HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA
SINCE SEPTEMBER 1795.

CHAPTER LXVII.

SIR GEORGE GREY, GOVERNOR AND HIGH COMMISSIONER, 4TH OF JULY 1860 TO 15TH OF AUGUST 1861.
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL ROBERT HENRY WYNYARD, LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, 15TH OF AUGUST 1861 TO 15TH OF JANUARY 1862.

THOUGH the second term of Sir George Grey's government of the Cape Colony was very short, covering only thirteen months, it was marked by some events of importance. It could not have been otherwise when a man of his commanding ability was at the head of affairs. Under the present system of government less depends upon the personal qualifications of the governor than upon those of the prime minister, but under the system in operation from 1854 to 1872 the governor was the controller of the administration and the initiator of public measures of every kind. He was the brain, the highest officials were merely the hands. Most men, upon receiving such a stunning blow as had been dealt to Sir George Grey by the annulling of his magnificent plans for the unification, peace, and prosperity of the country, would have become nerveless and apathetic; but his was a nature that could rise unharmed by the shock. Foiled in one direction, he could turn to another, and still strive earnestly and vigorously for the welfare of the community over which he was placed and of the great realm of which his immediate charge was but a tiny part.

It was at his suggestion that Prince Alfred, second son of her Majesty the queen, paid his first visit to South Africa. This was an event in which every one, white and black, took a keen interest, it being the first occasion on which a member of the royal family was seen in this part of the British dominions. The prince, then a midshipman in the steam frigate *Euryalus*, arrived in Simon's Bay on the 24th of July 1860, and in the afternoon of the next day reached Capetown, where every possible demonstration of welcome was made by the inhabitants as well as by the officials and the troops in the garrison.

A short visit to Stellenbosch, the Paarl, and Drakenstein followed, with which the prince expressed himself greatly pleased, though at that season of the year, when the trees and vines are leafless, those localities are not seen at their best. The hearty reception which was accorded to the royal visitor was sufficient to show, if such proof had been wanting, that the Dutch speaking colonists were as thoroughly loyal to her Majesty the queen as any people not of English descent could possibly be.

After this short tour in the oldest part of the colony the prince proceeded by sea to Port Elizabeth, and then, accompanied by Sir George Grey and a suitable retinue, commenced a journey overland which ended at Port Natal. The route followed was eastward through Grahamstown, Fort Beaufort, and Alice, to King-Williamstown. Along this line there is in many places very grand scenery, and everywhere something of interest can be observed. It passes through the heart of the territory that for three quarters of a century had been the battle ground of the white immigrants moving up from the west and the black immigrants moving down from the east, where no trace of the aboriginal inhabitants was left except their paintings on the rocks and their stone implements scattered about as they were lost or thrown away on the veld. Every hill and valley and little plain on that line, though then quiet and peaceful looking, had its story of battle or slaughter in the not very distant past.

The prince, who was fond of hunting, had several opportunities of shooting antelopes on the way. The nights were somewhat cold, but the days were mild and cloudless. August is the pleasantest month for travelling in that part of South Africa, being usually almost rainless, and always free from excessive heat.

From King-Williamstown the party turned to the north, but still continued through a country of ever varying and often grand scenery, where many warlike exploits could be recounted as having taken place. Windvogelberg was passed, the residence of the last Bushman who lived in the territory for a great distance around, and from whom the mountain has its name. Then Queenstown was reached and left behind, and keeping onward the party arrived at Bushman's Hoek, where the road wound up the face of the wall that bounds the interior plain. A steep road it was to climb, but from the top the view stretching over a vast expanse of country to the south amply repaid the travellers.

They were now on the great plain drained by the Orange river and its branches, and for many days the scenery was dull and devoid of interest. They passed through Burghersdorp, and kept on till Aliwal North was reached, nothing of note occurring on the way. Here Moshesh with a large party of Basuto met the travellers, and the old chief testified his joy in approved Bantu manner by dancing or capering about in the road before the prince. He met with a reception that pleased him exceedingly, as indeed did many other Bantu chiefs during the long journey. It was highly desirable that they and their followers, whether subjects of her Majesty or independent, should be gratified as much as possible, and for Prince Alfred it was no effort to make himself affable to all. On the way between Fort Beaufort and Burghersdorp he had visited the missionary institutions at Healdtown, Lovedale, and Lesseyton, and expressed a warm interest in the efforts being made for the advancement of the coloured people.

At Aliwal North the party crossed the Orange river and entered the Free State. It did not seem to Prince Alfred or

to Sir George Grey, however, that they were in a foreign country, for the people they met and by whom they were warmly welcomed differed in no respect whatever from those living in the British colony they had left behind. There were many English speakers among them too, who took care to remind their visitors that they had been abandoned by Great Britain very much against their own will. The party passed through Smithfield, and went on to Bloemfontein, the seat of government.

A grand hunt had been arranged to take place at Hartebeest Hoek, a farm belonging to Mr. Andrew Bain, about five miles or eight kilometres from Bloemfontein. At that time, although vast numbers of all kinds of wild animals native to the country had been destroyed for the sake of their flesh or their skins, or in mere wantonness, an immense number still remained. Moroko's Barolong had been engaged for some days in driving game, and by the time the prince arrived it was estimated that from twenty to thirty thousand large animals —white tailed gnus, Burchell's zebras, hartebeests, blesboks, bonteboks, springboks, ostriches, &c. — had been collected together in a small area. No European prince had ever seen such a number and variety of wild animals in one spot before, and no one will ever have such a sight in South Africa again, for they have nearly all been shot down years ago or have died of imported diseases. The day of the grand hunt was the most exciting one in the journey, although much game had been previously seen and shot.

From Bloemfontein the journey was continued northward to Winburg, where President Pretorius, who was returning from a visit to the Transvaal, met the party and had an interview with the prince and Sir George Grey. The course here turned to the east, and lay through Harrismith to Van Reenen's pass in the Drakensberg, where the great plain was left behind, and the party was once more in the midst of wild and grand mountain scenery.

The travellers now entered the colony of Natal, but were still at a great height above the level of the sea. They passed

down through the village of Colenso, and went on to Maritzburg, visiting the falls of the Umgeni on the way. Then the route lay through Pinetown to Durban, where the long land journey ended. At every place of the slightest importance along this extensive line there were enthusiastic assemblages of people, gaily decorated arches, illuminations, bonfires, and festivities, while escorts of volunteers attended from town to town.

At Durban the *Euryalus* was waiting, and on board were the Gaika chief Sandile, the reverend Tiyo Soga, and Mr. Charles Brownlee, who had been invited to accompany the prince to Capetown and had been taken in on her passage up the coast. It was supposed that Sandile would be impressed with a sense of awe on seeing the working of a ship of war, but he did not give himself the trouble to think at all about the matter, and took no more interest in the ship and her engines than a little child would have done. He understood, however, the cause of the marks of respect paid by everyone to the prince, and realised from what he saw that somewhere over the water there was a real living sovereign of great power, which he had previously believed to be somewhat mythical.

Having proceeded to Simon's Bay, the prince landed again, and on the 17th of September tilted the first load of stones in the great breakwater in Table Bay. On the following day he laid the foundation stone of the Sailors' Home in Capetown,—which was opened for use on the 25th of April 1862,—and inaugurated the South African public library in its fine new building beside the main avenue of the gardens. This was Prince Alfred's last public act during his first and most memorable visit, and on the 19th of September he embarked in the *Euryalus* and sailed for England.

The people of Port Frances had been anxious that the queen's son should inaugurate the construction of a new sea wall at that place, and they also wished to give his name to the mouth of the river, with a view of bringing the harbour into greater prominence. Through pressure of time

the prince was unable to comply with their desires, but he deputed Captain Tarleton, of the *Euryalus*, to represent him in driving the first pile of the new pier. This was done on the 20th of August 1860, when Port Frances was renamed Port Alfred, a designation by which it has ever since been known.

Before 1861 the weights and measures generally used in the colony were those introduced by the Dutch East India Company, though many of the English settlers bought and sold according to those of Great Britain. This double system often caused much confusion in accounts. In the same village, for instance, one shopkeeper would sell calico by the ell of twenty-seven Rhynland inches, and another by the yard of thirty-six English inches, the inch itself being slightly shorter in the latter case. It was evident that uniformity would be advantageous, and it was equally so that the same weights and measures should be used in the Cape Colony as in every other part of the queen's dominions. The decimal system, which is now coming into favour on account of its simplicity and the necessity of employing it in dealing with foreigners, had then no advocates, as oversea commerce was almost confined to Great Britain. It was therefore enacted that English weights and measures should alone be legal after the 1st of January 1861, and since that date they have been exclusively used, with the single exception of the land measure. To have changed that in the oldest settled districts would have introduced much confusion, and hence the morgen was retained in those parts of the colony.

The land measure, however, was not perfectly uniform in all the grants that had been made since 1657. There was no standard in the colony in the early days by which to rectify a surveyor's chain, and the other instruments employed were far from being as delicate as those now in use. Land was of so little value in those times, even in Capetown, that an absolutely accurate survey was not considered indispensable, and the work was performed in the crudest manner and in

the shortest possible time. The unit of measurement was supposed to be the Rhynland foot, but resurveys during recent years have shown that in general the measure actually employed was a little longer. Thus the oldest diagrams seldom agree with the extent of ground mentioned in the title deeds. Undisputed possession for thirty years, however, fixed the boundaries permanently, so that disputes and lawsuits were avoided.

The session of parliament which was opened by the governor on the 26th of April 1861 was a memorable one. The desire of a large majority of the English speaking colonists in the eastern districts for the establishment of a separate and distinct government had not abated, and at this time the question was the most prominent one in the politics of the country. An association termed the separation league was formed, with branches in all the important towns and villages of the east, meetings were held wherever people could be got together, and addresses were delivered by the leading English politicians in favour of the measure. The principal newspapers also lent their powerful aid, and pamphlets were published and widely distributed. By these means about six thousand signatures to petitions for separation were obtained, and the documents were laid before both houses of parliament. In opposition, petitions representing not more than one thousand individuals were presented, but none were sent in on either side from the western districts.

A bill was drafted to provide for the separation of the eastern province and its establishment as a distinct colony from the west, and on the 16th of May Mr. William Matthew Harries moved, and Mr. Richard Joseph Painter seconded, its first reading in the house of assembly, which took place accordingly. On the 27th of the same month practically the same measure was brought forward in the legislative council by Messrs. Henry Tucker and Charles Pote.

On the 7th of June the second reading was proposed and seconded in the house of assembly, when an animated debate

commenced, which was continued during prolonged sittings on that day, the 8th, 10th, and 11th, during which excitement was high not only in parliament, but everywhere in the community. On one side the question was felt to be the existence of a single strong colony or the substitution of two weak ones, each burdened with the cost of a complete government; on the other the freedom of the eastern section from the injustice in the distribution of public favours and the restraints imposed upon it by the west. The debate was by far the most important event of the session.

The arguments used by the advocates of the measure were to the effect that the eastern districts were making much more rapid strides in material prosperity than the western, but that their interests received much less consideration from parliament. Their public works were neglected, their rivers were unbridged, and their roads were well-nigh impassable, while in the west they were all attended to, and even a great breakwater was being constructed in Table Bay which might prove useless. The public debt was then £564,000, of which £400,000 had been borrowed for improvements in the west and only £164,000 for similar purposes in the east, though they had to pay half of the interest. Even in the matter of compensation for losses by Kaffir raiders they could get nothing; but a western man with claims less strong was awarded payment for damages sustained. The old argument as to the necessity of a strong government near the frontier to deal with the Xosas and Tembus had lost much of its force since 1857, but it was not altogether forgotten, and an endeavour was made to show that those tribes were rapidly recovering their former strength and might soon become formidable again. And finally the great distance from Capetown at which the members for the eastern districts lived prevented them from attending parliament throughout long sessions as the western members could easily do, so that they were often in a helpless minority when measures of the greatest importance to them were brought forward and disposed of.

On the other side, most of these assertions were disputed, and the excess of expenditure in the west was asserted to be caused by the principal officials being necessarily stationed at the seat of government. In the matter of public works, roads, and bridges, it was unreasonable to compare newly settled districts with others long inhabited, and it was claimed that the east was rather favoured than neglected in this matter. In other respects, if separation were to take place and Grahamstown or Uitenhage were to become the seat of government of the eastern province, the people of some of the districts in that province would have much greater reason to be discontented than the advocates of the measure were then.

At the close of the debate on the fourth day the bill was rejected by a majority of seven votes, those in favour of it being Messrs. Aspeling, Botman, R. M. Bowker, T. H. Bowker, Brand, Cawood, Clough, Darnell, Franklin, Harries, Painter, Scanlen, Slater, Stanton, and Stretch; and those opposed to it Messrs. Blake, Bosman, Van der Byl, Duckitt, Fairbairn, Haupt, Hopley, Kotzé, Louw, Manuel, Munnik, Prince, Proctor, Silberbauer, Solomon, Le Sueur, Theunissen, Walter, F. Watermeyer, P. Watermeyer, White, and Ziervogel.

In the legislative council the measure met with the same fate.

Foiled in this, the same eastern members then endeavoured to carry a measure in favour of the removal of the seat of government, but met with no better success. In this question the members of the party were divided among themselves, some favouring Uitenhage, others Grahamstown, as the capital. It has often been observed that the Dutch speaking colonists can unite readily in the preliminary stages of a great movement, but that when an important measure reaches its last stage, they are certain to quarrel and range themselves on different sides. The observation is correct, as the history of the colony has constantly shown. But this feature of character is not peculiar to them, for here were the English speaking colonists of the east, practically all of whom were desirous of removal of the seat of government, so influenced

by local jealousy that they were ranged on different sides upon the most important point in the whole question.

Finally, more in the way of pretending that they did not accept their defeat as final than in expectation of meeting with success, three members of the legislative council and thirteen of the house of assembly addressed a petition to the queen, praying that her Majesty would separate the provinces as had been done in two instances in Australia. This, of course, as coming from such a small minority in parliament, also proved a failure.

During this session, which lasted from the 26th of April to the 13th of August, one hundred and ten days, various public works were provided for. The board of commissioners for Table Bay was empowered to commence the construction of a dock, according to a plan furnished by the eminent marine engineer Sir John Coode. This was almost as necessary as the breakwater itself to facilitate the loading and unloading of ships, and ensure their safety. It was enormously expensive, as it had to be excavated in rock along the shore to a depth of seventy English feet, or 21·34 metres, a large portion of the sides had then to be faced with blocks of granite, and an opening to the bay to be made just within the breakwater. The length of the dock thus excavated was to be eleven hundred feet, or 335·28 metres, and the area of the sheet of water enclosed by its walls was to be ten English acres. The want of good natural harbours has always been a drawback to the prosperity of South Africa, and must always remain so, because the charges on shipping to make good the interest on the cost and maintenance of such an expensive artificial harbour as that of Table Bay must necessarily be very high. But in the condition of the country such a work was urgently needed, and it has since proved of the utmost advantage. Nearly nine years were needed for the construction of the dock, which was opened for use on the 17th of May 1870.

Provision was also made for the construction of a light-house on Robben Island. This useful work took over three years to carry out, for it was not until the 1st of January