

Illustrated Interviews.

No. XXXV.—SIR DONALD CURRIE, K.C.M.G., M.P.



AMONGST the men who have played no small part in the development of our national history, Sir Donald Currie certainly claims a distinguished place.

I first met Sir Donald Currie on board his last built steamer, the *Tantallon Castle*, on the occasion of her trial trip to the Cape, on which vessel, with a party of friends, we steamed as far as Southampton Water. In appearance the great steamship owner is decidedly benevolent; he possesses a face which inspires immediate confidence; his hair is perfectly white, and his eyes are continually looking you through and through. He is a perfect Scotchman, careful, cool, and calm in everything he says or does; and though he apparently thinks and works very rapidly, he never suggests hurry. One has but little difficulty in "discovering" the man. Earnestness, perfect and complete earnestness, is the great characteristic which has governed and directed his life from the very first moment when, as a lad of fourteen, he perched himself on an office stool and made his start in business with the smallest and most trifling work allotted to him.

"I did everything I was bid," Sir Donald said to me—an assurance that meant much.

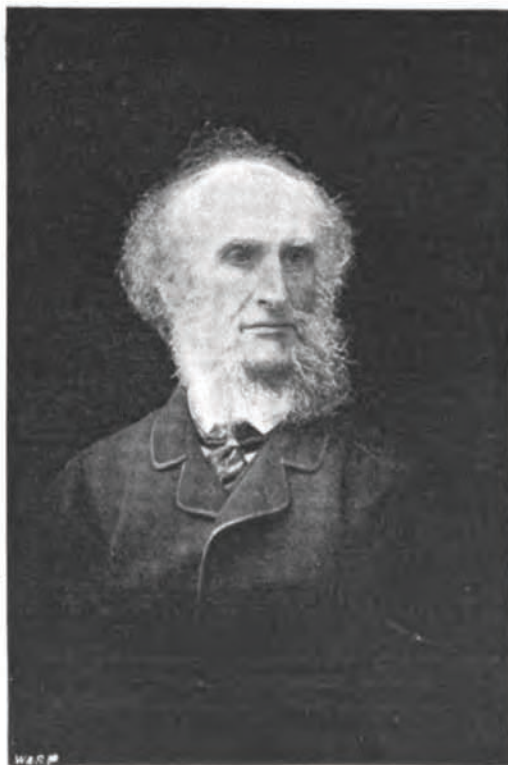
Sir Donald is a man to be "watched." He took the chair

at an impromptu concert on board the *Tantallon Castle*, and enthusiasm marked every word he uttered, although it was only to announce a banjo solo by a young lady travelling to the Cape for her health, or a duet by a wealthy American couple who were revelling in the luxury of a trip round the world.

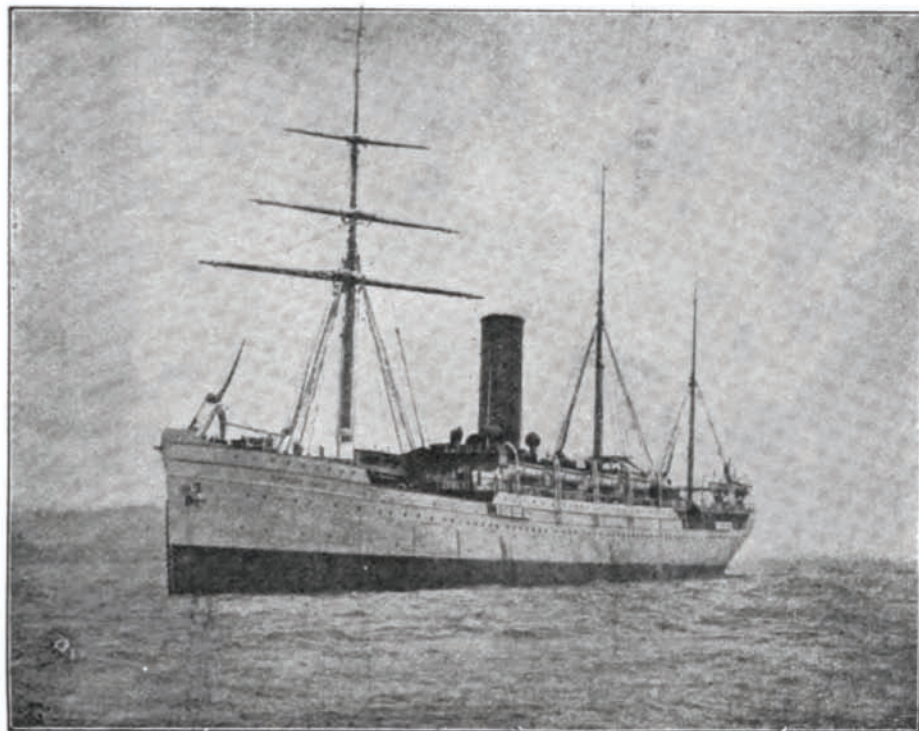
We chatted together in the smoking-room, and he spoke of the severer things that govern life: the South African questions in which he has been called upon to take a part; the past, present, and future of that vast and rich territory, and still with the same earnest enthusiasm without which it seemed to me he could never open his mouth to speak. And here lies the

secret of his success in the great steam-shiping world. He has laid down a law for himself: that whatever he touched, or said, or thought, should be carried out thoroughly.

Our smoking-room chat was particularly happy. It is very well known that amongst what might be termed Sir Donald's hobbies is that of taking in hand, and very successfully too, the restoration to health of sick celebrities. He is a firm believer in the restorative qualities of a sea voyage. Hence it comes about that many eminent men have for a time placed themselves under his care, and partaken of his hospitality on board his magnificent floating palaces. Amongst those I specially asked and we talked about,



Your truly
Donald Currie



From a]

R.M.S. "TANTALLON CASTLE."

[Photograph.

Shakespeare that I ever heard. Although Tennyson was not a very early riser, yet immediately after breakfast he always used to return to his cabin to study and write, for he assured me that he considered this was the best part of the day for work. I should like to tell you that when Tennyson talked it was just like one of his own poems. When he was viewing scenery—a moonlight night, or a sunset, or a little bit

as our temporary home lay quietly anchored in Southampton Water, were Gladstone and Tennyson.

"You know," said Sir Donald, "that both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Tennyson have been out with me in the *Pembroke Castle* and the *Grantully Castle*. Gladstone generally spent his day in reading or conversing with Tennyson, and every moment of his time was occupied, with never an instant wasted. On the *Grantully Castle*, after the illness which laid him aside from Parliamentary work, his favourite book was 'David Copperfield'; whilst frequently he would take up some great Greek work and read passages to me, making most admirable comments on them as he went along. It was most charming to see Gladstone and Tennyson together. When Tennyson would sit and read one of his poems to the great statesman, discussing here and there the various lines, and Gladstone questioning the poet as to how he came to use this and that form of phraseology, nothing could be more instructive.

"Sometimes they would talk about Homer and the old Greek poets, and I remember when we went for our Norway cruise in the *Pembroke Castle*, these two great men had the most interesting discussion on

of impressive landscape—he would sit and look at it silently for a moment, as though drinking it in and filling his soul, only the next moment to tell it all to those whose privilege it was to sit near him. Of course, I need not tell you that Tennyson was a great smoker. When he came out with me he brought quite a stock of pipes, and he very seldom gave any away. I think I am one of the very few who possess one of his famous clays, which he gave me on the day of the Royal visit. I keep it at Garth Castle, near Aberfeldy, where for



THE SMOKING-ROOM OF THE "TANTALLON CASTLE."
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Company.



From a Photo. by the

THE DINING-ROOM—"TANTALLON CASTLE."

[London Stereoscopic Co.]

more than interesting by the fact that it was on the way back, at Exeter, that Gladstone declared for the assimilation of the Burgh and County Franchise. It was in 1880 that the great statesman was my companion for a fortnight's cruise round Scotland in the *Gran-tully Castle*, and 1883 brought about the trip of Tennyson and Gladstone in the *Pembroke Castle* round Scotland to Kirkwall, Norway, and Copenhagen. On the occasion of the visit of the *Pembroke Castle* to Copenhagen—the

many years past I have spent the main portion of the summer and autumn months.

"Let me tell you how I came to get possession of it. We were at Copenhagen. After luncheon the ladies of the Royal party were very anxious to hear the great Poet Laureate read some of his poetry. He had retired to his room and was smoking, but I went after him and persuaded him to give up his pipe for a time; he did so, and instead of throwing his pipe out of the cabin window, as he often did, he gave it to me as a keepsake. When I told Gladstone this he said, 'Keep it, it will be precious some day.'

"It was on the well-known trip to Dartmouth and Plymouth, in 1877, that I took Mr. Gladstone for the first time, which occasion was made

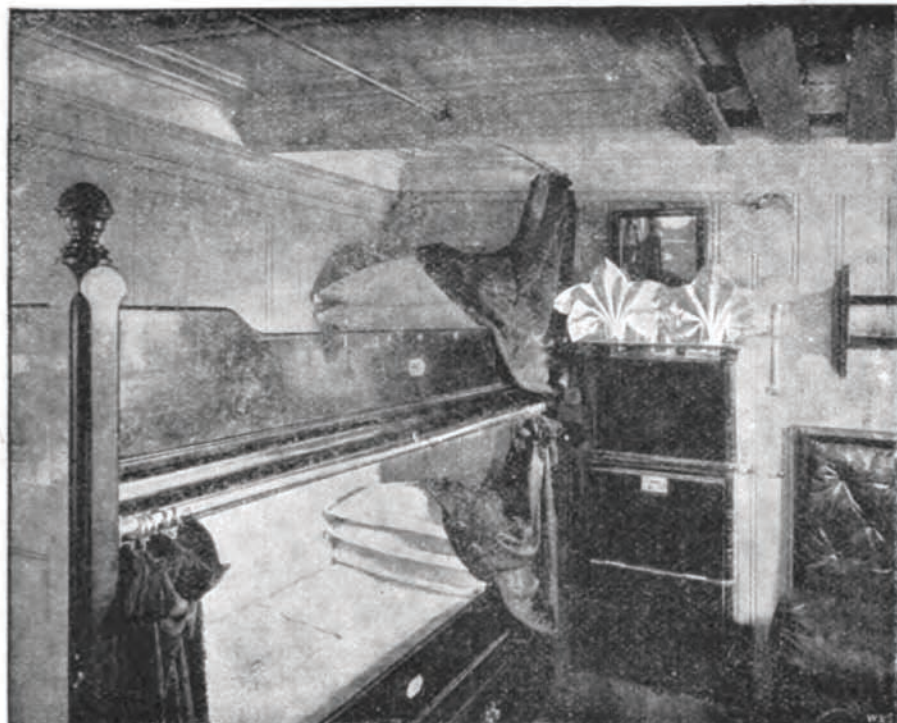
largest steamer ever in that port—a dinner at the palace was succeeded by the famous banquet on board the *Pembroke Castle*, the guests being the King and Queen of Denmark and their family, the Emperor and Empress of Russia and their family, the



From a Photo. by the

THE LADIES' ROOM—"TANTALLON CASTLE."

[London Stereoscopic Co.]



MR. GLADSTONE'S CABIN—"GRANTULLY CASTLE."
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Company.

King and Queen of Greece and their family, the Princess of Wales and Royal Family of England, and the Royal Family of Hanover—in all twenty-nine Royal persons, with diplomatists, Ambassadors, and admirals, numbering sixteen—forty-five in all.

"The speeches of the Royal guests and of Mr Gladstone on that interesting occasion, with the records of the proceedings of that peaceful visit to Copenhagen, where a merchant ship of England was saluted by the manning of the yards of the warships of the different nationalities off the harbour, and the bands playing 'God Save the Queen,' were in singular contrast with the less friendly visit which Nelson paid to Denmark in the time of the great war. As Lord Tennyson said to Mr. Gladstone: 'This is the first time that a merchant ship of Great Britain has been so saluted since the time of Drake.'"

It was some time after the successful launching of the beautiful *Tantallon Castle*, and we had heard that she had arrived safely after a very delightful passage to Madeira, that an opportunity was afforded me of

his works for fully a couple of hours before I could get him to sit down and tell me something about himself. He took very little notice of the clever canvas of Blarney Castle, which hangs in the hall, but he just paused to inform me merrily that he has refrained from calling one of his vessels, which form the Castle Line of steamers,



Original from
"TANTALLON CASTLE" LEAVING DOCK

(Photograph.)

From a

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



From a Photo. by]

THE DINING-ROOM—HYDE PARK PLACE.

[Elliott & Fry.

Blarney Castle, because he considers that would be a little too much!

In the dining-room will be found Wilkie's "Sir Walter Scott," painted whilst on a visit to Abbotsford, and an original sketch by the same artist of "A Village Wedding." Millais, Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Cox, J. F. Lewis, are all represented; whilst the two most recent additions to the room in the way of pictures are Sir Donald himself and Lady Currie, painted by Oules. There are several Turners here, the best trio probably being "The Lake of Geneva," a glorious bit of colouring; "The South Foreland," which hangs over the mantelpiece; and that marvellous work depicting Nelson's body brought over from Trafalgar in the old *Victory*—a curious picture in its way, for the canvas contains no fewer than a trio of *Victories*, in order to show the ship in three positions.

Sir Donald's study is next to

the dining-room, and here we have more Turners, and a very fine bust of Gladstone. It is, however, in the drawing-room, which overlooks Hyde Park, that Turner, so to speak, is revealed in all his glory. "Abbotsford," "Mount Moriah," "Dunfermline Abbey," "Venice," "Lucerne," "The Alps," "The Dawn of Christianity," and many of the pictures which went to illustrate the famous Bible series of Turner; and,

indeed, notwithstanding the fact that the walls of this apartment are covered with pictures, only three of them are other than Turner's.

We looked for a moment at Sir Donald's volume of autographs, a number of which are reproduced in these pages, and a portrait group of the members of many of the Royal families gathered together at Copenhagen at the time of Sir Donald's trip there—a portrait, by-the-bye, presented to him by the Queen of Hanover. But yet the steamship prince



From a Photo. by]

THE STUDY—HYDE PARK PLACE.

[Elliott & Fry.



From a Photo. by]

THE DRAWING-ROOM—HYDE PARK PLACE.

[Elliott & Fry.

will not be taken away from his Turners; he brings forward a large cardboard box and opens it. It contains a score of beautiful little water-colour drawings; Sir Donald lifts one of them up quite reverentially and places it in my hands.

"Do you recognise it?" he said.

I did not for the moment. His eyes twinkled, and he seemed almost proud to tell me.

"These, sir, are the twenty original drawings by Turner which went to illustrate Campbell's 'Pleasures of Hope' and his poems. Look at them! See!"—as he takes them up one by one. "There is the one for 'Lord Ullin's Daughter'; this is 'O'Connor's Child'; and that 'Gertrude of Wyoming'; and surely you know this, 'The Soldier's Dream'; and this, 'Lochiel's Warning,' and 'The Battle of the Baltic.'"

We looked at that score of precious pictures for a long time, and their possessor discussed their almost countless beauties till we reached his study downstairs, where I desired to talk with a man who has done much for his fellows. I am inclined to think that at the outset Sir Donald showed some reticence in speaking about himself; but I pointed out to him that a man must tell the truth about his own life, however much he may have done and achieved.

"Very well, then," said Sir Donald, "I will tell you. I was born in 1825. My first school was in Belfast. They were very lively days in Ireland in those times, when the great party feuds were on, and the differences of

opinion between the parties were much stronger then than now. Why, I have seen cavalry charge up and down the streets on the occasion of an election! James Bryce's father was my teacher. Yes, I was always fond of ships; revelled in reading sea stories, and I am inclined to think that I had one of the biggest collections of small boats of any of the boys in the school. I left school when I was fourteen, and went into the steam-shipping

office of a relative in my native town, Greenock. When about eighteen years of age I was transferred to Liverpool and joined the Cunard Company's service. At that time there were no steamers trading to America except those of the Cunard Company, and there were only three of those—the *Caledonia*, the *Arcadia*, and the *Britannia*. The ill-fated *President*, and the British-built steamer, *Great Western*, were for a time engaged in the Atlantic business, but no regular line existed either from the Continent or Great Britain, except that known as the Cunard Line, then intrusted with the carrying of the mails to Halifax and Boston; so that at the time referred to I was charged with the duty of making arrangements for all the cargo passing from Europe to America.

"What a change since that time! In 1849 the Navigation Laws of this country were abolished, and the United States reciprocated this policy. Up to that time no goods from the Continent or foreign ports could be carried into the States by British vessels, and no foreign produce could be imported into England by American ships. The trade between France and the Continent and the United States of America was very extensive and important—mind, I am speaking now of forty-five years ago—and I was dispatched to Havre and Paris to establish branch houses to take advantage of this new opening to British shipping. Within three days of my leaving England for France, a steamer was sent from Liverpool to Havre, and there

Aunt Harriet?

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S SIGNATURE.

was thus established a through service between France and America *via* Liverpool, which still exists, and which has been most successful. However, shortly after the Havre trade had been secured I went to Bremen and to Antwerp, and at both ports established similar branch offices and steamer services for the Cunard Company."

Here is what Mr. W. S. Gilbert would call a "highly respectable start." Sir Donald Currie is the first man to admit that he owes much to those early struggling days. He worked persistently, honestly, and with purpose not to be turned aside, and it was not long before he found himself in a very important position. The young man's capabilities, pluck, and tact had become a matter of common conversation, and from 1856 to 1862 Sir Donald Currie was attached to the head-quarters of the Cunard Company in the management at Liverpool, his brother conducting the business at Havre; but in the latter year he withdrew from the onerous labour

connected with the Cunard Company's largely extended operations in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean, and started for himself—the Castle sailing ship service

between Liverpool, London, and the East Indies, which supplied him in due time with the nucleus of the efficient officers now employed in his fleet of steamers.


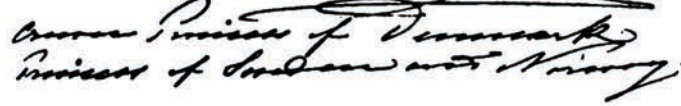








It is very interesting to note how Sir Donald, after leaving steamers for sailing vessels, finally took once more to steamers and discarded sailing ships. It was not his wish to go back to the exciting life

*Embroiderette
Cherbourg
18th Sept 1863*

*Christian King of Denmark
Louise Queen of Denmark*

Alexandra Pr^{nc} of Wales

*Edward of Wales
Louise Louise
Victoria Victoria
Grand*


 Frederick,
 Crown Prince of Denmark

 Louise,
 Crown Princess of Denmark,
 Princess of Sweden and Norway.

 Alexander. 1883

 Marie

 Georgios. 1883

 Olga

 Nicholas

 George

 Xenia. 1883

 Carl, of Denmark.
 Alexandra. 1883

SIGNATURES FROM SIR D. CURRIE'S AUTOGRAPH BOOK.

Frederick, Crown Prince of Denmark; Louise, Crown Princess of Denmark, Princess of Sweden and Norway; Alexander (Emperor of Russia); Marie (Empress of Russia); Georgios (King of Greece); Olga (Queen of Greece); Nicholas (the Czarvitch); George and Xenia (the younger children of the Czar); Carl, of Denmark; Alexandra.





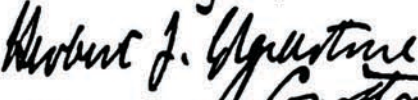
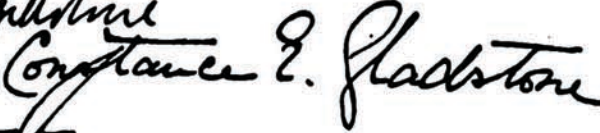



he came to be connected with the South African trade, in which he now holds such a high position. But it was not only in steamship enterprise to and from the Cape and Natal that he was to be engaged, for in a very short time, owing to the singular political circumstances of that period, his capacity and readiness to serve South African interests became manifest.

"In 1875," said Sir Donald, "complications arose in South Africa in connection with the occupation of the Diamond Field District, known as Kimberley, by the British Government, and in connection with that, as well as with the Transvaal, President Burgers, of the late Republic, known as the South African Republic, visited England. Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon, acting for the Government of the day, intrusted to me the communication to be placed in the hands of President Burgers on his arrival at Plymouth; and the President accompanied me to my house, where he stayed for some two or three months, the correspondence of the President with the Government of the day being carried on with my assistance.

"It is worthy of note that at that especial time it was known that proposals had been made

involved in steamship management; his capital was engaged in sailing ships in preference. He had said that he was for all time going out of the steam business, but the fates would have it otherwise. This is how

to Prince Bismarck for the proclamation of a Protectorate by Germany over the Transvaal; and this was not a matter overlooked in conversation between President Burgers and myself. On the settlement of

SIGNATURES OF CELEBRITIES FROM SIR D. CURRIE'S AUTOGRAPH BOOK.

lonial Institute at the South Kensington Museum, when President Burgers was present and received the welcome of his friends, people wondering if it could be true that there was gold in the Transvaal.

"The Swazi question was at that moment being discussed with the British Government, as well as the difference between the Orange Free State and the Imperial Government as to the Diamond Fields, the latter being claimed by the Orange Free State Republic as within their territory. Immediately after the return of President Burgers to the Transvaal, President Brand, of the Orange Free State, visited England, at the request of Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the

the treaty with Portugal which President Burgers completed, I did what I could, and secured for the Transvaal the transfer from Mr. G. P. Moodie, of Gold Fields fame, of the concession of the Delagoa Bay Railway, which had been granted to that gentleman by the Portuguese Government."

It is a fact worthy of interest that in that agreement Sir Donald was made arbitrator in case of dispute, and eventually gave a judgment in favour of Mr. Moodie subsequent to the annexation of the Transvaal by the British Government.

"Of the early history of gold mining," continued Sir Donald, "in the Transvaal, a singular illustration is the fact of the President having brought to this country and placed in my hands a nugget found at Pilgrims' Rest in that territory, of the value of about £600 sterling, and this nugget, by-the-bye, I exhibited at the first meeting of the Royal Co-

hope of arriving at a settlement of the Diamond Fields' dispute; and it was only after a long discussion with President Brand, spread over two or three months, that Lord Carnarvon made a final arrangement with him. Lord Carnarvon and President Brand, after agreeing upon the principles of settlement, left it to me to define the boundary and arrange the terms of agreement, and to draw up the agreement which is now in the Colonial Office, signed by Lord Carnarvon and President Brand."

For these services, acknowledged by Lord Carnarvon in the despatches published in the Blue Books of the time, the Queen made Sir Donald a K.C.M.G., and the Orange Free State Parliament voted him their unanimous acknowledgments.

"In 1876," Sir Donald said, "the mail contract with the Cape having come to an end, a new one was granted to the two mail

companies now carrying on the service—the Union Steamship Company and our Castle Line. In 1877, the year following, political matters in South Africa became very embarrassing, the Transvaal Boers resenting the authority of the British Crown; and Messrs. Paul Kruger, Jorissen, and Bok were sent to Lord Carnarvon as a deputation to claim their independence. Owing to the friendly feeling shown both to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State previously, their delegates informed the British Government that they desired my assistance, and

of the Transvaal, and with a view to some settlement which might prevent disturbance in that territory. I pointed out to the Government that an absolute and unconditional refusal of the memorial of the inhabitants of the great South African Republic would be followed by scenes of disorder, and possibly of bloodshed; and further, that the country would be disorganized, as many of the people would leave; that there would be difficulty in collecting taxes, and settlers and intending emigrants might be alarmed; commercial



W.A.S.C.

From a Photo. by]

A ROYAL GROUP.

[George Hansen, Kjöbenhavn.

I introduced the deputation, at their wish, to the British Government. They were not successful in obtaining what they desired, and subsequently, in July, 1878, a second and final deputation was sent from the Transvaal, appointed by the united voice of the burghers there. Messrs. Kruger, Joubert, and Bok were delegates, and their appeals were addressed to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The delegates named again came to me, and on the 19th of July, 1878, made a final appeal to the Conservative Government of the day in the interests of the peace and prosperity

relations would be disestablished, and all progress injured for many a day to come in the Transvaal. In that communication I added that the Boers were so persuaded of the injustice of the course which had been pursued, that they had so strong a disposition to freedom and liberty of movement, and were so religiously mindful of facts in their past history, that they would sacrifice their property and risk their lives, as they had done before, for their convictions and what they deemed their just rights."

From what Sir Donald told me, one can only characterize his suggestion as being a



From the Picture by

THE "DUNOTTAR CASTLE."

[W. L. Wyllie, A.R.A.]

very practical one for the solution of the difficulties that beset the Government. It was to the effect that the people should elect their own representatives, with other arrangements fitted to secure friendly co-operation between the different states and colonies in South Africa. Sir Donald urged that it would be easy to stir up angry feeling in the recollection of the Boers, of what they considered injurious treatment at the hands of persons who held official positions; but that, instead of antipathy and dislike, we might by good and kindly feeling secure their strong attachment, and in time clear away the prejudices that prevailed among them owing to our dealings with regard to the Diamond Fields and our past history in respect to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

One strong point Sir Donald put forward to the Government was this, namely, that the Boers had a strong conviction of the value of a decision by a majority, and that they distinctly offered to recognise any arrangement, even of annexation to England, if a majority of qualified voters could be found in the Transvaal willing to declare for the maintenance of the present condition of things.

"But you see," said Sir Donald, "that the Government of the day took a very different course, and, on the 17th of August, 1878, upon the motion of Mr. Courtenay for the restoration of the independence of the Transvaal, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, on behalf of the Ministry, made such an answer

in the hearing of the delegates in Parliament as justified them in their opinion in returning to the Transvaal, telegraphing to me in Scotland, where it was intended that they should follow me, to say farewell. They visited Holland and Germany to obtain sympathy and assistance.

"In the autumn of the same year, 1878, new troubles arose in South Africa; war was declared against Cetewayo on the 4th of January, 1879, and on the 11th of January British troops crossed into Zulu territory. On the 24th of January the British force was destroyed at Isandlana, of which incident, by-the-bye, I am sorry to say I had to communicate the intelligence to the Government. The episode of Rorke's Drift followed. In the rapid course of events of that day the British detachment of Sir Evelyn Wood had a hard struggle at Kambula, while Colonel Pearson's third division was shut up in Ekowe and surrounded by Dabulamanzi, the brother of Cetewayo, with 10,000 or 15,000 Zulus lying in wait for any sortie they might risk. This is how Cetewayo carried out his word to Sir Bartle Frere: 'If your soldiers attack me, I will tear them to pieces like a tiger.'

"On the day that the news arrived of the disaster at Isandlana, preparations were immediately made by the Home Government to provide within forty-eight hours two steamers to carry troops to Natal; and with the cordial approval of the Minister of War, I sent a telegram to our company's steamer, then passing that day the Island of



From a]

THE "ICELAND"—SIR D. CURRIE'S FIRST BOAT.

[Photograph.

vessel calling at Cape Verd, the 12,000 men or thereabouts armed and ready to start would have had to fight their way through the Zulus, with awful destruction of life, whilst the fever-stricken and wounded left at Ekowe would have been at the mercy of the Zulus, and another Isandlana disaster would have happened."

It is due to

Madeira, to stop on her way to the Cape at Cape Verd for my instructions. The Government had thus the three intervening days in which to decide on what course to follow, and the result was the transmission of telegraphic instructions by way of Cape Verd, which reached South Africa in fifteen days, instead of being delayed until the dispatch of the next steamer from England a week later. The minutes were precious, for the telegram referred to reached Sir Bartle Frere on the Tugela just in time to enable him to stop the sallying out of the troops from Ekowe, which had been ordered to sally out, and which were marshalled ready to start for the Tugela at the moment the heliograph signalled them to delay.

"Let me tell you how the garrison of Ekowe were saved. I know the facts, for a young naval officer, the second in command of the Naval Brigade attached to General Pearson's troops shut in Ekowe, wrote the following in his diary:—

"'At a given date,' he said, 'when shut up, we saw a signal by heliograph from the Tugela, twenty miles off. It said: "Sally out on such and such a day. Dabulamanzi is between you and us with 10,000 Zulus." Then it became dark, and there was no signal for about three weeks; but on the day we were to sally out we were marshalled with provisions to carry for twenty miles march and the Zulus in sight. Then the sun shone out, and the heliograph signalled: "Stop sallying out—troops are coming," and it went dark again.'

"That was the message that had gone out, and if it had not been taken out by the

Sir Donald Currie to record the fact that in a speech delivered in Perthshire, which Sir Donald represents in Parliament, Captain Campbell, of the Royal Navy, who was in command of the Naval Brigade at Ekowe, told the public meeting that their member had saved his life and that of his men; and the Duke of Coburg in command of the fleet at the opening of the docks at Leith, at a banquet, informed the guests that that was why Her Majesty made Sir Donald Currie a K.C.M.G.

The *Dublin Castle* of Sir Donald Currie's line was dispatched from England within forty-eight hours, and the soldiers on board marched from Natal to Ekowe, after a severe struggle with Dabulamanzi, and in this way the garrison was relieved.

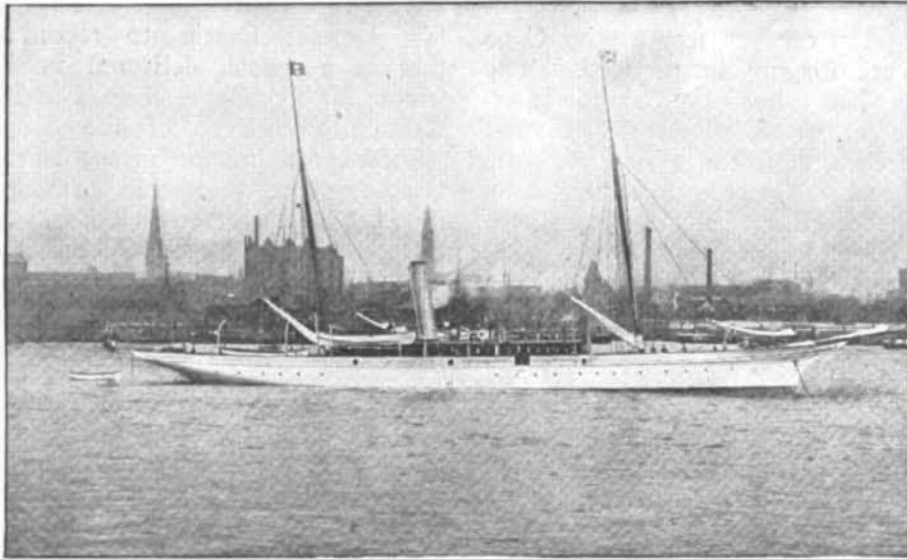
It should be pointed out that several years before, in 1875, Sir Donald urged upon the Government of this country the necessity for an alternative telegraph between England and the East Indies, *via* the Cape, but it was only after the disaster at Isandlana that the Government put down that cable.

Outside of the Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, and Orange Free State, but in intimate association with their interests, the part which Sir Donald has had to play has been a singularly interesting and useful one, both on the South-West and South-East Coasts of South Africa. If the Government of the day had listened to the representations which he, with a deputation of South African merchants, made to Mr. Gladstone's Government for the annexation to the Cape Colony of Damaraland and Namaqualand, that territory so friendly to England would have been under the British Crown to-day. On

the south-eastern side of Africa, at the moment when Germany was pressing its colonial policy in a direction of serious concern for both Natal and the Transvaal, it was at the urgent representation of Sir Donald Currie that Mr. Gladstone, six months after the South-West African failure of policy, yielded to his representations, and dispatched, upon the information which he gave, a telegram to the Cape authorizing the hoisting of the British flag at St. Lucia Bay in Zululand, which was accomplished by the gunboat *Goshawk*. If this had not been carried out, the German flag would have been floating there within a few days afterwards, and both Pondoland and Natal, as well as what is now British territory in Matabeleland, would have had a different history.

had much scope for encouragement. There is a great future for agriculturists in South Africa, and when the gold adventure has calmed down somewhat, as in Australia and California, we may hope for great and good things. In the high lands there are ample scope and inducement provided for those who have a little capital. One disadvantage against securing success at the present moment is the presence of the native element, which hinders individual effort on the part of the emigrating agriculturist. The land is so fruitful that the white population only care to develop it just for their own wants.

"Many young men write to me and ask me shall they go to South Africa. I have invariably refrained from advising them to do so unless they have sufficient



From a Photo. by]

THE "IOLANTHE."

[Carl Hanitz.

The reader will observe that this interview has treated somewhat seriously of Sir Donald Currie's work in connection with South African affairs, which are very much to the front at the moment of writing.

For the last twenty years Sir Donald may be said to have been immersed in the history of South Africa, and it is singular that no other merchant or shipowner has especially interested himself in that country. Sir Donald is well known as a lecturer on maritime matters, and has received the gold medal of the Society of Arts.

There was one question of considerable moment which I put to Sir Donald Currie before leaving him, and that was: "What chance has the emigrant in South Africa?"

He replied: "The miner—that is, the gold or copper miner—has had great inducements there, but agricultural talent has not hitherto

means to keep themselves going until they find an opportunity of utilizing their abilities. It is no good for anyone to think of going to South Africa unless he has some backbone and some money to keep him going till he sees a chance of success. They go out, expecting to find occupation when they have had none here; many have no business capacity, and such young fellows generally join the Cape Police or the Mounted Rifles, and then settle down. Still, whilst making this statement, let me add that I believe that the Cape Colony and Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal—not to speak of Mashonaland—will yet offer more and more opportunities to young men of sound judgment and good business habits than they can find in this country, or indeed in many of our other colonies."

HARRY HOW.