



The Landing of Van Riebeck

ROMANCE OF EMPIRE

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SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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WITH TWELVE REPRODUCTIONS IN COLOUR OF ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY  
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## CHAPTER XI

### THE HOUSE OF VAN DER STEL

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

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

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

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

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

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

There he saw bales of pepper and spices and talked

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But we have independent testimony of his kindness.



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But more serious quarrels than these were brewing

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

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

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

In this case the Company wanted to give up the



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

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

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



Simon Van der Stel and the Rhinoceros

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

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

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