

Letters from the Cape

Lady Duff Gordon

Table of Contents

<u>Letters from the Cape</u>	1
<u>Lady Duff Gordon</u>	1
<u>LETTER I – THE VOYAGE</u>	1
<u>LETTER II</u>	7
<u>LETTER III</u>	9
<u>LETTER IV – JOURNEY TO CALEDON</u>	12
<u>LETTER V – CALEDON</u>	16
<u>LETTER VI – CALEDON</u>	21
<u>LETTER VII – GNADENTHAL</u>	23
<u>LETTER VIII</u>	28
<u>LETTER IX</u>	29
<u>LETTER X</u>	30
<u>LETTER XI</u>	35
<u>LETTER XII</u>	36
<u>LETTER XIII</u>	39
<u>LETTER XIV</u>	41
<u>LETTER XV</u>	43
<u>LETTER XVI</u>	43

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- LETTER I – THE VOYAGE
 - LETTER II
 - LETTER III
 - LETTER IV – JOURNEY TO CALEDON
 - LETTER V – CALEDON
 - LETTER VI – CALEDON
 - LETTER VII – GNADENTHAL
 - LETTER VIII
 - LETTER IX
 - LETTER X
 - LETTER XI
 - LETTER XII
 - LETTER XIII
 - LETTER XIV
 - LETTER XV
 - LETTER XVI
-

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LETTER I – THE VOYAGE

Wednesday, 24th July.
Off the Scilly Isles, 6 P.M.

When I wrote last Sunday, we put our pilot on shore, and went down Channel. It soon came on to blow, and all night was squally and rough. Captain on deck all night. Monday, I went on deck at eight. Lovely weather, but the ship pitching as you never saw a ship pitch – bowsprit under water. By two o'clock a gale came on; all ordered below. Captain left dinner, and, about six, a sea struck us on the weather side, and washed a good many unconsidered trifles overboard, and stove in three windows on the poop; nurse and four children in fits; Mrs. T– and babies afloat, but good– humoured as usual. Army–surgeon and I picked up children and bullied nurse, and helped to bale cabin. Cuddy window stove in, and we were wetted. Went to bed at nine; could not undress, it pitched so, and had to call doctor to help me into cot; slept sound. The gale continues. My cabin is water–tight as to big splashes, but damp and dribbling. I am almost ashamed to like such miseries so much. The forecabin is under water with every lurch, and the motion quite incredible to one only acquainted with steamers. If one can sit this ship, which bounds like a tiger, one should sit a leap over a haystack. Evidently, I can never be sea– sick; but holding on is hard work, and writing harder.

Life is thus:– Avery – my cuddy boy – brings tea for S–, and milk for me, at six. S– turns out; when she is dressed, I turn out, and sing out for Avery, who takes down my cot, and brings a bucket of salt water, in which I

Letters from the Cape

wash with vast danger and difficulty; get dressed, and go on deck at eight. Ladies not allowed there earlier. Breakfast solidly at nine. Deck again; gossip; pretend to read. Beer and biscuit at twelve. The faithful Avery brings mine on deck. Dinner at four. Do a little carpentering in cabin, all the outfitters' work having broken loose. I am now in the captain's cabin, writing. We have the wind as ever, dead against us; and as soon as we get unpleasantly near Scilly, we shall tack and stand back to the French coast, where we were last night. Three soldiers able to answer roll-call, all the rest utterly sick; three middies helpless. Several of crew, ditto. Passengers very fairly plucky; but only I and one other woman, who never was at sea before, well. The food on board our ship is good as to meat, bread, and beer; everything else bad. Port and sherry of British manufacture, and the water with an incredible BORACHIO, essence of tar; so that tea and coffee are but derisive names.

To-day, the air is quite saturated with wet, and I put on my clothes damp when I dressed, and have felt so ever since. I am so glad I was not persuaded out of my cot; it is the whole difference between rest, and holding on for life. No one in a bunk slept at all on Monday night; but then it blew as heavy a gale as it can blow, and we had the Cornish coast under our lee. So we tacked and tumbled all night. The ship being new, too, has the rigging all wrong; and the confusion and disorder are beyond description. The ship's officers are very good fellows. The mizen is entirely worked by the 'young gentlemen'; so we never see the sailors, and, at present, are not allowed to go forward. All lights are put out at half-past ten, and no food allowed in the cabin; but the latter article my friend Avery makes light of, and brings me anything when I am laid up. The young soldier-officers bawl for him with expletives; but he says, with a snigger, to me, 'They'll just wait till their betters, the ladies, is looked to.' I will write again some day soon, and take the chance of meeting a ship; you may be amused by a little scrawl, though it will probably be very stupid and ill-written, for it is not easy to see or to guide a pen while I hold on to the table with both legs and one arm, and am first on my back and then on my nose. Adieu, till next time. I have had a good taste of the humours of the Channel.

29th July, 4 Bells, i.e. 2 o'clock, p.m. – When I wrote last, I thought we had had our share of contrary winds and foul weather. Ever since, we have beaten about the bay with the variety of a favourable gale one night for a few hours, and a dead calm yesterday, in which we almost rolled our masts out of the ship. However, the sun was hot, and I sat and basked on deck, and we had morning service. It was a striking sight, with the sailors seated on oars and buckets, covered with signal flags, and with their clean frocks and faces. To-day is so cold that I dare not go on deck, and am writing in my black-hole of a cabin, in a green light, with the sun blinking through the waves as they rush over my port and scuttle. The captain is much vexed at the loss of time. I persist in thinking it a very pleasant, but utterly lazy life. I sleep a great deal, but don't eat much, and my cough has been bad; but, considering the real hardship of the life – damp, cold, queer food, and bad drink – I think I am better. When we can get past Finisterre, I shall do very well, I doubt not.

The children swarm on board, and cry unceasingly. A passenger-ship is no place for children. Our poor ship will lose her character by the weather, as she cannot fetch up ten days' lost time. But she is evidently a race-horse. We overhaul everything we see, at a wonderful rate, and the speed is exciting and pleasant; but the next long voyage I make, I'll try for a good wholesome old 'monthly' tub, which will roll along on the top of the water, instead of cutting through it, with the waves curling in at the cuddy skylights. We tried to signal a barque yesterday, and send home word 'all well'; but the brutes understood nothing but Russian, and excited our indignation by talking 'gibberish' to us; which we resented with true British spirit, as became us.

It is now blowing hard again, and we have just been taken right aback. Luckily, I had lashed my desk to my washing-stand, or that would have flown off, as I did off my chair. I don't think I shall know what to make of solid ground under my feet. The rolling and pitching of a ship of this size, with such tall masts, is quite unlike the little niggling sort of work on a steamer – it is the difference between grinding along a bad road in a four-wheeler, and riding well to hounds in a close country on a good hunter. I was horribly tired for about five days, but now I rather like it, and never know whether it blows or not in the night, I sleep so soundly. The noise is beyond all belief; the creaking, trampling, shouting, clattering; it is an incessant storm. We have not yet got our masts quite safe; the new wire-rigging stretches more than was anticipated (of course), and our main-topmast is

Letters from the Cape

shaky. The crew have very hard work, as incessant tacking is added to all the extra work incident to a new ship. On Saturday morning, everybody was shouting for the carpenter. My cabin was flooded by a leak, and I superintended the baling and swabbing from my cot, and dressed sitting on my big box. However, I got the leak stopped and cabin dried, and no harm done, as I had put everything up off the floor the night before, suspicious of a dribble which came in. Then my cot frame was broken by my cuddy boy and I lurching over against S-'s bunk, in taking it down. The carpenter has given me his own, and takes my broken one for himself. Board ship is a famous place for tempers. Being easily satisfied, I get all I want, and plenty of attention and kindness; but I cannot prevail on my cuddy boy to refrain from violent tambourine-playing with a tin tray just at the ear of a lady who worries him. The young soldier-officers, too, I hear mentioned as 'them lazy gunners', and they struggle for water and tea in the morning long after mine has come. We have now been ten days at sea, and only three on which we could eat without the 'fiddles' (transverse pieces of wood to prevent the dishes from falling off). Smooth water will seem quite strange to me. I fear the poor people in the forecabin must be very wet and miserable, as the sea is constantly over it, not in spray, but in tons of green water.

3d Aug. – We had two days of dead calm, then one or two of a very light, favourable breeze, and yesterday we ran 175 miles with the wind right aft. We saw several ships, which signalled us, but we would not answer, as we had our spars down for repairs and looked like a wreck, and fancied it would be a pity to frighten you all with a report to that effect.

Last night we got all right, and spread out immense studding-sails. We are now bowling along, wind right aft, dipping our studding-sail booms into the water at every roll. The weather is still surprisingly cold, though very fine, and I have to come below quite early, out of the evening air. The sun sets before seven o'clock. I still cough a good deal, and the bad food and drink are trying. But the life is very enjoyable; and as I have the run of the charts, and ask all sorts of questions, I get plenty of amusement. S- is an excellent traveller; no grumbling, and no gossiping, which, on board a ship like ours, is a great merit, for there is AD NAUSEAM of both.

Mr. – is writing a charade, in which I have agreed to take a part, to prevent squabbling. He wanted to start a daily paper, but the captain wisely forbade it, as it must have led to personalities and quarrels, and suggested a play instead. My little white Maltese goat is very well, and gives plenty of milk, which is a great resource, as the tea and coffee are abominable. Avery brings it me at six, in a tin pannikin, and again in the evening. The chief officer is well-bred and agreeable, and, indeed, all the young gentlemen are wonderfully good specimens of their class. The captain is a burly foremast man in manner, with a heart of wax and every feeling of a gentleman. He was in California, 'HIDE DROGHING' with Dana, and he says every line of TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST is true. He went through it all himself. He says that I am a great help to him, as a pattern of discipline and punctuality. People are much inclined to miss meals, and then want things at odd hours, and make the work quite impossible to the cook and servants. Of course, I get all I want in double-quick time, as I try to save my man trouble; and the carpenter leaves my scuttle open when no one else gets it, quite willing to get up in his time of sleep to close it, if it comes on to blow. A maid is really a superfluity on board ship, as the men rather like being 'AUX PETITS SOINS'. The boatswain came the other day to say that he had a nice carpet and a good pillow; did I want anything of the sort? He would be proud that I should use anything of his. You would delight in Avery, my cuddy man, who is as quick as 'greased lightning', and full of fun. His misery is my want of appetite, and his efforts to cram me are very droll. The days seem to slip away, one can't tell how. I sit on deck from breakfast at nine, till dinner at four, and then again till it gets cold, and then to bed. We are now about 100 miles from Madeira, and shall have to run inside it, as we were thrown so far out of our course by the foul weather.

9th Aug. – Becalmed, under a vertical sun. Lat. 17 degrees, or thereabouts. We saw Madeira at a distance like a cloud; since then, we had about four days trade wind, and then failing or contrary breezes. We have sailed so near the African shore that we get little good out of the trades, and suffer much from the African climate. Fancy a sky like a pale February sky in London, no sun to be seen, and a heat coming, one can't tell from whence. To-day, the sun is vertical and invisible, the sea glassy and heaving. I have been ill again, and obliged to lie still yesterday and the day before in the captain's cabin; to-day in my own, as we have the ports open, and the maindeck is cooler

Letters from the Cape

than the upper. The men have just been holystoning here, singing away lustily in chorus. Last night I got leave to sling my cot under the main hatchway, as my cabin must have killed me from suffocation when shut up. Most of the men stayed on deck, but that is dangerous after sunset on this African coast, on account of the heavy dew and fever. They tell me that the open sea is quite different; certainly, nothing can look duller and dimmer than this specimen of the tropics. The few days of trade wind were beautiful and cold, with sparkling sea, and fresh air and bright sun; and we galloped along merrily.

We are now close to the Cape de Verd Islands, and shall go inside them. About lat. 4 degrees N. we expect to catch the S.E. trade wind, when it will be cold again. In lat. 24 degrees, the day before we entered the tropics, I sat on deck in a coat and cloak; the heat is quite sudden, and only lasts a week or so. The sea to-day is littered all round the ship with our floating rubbish, so we have not moved at all.

I constantly long for you to be here, though I am not sure you would like the life as well as I do. All your ideas of it are wrong; the confinement to the poop and the stringent regulations would bore you. But then, sitting on deck in fine weather is pleasure enough, without anything else. In a Queen's ship, a yacht, or a merchantman with fewer passengers, it must be a delightful existence.

17th Aug. – Since I wrote last, we got into the south-west monsoon for one day, and I sat up by the steersman in intense enjoyment – a bright sun and glittering blue sea; and we tore along, pitching and tossing the water up like mad. It was glorious. At night, I was calmly reposing in my cot, in the middle of the steerage, just behind the main hatchway, when I heard a crashing of rigging and a violent noise and confusion on deck. The captain screamed out orders which informed me that we were in the thick of a collision – of course I lay still, and waited till the row, or the ship, went down. I found myself next day looked upon as no better than a heathen by all the women, because I had been cool, and declined to get up and make a noise. Presently the officers came and told me that a big ship had borne down on us – we were on the starboard tack, and all right – carried off our flying jib-boom and whisker (the sort of yard to the bowsprit). The captain says he was never in such imminent danger in his life, as she threatened to swing round and to crush into our waist, which would have been certain destruction. The little dandy soldier-officer behaved capitally; he turned his men up in no time, and had them all ready. He said, 'Why, you know, I must see that my fellows go down decently.' S- was as cool as an icicle, offered me my pea-jacket, which I declined, as it would be of no use for me to go off in boats, even supposing there were time, and I preferred going down comfortably in my cot. Finding she was of no use to me, she took a yelling maid in custody, and was thought a brute for begging her to hold her noise. The first lieutenant, who looks on passengers as odious cargo, has utterly mollified to me since this adventure. I heard him report to the captain that I was 'among 'em all, and never sung out, nor asked a question the while'. This he called 'beautiful'.

Next day we got light wind S.W. (which ought to be the S.E. trades), and the weather has been, beyond all description, lovely ever since. Cool, but soft, sunny and bright – in short, perfect; only the sky is so pale. Last night the sunset was a vision of loveliness, a sort of Pompadour paradise; the sky seemed full of rose-crowned AMORINI, and the moon wore a rose-coloured veil of bright pink cloud, all so light, so airy, so brilliant, and so fleeting, that it was a kind of intoxication. It is far less grand than northern colour, but so lovely, so shiny. Then the flying fish skimmed like silver swallows over the blue water. Such a sight! Also, I saw a whale spout like a very tiny garden fountain. The Southern Cross is a delusion, and the tropical moon no better than a Parisian one, at present. We are now in lat. 31 degrees about, and have been driven halfway to Rio by this sweet southern breeze. I have never yet sat on deck without a cloth jacket or shawl, and the evenings are chilly. I no longer believe in tropical heat at sea. Even during the calm it was not so hot as I have often felt it in England – and that, under a vertical sun. The ship that nearly ran us and herself down, must have kept no look-out, and refused to answer our hail. She is supposed to be from Glasgow by her looks. We may speak a ship and send letters on board; so excuse scrawl and confusion, it is so difficult to write at all.

30th August. – About 25 degrees S. lat. and very much to the west. We have had all sorts of weather – some beautiful, some very rough, but always contrary winds – and got within 200 miles of the coast of South America.

Letters from the Cape

We now have a milder breeze from the SOFT N.E., after a BITTER S.W., with Cape pigeons and mollymawks (a small albatross), not to compare with our gulls. We had private theatricals last night – ill acted, but beautifully got up as far as the sailors were concerned. I did not act, as I did not feel well enough, but I put a bit for Neptune into the Prologue and made the boatswain's mate speak it, to make up for the absence of any shaving at the Line, which the captain prohibited altogether; I thought it hard the men should not get their 'tips'. The boatswain's mate dressed and spoke it admirably; and the old carpenter sang a famous comic song, dressed to perfection as a ploughboy.

I am disappointed in the tropics as to warmth. Our thermometer stood at 82 degrees one day only, under the vertical sun, N. of the Line; ON the Line at 74 degrees; and at sea it FEELS 10 degrees colder than it is. I have never been hot, except for two days 4 degrees N. of the Line, and now it is very cold, but it is very invigorating. All day long it looks and feels like early morning; the sky is pale blue, with light broken clouds; the sea an inconceivably pure opaque blue – lapis lazuli, but far brighter. I saw a lovely dolphin three days ago; his body five feet long (some said more) is of a FIERY blue–green, and his huge tail golden bronze. I was glad he scorned the bait and escaped the hook; he was so beautiful. This is the sea from which Venus rose in her youthful glory. All is young, fresh, serene, beautiful, and cheerful.

We have not seen a sail for weeks. But the life at sea makes amends for anything, to my mind. I am never tired of the calms, and I enjoy a stiff gale like a Mother Carey's chicken, so long as I can be on deck or in the captain's cabin. Between decks it is very close and suffocating in rough weather, as all is shut up. We shall be still three weeks before we reach the Cape; and now the sun sets with a sudden plunge before six, and the evenings are growing too cold again for me to go on deck after dinner. As long as I could, I spent fourteen hours out of the twenty–four in my quiet corner by the wheel, basking in the tropical sun. Never again will I believe in the tales of a burning sun; the vertical sun just kept me warm – no more. In two days we shall be bitterly cold again.

Immediately after writing the above it began to blow a gale (favourable, indeed, but more furious than the captain had ever known in these seas), – about lat. 34 degrees S. and long. 25 degrees. For three days we ran under close–reefed (four reefs) topsails, before a sea. The gale in the Bay of Biscay was a little shaking up in a puddle (a dirty one) compared to that glorious South Atlantic in all its majestic fury. The intense blue waves, crowned with fantastic crests of bright emeralds and with the spray blowing about like wild dishevelled hair, came after us to swallow us up at a mouthful, but took us up on their backs, and hurried us along as if our ship were a cork. Then the gale slackened, and we had a dead calm, during which the waves banged us about frightfully, and our masts were in much jeopardy. Then a foul wind, S.E., increased into a gale, lasting five days, during which orders were given in dumb show, as no one's voice could be heard; through it we fought and laboured and dipped under water, and I only had my dry corner by the wheel, where the kind pleasant little third officer lashed me tight. It was far more formidable than the first gale, but less beautiful; and we made so much lee–way that we lost ten days, and only arrived here yesterday. I recommend a fortnight's heavy gale in the South Atlantic as a cure for a BLASE state of mind. It cannot be described; the sound, the sense of being hurled along without the smallest regard to 'this side uppermost'; the beauty of the whole scene, and the occasional crack and bear–away of sails and spars; the officer trying to 'sing out', quite in vain, and the boatswain's whistle scarcely audible. I remained near the wheel every day for as long as I could bear it, and was enchanted.

Then the mortal perils of eating, drinking, moving, sitting, lying; standing can't be done, even by the sailors, without holding on. THE night of the gale, my cot twice touched the beams of the ship above me. I asked the captain if I had dreamt it, but he said it was quite possible; he had never seen a ship so completely on her beam ends come up all right, masts and yards all sound.

There is a middy about half M–'s size, a very tiny ten–year–older, who has been my delight; he is so completely 'the officer and the gentleman'. My maternal entrails turned like old Alvarez, when that baby lay out on the very end of the cross–jack yard to reef, in the gale; it was quite voluntary, and the other newcomers all declined. I always called him 'Mr. –, sir', and asked his leave gravely, or, on occasions, his protection and assistance; and his

Letters from the Cape

little dignity was lovely. He is polite to the ladies, and slightly distant to the passenger-boys, bigger than himself, whom he orders off dangerous places; 'Children, come out of that; you'll be overboard.'

A few days before landing I caught a bad cold, and kept my bed. I caught this cold by 'sleeping with a damp man in my cabin', as some one said. During the last gale, the cabin opposite mine was utterly swamped, and I found the Irish soldier-servant of a little officer of eighteen in despair; the poor lad had got ague, and eight inches of water in his bed, and two feet in the cabin. I looked in and said, 'He can't stay there – carry him into my cabin, and lay him in the bunk'; which he did, with tears running down his honest old face. So we got the boy into S-'s bed, and cured his fever and ague, caught under canvas in Romney Marsh. Meantime S- had to sleep in a chair and to undress in the boy's wet cabin. As a token of gratitude, he sent me a poodle pup, born on board, very handsome. The artillery officers were generally well-behaved; the men, deserters and ruffians, sent out as drivers. We have had five courts-martial and two floggings in eight weeks, among seventy men. They were pampered with food and porter, and would not pull a rope, or get up at six to air their quarters. The sailors are an excellent set of men. When we parted, the first lieutenant said to me, 'Weel, ye've a wonderful idee of discipline for a leddy, I will say. You've never been reported but once, and that was on sick leave, for your light, and all in order.'

Cape Town, Sept. 18.

We anchored yesterday morning, and Captain J-, the Port Captain, came off with a most kind letter from Sir Baldwin Walker, his gig, and a boat and crew for S- and the baggage. So I was whipped over the ship's side in a chair, and have come to a boarding house where the J-s live. I was tired and dizzy and landsick, and lay down and went to sleep. After an hour or so I woke, hearing a little GAZOUILLEMENT, like that of chimney swallows. On opening my eyes I beheld four demons, 'sons of the obedient Jinn', each bearing an article of furniture, and holding converse over me in the language of Nephelococcygia. Why has no one ever mentioned the curious little soft voices of these coolies? – you can't hear them with the naked ear, three feet off. The most hideous demon (whose complexion had not only the colour, but the precise metallic lustre of an ill black-leaded stove) at last chirruped a wish for orders, which I gave. I asked the pert, active, cockney housemaid what I ought to pay them, as, being a stranger, they might overcharge me. Her scorn was sublime, 'Them nasty blacks never asks more than their regular charge.' So I asked the black-lead demon, who demanded 'two shilling each horse in waggon', and a dollar each 'coolie man'. He then glided with fiendish noiselessness about the room, arranged the furniture to his own taste, and finally said, 'Poor missus sick'; then more chirruping among themselves, and finally a fearful gesture of incantation, accompanied by 'God bless poor missus. Soon well now'. The wrath of the cockney housemaid became majestic: 'There, ma'am; you see how saucy they have grown – a nasty black heathen Mohamedan a blessing of a white Christian!'

These men are the Auvergnats of Africa. I was assured that bankers entrust them with large sums in gold, which they carry some hundred and twenty miles, by unknown tracks, for a small gratuity. The pretty, graceful Malays are no honester than ourselves, but are excellent workmen.

To-morrow, my linen will go to a ravine in the giant mountain at my back, and there be scoured in a clear spring by brown women, bleached on the mountain top, and carried back all those long miles on their heads, as it went up.

My landlady is Dutch; the waiter is an Africander, half Dutch, half Malay, very handsome, and exactly like a French gentleman, and as civil.

Enter 'Africander' lad with a nosegay; only one flower that I know – heliotrope. The vegetation is lovely; the freshness of spring and the richness of summer. The leaves on the trees are in all the beauty of spring. Mrs. R- brought me a plate of oranges, 'just gathered', as soon as I entered the house – and, oh! how good they were! better even than the Maltese. They are going out, and DEAR now – two a penny, very large and delicious. I am wild to get out and see the glorious scenery and the hideous people. To-day the wind has been a cold

Letters from the Cape

south-wester, and I have not been out. My windows look N. and E. so I get all the sun and warmth. The beauty of Table Bay is astounding. Fancy the Undercliff in the Isle of Wight magnified a hundred-fold, with clouds floating halfway up the mountain. The Hottentot mountains in the distance have a fantastic jagged outline, which hardly looks real. The town is like those in the south of Europe; flat roofs, and all unfinished; roads are simply non-existent. At the doors sat brown women with black hair that shone like metal, very handsome; they are Malays, and their men wear conical hats a-top of turbans, and are the chief artisans. At the end of the pier sat a Mozambique woman in white drapery and the most majestic attitude, like a Roman matron; her features large and strong and harsh, but fine; and her skin blacker than night.

I have got a couple of Cape pigeons (the storm-bird of the South Atlantic) for J-'s hat. They followed us several thousand miles, and were hooked for their pains. The albatrosses did not come within hail.

The little Maltese goat gave a pint of milk night and morning, and was a great comfort to the cow. She did not like the land or the grass at first, and is to be thrown out of milk now. She is much admired and petted by the young Africander. My room is at least eighteen feet high, and contains exactly a bedstead, one straw mattress, one rickety table, one wash-table, two chairs, and broken looking-glass; no carpet, and a hiatus of three inches between the floor and the door, but all very clean; and excellent food. I have not made a bargain yet, but I dare say I shall stay here.

Friday. – I have just received your letter; where it has been hiding, I can't conceive. To-day is cold and foggy, like a baddish day in June with you; no colder, if so cold. Still, I did not venture out, the fog rolls so heavily over the mountain. Well, I must send off this yarn, which is as interminable as the 'sinnet' and 'foxes' which I twisted with the mids.

LETTER II

Cape Town, Oct. 3.

I came on shore on a very fine day, but the weather changed, and we had a fortnight of cold and damp and S.W. wind (equivalent to our east wind), such as the 'oldest inhabitant' never experienced; and I have had as bad an attack of bronchitis as ever I remember, having been in bed till yesterday. I had a very good doctor, half Italian, half Dane, born at the Cape of Good Hope, and educated at Edinburgh, named Chiappini. He has a son studying medicine in London, whose mother is Dutch; such is the mixture of bloods here.

Yesterday, the wind went to the south-east; the blessed sun shone out, and the weather was lovely at once. The mountain threw off his cloak of cloud, and all was bright and warm. I got up and sat in the verandah over the stoep (a kind of terrace in front of every house here). They brought me a tortoise as big as half a crown and as lively as a cricket to look at, and a chameleon like a fairy dragon – a green fellow, five inches long, with no claws on his feet, but suckers like a fly – the most engaging little beast. He sat on my finger, and caught flies with great delight and dexterity, and I longed to send him to M-. To-day, I went a long drive with Captain and Mrs. J-: we went to Rondebosch and Wynberg – lovely country; rather like Herefordshire; red earth and oak-trees. Miles of the road were like Gainsborough-lane, on a large scale, and looked quite English; only here and there a hedge of prickly pear, or the big white aruns in the ditches, told a different tale; and the scarlet geraniums and myrtles growing wild puzzled one.

And then came rattling along a light, rough, but well-poised cart, with an Arab screw driven by a Malay, in a great hat on his kerchiefed head, and his wife, with her neat dress, glossy black hair, and great gold earrings. They were coming with fish, which he had just caught at Kalk Bay, and was going to sell for the dinners of the Capetown folk. You pass neat villas, with pretty gardens and stoeps, gay with flowers, and at the doors of several, neat Malay girls are lounging. They are the best servants here, for the emigrants mostly drink. Then you see a

Letters from the Cape

group of children at play, some as black as coals, some brown and very pretty. A little black girl, about R-'s age, has carefully tied what little petticoat she has, in a tight coil round her waist, and displays the most darling little round legs and behind, which it would be a real pleasure to slap; it is so shiny and round, and she runs and stands so strongly and gracefully.

Here comes another Malay, with a pair of baskets hanging from a stick across his shoulder, like those in Chinese pictures, which his hat also resembles. Another cart full of working men, with a Malay driver; and inside are jumbled some red-haired, rosy-cheeked English navvies, with the ugliest Mozambiques, blacker than Erebus, and with faces all knobs and corners, like a crusty loaf. As we drive home we see a span of sixteen noble oxen in the marketplace, and on the ground squats the Hottentot driver. His face no words can describe – his cheek-bones are up under his hat, and his meagre-pointed chin halfway down to his waist; his eyes have the dull look of a viper's, and his skin is dirty and sallow, but not darker than a dirty European's.

Capetown is rather pretty, but beyond words untidy and out of repair. As it is neither drained nor paved, it won't do in hot weather; and I shall migrate 'up country' to a Dutch village. Mrs. J-, who is Dutch herself, tells me that one may board in a Dutch farm-house very cheaply, and with great comfort (of course eating with the family), and that they will drive you about the country and tend your horses for nothing, if you are friendly, and don't treat them with ENGELSCHE HOOG-MOEDIGHEID.

Oct. 19th. – The packet came in last night, but just in time to save the fine of 50L. per diem, and I got your welcome letter this morning. I have been coughing all this time, but I hope I shall improve. I came out at the very worst time of year, and the weather has been (of course) 'unprecedentedly' bad and changeable. But when it IS fine it is quite celestial; so clear, so dry, so light. Then comes a cloud over Table Mountain, like the sugar on a wedding-cake, which tumbles down in splendid waterfalls, and vanishes unaccountably halfway; and then you run indoors and shut doors and windows, or it portends a 'south-easter', i.e. a hurricane, and Capetown disappears in impenetrable clouds of dust. But this wind coming off the hills and fields of ice, is the Cape doctor, and keeps away cholera, fever of every sort, and all malignant or infectious diseases. Most of them are unknown here. Never was so healthy a place; but the remedy is of the heroic nature, and very disagreeable. The stones rattle against the windows, and omnibuses are blown over on the Rondebosch road.

A few days ago, I drove to Mr. V-'s farm. Imagine St. George's Hill, and the most beautiful bits of it, sloping gently up to Table Mountain, with its grey precipices, and intersected with Scotch burns, which water it all the year round, as they come from the living rock; and sprinkled with oranges, pomegranates, and camelias in abundance. You drive through a mile or two as described, and arrive at a square, planted with rows of fine oaks close together; at the upper end stands the house, all on the ground-floor, but on a high stoep: rooms eighteen feet high; the old slave quarters on each side; stables, opposite; the square as big as Belgrave Square, and the buildings in the old French style.

We then went on to Newlands, a still more beautiful place. Immense trenching and draining going on – the foreman a Caffre, black as ink, six feet three inches high, and broad in proportion, with a staid, dignified air, and Englishmen working under him! At the streamlets there are the inevitable groups of Malay women washing clothes, and brown babies sprawling about. Yesterday, I should have bought a black woman for her beauty, had it been still possible. She was carrying an immense weight on her head, and was far gone with child; but such stupendous physical perfection I never even imagined. Her jet black face was like the Sphynx, with the same mysterious smile; her shape and walk were goddess-like, and the lustre of her skin, teeth, and eyes, showed the fulness of health; – Caffre of course. I walked after her as far as her swift pace would let me, in envy and admiration of such stately humanity.

The ordinary blacks, or Mozambiques, as they call them, are hideous. Malay here seems equivalent to Mohammedan. They were originally Malays, but now they include every shade, from the blackest nigger to the most blooming English woman. Yes, indeed, the emigrant-girls have been known to turn 'Malays', and get

Letters from the Cape

thereby husbands who know not billiards and brandy – the two diseases of Capetown. They risked a plurality of wives, and professed Islam, but they got fine clothes and industrious husbands. They wear a very pretty dress, and all have a great air of independence and self-respect; and the real Malays are very handsome. I am going to see one of the Mollahs soon, and to look at their schools and mosque; which, to the distraction of the Scotch, they call their 'Kerk.'

I asked a Malay if he would drive me in his cart with the six or eight mules, which he agreed to do for thirty shillings and his dinner (i.e. a share of my dinner) on the road. When I asked how long it would take, he said, 'Allah is groot', which meant, I found, that it depended on the state of the beach – the only road for half the way.

The sun, moon, and stars are different beings from those we look upon. Not only are they so large and bright, but you SEE that the moon and stars are BALLS, and that the sky is endless beyond them. On the other hand, the clear, dry air dwarfs Table Mountain, as you seem to see every detail of it to the very top.

Capetown is very picturesque. The old Dutch buildings are very handsome and peculiar, but are falling to decay and dirt in the hands of their present possessors. The few Dutch ladies I have seen are very pleasing. They are gentle and simple, and naturally well-bred. Some of the Malay women are very handsome, and the little children are darlings. A little parti-coloured group of every shade, from ebony to golden hair and blue eyes, were at play in the street yesterday, and the majority were pretty, especially the half-castes. Most of the Caffres I have seen look like the perfection of human physical nature, and seem to have no diseases. Two days ago I saw a Hottentot girl of seventeen, a housemaid here. You would be enchanted by her superfluity of flesh; the face was very queer and ugly, and yet pleasing, from the sweet smile and the rosy cheeks which please one much, in contrast to all the pale yellow faces – handsome as some of them are.

I wish I could send the six chameleons which a good-natured parson brought me in his hat, and a queer lizard in his pocket. The chameleons are charming, so monkey-like and so 'CARESSANTS'. They sit on my breakfast tray and catch flies, and hang in a bunch by their tails, and reach out after my hand.

I have had a very kind letter from Lady Walker, and shall go and stay with them at Simon's Bay as soon as I feel up to the twenty– two miles along the beaches and bad roads in the mail–cart with three horses. The teams of mules (I beg pardon, spans) would delight you – eight, ten, twelve, even sixteen sleek, handsome beasts; and oh, such oxen! noble beasts with humps; and hump is very good to eat too.

Oct. 21st. – The mail goes out to–morrow, so I must finish this letter. I feel better to–day than I have yet felt, in spite of the south–easter.

Yours,

LETTER III

28th Oct. – Since I wrote, we have had more really cold weather, but yesterday the summer seems to have begun. The air is as light and clear as if THERE WERE NONE, and the sun hot; but I walk in it, and do not find it oppressive. All the household groans and perspires, but I am very comfortable.

Yesterday I sat in the full broil for an hour or more, in the hot dust of the Malay burial–ground. They buried the head butcher of the Mussulmans, and a most strange poetical scene it was. The burial–ground is on the side of the Lion Mountain – on the Lion's rump – and overlooks the whole bay, part of the town, and the most superb mountain panorama beyond. I never saw a view within miles of it for beauty and grandeur. Far down, a fussy English steamer came puffing and popping into the deep blue bay, and the 'Hansom's' cabs went tearing down to the landing place; and round me sat a crowd of grave brown men chanting 'Allah il Allah' to the most monotonous

Letters from the Cape

but musical air, and with the most perfect voices. The chant seemed to swell, and then fade, like the wind in the trees.

I went in after the procession, which consisted of a bier covered with three common Paisley shawls of gay colours; no one looked at me; and when they got near the grave, I kept at a distance, and sat down when they did. But a man came up and said, 'You are welcome.' So I went close, and saw the whole ceremony. They took the corpse, wrapped in a sheet, out of the bier, and lifted it into the grave, where two men received it; then a sheet was held over the grave till they had placed the dead man; and then flowers and earth were thrown in by all present, the grave filled in, watered out of a brass kettle, and decked with flowers. Then a fat old man, in printed calico shirt sleeves, and a plaid waistcoat and corduroy trousers, pulled off his shoes, squatted on the grave, and recited endless 'Koran', many reciting after him. Then they chanted 'Allah-il-Allah' for twenty minutes, I think: then prayers, with 'Ameens' and 'Allah il-Allahs' again. Then all jumped up and walked off. There were eighty or a hundred men, no women, and five or six 'Hadjis', draped in beautiful Eastern dresses, and looking very supercilious. The whole party made less noise in moving and talking than two Englishmen.

A white-complexioned man spoke to me in excellent English (which few of them speak), and was very communicative and civil. He told me the dead man was his brother-in-law, and he himself the barber. I hoped I had not taken a liberty. 'Oh, no; poor Malays were proud when noble English persons showed such respect to their religion. The young Prince had done so too, and Allah would not forget to protect him. He also did not laugh at their prayers, praise be to God!' I had already heard that Prince Alfred is quite the darling of the Malays. He insisted on accepting their FETE, which the Capetown people had snubbed. I have a friendship with one Abdul Jemaalee and his wife Betsy, a couple of old folks who were slaves to Dutch owners, and now keep a fruit-shop of a rough sort, with 'Betsy, fruiterer,' painted on the back of an old tin tray, and hung up by the door of the house. Abdul first bought himself, and then his wife Betsy, whose 'missus' generously threw in her bed-ridden mother. He is a fine handsome old man, and has confided to me that 5,000 pounds would not buy what he is worth now. I have also read the letters written by his son, young Abdul Rachman, now a student at Cairo, who has been away five years – four at Mecca. The young theologian writes to his 'HOOG EERBARE MOEDER' a fond request for money, and promises to return soon. I am invited to the feast wherewith he will be welcomed. Old Abdul Jemaalee thinks it will divert my mind, and prove to me that Allah will take me home safe to my children, about whom he and his wife asked many questions. Moreover, he compelled me to drink herb tea, compounded by a Malay doctor for my cough. I declined at first, and the poor old man looked hurt, gravely assured me that it was not true that Malays always poisoned Christians, and drank some himself. Thereupon I was obliged, of course, to drink up the rest; it certainly did me good, and I have drunk it since with good effect; it is intensely bitter and rather sticky. The white servants and the Dutch landlady where I lodge shake their heads ominously, and hope it mayn't poison me a year hence. 'Them nasty Malays can make it work months after you take it.' They also possess the evil eye, and a talent for love potions. As the men are very handsome and neat, I incline to believe that part of it.

Rathfelder's Halfway House, 6th November. – I drove out here yesterday in Captain T-'s drag, which he kindly brought into Capetown for me. He and his wife and children came for a change of air for whooping cough, and advised me to come too, as my cough continues, though less troublesome. It is a lovely spot, six miles from Constantia, ten from Capetown, and twelve from Simon's Bay. I intend to stay here a little while, and then to go to Kalk Bay, six miles from hence. This inn was excellent, I hear, 'in the old Dutch times'. Now it is kept by a young Englishman, Cape-born, and his wife, and is dirty and disorderly. I pay twelve shillings a day for S- and self, without a sitting-room, and my bed is a straw paillasse; but the food is plentiful, and not very bad. That is the cheapest rate of living possible here, and every trifle costs double what it would in England, except wine, which is very fair at fivepence a bottle – a kind of hock. The landlord pays 1 pound a day rent for this house, which is the great resort of the Capetown people for Sundays, and for change of air, – a rude kind of Richmond. His cook gets 3 pounds 10S. a month, besides food for himself and wife, and beer and sugar. The two (white) housemaids get 1 pound 15S. and 1 pound 10S. respectively (everything by the month). Fresh butter is 3S. 6D. a pound, mutton 7D.; washing very dear; cabbages my host sells at 3D. a piece, and pumpkins 8D. He has a fine garden, and pays a

Letters from the Cape

gardener 3S. 6D. a day, and black labourers 2S. THEY work three days a week; then they buy rice and a coarse fish, and lie in the sun till it is eaten; while their darling little fat black babies play in the dust, and their black wives make battues in the covers in their woolly heads. But the little black girl who cleans my room is far the best servant, and smiles and speaks like Lalage herself, ugly as the poor drudge is. The voice and smile of the negroes here is bewitching, though they are hideous; and neither S– nor I have yet heard a black child cry, or seen one naughty or quarrelsome. You would want to lay out a fortune in woolly babies. Yesterday I had a dreadful heartache after my darling, on her little birthday, and even the lovely ranges of distant mountains, coloured like opals in the sunset, did not delight me. This is a dreary place for strangers. Abdul Jemaalee's tisane, and a banana which he gave me each time I went to his shop, are the sole offer of 'Won't you take something?' or even the sole attempt at a civility that I have received, except from the J–s, who, are very civil and kind.

When I have done my visit to Simon's Bay, I will go 'up country', to Stellenbosch, Paarl and Worcester, perhaps. If I can find people going in a bullock–waggon, I will join them; it costs 1 pound a day, and goes twenty miles. If money were no object, I would hire one with Caffres to hunt, as well as outspan and drive, and take a saddle–horse. There is plenty of pleasure to be had in travelling here, if you can afford it. The scenery is quite beyond anything you can imagine in beauty. I went to a country house at Rondebosch with the J–s, and I never saw so lovely a spot. The possessor had done his best to spoil it, and to destroy the handsome Dutch house and fountains and aqueducts; but Nature was too much for him, and the place lovely in neglect and shabbiness.

Now I will tell you my impressions of the state of society here, as far as I have been able to make out by playing the inquisitive traveller. I dare say the statements are exaggerated, but I do not think they are wholly devoid of truth. The Dutch round Capetown (I don't know anything of 'up country') are sulky and dispirited; they regret the slave days, and can't bear to pay wages; they have sold all their fine houses in town to merchants, and let their handsome country places go to pieces, and their land lie fallow, rather than hire the men they used to own. They hate the Malays, who were their slaves, and whose 'insolent prosperity' annoys them, and they don't like the vulgar, bustling English. The English complain that the Dutch won't die, and that they are the curse of the colony (a statement for which they can never give a reason). But they, too, curse the emancipation, long to flog the niggers, and hate the Malays, who work harder and don't drink, and who are the only masons, tailors, and earn from 4S. 6D. to 10S. a day. The Malays also have almost a monopoly of cart–hiring and horse– keeping; an Englishman charges 4 pounds 10S. or 5 pounds for a carriage to do what a Malay will do quicker in a light cart for 30S. S– says, 'The English here think the coloured people ought to do the work, and they to get the wages. Nothing less would satisfy them.' Servants' wages are high, but other wages not much higher than in England; yet industrious people invariably make fortunes, or at least competencies, even when they begin with nothing. But few of the English will do anything but lounge; while they abuse the Dutch as lazy, and the Malays as thieves, and feel their fingers itch to be at the blacks. The Africanders (Dutch and negro mixed in various proportions) are more or less lazy, dirty, and dressy, and the beautiful girls wear pork–pie hats, and look very winning and rather fierce; but to them the philanthropists at home have provided formidable rivals, by emptying a shipload of young ladies from a 'Reformatory' into the streets of Capetown.

I am puzzled what to think of the climate here for invalids. The air is dry and clear beyond conception, and light, but the sun is scorching; while the south–east wind blows an icy hurricane, and the dust obscures the sky. These winds last all the summer, till February or March. I am told when they don't blow it is heavenly, though still cold in the mornings and evenings. No one must be out at, or after sunset, the chill is so sudden. Many of the people here declare that it is death to weak lungs, and send their POITRINAIRES to Madeira, or the south of France. They also swear the climate is enervating, but their looks, and above all the blowsy cheeks and hearty play of the English children, disprove that; and those who come here consumptive get well in spite of the doctors, who won't allow it possible. I believe it is a climate which requires great care from invalids, but that, with care, it is good, because it is bracing as well as warm and dry. It is not nearly so warm as I expected; the southern icebergs are at no great distance, and they ice the south–east wind for us. If it were not so violent, it would be delicious; and there are no unhealthy winds – nothing like our east wind. The people here grumble at the north–wester, which sometimes brings rain, and call it damp, which, as they don't know what damp is, is excusable; it feels like a DRY

Letters from the Cape

south-wester in England. It is, however, quite a delusion to think of living out of doors, here; the south-easters keep one in nearly, if not quite, half one's time, and in summer they say the sun is too hot to be out except morning and evening. But I doubt that, for they make an outcry about heat as soon as it is not cold. The transitions are so sudden, that, with the thermometer at 76 degrees, you must not go out without taking a thick warm cloak; you may walk into a south-easter round the first spur of the mountain, and be cut in two. In short, the air is cold and bracing, and the sun blazing hot; those whom that suits, will do well. I should like a softer air, but I may be wrong; when there is only a moderate wind, it is delicious. You walk in the hot sun, which makes you perspire a very little; but you dry as you go, the air is so dry; and you come in untired. I speak of slow walking. There are no hot-climate diseases; no dysentery, fever,

Simon's Bay, 18th Nov. – I came on here in a cart, as I felt ill from the return of the cold weather. While at Rathfelder we had a superb day, and the J-s drove me over to Constantia, which deserves all its reputation for beauty. What a divine spot! – such kloofs, with silver rills running down them! It is useless to describe scenery. It was a sort of glorified Scotland, with sunshine, flowers, and orange-groves. We got home hungry and tired, but in great spirits. Alas! next day came the south-easter – blacker, colder, more cutting, than ever – and lasted a week.

The Walkers came over on horseback, and pressed me to go to them. They are most kind and agreeable people. The drive to Simon's Bay was lovely, along the coast and across five beaches of snow-white sand, which look like winter landscapes; and the mountains and bay are lovely.

Living is very dear, and washing, travelling, chemist's bills – all enormous. Thirty shillings a cart and horse from Rathfelder here – twelve miles; and then the young English host wanted me to hire another cart for one box and one bath! But I would not, and my obstinacy was stoutest. If I want cart or waggon again, I'll deal with a Malay, only the fellows drive with forty Jehu-power up and down the mountains.

A Madagascar woman offered to give me her orphan grandchild, a sweet brown fairy, six years old, with long silky black hair, and gorgeous eyes. The child hung about me incessantly all the time I was at Rathfelder, and I had a great mind to her. She used to laugh like baby, and was like her altogether, only prettier, and very brown; and when I told her she was like my own little child, she danced about, and laughed like mad at the idea that she could look like 'pretty white Missy'. She was mighty proud of her needlework and A B C performances.

It is such a luxury to sleep on a real mattress – not stuffed with dirty straw; to eat clean food, and live in a nice room. But my cough is very bad, and the cruel wind blows on and on. I saw the doctor of the Naval Hospital here to-day. If I don't mend, I will try his advice, and go northward for warmth. If you can find an old Mulready envelope, send it here to Miss Walker, who collects stamps and has not got it, and write and thank dear good Lady Walker for her kindness to me.

You will get this about the new year. God bless you all, and send us better days in 1862.

LETTER IV – JOURNEY TO CALEDON

Caledon, Dec. 10th.

I did not feel at all well at Simon's Bay, which is a land of hurricanes. We had a 'south-easter' for fourteen days, without an hour's lull; even the flag-ship had no communication with the shore for eight days. The good old naval surgeon there ordered me to start off for this high 'up-country' district, and arranged my departure for the first POSSIBLE day. He made a bargain for me with a Dutchman, for a light Malay cart (a capital vehicle with two wheels) and four horses, for 30S. a day – three days to Caledon from Simon's Bay, about a hundred miles or so, and one day of back fare to his home in Capetown.

Letters from the Cape

Luckily, on Saturday the wind dropped, and we started at nine o'clock, drove to a place about four miles from Capetown, when we turned off on the 'country road', and outspanned at a post-house kept by a nice old German with a Dutch wife. Once well out of Capetown, people are civil, but inquisitive; I was strictly cross-questioned, and proved so satisfactory, that the old man wished to give me some English porter gratis. We then jogged along again at a very good pace to another wayside public, where we outspanned again and ate, and were again questioned, and again made much of. By six o'clock we got to the Eerste River, having gone forty miles or so in the day. It was a beautiful day, and very pleasant travelling. We had three good little half-Arab bays, and one brute of a grey as off-wheeler, who fell down continually; but a Malay driver works miracles, and no harm came of it. The cart is small, with a permanent tilt at top, and moveable curtains of waterproof all round; harness of raw leather, very prettily put together by Malay workmen. We sat behind, and our brown coachman, with his mushroom hat, in front, with my bath and box, and a miniature of himself about seven years old – a nephew, – so small and handy that he would be worth his weight in jewels as a tiger. At Eerste River we slept in a pretty old Dutch house, kept by an English woman, and called the Fox and Hound, 'to sound like home, my lady.' Very nice and comfortable it was.

I started next day at ten; and never shall I forget that day's journey. The beauty of the country exceeds all description. Ranges of mountains beyond belief fantastic in shape, and between them a rolling country, desolate and wild, and covered with gorgeous flowers among the 'scrub'. First we came to Hottentot's Holland (now called Somerset West), the loveliest little old Dutch village, with trees and little canals of bright clear mountain water, and groves of orange and pomegranate, and white houses, with incredible gable ends. We tried to stop here; but forage was ninepence a bundle, and the true Malay would rather die than pay more than he can help. So we pushed on to the foot of the mountains, and bought forage (forage is oats AU NATURAL, straw and all, the only feed known here, where there is no grass or hay) at a farm kept by English people, who all talked Dutch together; only one girl of the family could speak English. They were very civil, asked us in, and gave us unripe apricots, and the girl came down with seven flounces, to talk with us. Forage was still ninepence – half a dollar a bundle – and Choslullah Jaamee groaned over it, and said the horses must have less forage and 'more plenty roll' (a roll in the dust is often the only refreshment offered to the beasts, and seems to do great good).

We got to Caledon at eleven, and drove to the place the Doctor recommended – formerly a country house of the Dutch Governor. It is in a lovely spot; but do you remember the Schloss in Immermann's *Neuer Munchausen*? Well, it is that. A ruin; – windows half broken and boarded up, the handsome steps in front fallen in, and all EN SUITE. The rooms I saw were large and airy; but mud floors, white-washed walls, one chair, one stump bedstead, and PRAETEREA NIHIL. It has a sort of wild, romantic look; I hear, too, it is wonderfully healthy, and not so bad as it looks. The long corridor is like the entrance to a great stable, or some such thing; earth floors and open to all winds. But you can't imagine it, however I may describe; it is so huge and strange, and ruinous. Finding that the mistress of the house was ill, and nothing ready for our reception, I drove on to the inn. Rain, like a Scotch mist, came on just as we arrived, and it is damp and chilly, to the delight of all the dwellers in the land, who love bad weather. It makes me cough a little more; but they say it is quite unheard of, and can't last. Altogether, I suppose this summer here is as that of '60 was in England.

I forgot, in describing my journey, the regal-looking Caffre housemaid at Eerste River. 'Such a dear, good creature,' the landlady said; and, oh, such a 'noble savage'! – with a cotton handkerchief folded tight like a cravat and tied round her head with a bow behind, and the short curly wool sticking up in the middle; – it looked like a royal diadem on her solemn brow; she stepped like Juno, with a huge tub full to the brim, and holding several pailfuls, on her head, and a pailful in each hand, bringing water for the stables from the river, across a large field. There is nothing like a Caffre for power and grace; and the face, though very African, has a sort of grandeur which makes it utterly unlike that of the negro. That woman's bust and waist were beauty itself. The Caffres are also very clean and very clever as servants, I hear, learning cookery, in a wonderfully short time. When they have saved money enough to buy cattle in Kaffraria, off they go, cast aside civilization and clothes, and enjoy life in naked luxury.

Letters from the Cape

I can't tell you how I longed for you in my journey. You would have been so delighted with the country and the queer turn-out – the wild little horses, and the polite and delicately-clean Moslem driver. His description of his sufferings from 'louses', when he slept in a Dutch farm, were pathetic, and ever since, he sleeps in his cart, with the little boy; and they bathe in the nearest river, and eat their lawful food and drink their water out of doors. They declined beer, or meat which had been unlawfully killed. In Capetown ALL meat is killed by Malays, and has the proper prayer spoken over it, and they will eat no other. I was offered a fowl at a farm, but Choslullah thought it 'too much money for Missus', and only accepted some eggs. He was gratified at my recognising the propriety of his saying 'Bismillah' over any animal killed for food. Some drink beer, and drink a good deal, but Choslullah thought it 'very wrong for Malay people, and not good for Christian people, to be drunk beasties; – little wine or beer good for Christians, but not too plenty much.' I gave him ten shillings for himself, at which he was enchanted, and again begged me to write to his master for him when I wanted to leave Caledon, and to be sure to say, 'Mind send same coachman.' He planned to drive me back through Worcester, Burnt Vley, Paarl, and Stellenbosch – a longer round; but he could do it in three days well, so as 'not cost Missus more money', and see a different country.

This place is curiously like Rochefort in the Ardennes, only the hills are mountains, and the sun is far hotter; not so the air, which is fresh and pleasant. I am in a very nice inn, kept by an English ex-officer, who went through the Caffre war, and found his pay insufficient for the wants of a numerous family. I quite admire his wife, who cooks, cleans, nurses her babes, gives singing and music lessons, – all as merrily as if she liked it. I dine with them at two o'clock, and Captain D- has a TABLE D'HOTE at seven for travellers. I pay only 10S. 6D. a day for myself and S-; this includes all but wine or beer. The air is very clear and fine, and my cough is already much better. I shall stay here as long as it suits me and does me good, and then I am to send for Choslullah again, and go back by the road he proposed. It rains here now and then, and blows a good deal, but the wind has lost its bitter chill, and depressing quality. I hope soon to ride a little and see the country, which is beautiful.

The water-line is all red from the iron stone, and there are hot chalybeate springs up the mountain which are very good for rheumatism, and very strengthening, I am told. The boots here is a Mantatee, very black, and called Kleenboy, because he is so little; he is the only sleek black I have seen here, but looks heavy and downcast. One maid is Irish (they make the best servants here), a very nice clean girl, and the other, a brown girl of fifteen, whose father is English, and married to her mother. Food here is scarce, all but bread and mutton, both good. Butter is 3S. a pound; fruit and vegetables only to be had by chance. I miss the oranges and lemons sadly. Poultry and milk uncertain. The bread is good everywhere, from the fine wheat: in the country it is brownish and sweet. The wine here is execrable; this is owing to the prevailing indolence, for there is excellent wine made from the Rhenish grape, rather like Sauterne, with a SOUPCON of Manzanilla flavour. The sweet Constantia is also very good indeed; not the expensive sort, which is made from grapes half dried, and is a liqueur, but a light, sweet, straw-coloured wine, which even I liked. We drank nothing else at the Admiral's. The kind old sailor has given me a dozen of wine, which is coming up here in a waggon, and will be most welcome. I can't tell you how kind he and Lady Walker were; I was there three weeks, and hope to go again when the south-easter season is over and I can get out a little. I could not leave the house at all; and even Lady Walker and the girls, who are very energetic, got out but little. They are a charming family.

I have no doubt that Dr. Shea was right, and that one must leave the coast to get a fine climate. Here it seems to me nearly perfect – too windy for my pleasure, but then the sun would be overpowering without a fresh breeze. Every one agrees in saying that the winter in Capetown is delicious – like a fine English summer. In November the southeasters begin, and they are 'fiendish'; this year they began in September. The mornings here are always fresh, not to say cold; the afternoons, from one to three, broiling; then delightful till sunset, which is deadly cold for three-quarters of an hour; the night is lovely. The wind rises and falls with the sun. That is the general course of things. Now and then it rains, and this year there is a little south-easter, which is quite unusual, and not odious, as it is near the sea; and there is seldom a hot wind from the north. I am promised that on or about Christmas-day; then doors and windows are shut, and you gasp. Hitherto we have had nothing nearly so hot as Paris in summer, or as the summer of 1859 in England; and they say it is no hotter, except when the hot wind blows, which is very

Letters from the Cape

rare. Up here, snow sometimes lies, in winter, on the mountain tops; but ice is unknown, and Table Mountain is never covered with snow. The flies are pestilent – incredibly noisy, intrusive, and disgusting – and oh, such swarms! Fleas and bugs not half so bad as in France, as far as my experience goes, and I have poked about in queer places.

I get up at half–past five, and walk in the early morning, before the sun and wind begin to be oppressive; it is then dry, calm, and beautiful; then I sleep like a Dutchman in the middle of the day. At present it tires me, but I shall get used to it soon. The Dutch doctor here advised me to do so, to avoid the wind.

When all was settled, we climbed the Hottentot's mountains by Sir Lowry's Pass, a long curve round two hill–sides; and what a view! Simon's Bay opening out far below, and range upon range of crags on one side, with a wide fertile plain, in which lies Hottentot's Holland, at one's feet. The road is just wide enough for one waggon, i.e. very narrow. Where the smooth rock came through, Choslullah gave a little grunt, and the three bays went off like hippogriffs, dragging the grey with them. By this time my confidence in his driving was boundless, or I should have expected to find myself in atoms at the bottom of the precipice. At the top of the pass we turned a sharp corner into a scene like the crater of a volcano, only reaching miles away all round; and we descended a very little and drove on along great rolling waves of country, with the mountain tops, all crags and ruins, to our left. At three we reached Palmiet River, full of palmettos and bamboos, and there the horses had 'a little roll', and Choslullah and his miniature washed in the river and prayed, and ate dry bread, and drank their tepid water out of a bottle with great good breeding and cheerfulness. Three bullock–waggons had outspanned, and the Dutch boers and Bastaards (half Hottentots) were all drunk. We went into a neat little 'public', and had porter and ham sandwiches, for which I paid 4S. 6D. to a miserable–looking English woman, who was afraid of her tipsy customers. We got to Houw Hoek, a pretty valley at the entrance of a mountain gorge, about half–past five, and drove up to a mud cottage, half inn, half farm, kept by a German and his wife. It looked mighty queer, but Choslullah said the host was a good old man, and all clean. So we cheered up, and asked for food. While the neat old woman was cooking it, up galloped five fine lads and two pretty flaxen–haired girls, with real German faces, on wild little horses; and one girl tucked up her habit, and waited at table, while another waved a green bough to drive off the swarms of flies. The chops were excellent, ditto bread and butter, and the tea tolerable. The parlour was a tiny room with a mud floor, half–hatch door into the front, and the two bedrooms still tinier and darker, each with two huge beds which filled them entirely. But Choslullah was right; they were perfectly clean, with heaps of beautiful pillows; and not only none of the creatures of which he spoke with infinite terror, but even no fleas. The man was delighted to talk to me. His wife had almost forgotten German, and the children did not know a word of it, but spoke Dutch and English. A fine, healthy, happy family. It was a pretty picture of emigrant life. Cattle, pigs, sheep, and poultry, and pigeons innumerable, all picked up their own living, and cost nothing; and vegetables and fruit grow in rank abundance where there is water. I asked for a book in the evening, and the man gave me a volume of Schiller. A good breakfast, – and we paid ninepence for all.

This morning we started before eight, as it looked gloomy, and came through a superb mountain defile, out on to a rich hilly country, covered with miles of corn, all being cut as far as the eye could reach, and we passed several circular threshing–floors, where the horses tread out the grain. Each had a few mud hovels near it, for the farmers and men to live in during harvest. Altogether, I was most lucky, had two beautiful days, and enjoyed the journey immensely. It was most 'ABENTHEUERLICH'; the light two–wheeled cart, with four wild little horses, and the marvellous brown driver, who seemed to be always going to perdition, but made the horses do apparently impossible things with absolute certainty; and the pretty tiny boy who came to help his uncle, and was so clever, and so preternaturally quiet, and so very small: then the road through the mountain passes, seven or eight feet wide, with a precipice above and below, up which the little horses scrambled; while big lizards, with green heads and chocolate bodies, looked pertly at us, and a big bright amber–coloured cobra, as handsome as he is deadly, wriggled across into a hole.

Nearly all the people in this village are Dutch. There is one Malay tailor here, but he is obliged to be a Christian at Caledon, though Choslullah told me with a grin, he was a very good Malay when he went to Capetown. He did

Letters from the Cape

not seem much shocked at this double religion, staunch Mussulman as he was himself. I suppose the blacks 'up country' are what Dutch slavery made them – mere animals – cunning and sulky. The real Hottentot is extinct, I believe, in the Colony; what one now sees are all 'Bastaards', the Dutch name for their own descendants by Hottentot women. These mongrel Hottentots, who do all the work, are an affliction to behold – debased and SHRIVELLED with drink, and drunk all day long; sullen wretched creatures – so unlike the bright Malays and cheery pleasant blacks and browns of Capetown, who never pass you without a kind word and sunny smile or broad African grin, SELON their colour and shape of face. I look back fondly to the gracious soft-looking Malagasse woman who used to give me a chair under the big tree near Rathfelders, and a cup of 'bosjesthee' (herb tea), and talk so prettily in her soft voice; – it is such a contrast to these poor animals, who glower at one quite unpleasantly. All the hovels I was in at Capetown were very fairly clean, and I went into numbers. They almost all contained a handsome bed, with, at least, eight pillows. If you only look at the door with a friendly glance, you are implored to come in and sit down, and usually offered a 'coppj' (cup) of herb tea, which they are quite grateful to one for drinking. I never saw or heard a hint of 'backsheesh', nor did I ever give it, on principle and I was always recognised and invited to come again with the greatest eagerness. 'An indulgence of talk' from an English 'Missis' seemed the height of gratification, and the pride and pleasure of giving hospitality a sufficient reward. But here it is quite different. I suppose the benefits of the emancipation were felt at Capetown sooner than in the country, and the Malay population there furnishes a strong element of sobriety and respectability, which sets an example to the other coloured people.

Harvest is now going on, and the so-called Hottentots are earning 2S. 6D. a day, with rations and wine. But all the money goes at the 'canteen' in drink, and the poor wretched men and women look wasted and degraded. The children are pretty, and a few of them are half-breed girls, who do very well, unless a white man admires them; and then they think it quite an honour to have a whitey-brown child, which happens at about fifteen, by which age they look full twenty.

We had very good snipe and wild duck the other day, which Capt. D- brought home from a shooting party. I have got the moth-like wings of a golden snipe for R-'s hat, and those of a beautiful moor-hen. They got no 'boks', because of the violent south-easter which blew where they were. The game is fast decreasing, but still very abundant. I saw plenty of partridges on the road, but was not early enough to see boks, who only show at dawn; neither have I seen baboons. I will try to bring home some cages of birds – Cape canaries and 'roode bekjes' (red bills), darling little things. The sugar-birds, which are the humming-birds of Africa, could not be fed; but Caffre finks, which weave the pendent nests, are hardy and easily fed.

To-day the post for England leaves Caledon, so I must conclude this yarn. I wish R- could have seen the 'klip springer', the mountain deer of South Africa, which Capt. D- brought in to show me. Such a lovely little beast, as big as a small kid, with eyes and ears like a hare, and a nose so small and dainty. It was quite tame and saucy, and belonged to some man EN ROUTE for Capetown.

LETTER V – CALEDON

Caledon, Dec. 29th.

I am beginning now really to feel better: I think my cough is less, and I eat a great deal more. They cook nice clean food here, and have some good claret, which I have been extravagant enough to drink, much to my advantage. The Cape wine is all so fiery. The climate is improving too. The glorious African sun blazes and roasts one, and the cool fresh breezes prevent one from feeling languid. I walk from six till eight or nine, breakfast at ten, and dine at three; in the afternoon it is generally practicable to saunter again, now the weather is warmer. I sleep from twelve till two. On Christmas-eve it was so warm that I lay in bed with the window wide open, and the stars blazing in. Such stars! they are much brighter than our moon. The Dutchmen held high jinks in the hall, and danced and made a great noise. On New Year's-eve they will have another ball, and I shall look in.

Letters from the Cape

Christmas-day was the hottest day – indeed, the only HOT day we have had – and I could not make it out at all, or fancy you all cold at home.

I wish you were here to see the curious ways and new aspect of everything. This village, which, as I have said, is very like Rochefort, but hardly so large, is the CHEF LIEU of a district the size of one-third of England. A civil commander resides here, a sort of PREFET; and there is an embryo market-place, with a bell hanging in a brick arch. When a waggon arrives with goods, it draws up there, they ring the bell, everybody goes to see what is for sale, and the goods are sold by auction. My host bought potatoes and brandy the other day, and is looking out for ostrich feathers for me, out of the men's hats.

The other day, while we sat at dinner, all the bells began to ring furiously, and Capt. D- jumped up and shouted 'BRAND!' (fire), rushed off for a stout leather hat, and ran down the street. Out came all the population, black, white, and brown, awfully excited, for it was blowing a furious north-wester, right up the town, and the fire was at the bottom; and as every house is thatched with a dry brown thatch, we might all have to turn out and see the place in ashes in less than an hour. Luckily, it was put out directly. It is supposed to have been set on fire by a Hottentot girl, who has done the same thing once before, on being scolded. There is no water but what runs down the streets in the SLOOT, a paved channel, which brings the water from the mountain and supplies the houses and gardens. A garden is impossible without irrigation, of course, as it never rains; but with it, you may have everything, all the year round. The people, however, are too careless to grow fruit and vegetables.

How the cattle live is a standing marvel to me. The whole VELD (common), which extends all over the country (just dotted with a few square miles of corn here and there), is covered with a low thin scrub, about eighteen inches high, called RHENOSTER-BOSCH – looking like meagre arbor vitae or pale juniper. The cattle and sheep will not touch this nor the juicy Hottentot fig; but under each little bush, I fancy, they crop a few blades of grass, and on this they keep in very good condition. The noble oxen, with their huge horns (nine or ten feet from tip to tip), are never fed, though they work hard, nor are the sheep. The horses get a little forage (oats, straw and all). I should like you to see eight or ten of these swift wiry little horses harnessed to a waggon, – a mere flat platform on wheels. In front stands a wild-looking Hottentot, all patches and feathers, and drives them best pace, all 'in hand', using a whip like a fishing-rod, with which he touches them, not savagely, but with a skill which would make an old stage-coachman burst with envy to behold. This morning, out on the veld, I watched the process of breaking-in a couple of colts, who were harnessed, after many struggles, second and fourth in a team of ten. In front stood a tiny foal cuddling its mother, one of the leaders. When they started, the foal had its neck through the bridle, and I hallooed in a fright; but the Hottentot only laughed, and in a minute it had disengaged itself quite coolly and capered alongside. The colts tried to plunge, but were whisked along, and couldn't, and then they stuck out all four feet and SKIDDED along a bit; but the rhenoster bushes tripped them up (people drive regardless of roads), and they shook their heads and trotted along quite subdued, without a blow or a word, for the drivers never speak to the horses, only to the oxen. Colts here get no other breaking, and therefore have no paces or action to the eye, but their speed and endurance are wonderful. There is no such thing as a cock-tail in the country, and the waggon teams of wiry little thoroughbreds, half Arab, look very strange to our eyes, going full tilt. There is a terrible murrain, called the lung-sickness, among horses and oxen here, every four or five years, but it never touches those that are stabled, however exposed to wet or wind on the roads.

I must describe the house I inhabit, as all are much alike. It is whitewashed, with a door in the middle and two windows on each side; those on the left are Mrs. D-'s bed and sitting rooms. On the right is a large room, which is mine; in the middle of the house is a spacious hall, with doors into other rooms on each side, and into the kitchen. There is a yard behind, and a staircase up to the ZOLDER or loft, under the thatch, with partitions, where the servants and children, and sometimes guests, sleep. There are no ceilings; the floor of the zolder is made of yellow wood, and, resting on beams, forms the ceiling of my room, and the thatch alone covers that. No moss ever grows on the thatch, which is brown, with white ridges. In front is a stoep, with 'blue gums' (Australian gum-trees) in front of it, where I sit till twelve, when the sun comes on it. These trees prevail here greatly, as they want neither water nor anything else, and grow with incredible rapidity.

Letters from the Cape

We have got a new 'boy' (all coloured servants are 'boys,' – a remnant of slavery), and he is the type of the nigger slave. A thief, a liar, a glutton, a drunkard – but you can't resent it; he has a NAIF, half-foolish, half-knavish buffoonery, a total want of self-respect, which disarms you. I sent him to the post to inquire for letters, and the postmaster had been tipsy over-night and was not awake. Jack came back spluttering threats against 'dat domned Dutchman. Me no WANT (like) him; me go and kick up dom'd row. What for he no give Missis letter?' I begged him to be patient; on which he bonneted himself in a violent way, and started off at a pantomime walk. Jack is the product of slavery: he pretends to be a simpleton in order to do less work and eat and drink and sleep more than a reasonable being, and he knows his buffoonery will get him out of scrapes. Withal, thoroughly good-natured and obliging, and perfectly honest, except where food and drink are concerned, which he pilfers like a monkey. He worships S-, and won't allow her to carry anything, or to dirty her hands, if he is in the way to do it. Some one suggested to him to kiss her, but he declined with terror, and said he should be hanged by my orders if he did. He is a hideous little negro, with a monstrous-shaped head, every colour of the rainbow on his clothes, and a power of making faces which would enchant a schoolboy. The height of his ambition would be to go to England with me.

An old 'bastaard' woman, married to the Malay tailor here, explained to me my popularity with the coloured people, as set forth by 'dat Malay boy', my driver. He told them he was sure I was a 'very great Missis', because of my 'plenty good behaviour'; that I spoke to him just as to a white gentleman, and did not 'laugh and talk nonsense talk'. 'Never say "Here, you black fellow", dat Misses.' The English, when they mean to be good-natured, are generally offensively familiar, and 'talk nonsense talk', i.e. imitate the Dutch English of the Malays and blacks; the latter feel it the greatest compliment to be treated AU SERIEUX, and spoken to in good English. Choslullah's theory was that I must be related to the Queen, in consequence of my not 'knowing bad behaviour'. The Malays, who are intelligent and proud, of course feel the annoyance of vulgar familiarity more than the blacks, who are rather awe-struck by civility, though they like and admire it.

Mrs. D- tells me that the coloured servant-girls, with all their faults, are immaculately honest in these parts; and, indeed, as every door and window is always left open, even when every soul is out, and nothing locked up, there must be no thieves. Captain D- told me he had been in remote Dutch farmhouses, where rouleaux of gold were ranged under the thatch on the top of the low wall, the doors being always left open; and everywhere the Dutch boers keep their money by them, in coin.

Jan. 3d. – We have had tremendous festivities here – a ball on New Year's-eve, and another on the 1st of January – and the shooting for Prince Alfred's rifle yesterday. The difficulty of music for the ball was solved by the arrival of two Malay bricklayers to build the new parsonage, and I heard with my own ears the proof of what I had been told as to their extraordinary musical gifts. When I went into the hall, a Dutchman was SCREECHING a concertina hideously. Presently in walked a yellow Malay, with a blue cotton handkerchief on his head, and a half-bred of negro blood (very dark brown), with a red handkerchief, and holding a rough tambourine. The handsome yellow man took the concertina which seemed so discordant, and the touch of his dainty fingers transformed it to harmony. He played dances with a precision and feeling quite unequalled, except by Strauss's band, and a variety which seemed endless. I asked him if he could read music, at which he laughed heartily, and said, music came into the ears, not the eyes. He had picked it all up from the bands in Capetown, or elsewhere.

It was a strange sight, – the picturesque group, and the contrast between the quiet manners of the true Malay and the grotesque fun of the half-negro. The latter made his tambourine do duty as a drum, rattled the bits of brass so as to produce an indescribable effect, nodded and grinned in wild excitement, and drank beer while his comrade took water. The dancing was uninteresting enough. The Dutchmen danced badly, and said not a word, but plodded on so as to get all the dancing they could for their money. I went to bed at half-past eleven, but the ball went on till four.

Next night there was genteeler company, and I did not go in, but lay in bed listening to the Malay's playing. He had quite a fresh set of tunes, of which several were from the 'Traviata'!

Letters from the Cape

Yesterday was a real African summer's day. The D-s had a tent and an awning, one for food and the other for drink, on the ground where the shooting took place. At twelve o'clock Mrs. D- went down to sell cold chickens, and I went with her, and sat under a tree in the bed of the little stream, now nearly dry. The sun was such as in any other climate would strike you down, but here COUP DE SOLEIL is unknown. It broils you till your shoulders ache and your lips crack, but it does not make you feel the least languid, and you perspire very little; nor does it tan the skin as you would expect. The light of the sun is by no means 'golden' – it is pure white – and the slightest shade of a tree or bush affords a delicious temperature, so light and fresh is the air. They said the thermometer was at about 130 degrees where I was walking yesterday, but (barring the scorch) I could not have believed it.

It was a very amusing day. The great tall Dutchmen came in to shoot, and did but moderately, I thought. The longest range was five hundred yards, and at that they shot well; at shorter ranges, poorly enough. The best man made ten points. But oh! what figures were there of negroes and coloured people! I longed for a photographer. Some coloured lads were exquisitely graceful, and composed beautiful TABLEAUX VIVANTS, after Murillo's beggar-boys.

A poor little, very old Bosjesman crept up, and was jeered and bullied. I scolded the lad who abused him for being rude to an old man, whereupon the poor little old creature squatted on the ground close by (for which he would have been kicked but for me), took off his ragged hat, and sat staring and nodding his small grey woolly head at me, and jabbering some little soliloquy very SOTTO VOCE. There was something shocking in the timidity with which he took the plate of food I gave him, and in the way in which he ate it, with the WRONG side of his little yellow hand, like a monkey. A black, who had helped to fetch the hamper, suggested to me to give him wine instead of meat and bread, and make him drunk FOR FUN (the blacks and Hottentots copy the white man's manners TO THEM, when they get hold of a Bosjesman to practise upon); but upon this a handsome West Indian black, who had been cooking pies, fired up, and told him he was a 'nasty black rascal, and a Dutchman to boot', to insult a lady and an old man at once. If you could see the difference between one negro and another, you would be quite convinced that education (i.e. circumstances) makes the race. It was hardly conceivable that the hideous, dirty, bandy-legged, ragged creature, who looked down on the Bosjesman, and the well-made, smart fellow, with his fine eyes, jaunty red cap, and snow-white shirt and trousers, alert as the best German Kellner, were of the same blood; nothing but the colour was alike.

Then came a Dutchman, and asked for six penn'orth of 'brood en kaas', and haggled for beer; and Englishmen, who bought chickens and champagne without asking the price. One rich old boer got three lunches, and then 'trekked' (made off) without paying at all. Then came a Hottentot, stupidly drunk, with a fiddle, and was beaten by a little red-haired Scotchman, and his fiddle smashed. The Hottentot hit at his aggressor, who then declared he HAD BEEN a policeman, and insisted on taking him into custody and to the 'Tronk' (prison) on his own authority, but was in turn sent flying by a gigantic Irishman, who 'wouldn't see the poor baste abused'. The Irishman was a farmer; I never saw such a Hercules – and beaming with fun and good nature. He was very civil, and answered my questions, and talked like an intelligent man; but when Captain D- asked him with an air of some anxiety, if he was coming to the hotel, he replied, 'No, sir, no; I wouldn't be guilty of such a misdemeanour. I am aware that I was a disgrace and opprobrium to your house, sir, last time I was there, sir. No, sir, I shall sleep in my cart, and not come into the presence of ladies.' Hereupon he departed, and I was informed that he had been drunk for seventeen days, SANS DESEMPARER, on his last visit to Caledon. However, he kept quite sober on this occasion, and amused himself by making the little blackies scramble for halfpence in the pools left in the bed of the river. Among our customers was a very handsome black man, with high straight nose, deep-set eyes, and a small mouth, smartly dressed in a white felt hat, paletot, and trousers. He is the shoemaker, and is making a pair of 'Veldschoen' for you, which you will delight in. They are what the rough boers and Hottentots wear, buff-hide barbarously tanned and shaped, and as soft as woollen socks. The Othello-looking shoemaker's name is Moor, and his father told him he came of a 'good breed'; that was all he knew.

A very pleasing English farmer, who had been educated in Belgium, came and ordered a bottle of champagne, and shyly begged me to drink a glass, whereupon we talked of crops and the like; and an excellent specimen of a

Letters from the Cape

colonist he appeared: very gentle and unaffected, with homely good sense, and real good breeding – such a contrast to the pert airs and vulgarity of Capetown and of the people in (colonial) high places. Finding we had no carriage, he posted off and borrowed a cart of one man and harness of another, and put his and his son's riding horses to it, to take Mrs. D– and me home. As it was still early, he took us a 'little drive'; and oh, ye gods! what a terrific and dislocating pleasure was that! At a hard gallop, Mr. M– (with the mildest and steadiest air and with perfect safety) took us right across country. It is true there were no fences; but over bushes, ditches, lumps of rock, watercourses, we jumped, flew, and bounded, and up every hill we went racing pace. I arrived at home much bewildered, and feeling more like Burger's Lenore than anything else, till I saw Mr. M–'s steady, pleasant face quite undisturbed, and was informed that such was the way of driving of Cape farmers.

We found the luckless Jack in such a state of furious drunkenness that he had to be dismissed on the spot, not without threats of the 'Tronk', and once more Kleenboy fills the office of boots. He returned in a ludicrous state of penitence and emaciation, frankly admitting that it was better to work hard and get 'plenty grub', than to work less and get none; – still, however, protesting against work at all.

January 7th. – For the last four days it has again been blowing a wintry hurricane. Every one says that the continuance of these winds so late into the summer (this answers to July) is unheard of, and MUST cease soon. In Table Bay, I hear a good deal of mischief has been done to the shipping.

I hope my long yarns won't bore you. I put down what seems new and amusing to me at the moment, but by the time it reaches you, it will seem very dull and commonplace. I hear that the Scotchman who attacked poor Aria, the crazy Hottentot, is a 'revival lecturer', and was 'simply exhorting him to break his fiddle and come to Christ' (the phrase is a clergyman's, I beg to observe); and the saints are indignant that, after executing the pious purpose as far as the fiddle went, he was prevented by the chief constable from dragging him to the Tronk. The 'revival' mania has broken out rather violently in some places; the infection was brought from St. Helena, I am told. At Capetown, old Abdool Jemaalee told me that English Christians were getting more like Malays, and had begun to hold 'Kalifahs' at Simon's Bay. These are festivals in which Mussulman fanatics run knives into their flesh, go into convulsions, to the sound of music, like the Arab described by Houdin. Of course the poor blacks go quite demented.

I intend to stay here another two or three weeks, and then to go to Worcester – stay a bit; Paarl, ditto; Stellenbosch, ditto – and go to Capetown early in March, and in April to embark for home.

January 15th. – No mail in yet. We have had beautiful weather the last three days. Captain D– has been in Capetown, and bought a horse, which he rode home seventy–five miles in a day and a half, – the beast none the worse nor tired. I am to ride him, and so shall see the country if the vile cold winds keep off.

This morning I walked on the Veld, and met a young black shepherd leading his sheep and goats, and playing on a guitar composed of an old tin mug covered with a bit of sheepskin and a handle of rough wood, with pegs, and three strings of sheep–gut. I asked him to sing, and he flung himself at my feet in an attitude that would make Watts crazy with delight, and CROONED queer little mournful ditties. I gave him sixpence, and told him not to get drunk. He said, 'Oh no; I will buy bread enough to make my belly stiff – I almost never had my belly stiff.' He likewise informed me he had just been in the Tronk (prison), and on my asking why, replied: 'Oh, for fighting, and telling lies; Die liebe Unschuld! (Dear innocence!)

Hottentot figs are rather nice – a green fig–shaped thing, containing about a spoonful of SALT–SWEET insipid glue, which you suck out. This does not sound nice, but it is. The plant has a thick, succulent, triangular leaf, creeping on the ground, and growing anywhere, without earth or water. Figs proper are common here, but tasteless; and the people pick all their fruit green, and eat it so too. The children are all crunching hard peaches and plums just now, particularly some little half–breeds near here, who are frightfully ugly. Fancy the children of a black woman and a red–haired man; the little monsters are as black as the mother, and have RED wool – you

Letters from the Cape

never saw so diabolical an appearance. Some of the coloured people are very pretty; for example, a coal-black girl of seventeen, and my washerwoman, who is brown. They are wonderfully slender and agile, and quite old hard-working women have waists you could span. They never grow thick and square, like Europeans.

I could write a volume on Cape horses. Such valiant little beasts, and so composed in temper, I never saw. They are nearly all bays – a few very dark grey, which are esteemed; VERY few white or light grey. I have seen no black, and only one dark chestnut. They are not cobs, and look 'very little of them', and have no beauty; but one of these little brutes, ungroomed, half-fed, seldom stabled, will carry a six-and-a-half-foot Dutchman sixty miles a day, day after day, at a shuffling easy canter, six miles an hour. You 'off saddle' every three hours, and let him roll; you also let him drink all he can get; his coat shines and his eye is bright, and unsoundness is very rare. They are never properly broke, and the soft-mouthed colts are sometimes made vicious by the cruel bits and heavy hands; but by nature their temper is perfect.

Every morning all the horses in the village are turned loose, and a general gallop takes place to the water tank, where they drink and lounge a little; and the young ones are fetched home by their niggers, while the old stagers know they will be wanted, and saunter off by themselves. I often attend the Houyhnhnm CONVERSAZIONE at the tank, at about seven o'clock, and am amused by their behaviour; and I continually wish I could see Ned's face on witnessing many equine proceedings here. To see a farmer outspan and turn the team of active little beasts loose on the boundless veld to amuse themselves for an hour or two, sure that they will all be there, would astonish him a little; and then to offer a horse nothing but a roll in the dust to refresh himself withal!

One unpleasant sight here is the skeletons of horses and oxen along the roadside; or at times a fresh carcass surrounded by a convocation of huge serious-looking carrion crows, with neat white neck-cloths. The skeletons look like wrecks, and make you feel very lonely on the wide veld. In this district, and in most, I believe, the roads are mere tracks over the hard, level earth, and very good they are. When one gets rutty, you drive parallel to it, till the bush is worn out and a new track is formed.

January 17th. – Lovely weather all the week. Summer well set in.

LETTER VI – CALEDON

Caledon, January 19th.

Dearest Mother,

Till this last week, the weather was pertinaciously cold and windy; and I had resolved to go to Worcester, which lies in a 'Kessel', and is really hot. But now the glorious African summer is come, and I believe this is the weather of Paradise. I got up at four this morning, when the Dutchmen who had slept here were starting in their carts and waggons. It was quite light; but the moon shone brilliantly still, and had put on a bright rose-coloured veil, borrowed from the rising sun on the opposite horizon. The freshness (without a shadow of cold or damp) of the air was indescribable – no dew was on the ground. I went up the hill-side, along the 'Sloot' (channel, which supplies all our water), into the 'Kloof' between the mountains, and clambered up to the 'Venster Klip', from which natural window the view is very fine. The flowers are all gone and the grass all dead. Rhenoster boschjes and Hottentot fig are green everywhere, and among the rocks all manner of shrubs, and far too much 'Wacht een beetje' (WAIT A BIT), a sort of series of natural fish-hooks, which try the robustest patience. Between seven and eight, the sun gets rather hot, and I came in and TUBBED, and sat on the stoep (a sort of terrace, in front of every house in South Africa). I breakfast at nine, sit on the stoep again till the sun comes round, and then retreat behind closed shutters from the stinging sun. The AIR is fresh and light all day, though the sun is tremendous; but one has no languid feeling or desire to lie about, unless one is sleepy. We dine at two or half-past, and at four or five the heat is over, and one puts on a shawl to go out in the afternoon breeze. The nights are cool, so as always to want one

Letters from the Cape

blanket. I still have a cough; but it is getting better, so that I can always eat and walk. Mine host has just bought a horse, which he is going to try with a petticoat to-day, and if he goes well I shall ride.

I like this inn-life, because I see all the 'neighbourhood' – farmers and traders – whom I like far better than the GENTILITY of Capetown. I have given letters to England to a 'boer', who is 'going home', i.e. to Europe, the FIRST OF HIS RACE SINCE THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES, when some poor refugees were inveigled hither by the Dutch Governor, and oppressed worse than the Hottentots. M. de Villiers has had no education AT ALL, and has worked, and traded, and farmed, – but the breed tells; he is a pure and thorough Frenchman, unable to speak a word of French. When I went in to dinner, he rose and gave me a chair with a bow which, with his appearance, made me ask, 'MONSIEUR VIENT D'ARRIVER?' This at once put him out and pleased him. He is very unlike a Dutchman. If you think that any of the French will feel as I felt to this far-distant brother of theirs, pray give him a few letters; but remember that he can speak only English and Dutch, and a little German. Here his name is CALLED 'Filljee', but I told him to drop that barbarism in Europe; De Villiers ought to speak for itself. He says they came from the neighbourhood of Bordeaux.

The postmaster, Heer Klein, and his old Pylades, Heer Ley, are great cronies of mine – stout old greybeards, toddling down the hill together. I sometimes go and sit on the stoep with the two old bachelors, and they take it as a great compliment; and Heer Klein gave me my letters all decked with flowers, and wished 'Vrolyke tydings, Mevrouw,' most heartily. He has also made his tributary mail-cart Hottentots bring from various higher mountain ranges the beautiful everlasting flowers, which will make pretty wreaths for J-. When I went to his house to thank him, I found a handsome Malay, with a basket of 'Klipkaus', a shell-fish much esteemed here. Old Klein told me they were sent him by a Malay who was born in his father's house, a slave, and had been HIS 'BOY' and play-fellow. Now, the slave is far richer than the old young master, and no waggon comes without a little gift – oranges, fish, – for 'Wilhem'. When Klein goes to Capetown, the old Malay seats him in a grand chair and sits on a little wooden stool at his feet; Klein begs him, as 'Huisheer', to sit properly; but, 'Neen Wilhem, Ik zal niet; ik kan niet vergeten.' 'Good boy!' said old Klein; 'good people the Malays.' It is a relief, after the horrors one has heard of Dutch cruelty, to see such an 'idyllisches Verhaltniss'. I have heard other instances of the same fidelity from Malays, but they were utterly unappreciated, and only told to prove the excellence of slavery, and 'how well the rascals must have been off'.

I have fallen in love with a Hottentot baby here. Her mother is all black, with a broad face and soft spaniel eyes, and the father is Bastaard; but the baby (a girl, nine months old), has walked out of one of Leonardo da Vinci's pictures. I never saw so beautiful a child. She has huge eyes with the spiritual look he gives to them, and is exquisite in every way. When the Hottentot blood is handsome, it is beautiful; there is a delicacy and softness about some of the women which is very pretty, and the eyes are those of a GOOD dog. Most of them are hideous, and nearly all drink; but they are very clean and honest. Their cottages are far superior in cleanliness to anything out of England, except in picked places, like some parts of Belgium; and they wash as much as they can, with the bad water-supply, and the English outcry if they strip out of doors to bathe. Compared to French peasants, they are very clean indeed, and even the children are far more decent and cleanly in their habits than those of France. The woman who comes here to clean and scour is a model of neatness in her work and her person (quite black), but she gets helplessly drunk as soon as she has a penny to buy a glass of wine; for a penny, a half-pint tumbler of very strong and remarkably nasty wine is sold at the canteens.

I have many more 'humours' to tell, but A- can show you all the long story I have written. I hope it does not seem very stale and DECIES REPETITA. All being new and curious to the eye here, one becomes long-winded about mere trifles.

One small thing more. The first few shillings that a coloured woman has to spend on her cottage go in – what do you think? – A grand toilet table of worked muslin over pink, all set out with little 'OBJETS' – such as they are: if there is nothing else, there is that here, as at Capetown, and all along to Simon's Bay. Now, what is the use or comfort of a DUCHESS to a Hottentot family? I shall never see those toilets again without thinking of

Letters from the Cape

Hottentots – what a baroque association of ideas! I intend, in a day or two, to go over to 'Gnadenthal', the Moravian missionary station, founded in 1736 – the 'bluhende Gemeinde von Hottentoten'. How little did I think to see it, when we smiled at the phrase in old Mr. Steinkopf's sermon years ago in London! The MISSIONARIZED Hottentots are not, as it is said, thought well of – being even tipsier than the rest; but I may see a full-blood one, and even a true Bosjesman, which is worth a couple of hours' drive; and the place is said to be beautiful.

This climate is evidently a styptic of great power, I shall write a few lines to the LANCET about Caledon and its hot baths – 'Bad Caledon', as the Germans at Houw Hoek call it. The baths do not concern me, as they are chalybeate; but they seem very effectual in many cases. Yet English people never come here; they stay at Capetown, which must be a furnace now, or at Wynberg, which is damp and chill (comparatively); at most, they get to Stellenbosch. I mean visitors, not settlers; THEY are everywhere. I look the colour of a Hottentot. Now I MUST leave off.

Your most affectionate

L. D. G.

LETTER VII – GNADENTHAL

Caledon, Jan. 28th.

Well, I have been to Gnadenthal, and seen the 'blooming parish', and a lovely spot it is. A large village nestled in a deep valley, surrounded by high mountains on three sides, and a lower range in front. We started early on Saturday, and drove over a mighty queer road, and through a river. Oh, ye gods! what a shaking and pounding! We were rattled up like dice in a box. Nothing but a Cape cart, Cape horses, and a Hottentot driver, above all, could have accomplished it. Captain D– rode, and had the best of it. On the road we passed three or four farms, at all which horses were GALLOPING OUT the grain, or men were winnowing it by tossing it up with wooden shovels to let the wind blow away the chaff. We did the twenty–four miles up and down the mountain roads in two hours and a half, with our valiant little pair of horses; it is incredible how they go. We stopped at a nice cottage on the hillside belonging to a CI–DEVANT slave, one Christian Rietz, a WHITE man, with brown woolly hair, sharp features, grey eyes, and NOT woolly moustaches. He said he was a 'Scotch bastaard', and 'le bon sang parlait – tres–haut meme', for a more thriving, shrewd, sensible fellow I never saw. His FATHER and master had had to let him go when all slaves were emancipated, and he had come to Gnadenthal. He keeps a little inn in the village, and a shop and a fine garden. The cottage we lodged in was on the mountain side, and had been built for his son, who was dead; and his adopted daughter, a pretty coloured girl, exactly like a southern Frenchwoman, waited on us, assisted by about six or seven other women, who came chiefly to stare. Vrouw Rietz was as black as a coal, but SO pretty! – a dear, soft, sleek, old lady, with beautiful eyes, and the kind pleasant ways which belong to nice blacks; and, though old and fat, still graceful and lovely in face, hands, and arms. The cottage was thus:– One large hall; my bedroom on the right, S–'s on the left; the kitchen behind me; Miss Rietz behind S–; mud floors daintily washed over with fresh cow–dung; ceiling of big rafters, just as they had grown, on which rested bamboo canes close together ACROSS the rafters, and bound together between each, with transverse bamboo – a pretty BEEHIVEY effect; at top, mud again, and then a high thatched roof and a loft or zolder for forage, the walls of course mud, very thick and whitewashed. The bedrooms tiny; beds, clean sweet melies (maize) straw, with clean sheets, and eight good pillows on each; glass windows (a great distinction), exquisite cleanliness, and hearty civility; good food, well cooked; horrid tea and coffee, and hardly any milk; no end of fruit. In all the gardens it hung on the trees thicker than the leaves. Never did I behold such a profusion of fruit and vegetables.

But first I must tell what struck me most, I asked one of the Herrenhut brethren whether there were any REAL Hottentots, and he said, 'Yes, one;' and next morning, as I sat waiting for early prayers under the big oak–trees in

Letters from the Cape

the Plaats (square), he came up, followed by a tiny old man hobbling along with a long stick to support him. 'Here', said he, 'is the LAST Hottentot; he is a hundred and seven years old, and lives all alone.' I looked on the little, wizened, yellow face, and was shocked that he should be dragged up like a wild beast to be stared at. A feeling of pity which felt like remorse fell upon me, and my eyes filled as I rose and stood before him, so tall and like a tyrant and oppressor, while he uncovered his poor little old snow-white head, and peered up in my face. I led him to the seat, and helped him to sit down, and said in Dutch, 'Father, I hope you are not tired; you are old.' He saw and heard as well as ever, and spoke good Dutch in a firm voice. 'Yes, I am above a hundred years old, and alone – quite alone.' I sat beside him, and he put his head on one side, and looked curiously up at me with his faded, but still piercing little wild eyes. Perhaps he had a perception of what I felt – yet I hardly think so; perhaps he thought I was in trouble, for he crept close up to me, and put one tiny brown paw into my hand, which he stroked with the other, and asked (like most coloured people) if I had children. I said, 'Yes, at home in England;' and he patted my hand again, and said, 'God bless them!' It was a relief to feel that he was pleased, for I should have felt like a murderer if my curiosity had added a moment's pain to so tragic a fate.

This may sound like sentimentalism; but you cannot conceive the effect of looking on the last of a race once the owners of all this land, and now utterly gone. His look was not quite human, physically speaking; – a good head, small wild-beast eyes, piercing and restless; cheek-bones strangely high and prominent, nose QUITE flat, mouth rather wide; thin shapeless lips, and an indescribably small, long, pointed chin, with just a very little soft white woolly beard; his head covered with extremely short close white wool, which ended round the poll in little ringlets. Hands and feet like an English child of seven or eight, and person about the size of a child of eleven. He had all his teeth, and though shrunk to nothing, was very little wrinkled in the face, and not at all in the hands, which were dark brown, while his face was yellow. His manner, and way of speaking were like those of an old peasant in England, only his voice was clearer and stronger, and his perceptions not blunted by age. He had travelled with one of the missionaries in the year 1790, or thereabouts, and remained with them ever since.

I went into the church – a large, clean, rather handsome building, consecrated in 1800 – and heard a very good sort of Litany, mixed with such singing as only black voices can produce. The organ was beautifully played by a Bastaard lad. The Herrenhutens use very fine chants, and the perfect ear and heavenly voices of a large congregation, about six hundred, all coloured people, made music more beautiful than any chorus-singing I ever heard.

Prayers lasted half an hour; then the congregation turned out of doors, and the windows were opened. Some of the people went away, and others waited for the 'allgemeine Predigt'. In a quarter of an hour a much larger congregation than the first assembled, the girls all with net-handkerchiefs tied round their heads so as to look exactly like the ancient Greek head-dress with a double fillet – the very prettiest and neatest coiffure I ever saw. The gowns were made like those of English girls of the same class, but far smarter, cleaner, and gayer in colour – pink, and green, and yellow, and bright blue; several were all in white, with white gloves. The men and women sit separate, and the women's side was a bed of tulips. The young fellows were very smart indeed, with muslin or gauze, either white, pink, or blue, rolled round their hats (that is universal here, on account of the sun). The Hottentots, as they are called – that is, those of mixed Dutch and Hottentot origin (correctly, 'bastaards') – have a sort of blackguard elegance in their gait and figure which is peculiar to them; a mixture of negro or Mozambique blood alters it altogether. The girls have the elegance without the blackguard look; ALL are slender, most are tall; all graceful, all have good hands and feet; some few are handsome in the face and many very interesting-looking. The complexion is a pale olive-yellow, and the hair more or less woolly, face flat, and cheekbones high, eyes small and bright. These are by far the most intelligent – equal, indeed, to whites. A mixture of black blood often gives real beauty, but takes off from the 'air', and generally from the talent; but then the blacks are so pleasant, and the Hottentots are taciturn and reserved. The old women of this breed are the grandest hags I ever saw; they are clean and well dressed, and tie up their old faces in white handkerchiefs like corpses, – faces like those of Andrea del Sarto's old women; they are splendid. Also, they are very clean people, addicted to tubbing more than any others. The maid-of-all-work, who lounges about your breakfast table in rags and dishevelled hair, has been in the river before you were awake, or, if that was too far off, in a tub. They are also far cleaner in their huts than any

Letters from the Cape

but the VERY BEST English poor.

The 'Predigt' was delivered, after more singing, by a missionary cabinet-maker, in Dutch, very ranting, and not very wise; the congregation was singularly decorous and attentive, but did not seem at all excited or impressed – just like a well-bred West-end audience, only rather more attentive. The service lasted three-quarters of an hour, including a short prayer and two hymns. The people came out and filed off in total silence, and very quickly, the tall graceful girls draping their gay silk shawls beautifully. There are seven missionaries, all in orders but one, the blacksmith, and all married, except the resident director of the boys' boarding-school; there is a doctor, a carpenter, a cabinet-maker, a shoe-maker, and a storekeeper – a very agreeable man, who had been missionary in Greenland and Labrador, and interpreter to MacClure. There is one 'Studirter Theolog'. All are Germans, and so are their wives. My friend the storekeeper married without having ever beheld his wife before they met at the altar, and came on board ship at once with her. He said it was as good a way of marrying as any other, and that they were happy together. She was lying in, so I did not see her. At eight years old, their children are all sent home to Germany to be educated, and they seldom see them again. On each side of the church are schools, and next to them the missionaries' houses on one side of the square, and on the other a row of workshops, where the Hottentots are taught all manner of trades. I have got a couple of knives, made at Gnadenthal, for the children. The girls occupy the school in the morning, and the boys in the afternoon; half a day is found quite enough of lessons in this climate. The infant school was of both sexes, but a different set morning and afternoon. The missionaries' children were in the infant school; and behind the little blonde German 'Madels' three jet black niggerlings rolled over each other like pointer-pups, and grinned, and didn't care a straw for the spelling; while the dingy yellow little bastards were straining their black eyes out, with eagerness to answer the master's questions. He and the mistress were both Bastards, and he seemed an excellent teacher. The girls were learning writing from a master, and Bible history from a mistress, also people of colour; and the stupid set (mostly black) were having spelling hammered into their thick skulls by another yellow mistress, in another room. At the boarding school were twenty lads, from thirteen up to twenty, in training for school-teachers at different stations. Gnadenthal supplies the Church of England with them, as well as their own stations. There were Caffres, Fingoes, a Mantatee, one boy evidently of some Oriental blood, with glossy, smooth hair and a copper skin – and the rest Bastards of various hues, some mixed with black, probably Mozambique. The Caffre lads were splendid young Hercules'. They had just printed the first book in the Caffre language (I've got it for Dr. Hawtrey,) – extracts from the New Testament, – and I made them read the sheets they were going to bind; it is a beautiful language, like Spanish in tone, only with a queer 'click' in it. The boys drew, like Chinese, from 'copies', and wrote like copper-plate; they sang some of Mendelssohn's choruses from 'St. Paul' splendidly, the Caffres rolling out soft rich bass voices, like melodious thunder. They are clever at handicrafts, and fond of geography and natural history, incapable of mathematics, quick at languages, utterly incurious about other nations, and would all rather work in the fields than learn anything but music; good boys, honest, but 'TROTZIG'. So much for Caffres, Fingoes, The Bastards are as clever as whites, and more docile – so the 'rector' told me. The boy who played the organ sang the 'Lorelei' like an angel, and played us a number of waltzes and other things on the piano, but he was too shy to talk; while the Caffres crowded round me, and chattered away merrily. The Mantatees, whom I cannot distinguish from Caffres, are scattered all over the colony, and rival the English as workmen and labourers – fine stalwart, industrious fellows. Our little 'boy' Kleenboy hires a room for fifteen shillings a month, and takes in his compatriots as lodgers at half a crown a week – the usurious little rogue! His chief, one James, is a bricklayer here, and looks and behaves like a prince. It is fine to see his black arms, ornamented with silver bracelets, hurling huge stones about.

All Gnadenthal is wonderfully fruitful, being well watered, but it is not healthy for whites; I imagine, too hot and damp. There are three or four thousand coloured people there, under the control of the missionaries, who allow no canteens at all. The people may have what they please at home, but no public drinking-place is allowed, and we had to take our own beer and wine for the three days. The gardens and burial-ground are beautiful, and the square is entirely shaded by about ten or twelve superb oaks; nothing prettier can be conceived. It is not popular in the neighbourhood. 'You see it makes the d-d niggers cheeky' to have homes of their own – and the girls are said to be immoral. As to that, there are no so-called 'morals' among the coloured people, and how or why should there?

Letters from the Cape

It is an honour to one of these girls to have a child by a white man, and it is a degradation to him to marry a dark girl. A pious stiff old Dutchwoman who came here the other day for the Sacrament (which takes place twice a year), had one girl with her, big with child by her son, who also came for the Sacrament, and two in the straw at home by the other son; this caused her exactly as much emotion as I feel when my cat kittens. No one takes any notice, either to blame or to nurse the poor things – they scramble through it as pussy does. The English are almost equally contemptuous; but there is one great difference. My host, for instance, always calls a black 'a d–d nigger'; but if that nigger is wronged or oppressed he fights for him, or bails him out of the Tronk, and an English jury gives a just verdict; while a Dutch one simply finds for a Dutchman, against any one else, and ALWAYS against a dark man. I believe this to be true, from what I have seen and heard; and certainly the coloured people have a great preference for the English.

I am persecuted by the ugliest and blackest Mozambiquer I have yet seen, a bricklayer's labourer, who can speak English, and says he was servant to an English Captain – 'Oh, a good fellow he was, only he's dead!' He now insists on my taking him as a servant. 'I dessay your man at home is a good chap, and I'll be a good boy, and cook very nice.' He is thick-set and short and strong. Nature has adorned him with a cock eye and a yard of mouth, and art, with a prodigiously tall white chimney-pot hat with the crown out, a cotton nightcap, and a wondrous congeries of rags. He professes to be cook, groom, and 'walley', and is sure you would be pleased with his attentions.

Well, to go back to Gnadenthal. I wandered all over the village on Sunday afternoon, and peeped into the cottages. All were neat and clean, with good dressers of crockery, the VERY poorest, like the worst in Weybridge sandpits; but they had no glass windows, only a wooden shutter, and no doors; a calico curtain, or a sort of hurdle supplying its place. The people nodded and said 'Good day!' but took no further notice of me, except the poor old Hottentot, who was seated on a doorstep. He rose and hobbled up to meet me and take my hand again. He seemed to enjoy being helped along and seated down carefully, and shook and patted my hand repeatedly when I took leave of him. At this the people stared a good deal, and one woman came to talk to me.

In the evening I sat on a bench in the square, and saw the people go in to 'Abendsegen'. The church was lighted, and as I sat there and heard the lovely singing, I thought it was impossible to conceive a more romantic scene. On Monday I saw all the schools, and then looked at the great strong Caffre lads playing in the square. One of them stood to be pelted by five or six others, and as the stones came, he twisted and turned and jumped, and was hardly ever hit, and when he was, he didn't care, though the others hurled like catapults. It was the most wonderful display of activity and grace, and quite incredible that such a huge fellow should be so quick and light. When I found how comfortable dear old Mrs. Rietz made me, I was sorry I had hired the cart and kept it to take me home, for I would gladly have stayed longer, and the heat did me no harm; but I did not like to throw away a pound or two, and drove back that evening. Mrs. Rietz, told me her mother was a Mozambiquer. 'And your father?' said I. 'Oh, I don't know. MY MOTHER WAS ONLY A SLAVE.' She, too, was a slave, but said she 'never knew it', her 'missus' was so good; a Dutch lady, at a farm I had passed, on the road, who had a hundred and fifty slaves. I liked my Hottentot hut amazingly, and the sweet brown bread, and the dinner cooked so cleanly on the bricks in the kitchen. The walls were whitewashed and adorned with wreaths of everlasting flowers and some quaint old prints from Louthenburg – pastoral subjects, not exactly edifying.

Well, I have prosed unconscionably, so adieu for the present.

February 3d. – Many happy returns of your birthday, dear –. I had a bottle of champagne to drink your health, and partly to swell the bill, which these good people make so moderate, that I am half ashamed. I get everything that Caledon can furnish for myself and S– for 15L. a month.

On Saturday we got the sad news of Prince Albert's death, and it created real consternation here. What a thoroughly unexpected calamity! Every one is already dressed in deep mourning. It is more general than in a village of the same size at home – (how I have caught the colonial trick of always saying 'home' for England!

Letters from the Cape

Dutchmen who can barely speak English, and never did or will see England, equally talk of 'news from home'). It also seems, by the papers of the 24th of December, which came by a steamer the other day, that war is imminent. I shall have to wait for convoy, I suppose, as I object to walking the plank from a Yankee privateer. I shall wait here for the next mail, and then go back to Capetown, stopping by the way, so as to get there early in March, and arrange for my voyage. The weather had a relapse into cold, and an attempt at rain. Pity it failed, for the drought is dreadful this year, chiefly owing to the unusual quantity of sharp drying winds – a most unlucky summer for the country and for me.

My old friend Klein, who told me several instances of the kindness and gratitude of former slaves, poured out to me the misery he had undergone from the 'ingratitude' of a certain Rosina, a slave-girl of his. She was in her youth handsome, clever, the best horsebreaker, bullock-trainer and driver, and hardest worker in the district. She had two children by Klein, then a young fellow; six by another white man, and a few more by two husbands of her own race! But she was of a rebellious spirit, and took to drink. After the emancipation, she used to go in front of Klein's windows and read the statute in a loud voice on every anniversary of the day; and as if that did not enrage him enough, she pertinaciously (whenever she was a little drunk) kissed him by main force every time she met him in the street, exclaiming, 'Aha! when I young and pretty slave-girl you make kiss me then; now I ugly, drunk, dirty old devil and free woman, I kiss you!' Frightful retributive justice! I struggled hard to keep my countenance, but the fat old fellow's good-humoured, rueful face was too much for me. His tormentor is dead, but he retains a painful impression of her 'ingratitude'.

Our little Mantatee 'Kleenboy' has again, like Jeshurun, 'waxed fat and kicked', as soon as he had eaten enough to be once more plump and shiny. After his hungry period, he took to squatting on the stoep, just in front of the hall-door, and altogether declining to do anything; so he is superseded by an equally ugly little red-headed Englishman. The Irish housemaid has married the German baker (a fine match for her!), and a dour little Scotch Presbyterian has come up from Capetown in her place. Such are the vicissitudes of colonial house-keeping! The only 'permanency' is the old soldier of Captain D-'s regiment, who is barman in the canteen, and not likely to leave 'his honour', and the coloured girl, who improves on acquaintance. She wants to ingratiate herself with me, and get taken to England. Her father is an Englishman, and of course the brown mother and her large family always live in the fear of his 'going home' and ignoring their existence; a MARRIAGE with the mother of his children would be too much degradation for him to submit to. Few of the coloured people are ever married, but they don't separate oftener than REALLY married folks. Bill, the handsome West Indian black, married my pretty washerwoman Rosalind, and was thought rather assuming because he was asked in church and lawfully married; and she wore a handsome lilac silk gown and a white wreath and veil, and very well she looked in them. She had a child of two years old, which did not at all disconcert Bill; but he continues to be dignified, and won't let her go and wash clothes in the river, because the hot sun makes her ill, and it is not fit work for women.

Sunday, 9th. – Last night a dance took place in a house next door to this, and a party of boers attempted to go in, but were repulsed by a sortie of the young men within. Some of the more peaceable boers came in here and wanted ale, which was refused, as they were already very VINOUS; so they imbibed ginger-beer, whereof one drank thirty-four bottles to his own share! Inspired by this drink, they began to quarrel, and were summarily turned out. They spent the whole night, till five this morning, scuffling and vociferating in the street. The constables discreetly stayed in bed, displaying the true Dogberry spirit, which leads them to take up Hottentots, drunk or sober, to show their zeal, but carefully to avoid meddling with stalwart boers, from six to six and a half feet high and strong in proportion. The jabbering of Dutch brings to mind Demosthenes trying to out roar a stormy sea with his mouth full of pebbles. The hardest blows are those given with the tongue, though much pulling of hair and scuffling takes place. 'Verdomde Schmeerlap!' – 'Donder and Bliksem! am I a verdomde Schmeerlap?' – 'Ja, u is,' I could not help laughing heartily as I lay in bed, at hearing the gambols of these Titan cubs; for this is a boer's notion of enjoying himself. This morning, I hear, the street was strewn with the hair they had pulled out of each other's heads. All who come here make love to S-; not by describing their tender feelings, but by enumerating the oxen, sheep, horses, land, money, of which they are possessed, and whereof, by the law of this colony, she would become half-owner on marriage. There is a fine handsome Van Steen, who is very

Letters from the Cape

persevering; but S– does not seem to fancy becoming Mevrouw at all. The demand for English girls as wives is wonderful here. The nasty cross little ugly Scotch maid has had three offers already, in one fortnight!

February 18th. – I expect to receive the letters by the English mail to–morrow morning, and to go to Worcester on Thursday. On Saturday the young doctor – good–humoured, jolly, big, young Dutchman – drove me, with his pretty little greys, over to two farms; at one I ate half a huge melon, and at the other, uncounted grapes. We poor Europeans don't know what fruit CAN BE, I must admit. The melon was a foretaste of paradise, and the grapes made one's fingers as sticky as honey, and had a muscat fragrance quite inconceivable. They looked like amber eggs. The best of it is, too, that in this climate stomach–aches are not. We all eat grapes, peaches, and figs, all day long. Old Klein sends me, for my own daily consumption, about thirty peaches, three pounds of grapes, and apples, pears, and figs besides – 'just a little taste of fruits'; only here they will pick it all unripe.

February 19th. – The post came in late last night, and old Klein kindly sent me my letters at near midnight. The post goes out this evening, and the hot wind is blowing, so I can only write to you, and a line to my mother. I feel really better now. I think the constant eating of grapes has done me much good.

The Dutch cart–owner was so extortionate, that I am going to wait a few days, and write to my dear Malay to come up and drive me back. It is better than having to fight the Dutch monopolist in every village, and getting drunken drivers and bad carts after all. I shall go round all the same. The weather has been beautiful; to– day there is a wind, which comes about two or three times in the year: it is not depressing, but hot, and a bore, because one must shut every window or be stifled with dust.

The people are burning the veld all about, and the lurid smoke by day and flaming hill–sides by night are very striking. The ashes of the Bosh serve as manure for the young grass, which will sprout in the autumn rains. Such nights! Such a moon! I walk out after dark when it is mild and clear, and can read any print by the moonlight, and see the distant landscape as well as by day.

Old Klein has just sent me a haunch of bok, and the skin and hoofs, which are pretty.

LETTER VIII

Caledon, Sunday.

You must have fallen into second childhood to think of PRINTING such rambling hasty scrawls as I write. I never could write a good letter; and unless I gallop as hard as I can, and don't stop to think, I can say nothing; so all is confused and unconnected: only I fancy YOU will be amused by some of my 'impressions'. I have written to my mother an accurate account of my health. I am dressed and out of doors never later than six, now the weather makes it possible. It is surprising how little sleep one wants. I go to bed at ten and often am up at four.

I made friends here the other day with a lively dried–up little old Irishman, who came out at seven years old a pauper–boy. He has made a fortune by 'going on TOGT' (GERMAN, TAUSCH), as thus; he charters two waggons, twelve oxen each, and two Hottentots to each waggon, leader and driver. The waggons he fills with cotton, hardware, – an ambulatory village 'shop', – and goes about fifteen miles a day, on and on, into the far interior, swapping baftas (calico), punjums (loose trowsers), and voerschitz (cotton gownpieces), pronounced 'foosy', against oxen and sheep. When all is gone he swaps his waggons against more oxen and a horse, and he and his four 'totties' drive home the spoil; and he has doubled or trebled his venture. EN ROUTE home, each day they kill a sheep, and eat it ALL. 'What!' says I; 'the whole?' 'Every bit. I always take one leg and the liver for myself, and the totties roast the rest, and melt all the fat and entrails down in an iron pot and eat it with a wooden spoon.' JE N'EN REVENAIS PAS. 'What! the whole leg and liver at one meal?' 'Every bit; ay, and you'd do the same, ma'am, if you were there.' No bread, no salt, no nothing – mutton and water. The old fellow was quite

Letters from the Cape

poetic and heroic in describing the joys and perils of Togat. I said I should like to go too; and he bewailed having settled a year ago in a store at Swellendam, 'else he'd ha' fitted up a waggon all nice and snug for me, and shown me what going on togt was like. Nothing like it for the health, ma'am; and beautiful shooting.' My friend had 700L. in gold in a carpet bag, without a lock, lying about on the stoep. 'All right; nobody steals money or such like here. I'm going to pay bills in Capetown.'

Tell my mother that a man would get from 2L. to 4L. a month wages, with board, lodging, all found, and his wife from 1L. 10S. to 2L. a month and everything found, according to abilities and testimonials. Wages are enormous, and servants at famine price; emigrant ships are CLEARED OFF in three days, and every ragged Irish girl in place somewhere. Four pounds a month, and food for self, husband, and children, is no uncommon pay for a good cook; and after all her cookery may be poor enough. My landlady at Capetown gave that. The housemaid had ONLY 1L. 5S. a month, but told me herself she had taken 8L. in one week in 'tips'. She was an excellent servant. Up country here the wages are less, but the comfort greater, and the chances of 'getting on' much increased. But I believe Algoa Bay or Grahamstown are by far the best fields for new colonists, and (I am assured) the best climate for lung diseases. The wealthy English merchants of Port Elizabeth (Algoa Bay) pay best. It seems to me, as far as I can learn, that every really WORKING man or woman can thrive here.

My German host at Houw Hoek came out twenty–three years ago, he told me, without a 'heller', and is now the owner of cattle and land and horses to a large amount. But then the Germans work, while the Dutch dawdle and the English drink. 'New wine' is a penny a glass (half a pint), enough to blow your head off, and 'Cape smoke' (brandy, like vitriol) ninepence a bottle – that is the real calamity. If the Cape had the grape disease as badly as Madeira, it would be the making of the colony.

I received a message from my Malay friends, Abdool Jemaalee and Betsy, anxious to know 'if the Misses had good news of her children, for bad news would make her sick'. Old Betsy and I used to prose about young Abdurrachman and his studies at Mecca, and about my children, with more real heartiness than you can fancy. We were not afraid of boring each other; and pious old Abdool sat and nodded and said, 'May Allah protect them all!' as a refrain; – 'Allah, il Allah!'

LETTER IX

Caledon, Feb. 21st.

This morning's post brought your packet, and the announcement of an extra mail to–night – so I can send you a P.S. I hear that Capetown has been pestilential, and as hot as Calcutta. It is totally undrained, and the Mozambiquers are beginning to object to acting as scavengers to each separate house. The 'VIDANGES' are more barbarous even than in Paris. Without the south–easter (or 'Cape doctor') they must have fevers, and though too rough a practitioner for me, he benefits the general health. Next month the winds abate, but last week an omnibus was blown over on the Rondebosch road, which is the most sheltered spot, and inhabited by Capetown merchants. I have received all the SATURDAY REVIEWS quite safe, likewise the books, Mendelssohn's letters, and the novel. I have written for my dear Choslullah to fetch me. The Dutch farmers don't know how to charge enough; moreover, the Hottentot drivers get drunk, and for two lone women that is not the thing. I pay my gentle Malay thirty shillings a day, which, for a cart and four and such a jewel of a driver, is not outrageous; and I had better pay that for the few days I wait on the road, than risk bad carts, tipsy Hottentots, and extortionate boers.

This intermediate country between the 'Central African wilderness' and Capetown has been little frequented. I went to the Church Mission School with the English clergyman yesterday. You know I don't believe in every kind of missionaries, but I do believe that, in these districts, kind, judicious English clergymen are of great value. The Dutch pastors still remember the distinction between 'Christenmenschen' and 'Hottentoten'; but the Church Mission Schools teach the Anglican Catechism to every child that will learn, and the congregation is as piebald as

Letters from the Cape

Harlequin's jacket. A pretty, coloured lad, about eleven years old, answered my questions in geography with great quickness and some wit. I said, 'Show me the country you belong to.' He pointed to England, and when I laughed, to the cape. 'This is where we are, but that is the country I BELONG TO.' I asked him how we were governed, and he answered quite right. 'How is the Cape governed?' 'Oh, we have a Parliament too, and Mr. Silberbauer is the man WE send.' Boys and girls of all ages were mixed, but no blacks. I don't think they will learn, except on compulsion, as at Gnadenthal.

I regret to say that Bill's wife has broken his head with a bottle, at the end of the honeymoon. I fear the innovation of being MARRIED AT CHURCH has not had a good effect, and that his neighbours may quote Mr. Peachum.

I was offered a young lion yesterday, but I hardly think it would be an agreeable addition to the household at Esher.

I hear that Worcester, Paarl, and Stellenbosch are beautiful, and the road very desolate and grand: one mountain pass takes six hours to cross. I should not return to Capetown so early, but poor Captain J- has had his leg smashed and amputated, so I must look out for myself in the matter of ships. Whenever it is hot, I am well, for the heat here is so LIGHT and dry. The wind tries me, but we have little here compared to the coast. I hope that the voyage home will do me still more good; but I will not sail till April, so as to arrive in June. May, in the Channel, would not do.

How I wish I could send you the fruit now on my table – amber- coloured grapes, yellow waxen apples streaked with vermilion in fine little lines, huge peaches, and tiny green figs! I must send dear old Klein a little present from England, to show that I don't forget my Dutch adorer. I wish I could bring you the 'Biltong' he sent me – beef or bok dried in the sun in strips, and slightly salted; you may carry enough in your pocket to live on for a fortnight, and it is very good as a little 'relish'. The partridges also have been welcome, and we shall eat the tiny haunch of bok to-day.

Mrs. D- is gone to Capetown to get servants (the Scotch girl having carried on her amours too flagrantly), and will return in my cart. S- is still keeping house meanwhile, much perturbed by the placid indolence of the brown girl. The stableman cooks, and very well too. This is colonial life – a series of makeshifts and difficulties; but the climate is fine, people feel well and make money, and I think it is not an unhappy life. I have been most fortunate in my abode, and can say, without speaking cynically, that I have found 'my warmest welcome at an inn'. Mine host is a rough soldier, but the very soul of good nature and good feeling; and his wife is a very nice person – so cheerful, clever, and kindhearted.

I should like to bring home the little Madagascar girl from Rathfelders, or a dear little mulatto who nurses a brown baby here, and is so clean and careful and 'pretty behaved', – but it would be a great risk. The brown babies are ravishing – so fat and jolly and funny.

One great charm of the people here is, that no one expects money or gifts, and that all civility is gratis. Many a time I finger small coin secretly in my pocket, and refrain from giving it, for fear of spoiling this innocence. I have not once seen a LOOK implying 'backsheesh', and begging is unknown. But the people are reserved and silent, and have not the attractive manners of the darkies of Capetown and the neighbourhood.

LETTER X

Caledon, Feb. 22d.

Yesterday Captain D- gave me a very nice caross of blessbok skins, which he got from some travelling trader. The excellence of the Caffre skin-dressing and sewing is, I fancy, unequalled; the bok- skins are as soft as a kid

Letters from the Cape

glove, and have no smell at all.

In the afternoon the young doctor drove me, in his little gig-cart and pair (the lightest and swiftest of conveyances), to see a wine-farm. The people were not at work, but we saw the tubs and vats, and drank 'most'. The grapes are simply trodden by a Hottentot, in a tub with a sort of strainer at the bottom, and then thrown – skins, stalks, and all – into vats, where the juice ferments for twice twenty-four hours; after which it is run into casks, which are left with the bung out for eight days; then the wine is drawn off into another cask, a little sulphur and brandy are added to it, and it is bunged down. Nothing can be conceived so barbarous. I have promised Mr. M- to procure and send him an exact account of the process in Spain. It might be a real service to a most worthy and amiable man. Dr. M- also would be glad of a copy. They literally know nothing about wine-making here, and with such matchless grapes I am sure it ought to be good. Altogether, 'der alte Schlendrian' prevails at the Cape to an incredible degree.

If two 'Heeren M-' call on you, please be civil to them. I don't know them personally, but their brother is the doctor here, and the most good-natured young fellow I ever saw. If I were returning by Somerset instead of Worcester, I might put up at their parents' house and be sure of a welcome; and I can tell you civility to strangers is by no means of course here. I don't wonder at it; for the old Dutch families ARE GENTLEFOLKS of the good dull old school, and the English colonists can scarcely suit them. In the few instances in which I have succeeded in THAWING a Dutchman, I have found him wonderfully good-natured; and the different manner in which I was greeted when in company with the young doctor showed the feeling at once. The dirt of a Dutch house is not to be conceived. I have had sights in bedrooms in very respectable houses which I dare not describe. The coloured people are just as clean. The young doctor (who is much Anglicised) tells me that, in illness, he has to break the windows in the farmhouses – they are built not to open! The boers are below the English in manners and intelligence, and hate them for their 'go-ahead' ways, though THEY seem slow enough to me. As to drink, I fancy it is six of one and half a dozen of the other; but the English are more given to eternal drams, and the Dutch to solemn drinking bouts. I can't understand either, in this climate, which is so stimulating, that I more often drink ginger-beer or water than wine – a bottle of sherry lasted me a fortnight, though I was ordered to drink it; somehow, I had no mind to it.

27th. – The cart could not be got till the day before yesterday, and yesterday Mrs. D- arrived in it with two new Irish maids; it saved her 3L., and I must have paid equally. The horses were very tired, having been hard at work carrying Malays all the week to Constantia and back, on a pilgrimage to the tomb of a Mussulman saint; so to-day they rest, and to-morrow I go to Villiersdorp. Choslullah has been appointed driver of a post-cart; he tried hard to be allowed to pay a REPLACANT, and to fetch 'his missis', but was refused leave; and so a smaller and blacker Malay has come, whom Choslullah threatened to curse heavily if he failed to take great care of 'my missis' and be a 'good boy'. Ramadan begins on Sunday, and my poor driver can't even prepare for it by a good feast, as no fowls are to be had here just now, and he can't eat profanely-killed meat. Some pious Christian has tried to burn a Mussulman martyr's tomb at Eerste River, and there were fears the Malays might indulge in a little revenge; but they keep quiet. I am to go with my driver to eat some of the feast (of Bairam, is it not?) at his priest's when Ramadan ends, if I am in Capetown, and also am asked to a wedding at a relation of Choslullah's. It was quite a pleasure to hear the kindly Mussulman talk, after these silent Hottentots. The Malays have such agreeable manners; so civil, without the least cringing or Indian obsequiousness. I dare say they can be very 'insolent' on provocation; but I have always found among them manners like old-fashioned French ones, but quieter; and they have an affectionate way of saying 'MY missis' when they know one, which is very nice to hear. It is getting quite chilly here already; COLD night and morning; and I shall be glad to descend off this plateau into the warmer regions of Worcester, I have just bought EIGHT splendid ostrich feathers for 1L. of my old Togthandler friend. In England they would cost from eighteen to twenty-five shillings each. I have got a reebok and a klipspringer skin for you; the latter makes a saddle-cloth which defies sore backs; they were given me by Klein and a farmer at Palmiet River. The flesh was poor stuff, white and papery. The Hottentots can't 'bray' the skins as the Caffres do; and the woman who did mine asked me for a trifle beforehand, and got so drunk that she let them dry halfway in the process, consequently they don't look so well.

Letters from the Cape

Worcester, Sunday, March 2d.

Oh, such a journey! Such country! Pearly mountains and deep blue sky, and an impassable pass to walk down, and baboons, and secretary birds, and tortoises! I couldn't sleep for it all last night, tired as I was with the unutterably bad road, or track rather.

Well, we left Caledon on Friday, at ten o'clock, and though the weather had been cold and unpleasant for two days, I had a lovely morning, and away we went to Villiersdorp (pronounced Filjeesdorp). It is quite a tiny village, in a sort of Rasselas-looking valley. We were four hours on the road, winding along the side of a mountain ridge, which we finally crossed, with a splendid view of the sea at the far-distant end of a huge amphitheatre formed by two ridges of mountains, and on the other side the descent into Filjeesdorp. The whole way we saw no human being or habitation, except one shepherd, from the time we passed Buntje's kraal, about two miles out of Caledon. The little drinking-shop would not hold travellers, so I went to the house of the storekeeper (as the clergyman of Caledon had told me I might), and found a most kind reception. Our host was English, an old man-of-war's man, with a gentle, kindly Dutch wife, and the best-mannered children I have seen in the colony. They gave us clean comfortable beds and a good dinner, and wine ten years in the cellar; in short, the best of hospitality. I made an effort to pay for the entertainment next morning, when, after a good breakfast, we started loaded with fruit, but the kind people would not hear of it, and bid me good-bye like old friends. At the end of the valley we went a little up-hill, and then found ourselves at the top of a pass down into the level below. S- and I burst out with one voice, 'How beautiful!' Sabaal, our driver, thought the exclamation was an ironical remark on the road, which, indeed, appeared to be exclusively intended for goats. I suggested walking down, to which, for a wonder, the Malay agreed. I was really curious to see him get down with two wheels and four horses, where I had to lay hold from time to time in walking. The track was excessively steep, barely wide enough, and as slippery as a flagstone pavement, being the naked mountain-top, which is bare rock. However, all went perfectly right.

How shall I describe the view from that pass? In front was a long, long level valley, perhaps three to five miles broad (I can't judge distance in this atmosphere; a house that looks a quarter of a mile off is two miles distant). At the extreme end, in a little gap between two low brown hills that crossed each other, one could just see Worcester - five hours' drive off. Behind it, and on each side the plain, mountains of every conceivable shape and colour; the strangest cliffs and peaks and crags toppling every way, and tinged with all the colours of opal; chiefly delicate, pale lilac and peach colour, but varied with red brown and Titian green. In spite of the drought, water sparkled on the mountain-sides in little glittering threads, and here and there in the plain; and pretty farms were dotted on either side at the very bottom of the slopes toward the mountain-foot. The sky of such a blue! (it is deeper now by far than earlier in the year). In short, I never did see anything so beautiful. It even surpassed Hottentot's Holland. On we went, straight along the valley, crossing drift after drift; - a drift is the bed of a stream more or less dry; in which sometimes you are drowned, sometimes only POUNDED, as was our hap. The track was incredibly bad, except for short bits, where ironstone prevailed. However, all went well, and on the road I chased and captured a pair of remarkably swift and handsome little 'Schelpats'. That you may duly appreciate such a feat of valour and activity, I will inform you that their English name is 'tortoise'. On the strength of this effort, we drank a bottle of beer, as it was very hot and sandy; and our Malay was a WET enough Mussulman to take his full share in a modest way, though he declined wine or 'Cape smoke Soopjes' (drams) with aversion. No sooner had we got under weigh again, than Sabaal pulled up and said, 'There ARE the Baviaans Missis want to see!' and so they were. At some distance by the river was a great brute, bigger than a Newfoundland dog, stalking along with the hideous baboon walk, and tail vehemently cocked up; a troop followed at a distance, hiding and dodging among the palmiets. They were evidently en ROUTE to rob a garden close to them, and had sent a great stout fellow ahead to reconnoitre. 'He see Missis, and feel sure she not got a gun; if man come on horseback, you see 'em run like devil.' We had not that pleasure, and left them, on felonious thoughts intent.

The road got more and more beautiful as we neared Worcester, and the mountains grew higher and craggier. Presently, a huge bird, like a stork on the wing, pounced down close by us. He was a secretary-bird, and had

Letters from the Cape

caught sight of a snake. We passed 'Brant Vley' (BURNT or hot spring), where sulphur-water bubbles up in a basin some thirty feet across and ten or twelve deep. The water is clear as crystal, and is hot enough just NOT to boil an egg, I was told. At last, one reaches the little gap between the brown hills which one has seen for four hours, and drives through it into a wide, wide flat, with still craggier and higher mountains all round, and Worcester in front at the foot of a towering cliff. The town is not so pretty, to my taste, as the little villages. The streets are too wide, and the market-place too large, which always looks dreary, but the houses and gardens individually are charming. Our inn is a very nice handsome old Dutch house; but we have got back to 'civilization', and the horrid attempts at 'style' which belong to Capetown. The landlord and lady are too genteel to appear at all, and the Hottentots, who are disguised, according to their sexes, in pantry jacket and flounced petticoat, don't understand a word of English or of real Dutch. At Gnadenthal they understood Dutch, and spoke it tolerably; but here, as in most places, it is three-parts Hottentot; and then they affect to understand English, and bring everything wrong, and are sulky: but the rooms are very comfortable. The change of climate is complete – the summer was over at Caledon, and here we are into it again – the most delicious air one can conceive; it must have been a perfect oven six weeks ago. The birds are singing away merrily still; the approach of autumn does not silence them here. The canaries have a very pretty song, like our linnet, only sweeter; the rest are very inferior to ours. The sugar-bird is delicious when close by, but his pipe is too soft to be heard at any distance.

To those who think voyages and travels tiresome, my delight in the new birds and beasts and people must seem very stupid. I can't help it if it does, and am not ashamed to confess that I feel the old sort of enchanted wonder with which I used to read Cook's voyages, and the like, as a child. It is very coarse and unintellectual of me; but I would rather see this now, at my age, than Italy; the fresh, new, beautiful nature is a second youth – or CHILDHOOD – SI VOUS VOULEZ. To-morrow we shall cross the highest pass I have yet crossed, and sleep at Paarl – then Stellenbosch, then Capetown. For any one OUT of health, and IN pocket, I should certainly prescribe the purchase of a waggon and team of six horses, and a long, slow progress in South Africa. One cannot walk in the midday sun, but driving with a very light roof over one's head is quite delicious. When I looked back upon my dreary, lonely prison at Ventnor, I wondered I had survived it at all.

Capetown, March 7th.

After writing last, we drove out, on Sunday afternoon, to a deep alpine valley, to see a NEW BRIDGE – a great marvel apparently. The old Spanish Joe Miller about selling the bridge to buy water occurred to me, and made Sabaal laugh immensely. The Dutch farmers were tearing home from Kerk, in their carts – well-dressed, prosperous-looking folks, with capital horses. Such lovely farms, snugly nestled in orange and pomegranate groves! It is of no use to describe this scenery; it is always mountains, and always beautiful opal mountains; quite without the gloom of European mountain scenery. The atmosphere must make the charm. I hear that an English traveller went the same journey and found all barren from Dan to Beersheba. I'm sorry for him.

In the morning of Sunday, early, I walked along the road with Sabaal, and saw a picture I shall never forget. A little Malabar girl had just been bathing in the Slood, and had put her scanty shift on her lovely little wet brown body; she stood in the water with the drops glittering on her brown skin and black, satin hair, the perfection of youthful loveliness – a naiad of ten years old. When the shape and features are PERFECT, as hers were, the coffee-brown shows it better than our colour, on account of its perfect EVENNESS – like the dead white of marble. I shall never forget her as she stood playing with the leaves of the gum-tree which hung over her, and gazing with her glorious eyes so placidly.

On Monday morning, I walked off early to the old DROSDY (Landdrost's house), found an old gentleman, who turned out to be the owner, and who asked me my name and all the rest of the Dutch 'litanei' of questions, and showed me the pretty old Dutch garden and the house – a very handsome one. I walked back to breakfast, and thought Worcester the prettiest place I had ever seen. We then started for Paarl, and drove through 'Bain's Kloof', a splendid mountain-pass, four hours' long, constant driving. It was glorious, but more like what one had seen in pictures – a deep, narrow gorge, almost dark in places, and, to my mind, lacked the BEAUTY of the yesterday's

Letters from the Cape

drive, though it is, perhaps, grander; but the view which bursts on one at the top, and the descent, winding down the open mountain-side, is too fine to describe. Table Mountain, like a giant's stronghold, seen far distant, with an immense plain, half fertile, half white sand; to the left, Wagenmaker's Vley; and further on, the Paarl lying scattered on the slope of a mountain topped with two DOMES, just the shape of the cup which Lais (wasn't it?) presented to the temple of Venus, moulded on her breast. The horses were tired, so we stopped at Waggon-maker's Valley (or Wellington, as the English try to get it called), and found ourselves in a true Flemish village, and under the roof of a jolly Dutch hostess, who gave us divine coffee and bread-and-butter, which seemed ambrosia after being deprived of those luxuries for almost three months. Also new milk in abundance, besides fruit of all kinds in vast heaps, and pomegranates off the tree. I asked her to buy me a few to take in the cart, and got a 'muid', the third of a sack, for a shilling, with a bill, 'U bekomt 1 muid 28 granaeten dat Kostet 1S.' The old lady would walk out with me and take me into the shops, to show the 'vrow uit Engelland' to her friends. It was a lovely place, intensely hot, all glowing with sunshine. Then the sun went down, and the high mountains behind us were precisely the colour of a Venice ruby glass – really, truly, and literally; – not purple, not crimson, but glowing ruby-red – and the quince-hedges and orange-trees below looked INTENSELY green, and the houses snow-white. It was a transfiguration – no less.

I saw Hottentots again, four of them, from some remote corner, so the race is not quite extinct. These were youngish, two men and two women, quite light yellow, not darker than Europeans, and with little tiny black knots of wool scattered over their heads at intervals. They are hideous in face, but exquisitely shaped – very, very small though. One of the men was drunk, poor wretch, and looked the picture of misery. You can see the fineness of their senses by the way in which they dart their glances and prick their ears. Every one agrees that, when tamed, they make the best of servants – gentle, clever, and honest; but the penny-a-glass wine they can't resist, unless when caught and tamed young. They work in the fields, or did so as long as any were left; but even here, I was told, it was a wonder to see them.

We went on through the Paarl, a sweet pretty place, reminding one vaguely of Bonchurch, and still through fine mountains, with Scotch firs growing like Italian stone pines, and farms, and vineyard upon vineyard. At Stellenbosch we stopped. I had been told it was the prettiest town in the colony, and it IS very pretty, with oak-trees all along the street, like those at Paarl and Wagenmakers Vley; but I was disappointed. It was less beautiful than what I had seen. Besides, the evening was dull and cold. The south-easter greeted us here, and I could not go out all the afternoon. The inn was called 'Railway Hotel', and kept by low coarse English people, who gave us a filthy dinner, dirty sheets, and an atrocious breakfast, and charged 1L. 3S. 6D. for the same meals and time as old Vrow Langfeldt had charged 12S. for, and had given civility, cleanliness, and abundance of excellent food; – besides which, she fed Sabaal gratis, and these people fleeced him as they did me. So, next morning, we set off, less pleasantly disposed, for Capetown, over the flat, which is dreary enough, and had a horrid south-easter. We started early, and got in before the wind became a hurricane, which it did later. We were warmly welcomed by Mrs. R-; and here I am in my old room, looking over the beautiful bay, quite at home again. It blew all yesterday, and having rather a sore-throat I stayed in bed, and to-day is all bright and beautiful. But Capetown looks murky after Caledon and Worcester; there is, to my eyes, quite a haze over the mountains, and they look far off and indistinct. All is comparative in this world, even African skies. At Caledon, the most distant mountains, as far as your eye can reach, look as clear in every detail as the map on your table – an appearance utterly new to European eyes.

I gave Sabaal 1L. for his eight days' service as driver, as a Drinkgelt, and the worthy fellow was in ecstasies of gratitude. Next morning early, he appeared with a present of bananas, and his little girl dressed from head to foot in brand-new clothes, bought out of my money, with her wool screwed up extremely tight in little knots on her black little head (evidently her mother is the blackest of Caffres or Mozambiques). The child looked like a Caffre, and her father considers her quite a pearl. I had her in, and admired the little thing loud enough for him to hear outside, as I lay in bed. You see, I too was to have my share in the pleasure of the new clothes. This readiness to believe that one will sympathize with them, is very pleasing in the Malays.

Letters from the Cape

March 15.

I went to see my old Malay friends and to buy a water-melon. They were in all the misery of Ramadan. Betsy and pretty Nassirah very thin and miserable, and the pious old Abdool sitting on a little barrel waiting for 'gun-fire' – i.e. sunset, to fall to on the supper which old Betsy was setting out. He was silent, and the corners of his mouth were drawn down just like –'s at an evening party.

I shall go to-morrow to bid the T-s good-bye, at Wynberg. I was to have spent a few days there, but Wynberg is cold at night and dampish, so I declined that. She is a nice woman – Irish, and so innocent and frank and well-bred. She has been at Cold Bokke Veld, and shocked her puritanical host by admiring the naked Caffres who worked on his farm. He wanted them to wear clothes.

We have been amused by the airs of a naval captain and his wife, who are just come here. They complained that the merchant-service officers spoke FAMILIARLY to their children on board. QUEL AUDACE! When I think of the excellent, modest, manly young fellows who talked very familiarly and pleasantly to me on board the ST. LAWRENCE, I long to reprimand these foolish people.

Friday, 21st. – I am just come from prayer, at the Mosque in Chiappini Street, on the outskirts of the town. A most striking sight. A large room, like a county ball-room, with glass chandeliers, carpeted with common carpet, all but a space at the entrance, railed off for shoes; the Caaba and pulpit at one end; over the niche, a crescent painted; and over the entrance door a crescent, an Arabic inscription, and the royal arms of England! A fat jolly Mollah looked amazed as I ascended the steps; but when I touched my forehead and said, 'Salaam Aleikoom', he laughed and said, 'Salaam, Salaam, come in, come in.' The faithful poured in, all neatly dressed in their loose drab trousers, blue jackets, and red handkerchiefs on their heads; they left their wooden clogs in company, with my shoes, and proceeded, as it appeared, to strip. Off went jackets, waistcoats, and trousers, with the dexterity of a pantomime transformation; the red handkerchief was replaced by a white skullcap, and a long large white shirt and full white drawers flowed around them. How it had all been stuffed into the trim jacket and trousers, one could not conceive. Gay sashes and scarves were pulled out of a little bundle in a clean silk handkerchief, and a towel served as prayer-carpet. In a moment the whole scene was as oriental as if the Hansom cab I had come in existed no more. Women suckled their children, and boys played among the clogs and shoes all the time, and I sat on the floor in a remote corner. The chanting was very fine, and the whole ceremony very decorous and solemn. It lasted an hour; and then the little heaps of garments were put on, and the congregation dispersed, each man first laying a penny on a very curious little old Dutch-looking, heavy, iron-bound chest, which stood in the middle of the room.

I have just heard that the post closes to-night and must say farewell – A RIVEDERCI.

LETTER XI

Capetown, March 20th.

Dearest mother,

Dr. Shea says he fears I must not winter in England yet, but that I am greatly improved – as, indeed, I could tell him. He is another of the kind 'sea doctors' I have met with; he came all the way from Simon's Bay to see me, and then said, 'What nonsense is that?' when I offered him a fee. This is a very nice place up in the 'gardens', quite out of the town and very comfortable. But I regret Caledon. A– will show you my account of my beautiful journey back. Worcester is a fairy-land; and then to catch tortoises walking about, and to see 'baviaans', and snakes and secretary birds eating them! and then people have the impudence to think I must have been 'very dull!' SIE MERKEN'S NICHT, that it is THEY who are dull.

Letters from the Cape

Dear Dr. Hawtrey! he must have died just as I was packing up the first Caffre Testament for him! I felt his death very much, in connexion with my father; their regard for each other was an honour to both. I have the letter he wrote me on J-'s marriage, and a charming one it is.

I took Mrs. A- a drive in a Hansom cab to-day out to Wynberg, to see my friends Captain and Mrs. T-, who have a cottage under Table Mountain in a spot like the best of St. George's Hill. Very dull too; but as she is really a lady, it suits her, and Capetown does not. I was to have stayed with them, but Wynberg is cold at night. Poor B-'s wife is very ill and won't leave Capetown for a day. The people here are WUNDERLICH for that. A lady born here, and with 7,000L. a year, has never been further than Stellenbosch, about twenty miles. I am asked how I lived and what I ate during my little excursion, as if I had been to Lake Ngami. If only I had known how easy it all is, I would have gone by sea to East London and seen the Knysna and George district, and the primaeval African forest, the yellow wood, and other giant trees. However, 'For what I have received,' No one can conceive what it is, after two years of prison and utter languor, to stand on the top of a mountain pass, and enjoy physical existence for a few hours at a time. I felt as if it was quite selfish to enjoy anything so much when you were all so anxious about me at home; but as that is the best symptom of all, I do not repent.

S- has been an excellent travelling servant, and really a better companion than many more educated people; for she is always amused and curious, and is friendly with the coloured people. She is quite recovered. It is a wonderful climate – SANS QUE CELE PARAISSSE. It feels chilly and it blows horridly, and does not seem genial, but it gives new life.

To-morrow I am going with old Abdool Jemaalee to prayers at the Mosque, and shall see a school kept by a Malay priest. It is now Ramadan, and my Muslim friends are very thin and look glum. Choslullah sent a message to ask, 'Might he see the Missis once more? He should pray all the time she was on the sea.' Some pious Christians here would expect such horrors to sink the ship. I can't think why Mussulmans are always gentlemen; the Malay coolies have a grave courtesy which contrasts most strikingly with both European vulgarity and negro jollity. It is very curious, for they only speak Dutch, and know nothing of oriental manners. I fear I shall not see the Walkers again. Simon's Bay is too far to go and come in a day, as one cannot go out before ten or eleven, and must be in by five or half-past. Those hours are gloriously bright and hot, but morning and night are cold.

I am so happy in the thought of sailing now so very soon and seeing you all again, that I can settle to nothing for five minutes. I now feel how anxious and uneasy I have been, and how I shall rejoice to get home. I shall leave a letter for A-, to go in April, and tell him and you what ship I am in. I shall choose the SLOWEST, so as not to reach England and face the Channel before June, if possible. So don't be alarmed if I do not arrive till late in June. Till then good-bye, and God bless you, dearest mother – AUF FROHES WIEDERSEHN.

LETTER XII

Capetown, Sunday, March 23d.

It has been a REAL hot day, and threatened an earthquake and a thunderstorm; but nothing has come of it beyond sheet lightning to-night, which is splendid over the bay, and looks as if repeated in a grand bush-fire on the hills opposite. The sunset was glorious. That rarest of insects, the praying mantis, has just dropped upon my paper. I am thankful that, not being an entomologist, I am dispensed from the sacred duty of impaling the lovely green creature who sits there, looking quite wise and human. Fussy little brown beetles, as big as two lady-birds, keep flying into my eyes, and the mosquitoes are rejoicing loudly in the prospect of a feast. You will understand by this that both windows are wide open into the great verandah, – very unusual in this land of cold nights.

April 4th. – I have been trying in vain to get a passage home. The CAMPERDOWN has not come. In short, I am waiting for a chance vessel, and shall pack up now and be ready to go on board at a day's notice.

Letters from the Cape

I went on the last evening of Ramadan to the Mosque, having heard there was a grand 'function'; but there were only little boys lying about on the floor, some on their stomachs, some on their backs, higgledy-piggledy (if it be not profane to apply the phrase to young Islam), all shouting their prayers E TUE TETE. Priests, men, women, and English crowded in and out in the exterior division. The English behaved E L'ANGLAISE – pushed each other, laughed, sneered, and made a disgusting display of themselves. I asked a stately priest, in a red turban, to explain the affair to me, and in a few minutes found myself supplied by one Mollah with a chair, and by another with a cup of tea – was, in short, in the midst of a Malay SOIREE. They spoke English very little, but made up for it by their usual good breeding and intelligence. On Monday, I am going to see the school which the priest keeps at his house, and to 'honour his house by my presence'. The delight they show at any friendly interest taken in them is wonderful. Of course, I am supposed to be poisoned. A clergyman's widow here gravely asserts that her husband went mad THREE YEARS after drinking a cup of coffee handed to him by a Malay! – and in consequence of drinking it! It is exactly like the mediaeval feeling about the Jews. I saw that it was quite a DEMONSTRATION that I drank up the tea unhesitatingly. Considering that the Malays drank it themselves, my courage deserves less admiration. But it was a quaint sensation to sit in a Mosque, behaving as if at an evening party, in a little circle of poor Moslim priests.

I am going to have a photograph of my cart done. I was to have gone to the place to-day, but when Choslullah (whom I sent for to complete the picture) found out what I wanted, he implored me to put it off till Monday, that he might be better dressed, and was so unhappy at the notion of being immortalized in an old jacket, that I agreed to the delay. Such a handsome fellow may be allowed a little vanity.

The colony is torn with dissensions as to Sunday trains. Some of the Dutch clergy are even more absurd than our own on that point. A certain Van der Lingen, at Stellenbosch, calls Europe 'one vast Sodom', and so forth. There is altogether a nice kettle of religious hatred brewing here. The English Bishop of Capetown appoints all the English clergy, and is absolute monarch of all he surveys; and he and his clergy are carrying matters with a high hand. The Bishop's chaplain told Mrs. J– that she could not hope for salvation in the Dutch Church, since her clergy were not ordained by any bishop, and therefore they could only administer the sacrament 'UNTO DAMNATION'. All the physicians in a body, English as well as Dutch, have withdrawn from the Dispensary, because it was used as a means of pressure to draw the coloured people from the Dutch to the English Church.

This High–Church tyranny cannot go on long. Catholics there are few, but their bishop plays the same game; and it is a losing one. The Irish maid at the Caledon inn was driven by her bishop to be married at the Lutheran church, just as a young Englishman I know (though a fervent Puseyite) was driven to be married at the Scotch kirk. The colonial bishops are despots in their own churches, and there is no escape from their tyranny but by dissent. The Admiral and his family have been anathematized for going to a fancy bazaar given by the Wesleyans for their chapel.

April 8th. – Yesterday, I failed about my cart photograph. First, the owner had sent away the cart, and when Choslullah came dressed in all his best clothes, with a lovely blue handkerchief setting off his beautiful orange–tawny face, he had to rush off to try to borrow another cart. As ill luck would have it, he met a 'serious young man', with no front teeth, and a hideous wen on his eyebrow, who informed the priest of Choslullah's impious purpose, and came with him to see that he did NOT sit for his portrait. I believe it was half envy; for my handsome driver was as pleased, and then as disappointed, as a young lady about her first ball, and obviously had no religious scruples of his own on the subject. The weather is very delightful now – hot, but beautiful; and the south–easters, though violent, are short, and not cold. As in all other countries, autumn is the best time of year.

April 15th. – Your letters arrived yesterday, to my great delight. I have been worrying about a ship, and was very near sailing to-day by the QUEEN OF THE SOUTH at twenty–four hours' notice, but I have resolved to wait for the CAMPERDOWN. The QUEEN OF THE SOUTH is a steamer, – which is odious, for they pitch the coal all over the lower deck, so that you breathe coal–dust for the first ten days; then she was crammed – only one cabin vacant, and that small, and on the lower deck – and fifty–two children on board. Moreover, she will probably get

Letters from the Cape

to England too soon, so I resign myself to wait. The CAMPERDOWN has only upper-deck cabins, and I shall have fresh air. I am not as well as I was at Caledon, so I am all the more anxious to have a voyage likely to do me good instead of harm.

I got my cart and Choslullah photographed after all. Choslullah came next day (having got rid of his pious friend), quite resolved that 'the Missis' should take his portrait, so I will send or bring a few copies of my beloved cart. After the photograph was done, we drove round the Kloof, between Table and Lion Mountain. The road is cut on the side of Lion Mountain, and overhangs the sea at a great height. Camp Bay, which lies on the further side of the 'Lion's Head', is most lovely; never was sea so deeply blue, rocks so warmly brown, or sand and foam so glittering white; and down at the mountain-foot the bright green of the orange and pomegranate trees throws it all out in greater relief. But the atmosphere here won't do after that of the 'Ruggings', as the Caledon line of country is called. I shall never lose the impression of the view I had when Dr. Morkel drove me out on a hill-side, where the view seemed endless and without a vestige of life; and yet in every valley there were farms; but it looked a vast, utter solitude, and without the least haze. You don't know what that utter clearness means – the distinctness is quite awful. Here it is always slightly hazy; very pretty and warm, but it takes off from the grandeur. It is the difference between a pretty Pompadour beauty and a Greek statue. Those pale opal mountains, as distinct in every detail as the map on your table, are so cheerful and serene; no melodramatic effects of clouds and gloom. I suppose it is not really so beautiful as it seemed to me, for other people say it is bare and desolate, and certainly it is; but it seemed to me anything but dreary.

I am persuaded that Capetown is not healthy; indeed, the town can't be, from its stench and dirt; but I believe the whole seashore is more or less bad, compared to the upper plateaux, of which I know only the first. I should have gone back to Paarl, only that ships come and go within twenty-four hours, so one has the pleasure of living in constant expectation, with packed trunks, wondering when one shall get away. A clever Mr. M–, who has lived ALL OVER India, and is going back to Singapore, with his wife and child, are now in the house; and some very pleasant Jews, bound for British Caffraria – one of them has a lovely little wife and three children. She is very full of Prince Albert's death, and says there was not a dry eye in the synagogues in London, which were all hung with black on the day of his funeral, and prayer went on the whole day. 'THE PEOPLE mourned for him as much as for Hezekiah; and, indeed, he deserved it a great deal better,' was her rather unorthodox conclusion. These colonial Jews are a new 'Erscheinung' to me. They have the features of their race, but many of their peculiarities are gone. Mr. L–, who is very handsome and gentlemanly, eats ham and patronises a good breed of pigs on the 'model farm' on which he spends his money. He is (he says) a thorough Jew in faith, and evidently in charitable works; but he wants to say his prayers in English and not to 'dress himself up' in a veil and phylacteries for the purpose; and he and his wife talk of England as 'home', and care as much for Jerusalem as their neighbours. They have not forgotten the old persecutions, and are civil to the coloured people, and speak of them in quite a different tone from other English colonists. Moreover, they are far better mannered, and more 'HUMAN', in the German sense of the word, in all respects; – in short, less 'colonial'.

I have bought some Cape 'confeyt'; apricots, salted and then sugared, called 'mebos' – delicious! Also pickled peaches, 'chistnee', and quince jelly. I have a notion of some Cherupiga wine for ourselves. I will inquire the cost of bottling, packing, it is about one shilling and fourpence a bottle here, sweet red wine, unlike any other I ever drank, and I think very good. It is very tempting to bring a few things so unknown in England. I have a glorious 'Velcombers' for you, a blanket of nine Damara sheepskins, sewn by the Damaras, and dressed so that moths and fleas won't stay near them. It will make a grand railway rug and 'outside car' covering. The hunters use them for sleeping out of doors. I have bought three, and a springbok caross for somebody.

April 17th. – The winter has set in to-day. It rains steadily, at the rate of the heaviest bit of the heaviest shower in England, and is as cold as a bad day early in September. One can just sit without a fire. Presently, all will be green and gay; for winter is here the season of flowers, and the heaths will cover the country with a vast Turkey carpet. Already the green is appearing where all was brown yesterday. To-day is Good Friday; and if Christmas seemed odd at Midsummer, Easter in autumn seems positively unnatural. Our Jewish party made their exodus to-day, by

Letters from the Cape

the little coasting steamer, to Algoa Bay. I rather condoled with the pretty little woman about her long rough journey, with three babies; but she laughed, and said they had had time to get used to it ever since the days of Moses. All she grieved over was not being able to keep Passover, and she described their domestic ceremonies quite poetically. We heard from our former housemaid, Annie, the other day, announcing her marriage and her sister's. She wrote such a pretty, merry letter to S-, saying 'the more she tried not to like him, the better she loved him, and had to say, "Aha, Annie, you're caught at last."' A year and a half is a long time to remain single in this country.

Monday, April 21st, Easter Monday. – The mail goes out in an hour, so I will just add, good-bye. The winter is now fairly set in, and I long to be off. I fear I shall have a desperately cold week or so at first sailing, till we catch the south-east trades. This weather is beautiful in itself, but I feel it from the suddenness of the change. We passed in one night from hot summer to winter, which is like FINE English April, or October, only brighter than anything in Europe. There is properly, no autumn or spring here; only hot, dry, brown summer, with its cold wind at times, and fresh green winter, all fragrance and flowers, and much less wind. Mr. M-, of whom I told you, has been in every corner of the far East – Java, Sumatra, everywhere – and is extremely amusing. He has brought his wife here for her health, and is as glad to talk as I am. The conversation of an educated, clever person, is quite a new and delightful sensation to me now. He appears to have held high posts under the East India Company, is learned in Oriental languages, and was last resident at Singapore. He says that no doubt Java is Paradise, it is so lovely, and such a climate; but he does not look as if it had agreed with him. I feel quite heart-sick at seeing these letters go off before me, instead of leaving them behind, as I had hoped.

Well, I must say good-bye – or rather, 'AUF WIEDERSEHN' – and God knows how glad I shall be when that day comes!

LETTER XIII

Capetown, April 19th.

Dearest mother,

Here I am, waiting for a ship; the steamer was too horrid: and I look so much to the good to be gained by the voyage that I did not like to throw away the chance of two months at sea at this favourable time of year, and under favourable circumstances; so I made up my mind to see you all a month later. The sea just off the Cape is very, very cold; less so now than in spring, I dare say. The weather to-day is just like VERY warm April at home – showery, sunshiny, and fragrant; most lovely. It is so odd to see an autumn without dead leaves: only the oaks lose theirs, the old ones drop without turning brown, and the trees bud again at once. The rest put on a darker green dress for winter, and now the flowers will begin. I have got a picture for you of my 'cart and four', with sedate Choslullah and dear little Mohammed. The former wants to go with me, 'anywhere', as he placidly said, 'to be the missis' servant'. What a sensation his thatchlike hat and handsome orange-tawny face would make at Esher! Such a stalwart henchman would be very creditable. I shall grieve to think I shall never see my Malay friends again; they are the only people here who are really interesting. I think they must be like the Turks in manner, as they have all the eastern gentlemanly 'Gelassenheit' (ease) and politeness, and no eastern 'Geschmeidigkeit' (obsequiousness), and no idea of Baksheesh; withal frugal, industrious, and money-making, to an astonishing degree. The priest is a bit of a proselytiser, and amused me much with an account of how he had converted English girls from their evil courses and made them good MUSSULWOMEN. I never heard a NAIF and sincere account of conversions FROM Christianity before, and I must own it was much milder than the Exeter Hall style.

I have heard a great many expressions of sorrow for the Queen from the Malays, and always with the 'hope the people will take much care of her, now she is alone'. Of course Prince Albert was only the Queen's husband to

Letters from the Cape

them, and all their feeling is about her. It is very difficult to see anything of them, for they want nothing of you, and expect nothing but dislike and contempt. It would take a long time to make many friends, as they are naturally distrustful. I found that eating or drinking anything, if they offer it, made most way, as they know they are accused of poisoning all Christians indiscriminately. Of course, therefore, they are shy of offering things. I drank tea in the Mosque at the end of Ramadan, and was surrounded by delighted faces as I sipped. The little boy who waits in this house here had followed us, and was horrified: he is still waiting to see the poison work.

No one can conceive what has become of all the ships that usually touch here about this time. I was promised my choice of Green's and Smith's, and now only the heavy old CAMPERDOWN is expected with rice from Moulmein. A lady now here, who has been Heaven only knows WHERE NOT, praises Alexandria above all other places, after Suez. Her lungs are bad, and she swears by Suez, which she says is the dreariest and healthiest (for lungs) place in the world. You can't think how soon one learns to 'annihilate space', if not time, in one's thoughts, by daily reading advertisements for every port in India, America, Australia, and conversing with people who have just come from the 'ends of the earth'. Meanwhile, I fear I shall have to fly from next winter again, and certainly will go with J- to Egypt, which seems to me like next door.

I have run on, and not thanked you for your letter and M. Mignet's beautiful ELOGE of Mr. Hallam, which pleased me greatly. I wish Englishmen could learn to speak with the same good taste and MESURE.

Mr. Wodehouse, who has been very civil to me, kindly tried to get me a passage home in a French frigate lying here, but in vain. I am now sorry I let the Jack tars here persuade me not to go in the little barque; but they talked so much of the heat and damp of such tiny cabins in an iron vessel, that I gave her up, though I liked the idea of a good tossing in such a tiny cockboat. I will leave a letter for the May mail, unless I sail within a week of to-morrow, or go by the JASON, which would be home far sooner than the mail. I only hope you and A- won't be uneasy; the worst that can happen is delay, and the long voyage will be all gain to health, which would not be the case in a steamer.

All I hear of R- makes me wild to see her again. The little darkies are the only pleasing children here, and a fat black toddling thing is 'allerliebst'. I know a boy of four, literally jet black, whom I long to steal as he follows his mother up to the mountain to wash. Little Malays are lovely, but TOO well-behaved and quiet. I tried to get a real 'TOTTIE', or 'Hotentotje', but the people were too drunk to remember where they had left their child. C'EST ASSEZ DIRE, that I should have had no scruple in buying it for a bottle of 'smoke' (the spirit made from grape husks). They are clever and affectionate when they have a chance, poor things, – and so strange to look at.

By the bye, a Bonn man, Dr. Bleek, called here with 'Grusse' from our old friends, Professor Mendelssohn and his wife. He is devoting himself to Hottentot and aboriginal literature! – and has actually mastered the Caffre CLICK, which I vainly practised under Kleenboy's tuition. He wanted to teach me to say 'Tkorkha', which means 'you lie', or 'you have missed' (in shooting or throwing a stone, – a curious combination of meanings. He taught me to throw stones or a stick at him, which he always avoided, however close they fell, and cried 'Tkorkha!' The Caffres ask for a present, 'Tkzeelah Tabak', 'a gift for tobacco'.

The Farnese Hercules is a living TRUTH. I saw him in the street two days ago, and he was a Caffre coolie. The proportions of the head and throat were more wonderful in flesh, or muscle rather, than in marble. I know a Caffre girl of thirteen, who is a noble model of strength and beauty; such an arm – larger than any white woman's – with such a dimple in her elbow, and a wrist and hand which no glove is small enough to fit – and a noble countenance too. She is 'apprenticed', a name for temporary slavery, and is highly spoken of as a servant, as the Caffres always are. They are a majestic race, but with just the stupid conceit of a certain sort of Englishmen; the women and girls seem charming.

Easter Sunday. – The weather continues beautifully clear and bright, like the finest European spring. It seems so strange for the floral season to be the winter. But as the wind blows the air is quite cold to-day; nevertheless, I

Letters from the Cape

feel much better the last two days. The brewing of the rain made the air very oppressive and heavy for three weeks, but now it is as light as possible.

I must say good-bye, as the mail closes to-morrow morning. Easter in autumn is preposterous, only the autumn looks like spring. The consumptive young girl whom I packed off to the Cape, and her sister, are about to be married – of course. Annie has had a touch of Algoa Bay fever, a mild kind of ague, but no sign of chest disease, or even delicacy. My 'hurrying her off', which some people thought so cruel, has saved her. Whoever comes SOON ENOUGH recovers, but for people far gone it is too bracing.

LETTER XIV

Capetown, Saturday, May 3d.

Dearest mother,

After five weeks of waiting and worry, I have, at last, sent my goods on board the ship CAMPERDOWN, now discharging her cargo, and about to take a small party of passengers from the Cape. I offered to take a cabin in a Swedish ship, bound for Falmouth; but the captain could not decide whether he would take a passenger; and while he hesitated the old CAMPERDOWN came in. I have the best cabin after the stern cabins, which are occupied by the captain and his wife and the Attorney-General of Capetown, who is much liked. The other passengers are quiet people, and few of them, and the captain has a high character; so I may hope for a comfortable, though slow passage. I will let you know the day I sail, and leave this letter to go by post. I may be looked for three weeks or so after this letter. I am crazy to get home now; after the period was over for which I had made up my mind, home-sickness began.

Mrs. R- has offered me a darling tiny monkey, which loves me; but I fear A- would send me away again if I returned with her in my pocket. Nassirah, old Abdool's pretty granddaughter, brought me a pair of Malay shoes or clogs as a parting gift, to-day. Mr. M-, the resident at Singapore, tells me that his secretary's wife, a Malay lady, has made an excellent translation of the ARABIAN NIGHTS, from Arabic into Malay. Her husband is an Indian Mussulman, who, Mr. M- said, was one of the ablest men he ever knew. Curious!

I sat, yesterday, for an hour, in the stall of a poor German basket-maker who had been long in Caffre-land. His wife, a Berliner, was very intelligent, and her account of her life here most entertaining, as showing the different ANSICHT natural to Germans. 'I had never', she said, 'been out of the city of Berlin, and KNEW NOTHING.' (Compare with London cockney, or genuine Parisian.) Thence her fear, on landing at Algoa Bay and seeing swarms of naked black men, that she had come to a country where no clothes were to be had; and what should she do when hers were worn out? They had a grant of land at Fort Peddie, and she dug while her husband made baskets of cane, and carried them hundreds of miles for sale; sleeping and eating in Caffre huts. 'Yes, they are good, honest people, and very well-bred (ANSTANDIG), though they go as naked as God made them. The girls are pretty and very delicate (FEIN), and they think no harm of it, the dear innocents.' If their cattle strayed, it was always brought back; and they received every sort of kindness. 'Yes, madam, it is shocking how people here treat the blacks. They call quite an old man 'Boy', and speak so scornfully, and yet the blacks have very nice manners, I assure you.' When I looked at the poor little wizened, pale, sickly Berliner, and fancied him a guest in a Caffre hut, it seemed an odd picture. But he spoke as coolly of his long, lonely journeys as possible, and seemed to think black friends quite as good as white ones. The use of the words ANSTANDIG and FEIN by a woman who spoke very good German were characteristic. She could recognise an 'ANSTANDIGKEIT' NOT of Berlin. I need not say that the Germans are generally liked by the coloured people. Choslullah was astonished and Pleased at my talking German; he evidently had a preference for Germans, and put up, wherever he could, at German inns and 'publics'.

Letters from the Cape

I went on to bid Mrs. Wodehouse good-bye. We talked of our dear old Cornish friends. The Governor and Mrs. Wodehouse have been very kind to me. I dined there twice; last time, with all the dear good Walkers. I missed seeing the opening of the colonial parliament by a mistake about a ticket, which I am sorry for.

If I could have dreamed of waiting here so long, I would have run up to Algoa Bay or East London by sea, and had a glimpse of Caffreland. Capetown makes me very languid – there is something depressing in the air – but my cough is much better. I can't walk here without feeling knocked-up; and cab-hire is so dear; and somehow, nothing is worth while, when one is waiting from day to day. So I have spent more money than when I was most amused, in being bored.

Mr. J– drove me to the Capetown races, at Green Point, on Friday. As races, they were NICHTS, but a queer-looking little Cape farmer's horse, ridden by a Hottentot, beat the English crack racer, ridden by a first-rate English jockey, in an unaccountable way, twice over. The Malays are passionately fond of horse-racing, and the crowd was fully half Malay: there were dozens of carts crowded with the bright-eyed women, in petticoats of every most brilliant colour, white muslin jackets, and gold daggers in their great coils of shining black hair. All most 'anständig', as they always are. Their pleasure is driving about EN FAMILLE; the men have no separate amusements. Every spare corner in the cart is filled by the little soft round faces of the intelligent-looking quiet children, who seem amused and happy, and never make a noise or have the fidgets. I cannot make out why they are so well behaved. It favours A–s theory of the expediency of utter spoiling, for one never hears any educational process going on. Tiny Mohammed never spoke but when he was spoken to, and was always happy and alert. I observed that his uncle spoke to him like a grown man, and never ordered him about, or rebuked him in the least. I like to go up the hill and meet the black women coming home in troops from the washing place, most of them with a fat black baby hanging to their backs asleep, and a few rather older trotting alongside, and if small, holding on by the mother's gown. She, poor soul, carries a bundle on her head, which few men could lift. If I admire the babies, the poor women are enchanted; – DU RESTE, if you look at blacks of any age or sex, they MUST grin and nod, as a good-natured dog must wag his tail; they can't help it. The blacks here (except a very few Caffres) are from the Mozambique – a short, thick-set, ugly race, with wool in huge masses; but here and there one sees a very pretty face among the women. The men are beyond belief hideous. There are all possible crosses – Dutch, Mozambique, Hottentot and English, 'alles durcheinander'; then here and there you see that a Chinese or a Bengalee A PASSE PAR LE. The Malays are also a mixed race, like the Turks – i.e. they marry women of all sorts and colours, provided they will embrace Islam. A very nice old fellow who waits here occasionally is married to an Englishwoman, CI-DEVANT lady's-maid to a Governor's wife. I fancy, too, they brought some Chinese blood with them from Java. I think the population of Capetown must be the most motley crew in the world.

Thursday, May 8th. – I sail on Saturday, and go on board to-morrow, so as not to be hurried off in the early fog. How glad I am to be 'homeward bound' at last, I cannot say. I am very well, and have every prospect of a pleasant voyage. We are sure to be well found, as the Attorney-General is on board, and is a very great man, 'inspiring terror and respect' here.

S– says we certainly SHALL put in at St. Helena, so make up your minds not to see me till I don't know when. She has been on board fitting up the cabin to-day. I have SUCH a rug for J–! a mosaic of skins as fine as marqueterie, done by Damara women, and really beautiful; and a sheep-skin blanket for you, the essence of warmth and softness. I shall sleep in mine, and dream of African hill– sides wrapt in a 'Veld combas'. The poor little water-tortoises have been killed by drought, and I can't get any, but I have the two of my own catching for M–.

Good-bye, dearest mother.

You would have been moved by poor old Abdool Jemaalee's solemn benediction when I took leave to-day. He accompanied it with a gross of oranges and lemons.

Letters from the Cape

LETTER XV

Capetown, Thursday, May 8th.

At last, after no end of 'casus' and 'discrimina rerum', I shall sail on Saturday the 10th, per ship CAMPERDOWN, for East India Docks.

These weary six weeks have cost no end of money and temper. I have been eating my heart out at the delay, but it was utterly impossible to go by any of the Indian ships. They say there have never been so few ships sailing from the Cape as this year, yet crowds were expected on account of the Exhibition. The Attorney-General goes by our ship, so we are sure of good usage; and I hear he is very agreeable. I have the best cabin next to the stern cabin, in both senses of NEXT. S- has come back from the ship, where she has spent the day with the carpenter; and I am to go on board to-morrow. Will you ask R- to cause inquiries to be made among the Mollahs of Cairo for a Hadji, by name Abdool Rachman, the son of Abdool Jemaalee, of Capetown, and, if possible, to get the inclosed letter sent him? The poor people are in sad anxiety for their son, of whom they have not heard for four months, and that from an old letter. Henry will thus have a part of all the blessings which were solemnly invoked on me by poor old Abdool, who is getting very infirm, but toddled up and cracked his old fingers over my head, and invoked the protection of Allah with all form; besides that Betsy sent me twelve dozen oranges and lemons. Abdool Rachman is about twenty-six, a Malay of Capetown, speaks Dutch and English, and is supposed to be studying theology at Cairo. The letter is written by the prettiest Malay girl in Capetown.

I won't enter upon my longings to be home again, and to see you all. I must now see to my last commissions and things, and send this to go by next mail.

God bless you all, and kiss my darlings, all three.

LETTER XVI

Friday, May 16th.

On board the good ship CAMPERDOWN, 500 miles North-west of Table-Bay.

I embarked this day week, and found a good airy cabin, and all very comfortable. Next day I got the carpenter's services, by being on board before all the rest, and relashed and clefted everything, which the 'Timmerman', of course, had left so as to get adrift the first breeze. At two o'clock the Attorney-General, Mr. Porter, came on board, escorted by bands of music and all the volunteers of Capetown, QUORUM PARS MAXIMA FUIT; i.e. Colonel. It was quite what the Yankees call an 'ovation'. The ship was all decked with flags, and altogether there was LE DIABLE E QUATRE. The consequence was, that three signals went adrift in the scuffle; and when a Frenchman signalled us, we had to pass for BRUTAUX ANGLAIS, because we could not reply. I found means to supply the deficiency by the lining of that very ancient anonymous cloak, which did the red, while a bandanna handkerchief of the Captain's furnished the yellow, to the sailmaker's immense amusement. On him I bestowed the blue outside of the cloak for a pair of dungaree trowsers, and in signalling now it is, 'up go 2.41, and my lady's cloak, which is 7.'

We have had lovely weather, and on Sunday such a glorious farewell sight of Table Mountain and my dear old Hottentot Hills, and of Kaap Goed Hoop itself. There was little enough wind till yesterday, when a fair southerly breeze sprang up, and we are rolling along merrily; and the fat old CAMPERDOWN DOES roll like an honest old 'wholesome' tub as she is. It is quite a BONNE FORTUNE for me to have been forced to wait for her, for we have had a wonderful spell of fine weather, and the ship is the NE PLUS ULTRA of comfort. We are only twelve first-class upper-deck passengers. The captain is a delightful fellow, with a very charming young wife. There is

Letters from the Cape

only one child (a great comfort), a capital cook, and universal civility and quietness. It is like a private house compared to a railway hotel. Six of the passengers are invalids, more or less. Mr. Porter, over-worked, going home for health to Ireland; two men, both with delicate chests, and one poor young fellow from Capetown in a consumption, who, I fear, will not outlive the voyage. The doctor is very civil, and very kind to the sick; but I stick to the cook, and am quite greedy over the good fare, after the atrocious food of the Cape. Said cook is a Portuguese, a distinguished artist, and a great bird-fancier. One can wander all over the ship here, instead of being a prisoner on the poop; and I even have paid my footing on the fore-castle. S- clammers up like a lively youngster. You may fancy what the weather is, that I have only closed my cabin-window once during half of a very damp night; but no one else is so airy. The little goat was as rejoiced to be afloat again as her mistress, and is a regular pet on board, with the run of the quarter-deck. She still gives milk – a perfect Amalthea. The butcher, who has the care of her, cocks her up with dainties, and she begs biscuit of the cook. I pay nothing for her fare. M-'s tortoises are in my cabin, and seem very happy. Poor Mr. Porter is very sick, and so are the two or three coloured passengers, who won't 'make an effort' at all. Mrs. H- (the captain's wife), a young Cape lady, and I are the only 'female ladies' of the party. The other day we saw a shoal of porpoises, amounting to many hundreds, if not some thousands, who came frisking round the ship. When we first saw them they looked like a line of breakers; they made such a splash, and they jumped right out of the water three feet in height, and ten or twelve in distance, glittering green and bronze in the sun. Such a pretty, merry set of fellows!

We shall touch at St. Helena, where I shall leave this letter to go by the mail steamer, that you may know a few weeks before I arrive how comfortably my voyage has begun.

We see no Cape pigeons; they only visit outward ships – is not that strange? – but, EN REVANCHE, many more albatrosses than in coming; and we also enjoy the advantage of seeing all the homeward-bound ships, as they all PASS us – a humiliating fact. The captain laughed heartily because I said, 'Oh, all right; I shall have the more sea for my money', – when the prospect of a slow voyage was discussed. It is very provoking to be so much longer separated from you all than I had hoped, but I really believe that the bad air and discomfort of the other ships would have done me serious injury; while here I have every chance of benefiting to the utmost, and having mild weather the whole way, besides the utmost amount of comfort possible on board ship. There are some cockroaches, indeed, but that is the only drawback. The CAMPERDOWN is fourteen years old, and was the crack ship to India in her day. Now she takes cargo and poop-passengers only, and, of course, only gets invalids and people who care more for comfort than speed.

Monday Evening, May 26th. – Here we are, working away still to reach St. Helena. We got the tail of a terrific gale and a tremendous sea all night in our teeth, which broke up the south-east trades for a week. Now it is all smooth and fair, with a light breeze again right aft; the old trade again. Yesterday a large shark paid us a visit, with his suite of three pretty little pilot-fish, striped like zebras, who swam just over his back. He tried on a sailor's cap which fell overboard, tossed it away contemptuously, snuffed at the fat pork with which a hook was baited, and would none of it, and finally ate the fresh sheep-skin which the butcher had in tow to clean it, previous to putting it away as a perquisite. It is a beautiful fish in shape and very graceful in motion.

To-day a barque from Algoa Bay came close to us, and talked with the speaking trumpet. She was a pretty, clipper-built, sharp-looking craft, but had made a slower run even than ourselves. I dare say we shall have her company for a long time, as she is bound for St. Helena and London. My poor goat died suddenly the other day, to the general grief of the ship; also one of the tortoises. The poor consumptive lad is wonderfully better. But all the passengers were very sick during the rough weather, except S- and I, who are quite old salts. Last week we saw a young whale, a baby, about thirty feet long, and had a good view of him as he played round the ship. We shall probably be at St. Helena on Wednesday, but I cannot write from thence, as, if there is time, I shall get a run on shore while the ship takes in water. But this letter will tell you of my well-being so far, and in about six weeks after the date of it I hope to be with you. I hope you won't expect too much in the way of improvement in my health. I look forward, oh, so eagerly, to be with you again, and with my brats, big and little. God bless you all.

Letters from the Cape

Yours ever,

L. D. G.

Wednesday, 28th. – Early morning, off St. Helena, James Town.

Such a lovely UNREAL view of the bold rocks and baby-house forts on them! Ship close in. Washer-woman come on board, and all hurry.

AU REVOIR.