There is a conscious benefit and even enjoyment in the process. The summer days are often hot, but never enervating; usually the nights are cool, still and starry. In winter little rain falls, and then only at long intervals. Then every day is a day of brilliant sunshine, the nights are frosty but clear and dry, and one has all the exhilaration of a European winter with few of the discomforts.



At Glen, near Bloemfontein.

Much of the Free State resembles the Karoo, but most of it is prairie-like—great grassy plains hundreds of square miles in area. They are diversified in places by solitary kopjes, low ridges, or even wooded river valleys as at Ficksburg, Parys, Kroonstad, and Senekal; in the main however the plains are flat and featureless, almost devoid even of trees.

Like the Russian steppe, or much of the United States and Canada, the plains of the Free State claim attention more for their productivity than for their scenery. They interest the home-maker or investor.



Modder River, near Bloemfontein.

rather than the traveller. Yet even for the traveller, if he be in the mood, there is about those plains a moving fascination felt everywhere on the South African veld by those who sojourn awhile in its by-ways and do not merely hurry through by train.

“It is a fascination,” a prominent authority has written, “indescribable yet strong; and those who have tasted it never weary of it, or cease to feel the longing to return once they have left it.”

Of course the veld, like the desert or the sea, having about it much that is sombre and harsh,



View of Harrismith.

does not affect all alike. Many, especially newcomers, are repelled; they feel only the monotony, are wearied to the soul when travelling perhaps a whole day and seeing only an occasional small and drab village. But others, and their number has grown since men acquired virile tastes as the result of their experiences in the war, are peculiarly susceptible to nature in its larger moods. The vast and rough-hewn appeals to them. They feel the freedom of the veld. The mysticism of the lonely places draws them. They respond to the appeal of the

solitude. If they have capital, they want to get away to the uncontaminated spaces of the young countries, either to shoot big game or farm.

The eastern portion of the Free State, with its comparatively broken formation and ample rainfall, is scenically and productively much like the best parts of Natal or the Transvaal. But even in the west there are many pleasant characteristics about the land and the life. There is a man in Britain who used to farm in the western Free State. In his day markets were not as good, nor local farming conditions nearly so well understood as now, so he did not prosper in South Africa. But some day he will come back. He is one of a type, and though he lived in the drier part of the Free State there were some experiences that he now finds quaintly attractive, when he looks back on them, say from a fog in London, or when, depressed by a drizzling winter day, he longs for the sun.

It is with a pang, at such a time, that he recalls those other days on the veld, when he rose with the dawn. Along the winding sheep paths, in that cool gray hour, the guinea-fowls would slink, one behind the other, with raucous cries of complaint till the seed beds were reached. Around would lie the quiet veld, the pungent odour of wild herbs scenting the strong air, with may-be here and there a vapoury remnant of the night, and overhead, in the cloudless sky, the lingering morning star.

Little would be moving, as the horseman picked his way to inspect some distant bore-hole or boundary fence; but anon perhaps a springbok would climb the ridge, shake dew from coat and sleep from eye, sniff at the flushing east, then bask contentedly in the first warm rays.

And so day would come on the veld, and the sheep would trail from the kraals in a cloud of alkali dust, with much bleating from ewes and lambs, and the shrill cries of the Hottentot flock boys. Then there would be rams to be classified, wool to be pressed or dispatched, a post mortem examination of sheep mysteriously deceased, stock thefts to look into, grazing to study, and plans, big plans to be made, for the next season's mating, and for conserving more water.

So the morning wears on, till the heat dances on the plain, and the sheep, weary of grazing, gather in bunches, panting, for what little shade the euphorbias and aloes give. Then shutters and doors are closed to darken the farm-house and exclude the hot air, and man relaxes. Even the dignified and decorous secretary bird steps from the hot white sunshine, and from the studious search for vermin. But in an hour or two a revivifying air comes in little gusts. Then grazing is renewed, and work is taken up again.

Musing thus, beneath the lowering sky of another land, you recall with peculiar pleasure the solitary kopje and the sober tints of the veld, that, as the afternoon wears on, become idealised and refined in the waning light. A great peace then settles over all, a haze of mauve creeps over the veld, and a little chill creeps into the vigorous air. The flocks return contentedly chewing the cud, the red-legged francolins seek patches of grass for warmth in the oncoming night, and the korhaan sounds its fretful cry through the gathering dusk.

Then flames leap before the native huts, and the acrid smoke of dung-fires, than the memory of which nothing is more subtle to cause nostalgia in the exile from South Africa, comes to the nostrils.

On the steep sunburnt men yarn, probably of the old days, forty years ago, when every kind of game roamed those plains—zebra, kudo, eland, ostrich, and occasionally even giraffe and elephant, and in the river valleys rhinoceros and hippopotamus. Probably debate is held on the relative merits of the big-game days of the past, and the days of big farming possibilities of the present, till, wearying of the subject, the talking wanes. The native fires die down, a few final orders for the next day's work are

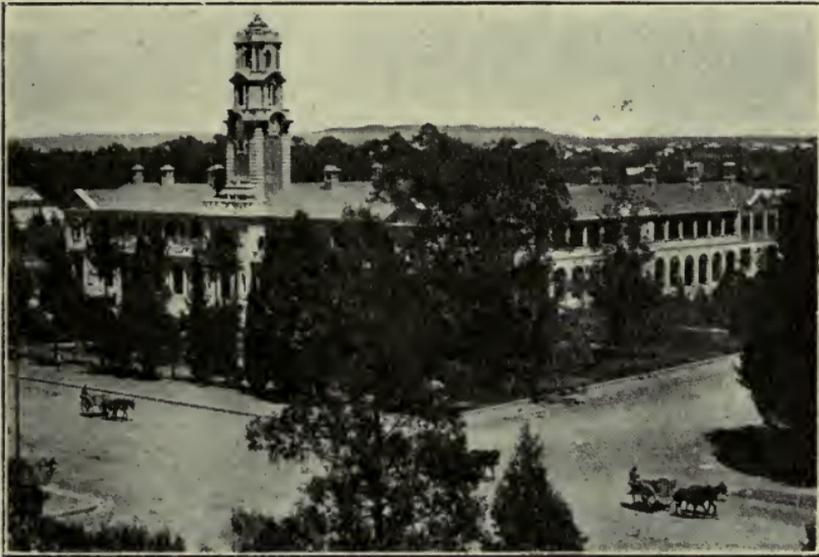


The Park, Harrismith.

shouted to the huts, then pipes are knocked out, a last satirical look for rain is taken, and, though it is an early hour, soon the farmstead, the huts and the kraals are wrapped in peace. Night rules the plain, a desert wind fans all to dreamless sleep.

This summary is not much to look at on paper, but those who have lived the life will generally admit that, somehow, it was attractive. However much at first one may detest the humdrum routine, the lack of variety, the plain fare and simple ways, in time, though it may take years, one is almost certain

to acquire a deep and lasting affection for the veld, the life and the people. Even the Taal, which at first repels as guttural and crude, becomes a treasured acquirement when at last one can speak it. It is an old-fashioned Dutch, somewhat corrupted and much clipped in vocabulary. It has little literature, and is hardly understood outside South Africa. Yet it is, if one may use the term, a felicitous language,



Government Buildings, Bloemfontein.

enabling a friendly thought to be expressed in the most kindly way, even between people of very different rank ; and the result is an ease of intercourse and high degree of good feeling between those who speak it.

There are under two hundred thousand Europeans in the Free State, though it is nearly as large as England ; indeed the whole of the Union has a European population smaller than that of many a capital town in other countries. Hence most South

African towns are small, judged by European standards; but nearly all are prosperous and growing. In the Free State Jagersfontein and Koffyfontein are the centres of an important diamond industry. Parys, a charming sylvan village on the Vaal, has an increasing number of rural industries. Winburg serves a great sheep district. Smithfield has an important trade in wheat and cattle. Harrismith,



Maitland Street, Bloemfontein.

besides being a health resort, transacts the business of a district famous for its livestock. Kroonstad is the principal pleasure ground of the Free State, and the hub of a large and rich farming area.

The principal town is Bloemfontein, with a population of over sixty thousand, of which twenty-six thousand are Europeans. It is 750 miles from Capetown, and 255 from Johannesburg. Being the most centrally situated town of consequence in South

Africa, with good railway connections in every direction, it is a convenient meeting place, and most of the important conferences are held there. It was the place where President Kruger and Sir Alfred (now Lord) Milner met in 1899, in an endeavour to avert the Anglo-Boer war. There Lord Roberts made his first important halt in his march on Pretoria. And there, what had been the aim of statesmen for generations, to bring the people of South Africa into one fold, was achieved in 1909, when the foundation of the South African Union was laid.

When the Free State was a republic, Bloemfontein was the capital. It is now the seat of a Provincial Council, and of the highest Court of Appeal in the country, besides being the principal place at which officers for the Union Defence Force are trained.

Socially and residentially Bloemfontein has much to commend it; the climate is invigorating, and though the permanent population is not large, there is always a considerable stream of all classes attracted to the courts and conferences, and especially to the great agricultural shows and sales which are a feature of the place, and which have all contributed something towards creating an enterprising and very comfortably appointed town. Indeed after a sojourn on the veld, or in the average dorp with its small "hotel" and store, its smaller railway station, its church and one straggling street, Bloemfontein is by contrast a place of much attraction, with good hotels, theatres, clubs, public baths, a university college, polytechnic, national museum, and many excellent public buildings. It is also likely to become an important manufacturing centre, tapping as it does a country rich in raw materials, and already many large projects are afoot around it.



Views of Buffalo River, East London.



CHAPTER XX.

EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.

The sweet of life is something small,
A resting by a way-side wall
With God's good sunshine over all.

—GILBERT.

FROM Bloemfontein to East London by train is a journey of just over four hundred miles, occupying a day and night. A few hours after leaving Bloemfontein, the Orange River is crossed, and one enters again Cape Province, the eastern portion of it.

The crossing of the Free State border however implies no immediate change. One continues in the same environment of lonely veld—a flat yet in a way impressive veld, vast as the sea, peaceful as the desert; with something too of the fitful moodiness of both that transmits itself to the traveller.

This was noticeable among the passengers. A few, hardened by experience, but not unappreciative of the comfortable train appointments, contentedly settled down to lounge and gossip. Some, happening at the moment to be in tune with their environment, frankly enjoyed it, if only for the sunny brightness of the land. Others, depressed by the sameness and extent of the veld, found the hours leaden.

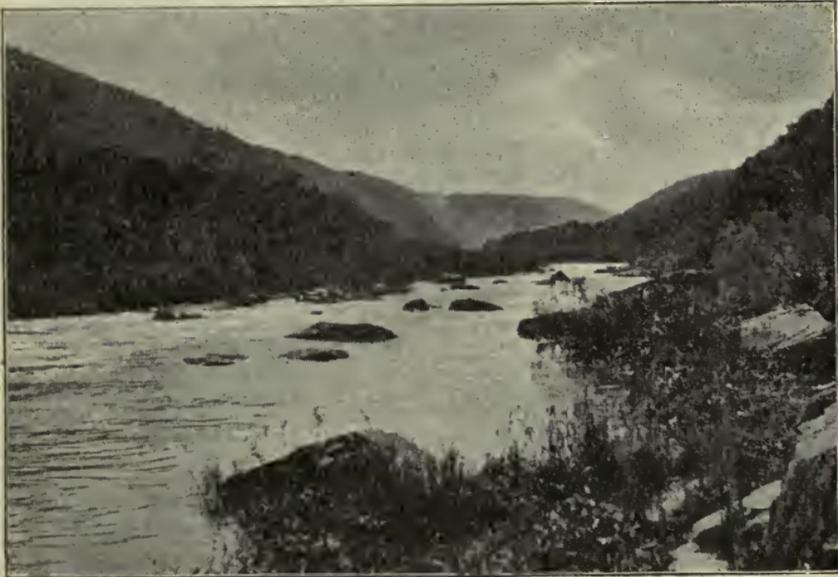
Thus afternoon wears on, and tea is served from the restaurant car. Round it the talk becomes more spirited, and if the travellers are acquainted with other lands, and with the gruelling battle people there have had to make such lands largely productive



The Beach, East London.

and prosperous, generally the talk will be about the big future before South Africa. It is a coming country, great with possibilities.

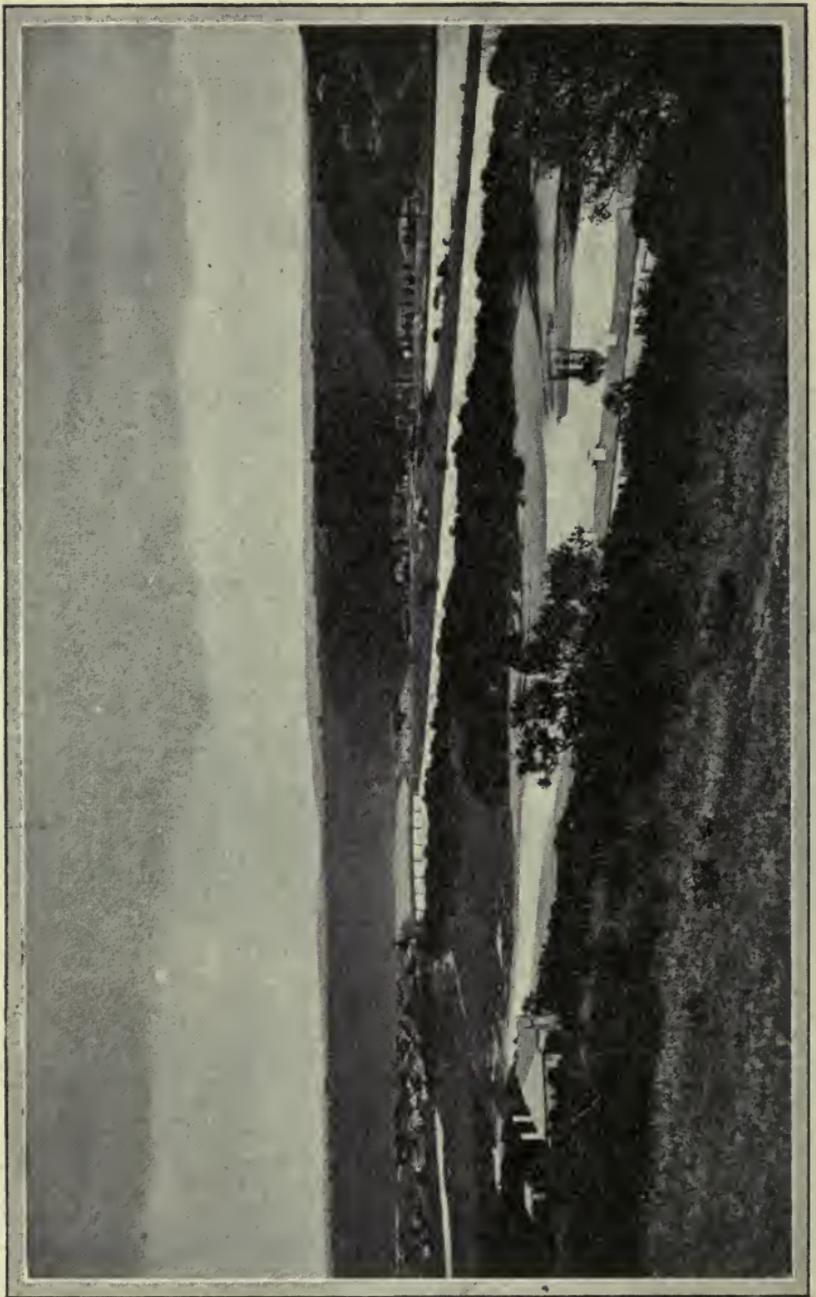
As the shadows lengthen and deepen round the kopjes, which now become more numerous, Stormberg is passed, and towards sunset, as the train approaches Queenstown, you enter a section of Cape Province not perhaps naturally richer than the section passed,



Buffalo River, East London.

but more developed, more closely settled. This area is strikingly mountainous in parts, with an occasional trout stream and pastures that show the skill of the owners. The trees were of a nobler proportion than we had seen for some weeks—gums, beefwoods and oaks; the tillage careful, and there was an air of prosperity about each farmstead.

We were now within a hundred and fifty miles of



The Kowie.

East London, travelling through the old border country, better known as Kaffraria in the bygone days when the early settlers fought for existence. Eastward beyond the Great Kei River lay the Transkei—the reservoir from which poured most of the native troubles that so sorely beset the early European settlers.

From this point our way lay among some of the



Port St. Johns.

noblest scenes in South Africa—a majestic panorama of mountain, forest, river, sea and meadow that extends along the sea-board of Cape Province, from the Transkei past East London, Port Elizabeth and Mossel Bay to Capetown.

The Transkei is a territory over sixteen thousand square miles in area, with a population of about twenty thousand Europeans and a million natives.



Suburbs, and Oxford Street, East London.

It is in the main a native reserve, where, as in Zululand, native life may be seen in its patriarchal simplicity.

Besides its ethnological interest, the Transkei is in places strikingly beautiful. Port St. Johns is an exceptionally picturesque harbour.

In Kaffraria the Amatola Mountains would alone raise the area to the rank of a first-class pleasure



On the Buffalo River, East London.

resort, were it in Europe, or were such resorts scarce in South Africa; and the valley of the Kat River is lovely in the extreme.

At present East London gets most of the attention. It is a well-equipped and growing port. The area it serves is not only large and rich, but holds great possibilities of development. It is in the main an area of high rainfall, good soil, and abundant sunshine.

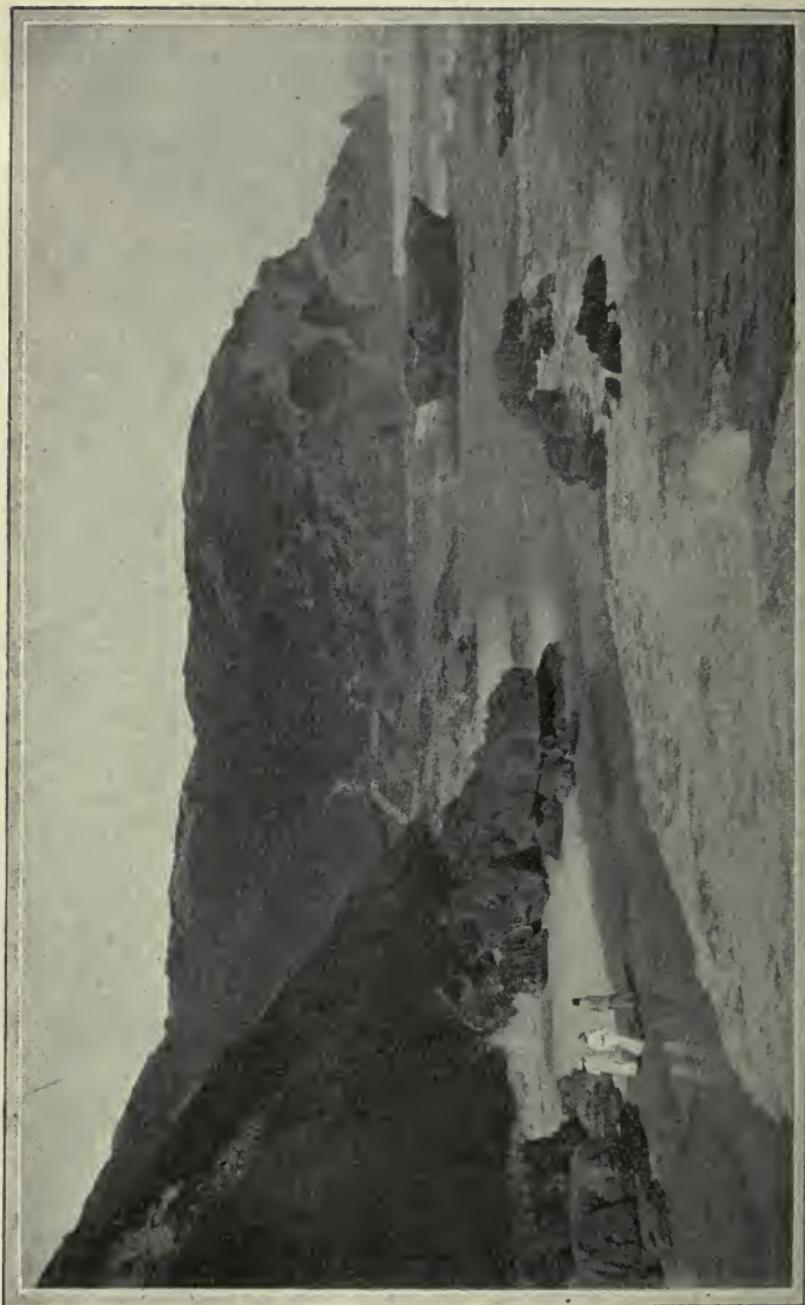


Upper Section, Orient Beach, East London.

Behind East London the land is therefore fitted to support a much larger farming and manufacturing population than it does. But as agriculture in the hinterland, and industries at the port, can develop only to the extent that capital is available, the development, though large, has not been as large as the natural excellence of the country merits. At present, though there is a varied production for South African consumption, the main exports are wool, skins and hides. Orchards in increasing numbers are however coming into bearing, and considerable enterprise is being shown in developing beef production, dairying and general farming, so that a few years should see an increased trade. Indeed it is the general expectation that East London, when the raw materials become abundant, will have canning factories, wool mills and washeries, perhaps cotton mills, and possibly even a paper mill or pulping plant for making paper from the abundant native grasses of the Transkei.

To those, however, who travel for recreation, East London is perhaps of most interest as a place of sojourn. It is picturesquely situated on the Indian Ocean, at the mouth of the beautifully wooded Buffalo River. The adjoining country-side is in places striking and everywhere attractive. It is a country-side of wooded hills and green valleys, with here and there a mountain in the background, here and there a forest in some ravine; and nearer East London itself the impression is of rich meadows, in the season gay with the lilac petals of the speckboom and the golden blossoms of the mimosa.

The great attraction at East London is however the sea. Especially to those who have been inland awhile, sea-sights and sounds are doubly alluring.



Near "Bats' Cave," East London.

The South African, being by blood a northerner, descendant of seafarers, responds readily to the call of the sea. He goes to it, if at all possible, at least once a year. When this great annual migration sets in, East London assumes a gala mood.

The season there is noticeably different to that at either Muizenberg or Durban. So genial is the climate, that a large number of visitors, following the precept that "sunbeams are good for old bones and young," live *al fresco* during their holiday.

A quaint town of canvas bungalows and villas springs up on the beach-grass—a very comfortable little town which, though temporary, is lit by electricity, and has all conveniences, so that an hour or two after arrival, when the kit has been unpacked and essential household goods have been put in place, one may settle luxuriously into a lounge chair, under one's own little awning, thoroughly at home by the Indian Ocean.

The season was drawing to a close when we arrived, and already the visitors were leaving for the plains and the dry lofty plateaus a thousand miles away. With us too time was pressing. Our stay in the country was coming to an end, and there was still much that we were under a resolution to see. Yet we stayed at East London. The weather was so perfect, the boating, bathing and fishing so enticing, that the days slipped by with a rush.

In such a place you are apt to defer departure. When you weary of the shingles on which the league-long combers roll, and of bathing in the foaming surf; when you are sufficiently browned and tired; when golf and fishing have lost their edge, and boating on the river reaches no longer entices, there is still a

stimulus in the vigorous air and the sunshine. It lures you abroad, along the grass-banked beach, through bright woods. And as you round the headland, generally a brisk breeze nods the tree-tops, a strong sea-air refreshes the blood.

The shore beyond the headland is a lonely, fascinating one, seemingly remote though in reality only three or four miles from the esplanade. There, from a safe vantage point, with a high sea running after a



“. . . . a high sea running.”

wild night off the Cape of Storms, you hear deep answering deep, and are, as it were, secretly party to the loosening of stupendous forces.

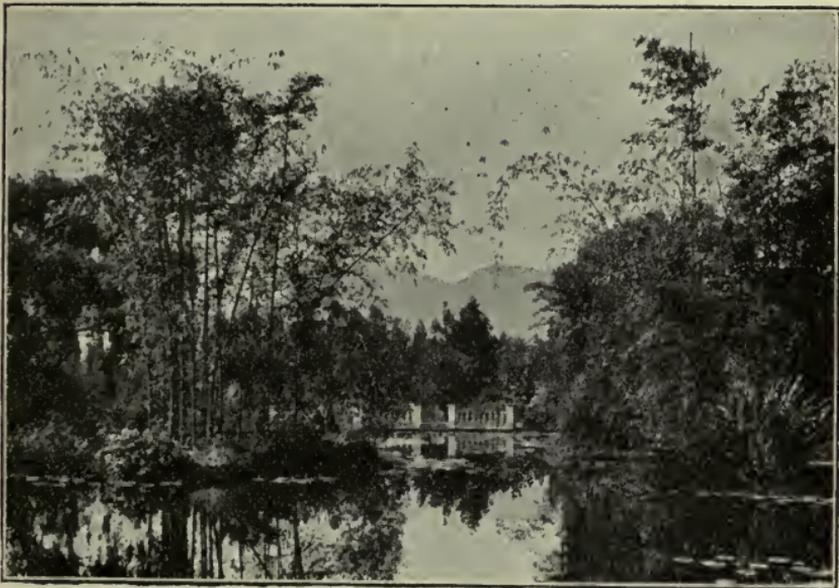
There is might, variety and endless interest in the broken and excited waters. The thunder of a great surf fills the air, a constant spindrift, rising like smoke, coats the lips with salt, and stings the blood till it glows. Breakers, vast and green, crash with a thousand-ton shock, subside, and, after a momentary

hush, hurl themselves with redoubled vigour at the great dark rocks.

An hour's scramble brought us back to the esplanade. Night had closed in, but the place still wore a carnival air.

After the lonely farther reaches, it was an experience in contrasts to sit, with the Sauvignon invitingly in the ice-bucket, the noiseless waiters serving dinner, and round the rose-coloured table the hum of cheery talk.

Then coffee on the lawn, with an orchestra in the distance and the Southern Cross over all.





Views of Port Elizabeth.
262

CHAPTER XXI.

MIDLAND CAPE PROVINCE.

The real use of travelling to distant countries and of studying the annals of past times is to preserve men from the contraction of mind which those can hardly escape whose whole communion is with one generation and one neighbourhood.

—LORD MACAULAY.

HEARING that the area served by Port Elizabeth was in several respects remarkable, we decided to see it with some thoroughness.

We therefore travelled, mainly by rail, through the picturesque and thriving industrial centre of King Williams Town, to Grahamstown, and then inland in a circle to Bedford, Cradock, Middelburg, Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage to Port Elizabeth.

On the journey to Cradock and Graaff-Reinet the country was the very opposite to that around Grahamstown and East London. We were again on the Karoo—as it happens a rich but, to the casual glance, a desert-like Karoo. The air was dry, and the soil not only dry but drab-coloured. There were kopjes everywhere, and around the kopjes barrenness; a barrenness accentuated rather than relieved by what grew thereon.

Few deserts had a more woebegone appearance. The verdure, after the rainless winter and almost rainless summer, was an affair of withered twigs. The watercourses were dry. The polished ironstone reflected the heat as from a mirror. Near Graaff-Reinet, for example, the aptly-named Valley of Desolation, after the long drought of which we were

to witness the dramatic end, was so Dantesque in sheer aridity, so like a calcined valley of the moon, that we longed, almost ached, for the moist smell of mould and the sight of gnarled tree-trunks and running water. Instead there was prickly pear, scrub and desolation.

Yet curiously enough the trip was one which we remember with peculiar pleasure. The clearness, purity, tonic quality of the air were astonishing. The sun got into our blood and danced there.

It is an air which, as it were, unties the years from one's shoulders, so that, after a while on the Karoo, one stands erect with vigour renewed. And the daily sunshine—that most forceful magic on earth—gives one a new perspective. Impressions may not be durable where there is so little by which to fix them; but while they last they are vivid. Every day is a golden day. Just to live is a pleasure. So that despite all we have here frankly set down about the Karoo, we travelled it with considerable enjoyment, that heightened when we saw Graaff-Reinet in the smoky orange of a desert sunset.



Town Hall, Port Elizabeth.
264

Clouds banked up during the night. At dawn a storm hung lowering. All rejoiced, for the drought had been long and severe. The air was motionless, yet the thick dust that covered the cattle trails was strangely stirred. "Dust-devils" rose like wraiths, hung fantastically poised a while, and then expired. Earth lay expectant, waiting for the pent-up moisture. And expectation was in every heart. All hopes were turned to the sky.

Then the sun beat down as fiercely as ever, and the life-giving clouds passed on.

It was nature's jest. Gloom settled firmly on the farmers. The orchards drooped in earnest. Gaunt sheep and goats nibbled a parched twig or two, and then lay down in apathy. It was a depressing spectacle.

Two days later there was no perceptible sunrise. A pall hung over the veld. Fitful lightning gleamed across the clouds. Occasional drops of rain fell with a thud, and were sucked up greedily by the thirsty earth—fell at noticeable intervals, one here and there, that left on the dust a crater-like dent. Then these too ceased, and all was still, dark, and ominous.

In a sudden the heavens opened, a sea of flame flared above the veld, then closed. A crash as of planets in collision followed, flame leaped with flame across the sky, then all was quiet and dark again. At last, with a shriek, the deluge came. Hail, thunder and lightning cracked together—peal upon peal roared cavernously over the kopjes, and the driving rain came down in solid sheets.

The ten-month drought was broken. In a few hours thousands of tons of water had fallen, rivers were churning their banks to mud, even the chronic-

ally dry creek had caught some overflow and had become a mad torrent of tortured water on which flotsam swirled wildly.

Within a week, so swift is Karoo growth after rain, the juice of succulent herbs freely lathered the jowls of the livestock, and the sheep, when kraaled, chewed the cud of a heavy contentment. Their troubles for the time were over. The season, they sensed, would now be one of plenty, for already every plant had quickened into life, every shrivelled stick had thrown out some blossom or leaf, the valleys and plains were now mauve-green, and the Karoo was again full of promise.

We mention this storm, and shall later draw a moral from it, because rightly considered it is the key to much that is curious in the economy of South Africa.

The miracle that is being wrought on the Karoo with water conservation is as heartening a spectacle as will be seen anywhere. The rivers are being harnessed, the wilderness is "being made to blossom like the rose." In Egypt the British have doubled the supply of water, and doubled the cultivable area. The South Africans are doing the same in their country, and so are gradually preparing to rank with the great producers.

Nowhere in South Africa is this more strikingly brought home to one than in the area served by Port Elizabeth. Draw a V on the map, from Port Elizabeth to Queenstown on the one side, and from Port Elizabeth to Graaff-Reinet on the other. In between is the area of greatest irrigation development in South Africa. The country there, as already described, though fertile is on the whole dry, having a low rainfall. Yet such is generally the violence of the

storm when rain does fall that millions of tons of water run to the sea and are wasted each year.

This is now being improved. A large capital is being invested, by Government and private enterprise, to imprison in reservoirs and turn to account if not the whole then much of that water. The task, entailing an outlay of several millions sterling, and more as new areas are taken in hand, is not only a costly but a heavy one. It will be from two to four years before most of the great storage reservoirs now being constructed in the area behind Port Elizabeth supply water for irrigating fields. Then that area will become a rich one, producing great yields of almost every crop.

That much is certain, for what can be done with permanent water on the Karoo has already been abundantly proved, notably under the great irrigation works near Prieska. Describing those works, a noted authority recently wrote: "To-night I can write in all sincerity that South Africa's future appears to be greater, more substantial and enduring, than appeared possible. Here, in the heart of a drought-parched land, I have passed through valley after valley of smiling farms, where the golden grain stretches to the horizon, where one walks up to the horses' girths through luxuriant lucerne, and where a man-made lake stretches in one vast magnificent sheet between the grim hills."

With such developments in its hinterland, Port Elizabeth is destined for a big future. It is already an important export port of the Union, and, for variety of manufactures, one of its most highly developed industrial towns. Tanning and the manufacturing of boots and other leather goods are especially well

developed yet growing industries. Then there are large foundries and factories producing candles, soap, jam, biscuits, confectionery and cement. A great trade in wool is done, and in time wool washeries, textile factories and other new industries, to say nothing of a considerable expansion of present industries, may confidently be looked for.

Even for the traveller Port Elizabeth has a good



Humewood Beach, Port Elizabeth.

deal to commend it. It is a prosperous town of considerable architectural merit.

Its quaint hilly situation lends itself to picturesque effect in building, and here and there you get a touch faintly suggestive of a Swiss scene—villa terraces rising one above the other. On The Hill, a flat tableland overlooking the lagoon-like bay, are smart residences in pleasant grounds. Indeed a holiday at Port



Humewcod, Port Elizabeth.

Elizabeth can be very inviting, with all the amenities of a prosperous progressive town, as well as boating at Zwartkops, jaunts among the pines at Walmer, and sunlit hours on the sands of Humewood Beach.

Grahamstown, to which allusion has been made, is a hundred and seven miles by rail from Port Elizabeth. It is a cathedral city and important educational centre, charmingly ringed by a series of wooded hills.

Grahamstown was founded in 1812 and British settlers reached the vicinity in 1820. In the latter year the price of the Napoleonic wars was still being paid. Everywhere trade was bad, production was



High Street, Grahamstown.

hampered, employment scarce, and the cost of living high. Hundreds of thousands of people in Britain and Europe were threatened with hopelessness.

The Governor at the Cape, impressed by the country around what is now Grahamstown, recommended to the British Government that settlers should be sent out to occupy it. The scheme, as it promised slightly to relieve the pressure in Britain, by making habitable what somehow became reputed a kind of colonial Eden, appealed to the public imagination. A grant in aid was voted. Ninety

thousand people applied to come. Four thousand were selected.

The first contingent disembarked at Port Elizabeth in 1820. There were no landing facilities in those days, so the settlers rowed as near land as they could, and, with their possessions, waded ashore.

Wagons and guides were provided, and the settlers took the road to their new home, looked bravely to



Bathurst Street, Grahamstown.

the future they were to shape there, or, round the camp fire, pensively regarded the past.

One of the party, who saw them thus, has depicted the scene :—

“ The groups, with all their variety of mien and attitude, character and complexion, now dimly discovered, now distinctly lighted up by the fitful blaze of the watch-fires, and the exotic aspect of the aloes and euphorbias, in the wan light of the rising moon, had a very strange and striking effect. It made us feel, far more impressively than we had

yet felt, that we were now indeed pilgrims in the wilds of savage Africa."

The country through which the newcomers passed was open and park-like in places, wildly mountainous elsewhere. Alternately the way lay through sunny valleys, or gloomy defiles so narrow that the wagons could only just pass.

After many tribulations, the destination was reached. On three sides sterile mountains rose, but the main valley was pleasant, with tall grass running to seed, and many trees among which antelopes pastured.

Huts were soon erected, and attention given to the means of livelihood. Dainty fingers, more accustomed some of them to fans than churns, made butter and cheese, soap and candles. And the minds of the men were now bent in earnest on such pioneer work as tilling the land, handling livestock, tanning sheepskin with mimosa bark and cutting garments therefrom.

Such approximately were the people, and the conditions, that went to the development of the large and now important area of which Grahamstown became the ecclesiastical, commercial, social and educational centre.

"In reading," an authority has written, "through the many documents relating to the numerous and continuous inroads of Bushmen and Kafirs, which took place before the influx of the British into the eastern province, one cannot but be impressed with the patient heroism of the Dutch inhabitants in their incessant struggle to provide homes and secure progress."

The tribute is just. It is, however, applicable as much to the 1820 settlers of whom we have just written, as to their predecessors. Those men and

women from Britain, in addition to the hardship, doubly appalling to untrained settlers, of wresting a livelihood from new and wild country, became a barrier between the warlike native tribes on the one side, and the white settlers on the other.

The brunt of terrible native wars, which the small bands of earlier Dutch settlers had borne with such lofty spirit, fell heavily on the newcomers. Grahams-



Along the Wilderness Road,

town became the centre of the fierce struggle between white and black, generations passing before that outpost emerged from its troubles and peace and prosperity settled over it. Now gardens smile where once disaster throve, great pines and gums stand densely on the hills and line the streets, making, like the history of the place itself, a checkerwork of light and shadow.

CHAPTER XXII.

OUTDSHOORN.

I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry—" 'Tis all a barren waste."

—STERNE.

OUTDSHOORN, like a palm-grove round a desert well, is one of the pleasant surprises of travel. Its encircling mountains are for the most part sterile, but its valleys are bright with lucerne and vineyards, orange-groves, peach orchards, tobacco fields, and the plumage of the domesticated ostrich.

The place is one of man's great triumphs over nature. The rainfall there is scant, and but for a special dispensation the surrounding country-side would be like the rest of the Karoo. Fortunately the large catchment area which the mountains tap converges on Oudtshoorn, so that instead of aridity there is the laugh of running waters.

The streams are small, but numerous and fairly reliable. They carry fortunes where they flow, so fertile is the local soil. Consequently in the surrounding valleys are some not only of the richest, but of the loveliest farms in South Africa. Great vintages of brandy, heavy crops of tobacco and fruit are produced. But the main product is lucerne, for feeding ostriches and other livestock.

Ostrich farming is one of South Africa's important

industries. In a normal year the feather production is valued at about three million sterling.

To give the best feathers the ostrich requires a desert climate, and what is not usually associated with such a climate, an abundance of nutritious food. Around Oudtshoorn these two requirements are fulfilled to perfection, with the result that the best feathers come from there. So prized are they, that the finest of them sell for from five guineas an ounce.

To produce such feathers is a highly technical occupation, great experience and skill in the breeding and feeding of the ostriches being required. And as the ostrich feather, though of great beauty, is an article of adornment the demand for which rises and falls according to the changing fashions introduced by the milliner and dressmaker, the industry occasionally suffers from severe slumps.

Still, given the necessary skill and capital, in normal times it pays handsomely to farm high-class ostriches. Competition for birds of approved lineage is then great, and exceptional breeding ostriches have sold for as much as a thousand pounds a pair.

The feathers, when fully grown, and when the sheen on the flue is at its best, are taken from the wings and tail. No pain is inflicted. There is no plucking. The quill is cut, its root being left in the flesh where, after a while, it withers and comes out without hurting the bird. The ostrich is too costly, and too susceptible to good or bad treatment, for cruelty to pay.

The industry is one of the novelties of the country, and should be seen in passing, especially as around

Oudtshoorn there is much else that repays attention. The scenery, in places, is equal to that of the famed Hottentots' Holland in the Cape. Schoeman's Hoek, for instance, is a delightful spot. The road to it rounds the foothills, winding about and about, and soon the many farms, with their precise-looking poplar and cypress trees, are far below. Above lie the gusty moors, knee-deep in heather and bracken. And above



Main Street, Oudtshoorn.

the moor is the most charming glen imaginable—three hundred feet of foliage-hidden rock, down which a brilliant stream falls foaming.

Another trip is to the caves. This takes one among grand surroundings, through rich and picturesque valleys, beyond which mountain ridge lies locked in mountain ridge—surroundings that grow intensely wild and impressive as you skirt the Cango Valley,

and so arrive at the entrance of the stalactite caves, in the foot-hills of the Zwartberg.

Through the years these caves were splendidly furnished; till now, like a buried palace in which everything was suddenly petrified, they contain suggestions of all that is elegant: of regal forms in stone; of banqueting chambers richly tapestried; and pillared corridors down which hang gorgeous curtains of multi-coloured lime.



Throne Room, Cango Caves.

There are galleries with organ pipes so realistic in the uncertain light that momentarily you expect strains of music to burst from them.

One exquisite boudoir has a ceiling the blue stalactite of which was spangled with crystals that twinkled like little stars.

Then there is an eerie grotto with sparkling cascades that never move and never sound but silently foam in billowy rock.

Altars there are too, like those for ancient sacrifice ;
and mounds of disturbed mosaics.

On these latter the more fanciful, not to say
feminine members of the party, discerned broken
goblets and scattered trinkets, and shrinkingly
thought they saw even half-human forms, that loomed



An Ostrich Farm.

in the dimness as though, in the midst of high revels, roysterers of some past age had tried to escape from the vaults, hurriedly and in confusion ; but overtaken by some mighty wrath, had like Lot's wife been stilled for ever, and rendered into stone to endure as a warning through the ages.

This interpretation intrigued the more prosaic of the party. Hitherto their bent had been geological rather than poetical. But now they were urgent in a demand for more magnesium wire, and were with difficulty restrained by the guide from, in a burst of reckless enthusiasm, heaping the whole of the wire in one last flare of generous illumination.

From this we were happily saved. It was as well, for half the charm of those caves lies in illusion. To have destroyed that by too much light would have been vandalism. As it was, the artificial light was strong enough to give an impression of matchless splendour, yet dim enough to give the imagination scope ; which is as it should be, for in the caves all the charm depends on the chance of light and perspective. None of the chambers is really of large size, but an illusion of size is created by the shadows, and from this other illusions spring. Throughout the caves the effect depends on just how much illumination is permitted, and whoever enters should therefore enter, like Aladdin, a slave to the lamp ; and should be guided by that black magician, the genii of strange fancies.

In that mood nothing is too strange for acceptance, and enjoyment is complete. One is then back in a concrete fairy tale, in what the Oudtshoorn people affirm are the finest stalactite caves extant.



On the Knysna Road.
280

CHAPTER XXIII.

OVER THE OUTENIQUAS.

“ A country without sunshine requires all its riches.”

BETWEEN Oudtshoorn and George the railway passes over the Outeniqua Mountains. It is the great mountain railway of South Africa—a section of line notable for the difficulties overcome in its construction and for remarkable surroundings. Over it the journey is as full of discovery and interest for the traveller as when, crossing the Zambesi River by rail, he first sees the Victoria Falls through the carriage window.

It was late autumn when we crossed the mountains, but for those accustomed to harsher climates an autumn of which each day was a summer day. As always at Oudtshoorn the sun shone extravagantly when we left. It flooded the mist-capped Outeniquas till they glowed with warmth and colour. Companionably it climbed the slopes with us, and from then until we sailed was in daily attendance—a friendly generous sun, of which the traveller carries away memories that shall not easily be dislodged.

On the Oudtshoorn side, the Outeniquas are sterile. On the George side, which falls right on to the sea and drains most of the clouds before they pass the summit, the change is radical, even startling. Suddenly you pass from the sterile to the fruitful. You are in a land not of greater fertility than the Karoo,

but of greater rain-fall, and therefore of abundant verdure. Knysna especially is heavily forested, and in the so-called "Wilderness," here and there a lake flashes, and a stream meanders to the sea.

Great combers roam the crescent bay, the plains are dotted with pines and oaks, mile upon mile of lush grass and husbandry extends into the viewless distance.

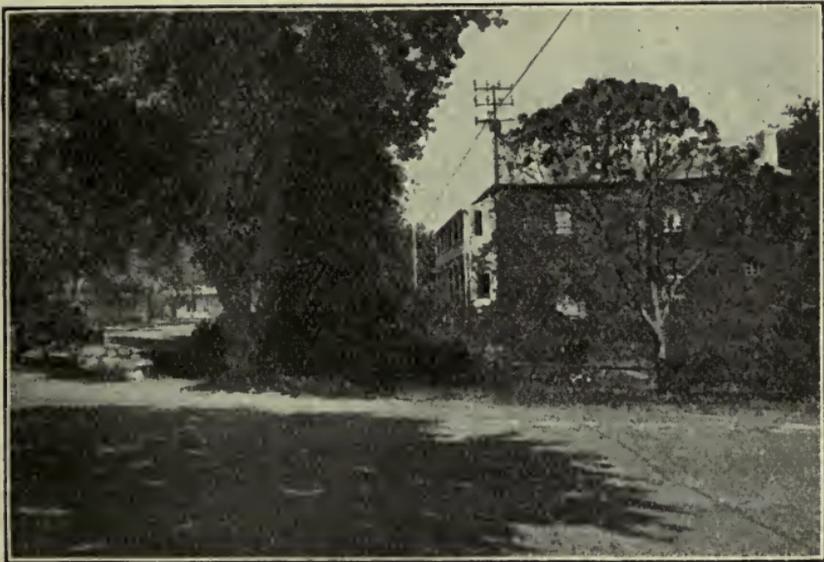


Montagu Pass, near George.

From the high elevation on the mountain side, the prospect below, of sea and forest and plain, is an inspiring one. Nature has designed that landscape on a noble scale. The plains are vast, the sea comes in with a thousand mile roll, and on both land and water there is an abundant harvest.

On the edge, with their feet almost in the surf,

the mountains stand, lording it royally over all. We looked for hotels or other signs of habitation on the mountains as the train climbed down, but there was none. Yet nowhere shall you find more habitable hills. They are the Adirondacks of the Cape, or will become so when someone with sufficient vision to appreciate and make use of nature's great gift erects the necessary hotels and summer bungalows there.



A Street in Knysna.

To reach all this the train wound laboriously round deep ravines and sharp mountain spurs. In an hour or two the summit was reached. We were on the edge of the Karoo, aloft the mountain ridge which cuts the desert from the sea. It was the parting of the ways, and there we took our last farewell of the Karoo—the unconventional, downright Karoo which sweats superfluous tissue from limbs and cant from

minds ; the Karoo which, when you leave it, sends something small and still, and very insistent, to creep like regret to your heart.

Soon the train was pounding down the Montagu Pass, on the George side of the mountain, into a smiling land, one of earth's most verdant spots. We were quickly conscious of the change. Every pore opened to the ozone from below, a dryness crept out of one's bones, and ennui fled as we descended into scenery that became more and more grand.

As it happened, a downpour set in—soft noiseless rain that lasted half an hour, then passed as gently as it had come. Sunshine followed, and the effect on the mountain was superb. The turf was quickly sodden, runnels glided between the dripping banks on which beads of dew lit to the sun, and rainbows trembled in unexpected quarters. The waterfalls caught the illumination. The foam-flecked burns lay inky black in pools round which the wild olive sent its roots.

Thus the train descended over mountain pastures, round densely wooded gorges and fern-clad glens. Highland shepherds grazed their flocks, brooks babbled in every direction, the moors were bright with reddening bracken and heather.

And in and out of the winsome scene, sometimes just visible through the blue haze of a ravine, sometimes white just beside us, the old wagon road twined with a suggestive air of romance.

Cut for the most part out of the rock, and in places quaintly bridged, it pierces the Outeniquas, like some old and long-forgotten Roman road lost among mountain passes.

The plain was no less pleasing than the mountain. As the view from above had suggested would happen, time passed all too quickly at Mossel Bay, Knysna and George.

The town of George is thirty-two miles by rail from Mossel Bay, and Knysna is fifty-three miles by motor car from George. Between them they share the honours of the district.



Summit of the Outeniquas.

George lies at the foot of the mountains. In front of it, six miles away, is the sea. On either side of that point the bay sweeps in a graceful curve, with Mossel Bay at one end and Knysna at the other.

It is a classical-looking littoral, in many ways reminding one of parts of Greece. The sunlit sea, on

a bright autumn day, is so blue that you almost expect it to stain the white sands it washes. Across the plain the forests stand, and westward to the sunset a mighty shadow-show of gold and purple plays where the Outeniqua Mountains rear their serrated peaks. Nearer Mossel Bay the coves are rocky, the cliffs lofty above crashing combers. Indeed the cliff scenery there is such as will be found



The Homestead, Wilderness.

in few other places along the South African coast. The landscapes around Simon's Bay and Camp's Bay are nobler, and around Durban Bay more vividly beautiful. But from Cape St. Blaize to the Gamtoos the coast has a grandeur of its own. There is, it seemed to us, something vaster, more vital and appealing about the sea there than almost anywhere else in the Cape. And the quaint rock formations, Scylla-like, entice.

Perhaps we had most joy from the rocky swimming pool at Mossel Bay. There are many swimming baths

in South Africa, but that at Mossel Bay is the only natural one we saw. The difference is notable, for in the natural swimming bath the waves, except at low tide, foam in and out freely.



Mossel Bay Baths.

Thus there is for the swimmer all the delights of the open sea, with none of the risk. What this means will be appreciated when it is recalled that while along the South African coast there are plenty of attractive facilities for safe surf-bathing, the currents are generally too uncertain beyond the surf, and the sharks too plentiful, for even a strong swimmer to venture out with safety.

This is true also of Mossel Bay. But such is the natural formation of the rocky pool that the sharks are kept out but the water enters freely—not still water, but waters as fresh, sparkling and full of

vitality as the outer sea, and spacious enough for swimming and diving.

Eyes brighten, minds clear, the heart grows buoyant as the sparkling salt waters of that pool bite on naked limbs. It is a great restorer.

Mossel Bay is also noted for its oyster beds and line fishing. The waters swarm with fish, some weighing up to seventy pounds, and good sport is to be had.



Mossel Bay.

The climate is excellent, with an air stimulating as wine; and in the season the scene is one of much vivacity, holiday-makers recruiting in large numbers along the whole of that beach, but especially at Mossel Bay, where there are good places of accommodation and the conveniences of a well-managed town.

Inshore, George is a quaint sunny Eden, full of

rural charm and sleepy loveliness. Ancient oaks throw their shade across the roads; little white houses peep between the stems; there is the drone of bees upon the air and the tinkle of running water beside the kerb.

Secluded among the many plantations of the Forest Department, George is a very fruitful and charming old place, whose gardens snare you with perfume, so



A Garden at George.

that, with rural philosophy, you allot another spell to leisurely wandering, among forest walks and nearby inland cañons along "the cool sequestered vale of life."

The roads from George are well-kept. They are proper motor roads, with a bridge over nearly every stream. They radiate into enticing surroundings.

The Wilderness, with its lakes and occasional seascapes, its fine forest scenery—especially near

Kaaimans—and the delicate fish with which the visitor is regaled there, to say nothing of a little rough shooting in the season—grey-buck, pheasants and duck on the lakes and rivers—has also its earnest votaries.

Then there is the trip to Balmoral and Knysna. The long road from George runs roughly parallel with the curve of the bay. It turns gradually from the



Kowie, Port Alfred.

Outeniquas, so that, as you go on, the dark line of mountains recedes farther and farther, until it is faint with distance and inland haze. And soon the view is restricted by intervening hills, and valleys and woods.

South Africa is on the whole sparsely wooded, but this portion of it is nearly all forest. It is not the impressive forest of Canada or the United States,

None of the plantations is of considerable age, and the indigenous forest is so dense, so interlaced with wild vine and other undergrowth, and as a rule so dwarfed by the magnitude of the slope on which it grows, that the traveller hardly realises the noble proportions of the trees, unless he penetrates on foot to the wild chestnuts and the great yellow-woods.

Yet there is considerable industry in those forests,



The Bar, Knysna.

as near Deepwells, where the ringing axe of the wood-cutter is heard, the charcoal-burner tends his oven, and the slipways from the forest to the sawmill are busy with large timber.

The road in places penetrates the forest, as near Balmoral, and mostly it runs through valleys filled with wild beauty, as at Homtini Gorge, whose slopes are densely wooded.

The hills become greener, the streams more numerous and livelier, the whisper and the fragrance of the forests deepen, as you proceed.

In parts of those surroundings the placer miner once sought gold, on the whole with indifferent success. Millwood, now almost deserted, was the centre of that enterprise.

It is alluringly situated, commanding views over hill and forest, with occasional glimpses of sea as far as distant Mossel Bay. The glorious climate, the forest setting, the rushing mountain stream, recalled with peculiar charm the similar scenes described by Bret Harte in his Californian tales of the old mining days. The minstrelsy of the birds, the peace, the fragrance, the salinity of the place, were a mental and spiritual bath. One is cleansed of all unworthy feeling, except perhaps of envy—envy of the life, even if it were unprosperous, that those departed diggers had led around Millwood.

The interest of the district culminates at Knysna. The town is small and unimpressive, but its immediate surroundings surprised us. Lofty headlands, through the passage between which the tide enters narrowly, shut Knysna from the sea. And behind the headlands is a spacious lagoon, in which the sea and river mingle their waters.

That lagoon is a thing of placid beauty, picturesquely locked among hills, with one or two enchanting islands that heightened, we thought, the resemblance to an Alpine lake. Indeed, seen under a full moon, as we first saw that lagoon, with a silver path across the water and the dark shadows of the islands and surrounding hills reflected from the still surface, it might have been Como on a small scale.

Even by daylight, it seemed to us, there was the same grace and diversity of outline—an Italian warmth of colouring, and subtle fusion of hillside and lake; lacking indeed the splendid villas, but otherwise such a lake as Como was when its young charms were sung by Virgil, that great publicity agent.



[Photo by H. Edwards.

A Cape Homestead—"Welgelegen."

CHAPTER XXIV.

BACK TO THE CAPE.

Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood.

FROM Mossel Bay our way lay over the New Cape Central Railway to Worcester, and we were again among the oldest settlements of South Africa, villages and towns that date back to the early eighteenth century.

Much of that countryside is moor, shut in here and there by sterile-looking mountains. But go a little way off the beaten track, the moors are aflame with colour, the seemingly bleak mountain slopes are fragrant with the scent of buchu and wild tea. Nowhere, in the season, is there a more generous display of wild flowers than around Riversdale and Swellendam. And at Nuy and Robertson, where water is led in canals for miles to the fields, the land is very productive. One is reminded of parts of France. It is a sunny countryside, carefully cultivated. Many quaint old villages are passed on the way, their ancient church spires picturesquely silhouetted against the mountain background; and over all is an air of peace and of rural felicity.

But perhaps the main attraction of the area is the watering place in the hills—famous even in the days of the East India Company, when Anglo-Indians held it in some esteem for their gout and their livers. South Africa is moderately rich in medicinal springs. In time they will, no doubt, attract some attention which the war has diverted from European spas.

The accommodation around the curative waters of South Africa is nowhere so luxurious as will be found at any European spa of note. But the South African waters can be used under almost ideal climatic conditions at those seasons when most European spas are rendered comfortless by the severity of the European winter. The South African waters can



Near Robertson.

be enjoyed in sunshine and comfort all the year round.

Though not so highly impregnated with radium emanations as the waters at Gastien, the hot springs at Montagu, along the New Cape Central Railway, are more strongly impregnated than those at Karlsbad or Baden-Baden, and are peculiarly effective for curing rheumatism and diseases of the nervous system. The sanatorium at the baths,



Montagu Medicinal Baths.

though small and plain, is comfortable and well managed.

At Worcester the traveller reaches a point from which many pleasant excursions may be planned. There is the road through the grandeur of Mitchell's Pass to Tulbagh and Ceres. On the other side there are Wellington, Paarl, and Stellenbosch, then Groot Drakenstein, French Hoek, and Somerset West, all



A Street in Montagu.

connected by good motor roads, and containing many memorials of the Huguenots and early Dutch settlers.

It is a land of valleys rimmed by blue mountains. To the casual glance, on a distant view, they are bleak-looking valleys. But on closer examination the mountain slopes are seen to be covered in places with fir plantations. On the arable land below are great blocks of orchards—pear, plum, peach, and

prune—with here and there long stretches of vines, here and there a wheatfield or rich pasture.

Then one comes to the great gums and oaks of a bygone age, and dozing in the golden haze are the white-gabled spacious homesteads. They, too, are of a past age. Some have been modernised by electric lighting and telephones; most of them are dignified beautiful homes, yet quaintly old-fashioned



[Photo by Geo. Greene.]

“Morning Star”—Somerset West.

with their curley-cue chimneys, many-paned windows, high stoeps, pergolas, and old-world rambling gardens aglow with coreopsis, asters, and zinnias.

The great peach crop had been cleared, the grapes harvested and pressed when we passed, but in the air there still lingered a heavy odour of fruit, the countryside being busy with its drying of prunes.

We stayed only long enough to rest awhile on the high cool stoeps, and to drink a little of the good white wine of the Cape.

That season the harvest had been an abundant one, prices for produce stood high, there was contentment in every valley. The shadowy gorges of purple and blue, the flushing crimson peaks, the freshness of the morning, the clean earth-smells and heartening signs



[Photo by N. Baker.]

“Tokio.”

of industry well rewarded, induced optimism. And as we sped on towards Capetown, in top gear even over the mountain roads, we were a little predisposed, perhaps, to idealise the place, the people and the lives they lead. The war was over, but the cost was still being paid. East and West economic difficulties remained almost as trying as the war had been; hardship, disillusionment, and discontent were world-

wide. South Africa had not entirely escaped, but on the whole it was prosperous. And, as in that other great war epoch a century ago, to which reference was made at the beginning of this volume, the Cape, it seemed to us, was a happy land of plenty; it was again the idyllic oasis between the East and the West.



Cogman's Kloof, Montagu.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE END OF THE TOUR.

'Tis hard to venture where our betters fail,
Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale.—BYRON.

BOOKS about South Africa are plentiful. Many are good, but *the* book has still to be written. South Africa must be seen to be appreciated. Adequately to describe so large and variedly interesting a country is impossible. To depict only its main features would require, though a miniature scale be planned, a very large canvas, and a very great artist. The description doing justice to South Africa therefore remains unwritten.

Still, in so large an enterprise as those enter upon who take South Africa for their theme, no pen, however mediocre, can altogether fail to hit upon occasional points of interest. And if the present volume helps to give even a faint idea, to people unacquainted with South Africa, of how attractive a country it is, a sufficient purpose will have been served.

If we can convey to others at least a fraction of what we enjoyed on our tour, we shall be content as having repaid a little of our debt to South Africa for several months of pleasant travel.

During those months a sunniness characteristic of that country entered our hearts and refreshed our beings. New scenes, values and ideas were encountered plentifully. And with us will long remain the impressive memory of great and peaceful plains ;

of mountain grandeur, fruitful valleys, many pleasant towns, and an active people turning a great country to a good account.

It was therefore with more than the usual regret at parting that we took leave of C  petown. Slowly the liner passed Sea Point, sailing into the sunset. As the shore receded, a hush descended upon the passengers lining the deck ; and most of all it descended upon us, as we realised that South Africa had become a memory, and that at last we were at sea. Slowly the African sunset died out of the sky, and the mountainous coast sank behind the horizon. It was the end of the tour.



[Photo by H. Edwards.]

A typical Cape Homestead.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN STEAMER AND TRAIN

COMFORT and convenience are the characteristics of the South African railway and steamer services to-day. On the long-distance trains qualified chefs and stewards are in attendance; the saloons, and especially the sleeping arrangements,



The Smoking Room, Union-Castle Mail Boat.

are up-to-date and comfortable. Indeed, railway travelling in South Africa will bear comparison with that of much more populous countries.

The steamers, especially the mail boats, plying between South Africa and Britain are luxuriously appointed, and as the voyage is comparatively a



Dinner in the Union-Castle Mail Boat Saloon.

smooth-water voyage, the sixteen days spent on board can be very pleasant, restful, and invigorating, or with considerable recreation, according to taste—



After Dinner on Deck.

but in either case as comfortable and contenting as in a really first-class hotel. Travel to, and in, South Africa is no longer a hardship. It has become a pleasure.

Here is a typical dinner menu en route:—

DINNER :

Hors d'Œuvres :

Consommé Bouquetiere.

Boiled Turbot, Sauce Hollandaise.

Salmi of Partridge.

Braized Celery, Demi Glace.

Roast Saddle of Mutton.

Cauliflower. Baked and Boiled Potatoes.

Roast Chicken and Bread Sauce.

Dressed Salad.

—o—

College Pudding.

Vol au Vent of Greengages.

Genoese Ice.

—o—

Croute au Fromage.

—o—

Cheddar and Roquefort Cheese.

Dessert. Coffee.

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