

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK
THE GROWTH OF
THE BRITISH EMPIRE

M. B. Synge

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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The Growth of the British Empire

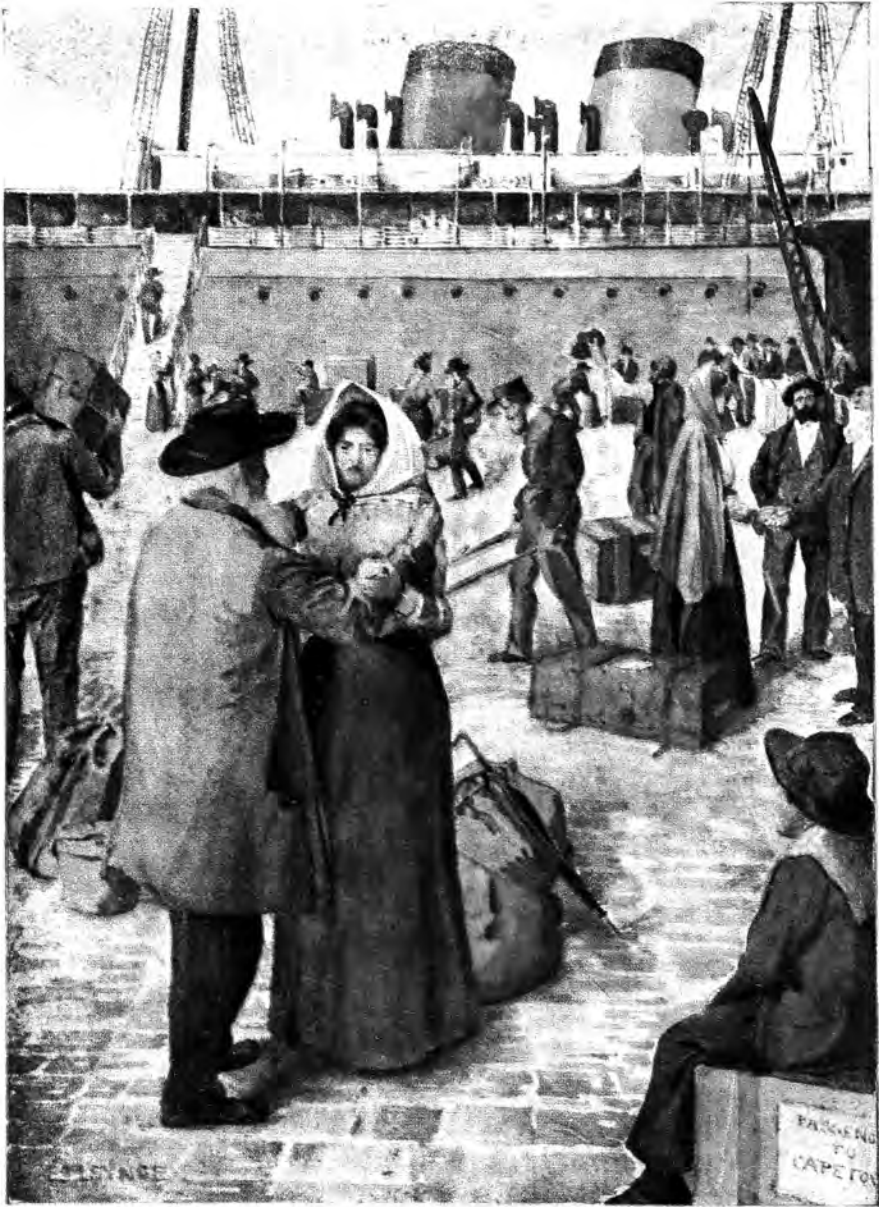
FROM WATERLOO

TO 1903 (1815-1903)

by

M. B. SYNGE





OFF TO THE COLONIES

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1. HOW SPAIN LOST SOUTH AMERICA

"So grew and gathered through the silent years
The madness of a people, wrong by wrong."

—LOWELL.

The storms of war had passed away and Europe was at peace. But, like the waves after a great storm, the influences that had worked for freedom, continued to work. For two centuries, this sixth part of the world, had been governed by Spaniards and Portuguese: for two centuries, she had borne the oppression of despotic viceroys sent from Spain, whose cruelties defy description. It was small wonder then that, with the spirit of revolution in the air, the people of South America should rise and fight to free themselves from Spain.

Brazil belonged to Portugal, and the hatred of the people towards the Portuguese, not being so bitter, the country worked out its freedom by more peaceful means. The Spanish colonies rose after the deposition of their king by Napoleon.

It is impossible to follow the many battles that took place during the next twelve years: let us rather tell the story of two heroes, whose names stand out clearly against the horizon of South American history, as the liberators of their country—Bolivar and San Martin.

The earliest plans for the revolution, that was to free South America from the yoke of Spain, were laid by a secret society in London, founded by Miranda. England herself took no part;

but Bolivar and San Martin both caught the enthusiasm of the master, and swore to do all in their power to carry out Miranda's ideas. Both men sailed for South America.

San Martin landed at Buenos Ayres in the year 1812—an unknown man. He at once roused the people of Argentina, a country ten times the size of Great Britain and Ireland, called from the great silver river—La Plata, which flowed through it. It is one of the richest territories in the world to-day, and largely populated by European emigrants. San Martin, who had served in Spanish armies for twenty years, soon fired the enthusiasm of the people. An army was raised, which soon became famous under his leadership. It was not long before the arms of Spain were torn down, to be replaced by the blue and white colours of the revolutionists, the cruel tortures of the Spanish Inquisition were abolished, and the last links with the mother country broken. Early in the year 1816—the year after Waterloo—Argentina declared her independence.

The spirit of revolution had meanwhile spread to the neighbouring province of Chili, a strip of country between the high Andes and the Pacific Ocean, so called from the Peruvian word for snow. But the Spaniards were strong in Peru, and marching south, they defeated the Chilians, under the leadership of the famous Irishman O'Higgins. He now looked to San Martin for help. But the mighty range of the Andes, rising between the two provinces, was considered quite impassable. Nevertheless San Martin determined to march to the aid of Chili. And the march of the army of the Andes is one of the most brilliant feats ever recorded in the world's military history. It is a feat that ranks with Hannibal's famous passage over the snowy Alps and Napoleon's march to Marengo.

Having set themselves free, this army of patriots was ready

to face the colossal task, of helping their brothers across the Andes to free themselves. Everything was prepared at Mendoza, at the western feet of the mountains. Here an arsenal was established, where cannon, shot, and shell were cast, church bells were melted down, and forges blazed by day and night. The patriotic women of Mendoza made blue cloth for the uniforms, and early in January 1817, all was ready for the start. There was high holiday in the town; the streets were decked with flags, and the army marched forth to receive its flag, embroidered by the women of the city.

“Soldiers!” cried San Martin, waving the flag above his head, “this is the first independent flag, which has been blessed in America. Swear to sustain it and to die in defence of it—as I swear I do.”

“We swear!” rose from four thousand throats.

Off started the army under the guidance of San Martin and O’Higgins. It would take too long to tell of the bitter days and nights, endured by these brave soldiers of Argentina, as they struggled over the snow-clad passes. Ridge after ridge rose before them, terrible with ice and snow, treacherous with chasms and precipices. Mules, horses, and men dropped dead in the icy winds, that swept down from the lofty summits. But their noble efforts were crowned with success. Three weeks from the start, the army of the Andes descended on the plains of Chili, surprised and defeated the Spanish army, and marched triumphantly into Santiago, the capital. Chilian independence was won, and O’Higgins was made the first governor of the new republic.

Much had been done. Spanish rule had been checked, but not yet broken. Its grip was still on Peru, and her people were crying aloud for freedom, like their neighbours. The way to Peru

from Chili lay by sea, and the Spanish fleet lay off Callao, the port of Lima. It was at this moment, that the famous British sailor Lord Cochrane came upon the scene. One November day in 1818, he landed at Valparaiso, the port of Chili, ready to place his services at the disposal of the revolutionists.

Though broken on land, the Spanish shore was not conquered. Peru still lay in the hands of the oppressor, and the Spanish fleet in its harbours was ready to sail south to attack the Chilians, when Lord Cochrane, trained in the school of Nelson, appeared on the scene. He was given command of the Chilian fleet, and soon swept the Spaniards from the sea.

Having thus made Chili mistress of her own waters, it was possible to begin the liberation of Peru.

2. THE HEROES OF INDEPENDENCE

"The time is ripe, is rotten-ripe, for change,
Then let it come."

—LOWELL.

While San Martin, O'Higgins, and Cochrane were working to free the southern provinces of South America from the yoke of Spain, Bolivar was at work with the master-spirit, Miranda, in the north.

When little more than a boy, young Bolivar had stood with his tutor amid the ruins of Rome—the city of the Cæsars. In a moment of enthusiasm, he had seized his tutor's hands and sworn to liberate his native land. Did the dream of his life also come to him here,—that of ruling over a united South American republic? He went to London, became an enthusiastic disciple of Miranda, renewed the oath made on the sacred hill of Rome, and returned to South America with Miranda to fulfil his promise.

So successful were the liberators, that in the summer of 1811, Venezuela was ready to declare her independence, as the first republic in South America. All was going well, when the terrible earthquake of 1812 devastated the capital, Caracas. For many weeks, not a single drop of rain had fallen, and a day had been set apart for all the people to pray in the churches, as with one voice, for the much-needed rain. The sky was cloudless, the heat intense. It was four o'clock in the afternoon—the churches were crowded. Suddenly a tremendous roar was heard from the neighbouring hills, the ground rocked violently to and fro, and

in a few minutes five large towns, including Caracas, were in ruins, under which lay buried some 20,000 people.

The first republic of Venezuela had found its grave. Panic spread among the revolutionists. Miranda, loaded with chains, was sent to Spain, to languish in a dungeon at Cadiz till he died. Bolivar had to flee. But he was undaunted. He determined to reconquer Venezuela. He collected an army, and in a short time gained for himself a place, among the most famous leaders of his time. With 600 men, in ninety days, he fought six battles; he defeated 4500 men, captured fifty Spanish guns, and restored the republic in Venezuela.

He entered Caracas in triumph, amid the ringing of bells and the roar of cannon. People shouted for their "Liberator"; his path was strewn with flowers; beautiful maidens in white led his horse, and decked his brow with a laurel crown. And Bolivar delighted in this display. There was nothing very heroic in his appearance at this time. Short and rugged, with an olive skin and black deep-set eyes, he wore his black curling hair tied behind, after the fashion of the age. Such was the Dictator of Venezuela in 1813.

But fortune now deserted the revolutionists. The Spaniards collected in force and defeated them. Bolivar was obliged to flee to Jamaica. He spent his exile planning a new war of independence. One night, he narrowly escaped death. The Spaniards had hired a man to kill him, and it was only owing to the fact that his secretary was sleeping in his hammock, that the secretary was slain and not Bolivar.

A few years later, he landed once more in South America to renew the struggle. In none of the colonies was fighting so stubborn, so heroic, so full of tragedy, as in Venezuela. Twice conquered, she rose a third time against her oppressors, ever encouraged by Bolivar. For a time, the Liberator was met by nothing but defeat. His courage was magnificent.

“The day of America has come!” he cried. “Before the sun has again run his annual course, Liberty will have dawned throughout your land.”

The next step was perhaps his greatest. He crossed the Andes and captured the capital of New Granada, changing the whole aspect of affairs at one supreme stroke. It was even a more wonderful feat than that of San Martin. It was June 1819. To tell the story of his passage would be but to repeat that of San Martin. There was the same intense cold, the same awful dangers to be faced, but without the careful preparation made at Mendoza. The men under Bolivar were ill-clad, and over one hundred died, while struggling manfully over the snow-covered summits of the Andes. It was a mere skeleton army that descended from the heights into the beautiful valley, where lay the capital of New Granada. The Spaniards were completely taken by surprise and defeated. And Bolivar marched triumphantly into the city, crowned with laurels. The dream of his life was now accomplished. Venezuela and New Granada were thrown into a huge province called Columbia, under the presidency of Bolivar. To the Columbians he cried in his joy: “From the banks of the Orinoco to the Andes of Peru, the liberating army, marching from one triumph to another, has covered with its protecting arms the whole of Columbia.”

Soon he had annexed the neighbouring province, whose capital was Quito.

Both San Martin and Bolivar were now advancing on Peru, “the last battlefield in America,” as Bolivar said. The moment had come, when the two liberators must meet, to discuss the future of the revolution. San Martin hoped they would be able to work together for the good of their country. But their aims were different. San Martin had no personal ambition: he only wished to see South America freed from the yoke of Spain. Bolivar wished to be

President of a united country, and that country one of the largest in the world. The two men met. It was July 1822. They embraced one another warmly, and held a long private interview. It was followed by a banquet and a ball. Bolivar proposed the first toast: "To the two greatest men of South America—General San Martin and myself."

The ball followed. In the middle of it San Martin crept away. He had seen clearly that he and Bolivar could never act together. In a spirit of generosity, unsurpassed in history, he left to Bolivar the completion of his life's work. To him should be "the glory of finishing the war for the independence of South America."

"There is no room in Peru for both Bolivar and myself," he said afterwards to his faithful friend Guido. "He will come to Peru. Let him come, so that America may triumph."

Then he embraced Guido and rode away into the darkness, never to return. He died in voluntary exile in 1850.

The coast was now clear, and Bolivar soon became absolute master of Peru. He thought that all America was his. With the splendid forces of the Argentina army left him by San Martin, he passed from strength to strength. A new Republic was named after him—Bolivia. But his supreme power in 1828 roused the suspicions of the people. They dreaded a second Cæsar—a second Napoleon. A conspiracy to slay him failed, but it forced Bolivar to resign. He died in exile in 1830.

Such is the story of the two men who helped to free South America from Spain. Statues at Caracas and Lima were raised to commemorate the splendid work of Bolivar, but the work of the man, who was ready to sacrifice all, for the good of his country, needs no monuments—for history does not forget such as these.

3. THE GREEK WAR

"Hellenes of past ages,
Oh, start again to life!
At the sound of my trumpet breaking
Your sleep! Oh, join with me
And the seven-hilled city seeking
Fight, conquer, till we're free!"

—RIGAS'S WAR-SONG.

Before ever South America had won her independence, another country had felt the tyranny of oppression, and had already begun to struggle into the fuller air of freedom. That country was Greece—the land of Homer and Socrates—the land of Marathon and Thermopylæ. Greece had been subject to Rome, till Constantine built a new Rome and Constantinople became the capital of the Eastern Empire. Under this Byzantine Empire, Greece had remained, till the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. Under Turkish rule the Greeks had suffered deeply, and that nation, once so famous in Europe, now lay paralysed under its Mohammedan oppressors.

When the Greek revolution began, in 1821, it was no sudden insurrection to which the people were stung. As a tree, which winter has stripped of its leaves, puts forth fresh growth in the spring, so the time had come, when the long winter of Turkish oppression must pass and spring must dawn. The War of Independence in North and South America, and the outburst of suppressed France, gave the Greeks courage to arise and assert their newly recognised strength.

In the opening scenes of the insurrection, the barbarity of Greek and Turks was perhaps on a level. The Greeks revenged themselves as fiercely as a slave, who had broken his fetters: the Turks resorted to wholesale massacre. Europe could not watch a struggle, so heroic, so prolonged, so full of tragedy, without being strangely moved. British volunteers, among them Lord Cochrane of Chilian fame, and Byron the poet, lent their services to the cause of Greek freedom. Byron still dreamt of a Greece, on whose free soil the arts and sciences should once more flourish in their ancient glory. At the moment of his arrival, in 1823, Greece was split up into parties. She had no leader, and things were going badly for her. Mesolonghi, one of the strongholds of western Greece, was besieged by the Turks. They stood at the entrance of the Gulf of Patras, in a plain stretching away from the sea-coast to the mountains. Much of the country was little better than a swamp, inhabited by fishermen. Byron's arrival here was hailed with enthusiasm. Crowds of citizens gathered on the beach to receive him, and shouts arose as he stepped ashore in a scarlet uniform. It was January 1824. His very presence gave them encouragement. His interest in them was very real, and it is likely he would have done much. But Mesolonghi was a bed of fever, and four months after his arrival, Byron died in the midst of the Greeks he had come to serve.

"I have given Greece my time, my means, my health; and now I give her my life!" he cried almost with his dying breath.

Perhaps his death—in the glorious attempt to restore Greece to her ancient freedom and renown—served Greece better than his life could ever have done. All the Greek patriotism seemed now to be corked up within the walls of Mesolonghi, where an undisciplined population did the duty of a trained garrison, and warm-hearted peasants the work of a trained army. The Turk-

ish commander had invested the city by land and sea, but the Greek garrison had a good supply of food within, and moreover a Greek fleet was known to be on its way with supplies. One July morning at early dawn the Greeks saw the distant sea covered with vessels. Their joy was boundless. It was their fleet, and it would enable them to defeat the Turks. But suddenly the red flag of Turkey became visible to their straining eyes, and they discovered it was thirty-nine ships of war to block their port, and no Greek ships. Soon after this, came six Turkish chiefs to offer terms. The Greeks were indignant. With one voice they cried, in a spirit worthy of the Spartans of old, "War!"

The summer passed. Famine threatened the city. A few old Greek chiefs were in favour of treating.

"What, old men," cried the garrison, "do you hold life so dear at your age, when we, in the flower of youth, would give it up? If the men of Mesolonghi cannot defend their walls, they will defend their liberty. There shall be no capitulation as long as one of us remains alive. The Turkish standard shall not fly in Mesolonghi, till it has been carried over our dead bodies."

Still the Greek fleet did not come. It alone could save the brave defenders.

Meanwhile the Sultan of Turkey grew furious with his commander. "I will have Mesolonghi or your head," he cried.

The tardy arrival of the Greek fleet brought joy to the defenders, and alarm spread through the ranks of the Turks. The Sultan now called in the Egyptian army under Ibrahim. The Egyptians came on, boasting that they would make short work of Mesolonghi, but when they met the Greeks hand-to-hand, they were thoroughly defeated.

Still the spirit of Greek heroism, rare in the Greek revolu-

tion, rare even in the history of mankind, kept the flag flying over Mesolonghi.

Then Ibrahim ordered a fleet of flat-bottomed boats to be built, and launched upon the lagoons between the city and the open sea. Mesolonghi was thus completely surrounded.

The siege had lasted a year. The food was exhausted, the last charge of powder had been fired, when the Greeks—men, women, and children—joined in one last reckless, heroic assault, and perished, fighting their way through the Turkish lines.

Their splendid defence had achieved its end. The powers of Europe could no longer hold aloof. England, France, and Russia agreed to send help. In 1827 a combined fleet under an English sailor, Sir Edward Codrington, appeared in Greek waters. Codrington was one of Nelson's school, and had commanded a ship at the battle of Trafalgar.

The combined fleets of Turkey and Egypt—a great armament of sixty-five sail—lay in the Bay of Navarino. They formed a huge crescent in the mouth of the bay, with fire-ships at either end. On the afternoon of October 20, the English Admiral, on board a stately wooden three-decker, sailed into the bay. He was followed by the French and Russians. He did not mean to fight. But suddenly one of the fire-ships discharged a volley into an English ship, whose commander fired back. Soon a deep roar resounded through the crescent. The battle of Navarino had begun. For four hours it raged. Codrington poured a very tempest of fire into the Turkish flag-ship, until she drifted away, a total wreck, having lost 650 men out of a crew of 850. Then he turned to the Egyptian flag-ship, and ten minutes later she too was a wreck. When evening fell, most of the Turkish and Egyptian ships were in flames. All through the night, the hills round Navarino shone with the light of burning ships. When

morning dawned, what remained of the crescent of ships had vanished.

The allied fleets had saved Greece. It was some years yet, before Greece finally won her independence. There was more fighting to be done by land and sea. But at last in the year 1833, young Otho of Bavaria landed in Greece, to be crowned amid the shouts of the people, as their first King.

4. VICTORIA—QUEEN OF ENGLAND

"Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you or me."

—TENNYSON.

Greece had fought for and won her independence, and the Bavarian boy-king Otho, had reigned for four years, when an event of great importance took place in England.

After a short reign, King William IV. died in 1837, leaving his niece, the Princess Victoria, heir to the throne. The Princess was but eighteen. She had been carefully trained by her widowed mother for the great position she would one day fill. She was taught to be "self-reliant, brave, and systematical." She learnt prudence and economy, as though she were born to be poor. The story of her accession is well known, but it must be told yet again. It was early in the morning hours of June 20, when the old king died at Windsor, and messengers were soon hurrying off to Kensington Palace in London to carry the tidings to the young princess. They reached the palace about five o'clock in the morning. All was still within. "They knocked, they rang, they thumped for a considerable time, before they could arouse the porter at the gate. They were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody. They rang the bell and desired that the attendant of the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform her Royal Highness, that they requested an audience on business of importance. After another delay, and another ringing to inquire

the cause, the attendant was summoned, who stated that the princess was in such a sweet sleep, that she could not venture to disturb her.”

“But we are come on business of state to the queen, and even her sleep must give way to that,” they said.

And a few moments later, the new queen entered the room in a “loose white nightgown and shawl, her nightcap thrown off and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified.”

So the Princess Victoria became Queen of England, and a new era opened for her country.

The opening of the new reign found some of the greatest discoveries and inventions, which make for civilisation, forcing their way into daily use. Time had dispelled the vague fears of travelling by trains at a speed of over five miles an hour. Stephenson had run the first passenger train in the north of England in 1825. It had reached the alarming speed of twelve miles an hour! Not only was it the first passenger train in England; it was the first in the world. Stephenson was the pioneer. He lightly over-rode all objections.

“Suppose now,” said a member of Parliament to him one day—“Suppose now one of your engines, to be going at a speed of ten miles an hour along the railroad, and that a cow were to stray upon the line and get in the way of the engine, would not that be very awkward?”

“Yes,” answered the great engineer, with a twinkle in his eye, “very awkward—for the coo.”

The year after the queen’s accession, railways were opened all over the country, and it was noted as a triumph

of human energy and skill, over time and space, that an engine had travelled at the speed of twenty-seven miles an hour. Since the year 1819, when the first historic steamer, the Savannah, had made its way across the Atlantic, from New York to Liverpool in four weeks, more and more sailing ships had been fitted with steam-engines. The year after the queen's accession, the famous Great Western crossed the ocean from Bristol to New York in fifteen days. Regular service was now established with the New World, and Liverpool rose year by year in importance, till she became one of the greatest ports, not only in England, but in Europe.

Yet another means of bridging over time and space, was now established in England, to spread later over the whole world. Up to this time, letter writing had been the luxury of the rich, the cost of postage being too much for poor people to afford. This story is always told concerning the origin of the penny post in England. Coleridge, the English poet, was one day walking through the Lake district in the north, when he saw the postman deliver a letter to a poor woman at her cottage door. The woman turned it over and examined it, and then returned it, saying she could not afford to pay the postage, which was one shilling. Hearing that the letter was from her brother, Coleridge insisted on paying the postage, in spite of evident unwillingness on the part of the woman. As soon as the postman had ridden off, she showed Coleridge how his money had been wasted. The sheet inside the envelope was blank. They had agreed together, that as long as all went well with him, he should send a blank sheet once a quarter, and thus she had tidings without the expense of postage.

Coleridge told this story to an official in the Post Office, named Rowland Hill. It struck him at once that something must be wrong in a system, which drove a brother and sister to cheat, in order to hear of one another. He at once worked out a scheme of reform. London had had a penny post for years. Could this be extended to the country? Rowland Hill was laughed at. "Of all the wild and extravagant schemes I have ever heard of, this is the wildest and most extravagant," cried the Postmaster-General, while others denounced the idea as "nonsense."

Rowland Hill fought on, and at last made things possible by the introduction of a cheap stamp, since adopted throughout the civilised world. To him also thanks are due, for the introduction of the book-post and money orders, none of which were possible, till after the queen's accession.

Another and yet faster means of communication was now burst upon the astonished world. This was the electric telegraph, first opened for use in 1842. The word telegraph explains itself (*tele*, far off, and *grapho*, I write). It was the result of long years of patient toil. But by a curious coincidence, an American and an Englishman in the same year discovered, how the electric current could be brought into practical use for "sounding alarms in distant places."

Thus the very year of the queen's accession, a line of telegraph was constructed on a railway in the north of England, for the use of railway signals; and a little later, it was taught to print the messages it carried, as it does to-day.

Thus science and speed played their great part in the history of England and in the history of the world. Men and countries were no longer cut off from one another.

Knowledge grew from more to more; commerce increased by leaps and bounds; colonies grew nearer to the mother country, for the long sea-passage was robbed of half its terrors.

"Not in vain the distance beacons.
Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever
down the ringing grooves of change."

5. THE GREAT BOER TREK

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."

—TENNYSON.

It was therefore no small event in the world's history, when in 1826, the first steamer—suitably named the *Enterprise*—made its way, in two months, from England to the Cape of Good Hope. Let us see how the Cape Colony was getting on. After the battle of Waterloo and the fall of Napoleon, there had been great distress throughout the British Isles, and 5000 emigrants had been sent out to the Cape. These had mostly landed on the sandy beach of Algoa Bay. They settled in a district known as Albany, west of the Great Fish River, and were soon building the now flourishing towns of Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown.

Meanwhile the fair prospects, with which the colony had started in 1807, were clouding over. The colonists, especially the Dutch farmers, were discontented. They refused to conform to the new order of things.

"The English want us to use their ploughs, instead of our old wooden ones," they complained. "But we like our old things best. What satisfied our forefathers can satisfy us."

It was a natural cry, wrung from a people, who had so long been cut off from European intercourse.

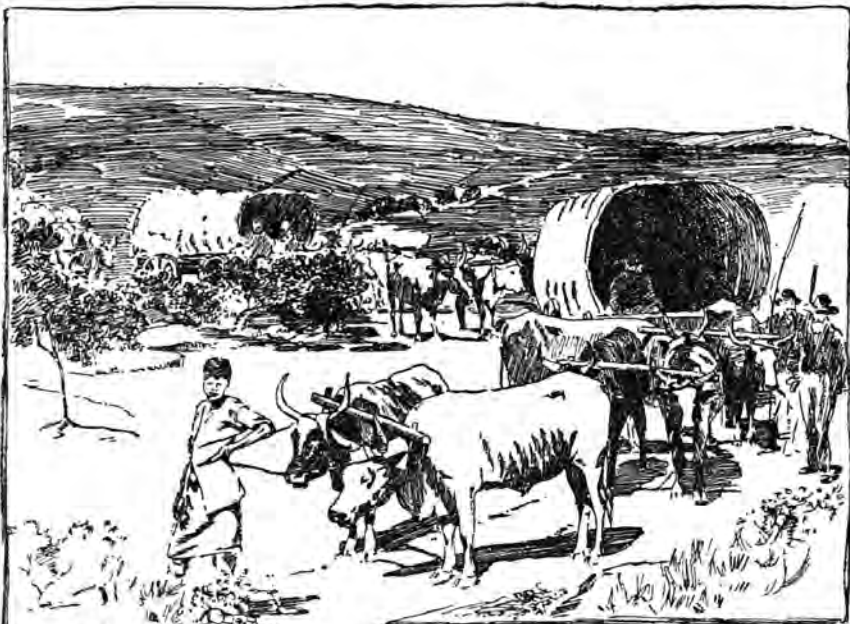
Up to this time, the colonists had used the black Hottentots of the country, as well as the negro slaves imported before 1806, to do their work. It had been slowly dawning on the people in

Europe, that the position of these Hottentots was very wretched. They were, in fact, no better than the four-legged cattle, that made up the live stock of the colony. They were slaves. In 1833, a bill was passed in England freeing all slaves in the British dominions, and decreeing that they should have equal rights with the white men of the colonies. Now in Cape Colony, there were no less than 39,000 slaves.

Compensation for the loss of their slaves was given to the slave-holders, but it was quite inadequate, and numbers of farmers were utterly ruined. Sir Benjamin D'Urban was now sent out from England to govern Cape Colony, to enforce the new Slave Act and to put Europeans and natives on a better footing. It was his first Christmas at the Cape: on New Year's Eve he had a large party of colonists at the Castle, to welcome in the New Year of 1835. Great good humour prevailed, and no one observed that several times during the evening, the Governor left the merry party, which broke up after midnight. Next morning bad news spread. A large force of Kaffirs had invaded the then frontiers of Cape Colony on Christmas Day; they had burnt every farm, killed the colonists, and carried off their sheep and cattle. The Governor knew the worst on the evening of the party: he had not wished to throw a gloom over the colonists, but he had secretly despatched a force under Sir Harry Smith, in the middle of the night. Five days later, the force reached Grahamstown, to find a state of indescribable panic: 456 farms had been destroyed, 50 Europeans slain. It took a year's fighting to drive the Kaffirs back into their own country.

The Dutch farmers were now thoroughly dissatisfied. They did not approve of much that had been done and left undone, so they determined to take an important step.

South Africa was large. There were vast tracts of country



ENSYNGE

yet unexplored. To the north and east lay a great wild land, where they might live that solitary, wandering, unrestrained life, that had become necessary to them. There they might do as they pleased, vexed by no changes in the laws, burdened by no taxes, worried by no English-speaking people. They would leave their farms in the Cape Colony and wander forth into the wilderness. They likened themselves to the Children of Israel, when they went forth from Egypt, from the oppression of Pharaoh. They knew no history

BOER TREK.

or geography, save that contained in their Bibles, and some, amongst them, had dreamy ideas, that they might reach Jerusalem or the Promised Land.

The region toward which they now set their faces, was only known to European travellers seeking sport and adventure. It was a hunter's paradise. Giraffes, elephants, lions filled the forests and covered the plains; there were hippopotami and rhinoceri abounding in the rivers and swamps.

"It is like a zoological gardens turned out to graze," said an early traveller.

The land itself was brown and arid except during the summer rains, and the Boer farmers found a very wilderness before them, as they made their way into the unknown land. Each householder took his wife and children, his flocks and herds, travelling in large canvas-covered waggons drawn by some 16 oxen. Among these was little Paul Kruger, who at the age of nine followed his father's cattle over stretches of plain and veld. It would take too long to tell the romantic story of their wanderings, their conflicts with the natives, their hardships, their sufferings. Heroically they pushed on to Thaba 'Nchu, near the present town of Bloemfontein in the Orange River Colony. A party, under the leadership of Hendrik Potgieter was the first to arrive. Leaving there a little encampment, Potgieter and eleven comrades went off to explore the country to the north. They returned to find that a number of their party had been massacred, by a band of native warriors, known as the Matabili. There was no time to be lost. Potgieter selected a suitable hill near by, lashed fifty waggons together, filled the open spaces with thorn trees, and with forty brave settlers awaited attack. They had not long to wait. The Matabili rushed upon the laager with loud hisses, to be received by a deadly fire from the defenders.

Again and again they rushed on, regardless of death, and with loud war-whoops tried to tear the waggons apart; but the Dutch defended themselves by keeping up a rapid fire, the women loading spare guns for their use, until at last the Matabili had to flee. But they had carried off the emigrants' cattle and left them in great distress. Fortunately a fresh band of emigrants had just arrived under the leadership of Gerrit Maritz, and the two leaders determined to attack the Matabili chief in his kraal. One hundred and seven farmers mustered for the purpose. At break of day one morning, they surprised the Matabili warriors, who took to flight, only to be hunted by the Dutch farmers, till the sun was high in the heavens and 400 of them lay dead. Then the colonists burnt the kraal and returned in triumph to Thaba 'Nchu with 7000 cattle. They formed a camp near the Vet river and called it Winburg, in memory of their victory. Fresh bands of emigrants were now constantly arriving to take possession of this new land to the south of the river Vaal, north of the Orange river, known to-day as the Orange River Colony.

One specially large party arrived under the leadership of Pieter Retief, whose tragic fate must now be told in the story of Natal.