

she will be well taken care of. Anything less than what she leaves would be quite impossible for her."

"I haven't a doubt of it, ma'am," was the reply, the speaker bending to tie her parcel.

"You are ready now? Assure Lady Avena I shall not even miss what I send her. And—oh! mind—mind my Chelsea boy!" as an abrupt turn jeopardised a piece of eighteenth-century ware—"I couldn't replace it for fifty guineas! It's safe now. You will go down into the hall, please. Phillips will show you out. Good morning."

Sydney was just coming from her own room as this early visitor quitted the boudoir. Not particularly wanting to meet the stranger, she drew back, and, herself unseen, was witness of a most inexplicable pantomime. For the stereotyped respectful aspect of the woman changed as she closed the door behind her. With a fierce scowl of bitterest anger she clenched her hand, and, her teeth hard set, seemed furiously to menace the room she had just left. Catching her breath she seemed barely able to restrain vituperation or sobs. One foot raised, as if she could have stamped

for very passion, was only brought silently down by an effort that set her trembling from head to foot. But a sound in the hall below seemed to recall her senses. With one great quivering breath she steadied herself, swept the back of her gloved hand quickly over her eyes, and, rapidly descending left the house.

"I wonder, mamma," Leonora was saying as her step-sister entered, "how that servant knew Sydney's name. Did you notice it?"

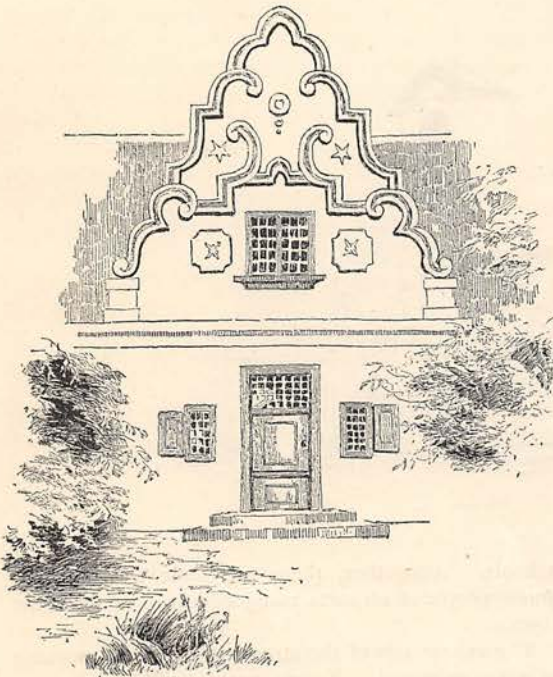
"Picked it up from fellow-servants, of course," was the quick rejoinder. "Now rest quietly, my dear, while I make haste to Hemyingford—Leonora had best not be disturbed, Sydney, till I come back."

So Sydney was left with only her own counsel to consult over that curious interlude on the landing, and, since she could not possibly either fathom or amend the woman's singular excitement, she did her best to put it from her mind. It might have been illness, she thought. It *could* have nothing to do with any of them at the Dale.

But it had.

END OF CHAPTER THE NINTH.

THE OXFORD OF SOUTH AFRICA.



FRONT OF A HOUSE IN 'PLEIN STRAAT.'

IN the centre of the wine-growing district of the Paarl, which lies at the foot of the Drakenstein Mountains, there is a quaint collection of old-world homesteads almost buried in luxuriant oak-trees. This is Stellenbosch. My first impressions of the place were not altogether pleasant. A gentle but

determined fall of rain attended me on my short drive from the station, and the spire of the Dutch church and the big unfinished college looked weird-like and huge in the mist. So I was not sorry to secure the shelter of the Masonic Hotel, where I had arranged to put up for my short visit.

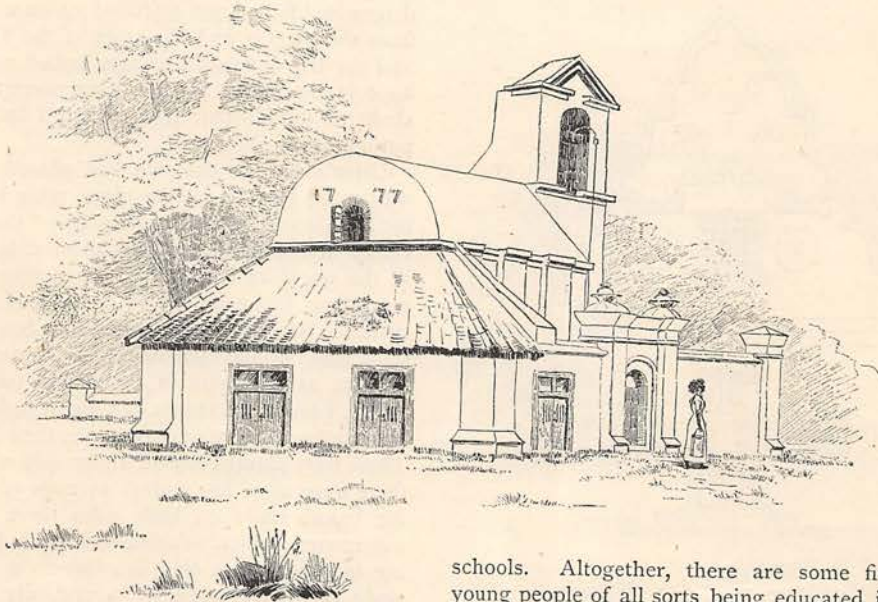
Later on, when the rain had passed away, and I was going forth to see the place, mine host informed me with much pride that this was "the educational centre of South Africa." I wondered he did not say of the world at once, for his patriotism appeared to my bilious temperament to be somewhat disproportionate. Afterwards I admitted that Stellenbosch had some claim on the attachment of its citizens.

Here, as elsewhere in the inland towns of South Africa, I found the streets laid out at right angles, with a formality which at once bespeaks their Dutch origin. These were planted too on either side with trees, and there were not a few perfect avenues of wide-stretching oaks; while on both sides there ran a small watercourse, which bubbled and hurried along, varying in size from a tiny brooklet to a stream which could only be crossed by a regularly built bridge. In the centre of the town there is a large square plat of grass, where the youth of a South African town play cricket and football, and where sometimes a lawn-tennis court is made. All this belongs, more or less, to all Dutch inland towns, but in Stellenbosch the trees grow with a surpassing luxuriance of foliage, and the houses are more than usually quaint and interesting.

Now, an Africander house is a thing *sui generis*. Let me describe it. It has a thatched roof, high-pitched, which is coal-black with age and frequent

drenchings by tropical showers, and its walls are bright with the whitest of whitewash. The front is very regular, the windows all at equal spaces from each other and from the ground; in fact, the whole plan of the house and its decoration is as formal and exact as the plan of the town. The windows have heavy frames and innumerable small panes of glass. The front door has a moulded top and door-posts. The whole front is not unfrequently decorated with mouldings and pilasters, and the same mouldings and capitals are reproduced in the decoration of the front door. Along the outside of the front there runs a "stoep"—a raised platform of brick or stone, which has a stone seat at either end, and is decorated with the same formal geometrical designs. This is where the "Bass" * takes his afternoon pipe, and where he and his family sit out in the bright moonlight. Here, too, he welcomes his guests. Indeed, there is an irresistible suggestion of hospitality about a South African stoep; it is as though half the household things as well as the people had come out to welcome you.

There is a house in Plein Straat, the front of which I sketched, which is a good example of the fantastic appearance of the Africander style of ornamentation. This house, by the way, was approached by a real bridge, for the wayside brook had assumed in this street quite the proportions of a good-sized stream.



THE MARKET-HOUSE, STELLENBOSCH.

I found a curious door too in Andranga Straat, surmounted by a large oblong light; it was divided into two parts, both opening with little double doors like a cupboard. This kind of door is by no means uncommon, and is generally of very thick wood, which makes it look as though it were the entrance to a Liliputian castle.

* Anglicè, "Master"; American, "Boss."

In the big green square stands the market-house, originally built as a guard-house in the old times. It bears the date of 1777, and is a good instance of an Africander building. There are pilasters and mouldings scattered all over it in a delightfully prodigal way. Even the humblest farm buildings are built in this classic style, with arched gateways surmounted with mouldings. Very pleasant places are some of these wine farms, with their cool courtyards and old-fashioned gardens.

Talking about the houses, I must not forget the cottages. Stellenbosch is one of the few places where there is anything like the cottage life of old England. Here there are rows of tiny Africander cottages, and sable mothers calling to their little ones not to fall into the brook, or what not. One or two of these cottages I put in my sketch-book, borrowing a chair from their "coloured" occupants (the peasantry of South Africa are Kafirs, or half-castes, never called "black," but "coloured"), who were surprised to think that I should find anything to sketch in their humble little dwellings.

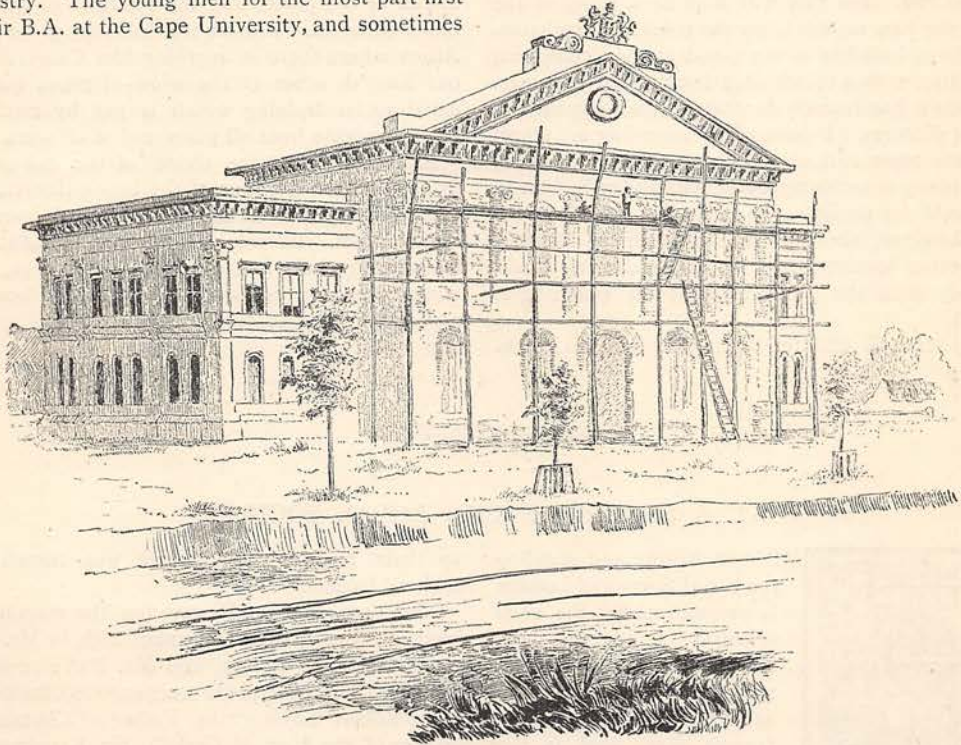
But, in spite of its picturesqueness, the great interest of the place lies in the educational work which is going on. It has a college, a theological seminary, a gymnasium or public school, and a preparatory school. Besides these, there are numerous girls'

schools. Altogether, there are some five hundred young people of all sorts being educated in this little town.

The appearance of the streets in the early morning is very animated. Young people with books are hurrying hither and thither. Now and then the figure of a professor may be discerned on the way to his lecture-room and classes; while young men in twos and threes may be seen walking in grave conversation under the oak avenues, as young men are supposed to do in Magdalen Walk or Christ Church Meadow. The Africander students are far more staid than our own; there is no tandem driving, no boating

on the river ; some cricket and football, and occasionally, I was told, a surreptitious game of billiards was played. The theological seminary is now in the old Drosdty (or governor's house) buildings, and has some magnificent avenues around it. It is here that all the clergy of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is the National Church of South Africa, are prepared for the ministry. The young men for the most part first take their B.A. at the Cape University, and sometimes

same management, which consists of a council of nine members, partly appointed and partly elected by a mixed constituency of guarantors and past students ; while the regulation of discipline and instruction is in the hands of a senate, formed of the college professors and one member of the council. There is a licensed



THE COLLEGE.

they continue to attend the college lectures as well. But these are only the more enthusiastic seekers after knowledge. The teaching of the seminary, of course, is limited to practical and theoretical theology.

The college is one of the five colleges working for the examinations of the Cape University, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1873, and had a Royal Charter granted to it in 1877. Mr. Porter, the Attorney-General, was the first Chancellor. Like the London University, on which it is modelled, it is an examining, but not a teaching body. It examines and confers degrees in Arts, Science, and Law, but the work of teaching is done by the various colleges and by private docents. No Africander is supposed to have completed his education until he has become a matriculated student of the University, while a considerable percentage proceed to take their B.A. in literature or science, and not a few then proceed to the Home Universities. The teaching staff of the college consists of "professors," who are chiefly Scotch and London University men, with some assistance from the Dutch and German Universities. The college and public schools are both under the

boarding-house, where some of the students reside, while the rest live in lodgings or with their friends. The young men have numerous societies, literary, debating, &c., and a capital cadet corps, which owes its existence, I believe, like those of the other colleges, to Sir Bartle Frere. Speaking broadly, the discipline of the place is about half-way between an English public school and an University. That is to say, there is more freedom than is allowed in the first, and more supervision than is exercised at Oxford or Cambridge, while the average age of the students is very little lower.

As regards the teaching of the professors, I think they have hit on the best course in aiming not so much at great exactness of classical or mathematical scholarship as in giving a good broad education in general culture. And in this I see that I am supported by Mr. Brady's report. He says:—"I hope I may be allowed to express the satisfaction I felt at seeing that much general information, apart from mere preparation for examinations, seemed to be given.

. . . So many boys and young men come up to school and college from homes where it is impossible

for them to have obtained much, if any, general knowledge or culture, that it is of the utmost importance that this want should be remedied, so that they may return, if possible, stocked with a few ideas, as well as provided with a certificate of a certain proficiency in literature and science."*

At present the various lecture-rooms are scattered over the town. But this will soon be a thing of the past, as the new college is on the point of completion. It is a large building in the classical style, consisting of a centre, with a colonnaded front and two wings. The whole is handsomely decorated with heavy mouldings and pilasters. I cannot help recording my regret that some more natural building was not designed; with so many beautiful types of Africander buildings, there could be no difficulty in finding models. No doubt, however, the new building, which contains, among other lecture-rooms, a large laboratory, will admirably fulfil the practical ends for which it is intended.

Stellenbosch is affiliated to the Edinburgh Univer-

sity, which gives Stellenbosch students (of whom there are large numbers studying medicine) certain privileges. Not only has it a larger number of students than any of the other colleges, but owing to the fact that it is in a small town, the college and the theological seminary together give quite a scholastic tone to the whole society. The professors are the leading spirits of the place, and the interests of the college are paramount. Indeed, it is the only place in South Africa where there is anything like University life in our English sense of the word—I mean the many-sided social training which is got by mixing with fellow-students from all parts and of all sorts.

As I sat under the shade of the oak-trees and listened to the murmur of the brook that ran by my side, I thought here was a fit seat of learning for South Africa. Its oak avenues and pleasant country lanes, with their flower-covered hedgerows, and its quaint buildings seemed to give it that beauty and repose which is so justly associated with a genuine seat of learning.

W. B. W.

AT A SOIRÉE OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.



FROM its history and standing the Royal Society of London is unquestionably the chief scientific body in these islands. It has all the dignity of a State institution as well as the lustre of a famous past; and, in the minds of many, to have the privilege of writing "F.R.S."

after one's name is to have gained the blue ribbon of science. Like other great associations, it began in a very humble way.

During the year 1645—just two hundred and forty-one years ago—a small band of friends were wont to meet in Dr. Goddard's lodgings, Wood Street, London, to talk over the various observations of natural things which had been made, in a curious and philosophical spirit. The notion of holding these meetings is said to have been suggested by one Theodore Haak; and Dr. Goddard's lodgings were selected because he had an assistant working there who was skilled in grinding glasses. Subsequently the meeting-place was removed to Oxford, and after that to Gresham College, London, where after the Wednesday lecture of Mr. Christopher Wren, the celebrated architect, the colleagues met in the classroom to carry on their discussions, from which all political and theological topics were excluded. This was in the year 1659, the year of the troubles with King Charles II., and the philosophers, despite their harmless attitude in politics, were obliged to give

up their meeting-place, which was turned into a soldiers' barrack.

Next year, after the Restoration, the meetings were, however, resumed on November 28th, in Mr. Rooke's room, Gresham College, and Mr. Ball's room in the Temple. Forty members were enrolled, including the Hon. Robert Boyle ("the Father of Chemistry, and brother of the Earl of Cork"), Sir Kenelme Digby, Mr. Evelyn, of the "Diary," Mr. Christopher Wren, Dr. Cowley, and Dr. Wallis.

At the meeting on December 5th, Sir Robert Moray announced the welcome news that his Majesty King Charles II. had been pleased to signify his approbation of the young society, and their objects. The king afterwards took further interest in their proceedings, and it is his Majesty's picture which holds the place of honour in their meeting-hall at Burlington House to-day.

It is curious to read some of the minutes of the young society. Thus Mr. Pope was deputed to "procure the experiment of breaking pebbles with the hand;" and later on Mr. Wilde agreed to "show the stone kindled by wetting."

Again: "The Duke of Buckingham promised to bring to the society a piece of a unicorn's horn."

This remarkable substance was afterwards made the subject of an interesting experiment, for we read that (on July 24th) "A circle was made with powder of unicorn's horn, and a spider set in the middle of it; but it immediately ran out."

"Sir John Findis' piece of an incombustible hat-band was produced." (Query, asbestos?)

"Mr. Croune was desired to inquire into the manufacture of hats."

* Supplement to Annual Report of the Superintendent-General of Education, 1884, p. 19.