

SOUTH AFRICA CALLING

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

DOREEN COASTING. (South Africa via
the East Coast.)

**CHARTRES, AND HOW TO SEE IT.
A WAYFARER IN MOROCCO.**

THE MIRROR OF KAINZA. (Translation
of *Ames Maghrebiens*. By J. Vattier.)
Etc.



[Frontispiece.

By permission]

WARRIORS IN CIVIL SERVICE. ('Riksha Runners at Durban.)

[S. A. Railways.

SOUTH AFRICA CALLING

By
ALYS LOWTH

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP



CECIL PALMER
CHANDOS STREET
LONDON
W.C.2

FIRST
EDITION
1928
COPY-
RIGHT

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE LONDON AND NORWICH PRESS, LIMITED, ST. GILES' WORKS, NORWICH

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE Author thanks Mr. Rudyard Kipling for his very kind indulgence in allowing her to quote so freely from his books; and asks pardon of the other living writers of whom there has been no time to obtain leave to use their verse or prose in the illumination of this record. She thanks too, for the use of their photographs, Miss Gadd, Mr. Soper, and Mr. W. H. Smith.

“ ‘ Now give us lands where the olives grow,’
Cried the North to the South.
‘ Where the sun with a golden mouth can blow
Blue bubbles of grapes down a vineyard row !’
Cried the North to the South.
‘ Now give us men from the sunless plain,’
Cried the South to the North,
‘ By need of work in the snow and the rain
Made strong and brave by familiar pain !’
Cried the South to the North.”

E. B. BROWNING.

With grateful appreciation to the very kind and cordial hosts and hostesses who added the glow of friendliness to the enchanting beauties of a glorious country, and made this journey so delightful. Heavenly weather, entrancing scenery, marvellous sights, were all enhanced by that generous welcome ; and with the Nut-brown Mayde,

“I am sure of one pleasure,
And shortly it is this—
That where ye be, me seem’th, *pardè*,
I could not fare amiss.”

ALYS LOWTH.

INTRODUCTION

By SIR JAMES HEATH, B.T.

FROM Moffatt the Missionary, whose letters took months to reach their destination, down to to-day's wireless news, for the last century South Africa has been a land of absorbing interest to us all. But we do not know one hundredth part of her attractions . . . and we never will until we learn to look upon her less as a land for exploitation, and more as a fairy god-mother to whom we can with perfect confidence entrust our argosies.

Countless descriptions of South Africa have been drawn, showing its beauty and grandeur; its climate and its wealth; its Junoesque women; its fighting men; its heart-breaking cruelties and its eternal romance. . . . But, though we still await a long story by his magic pen of that "Woman Wonderful,"* no one has given us such pulsing pictures of her "pagan beauty" as Rudyard Kipling. To these vivid verses should the puzzled parents turn who are wondering what to do with their sons and daughters. And in them, too, will be found the inspiration of the wealthy unwise who have put all their surplus money into bonds and other investments doomed to seizure very soon by the State in the guise of Death and Inheritance Duties.

It is to the Overseas Dominions that Great Britain must look for hope in the future. And, with dreams of peace and regeneration in our minds, what better can each one of us do than go forth to visit our own overseas lands and "plant a tree" even if we cannot "dig a well" in that beautiful country "where the healing stillness lies." †

* *South Africa. The Five Nations.* Rudyard Kipling (Macmillan).

† *The Settler. The Five Nations.* Rudyard Kipling (Macmillan).

Unfortunately, judging by all I saw and heard on my recent visit, South Africa is wasting far too much time and energy on useless matters. The Labour Question, and a big increase in the white population, are the two outstanding problems, vital to the whole future of the white races out there: and, even with Boer and Briton pulling loyally together, concentrating all forces on these questions, they will have their work cut out to solve them satisfactorily.

A suggestion I made years ago still seems to me one good way of lessening the native difficulty, namely, the establishment of locations or villages near all big towns, mines, factories, and so on. The South Rand Collieries, for instance, could well afford to set aside some of their 70,000 acres between Heidelberg and the Vaal for the use of their natives, wherein they could build their kraals, run their cattle, grow their corn, thus enabling the men to live a natural home life while carrying out their contracts. The present system of divorcing them from their own folk is entirely wrong, and the cause of two-thirds of all the trouble. The native is essentially a domestic animal: if he can live at home and go to work daily, as white men do, there is no reason why he should not be perfectly contented, and even averse to changing his lot. It would do away with the necessity of scouring the country for labour and continually introducing strangers; while making it very much easier to locate any possible unrest. And as the kraals would have their own responsible headmen to keep order, their existence would reduce the cost of police.

Far from complicating that other burning question,—the poor whites, this, leading as it would to lower wages, would simplify it. For when native labour is so cheap that every little agriculturist can hire his "boy" to carry his tools, that fell spectre of "caste" will disappear, and we can send out our tens of thousands of ploughmen and tree planters to group farms and afforestation estates, to be paid on results and in kind, happy in the fact that, as they are attended by native henchmen, the dignity and honour of the white race is not being debased by their work.

This matter of the poor white is a bogey that has assumed huge proportions since the institution of the "Dole." Consequently South Africa very naturally feels that while there is plenty of room for the determined worker, there is greater need of the men who will create employment. We do not hear nearly enough of this need, nor the opportunities of filling it, for the Popular Press that absorbs so much of our reading time is far too parochially minded to be of any real help in the solving of Imperial problems.

The thoughts of Capitalists, small as well as big, will have to turn into other channels than the dead alleys that are stifling expansion to-day. In South Africa there are hundreds of new industries awaiting birth: thousands of innovations ready to be formed on parent stems,—to become independent plants by the time the heirs of their gardeners are ready to profit by them.

At present our people are lamentably blind to the possibilities latent in our overseas countries. This book shows how easy and how pleasant are the ways open to those who would see what South Africa has to offer.

And since the most imperative of all reasons for our going is the twofold duty of finding means for increasing the white population there while helping the emigration of our surplus workers here, to quote Mr. Kipling once again, let us not :

“ hold
Aloof till great occasion rise,
But serve, full-harnessed, as of old,
The days that are the destinies.”

JAMES HEATH.

FOREWORD

ONE object of this book is to give intending visitors to South Africa a better idea of the actual travelling they will do in a tour of the country than is usually gathered from perusal of pamphlets and time-tables.

Its more important mission is to show that opportunity is there, awaiting the enterprising ; but that it is unwise to rely upon old conservative notions, and upon correspondence, if our people wish to enter into really satisfactory relations with the folk overseas. To go out, see what the country is like, find out conditions, and discover the actual needs of various localities, is the only way in these days of keen competition. Nothing less than personal acquaintance can convey all the details and inwardness of requirements in a place so vastly different, and with a population of such varied and distinctive characteristics.

A field of unlimited possibilities is open in South Africa ; British merchants do not seem to realise that it is equally open to their many rivals. America is sending—not in twos and threes, but in thousands—her keenly observant, most pleasantly sympathetic, advance-guard, who have already done far more than survey the ground. American motor-cars ; American typewriters ; American agricultural implements ; even American citrus-fruit essences and pineapple preserves in that land of oranges, and where *ananas* grow like weeds ! Germany pines to re-establish herself on her prosperous pre-war footing, and is not one whit less go ahead and progressive, but possibly more so, for her temporary check. Italy has gone the length of fitting up and financing a floating exhibition of her goods, which voyages periodically all round the coast, and makes warm friends

as well as substantial customers in every port. . . . These are only the three most important of myriads desirous of new trade.

But there is room for all, since new trade brings new population in its train. And Great Britain has her own special attributes in commerce—of which broad-visioned co-operation with that of other peoples is not the least attractive. But . . . if we do not shake off the lethargy that seems to be clogging enterprise just now, all these others will crowd us out.

And this is a moment when the opportunities for finding out at first hand the openings now existing, and that can be made, are greater than ever before. It is as easy to get to Africa as to Italy, even to its hithermost fastnesses. And the question of language is no obstacle. English is understood, even by the Dutchmen who pretend they know nothing but the *Taal*. But the Dutch—as traders—are still in the minority; and, excepting up-country store-keepers and farmers, practically all business can be, and generally is, done in English. Nevertheless—and especially at the moment—a knowledge of Dutch is always an *Open Sesame*; in addition, it is a protection against the wily; and the *Taal* is so easy to learn that the truly earnest and ambitious can arrive at a very fair working knowledge of it between Southampton and Cape Town . . . if he is a good sailor, and strong to defy the attractions of “sports” on the voyage.

The remarkably liberal terms now offered by the Union Castle Company and the South African Railways put a tour within the means of even the smallest manufacturer and trader to-day. By taking advantage of special rates and periods, he can go out, travelling first-class on both ship and train, for about 50s. a day, including travelling, food, and all accommodation in first-rate hotels, and visit all the occupied territory at his leisure. And he would indeed be a poor thing who returned without orders—sufficient, at least, to show a handsome profit on his outlay—and furnished

with invaluable first-hand knowledge of what is wanted and how to get it there.

After this, it is purely a question of energy, common-sense, tact, and such other attributes as every capable man and woman possesses. The good wheat is there, ready for harvesting; and every British man and woman in the country has a welcome for a fellow Briton in preference to "foreigners."

But—and they cite many excellent reasons for the fact—there are far too many, both Boer and British, in South Africa who are inclined to think with some of the Americans of a few years back that England is altogether too apt to disdain other people's opinions; in their own way they echo the Editor of the "Bigelow Papers" in his assertion that:

"Of all the sarse that I kin call to mind,
England do make the most unpleasant kind;
It's you're the sinner, ollers; she's the saint:
What's good's all English, all what isn't, ain't."

And, unhappily again, there are far too many indications that our people are content to remain supine, indifferently looking on while the harvest is gleaned by more go-ahead thrusters. Why? . . . with our million unemployed fast turning Great Britain into a pauper state!

.

Here, in London, there are plenty of advisers ready to set unaccustomed feet in the right track.

In the 1820 Settlers' Association, of 199, Piccadilly, there are experts on all subjects connected with the taking up of land and residence anywhere within the Union and Rhodesia.

At 24 St. James' Street an office in the name of Overseas Tours has been opened by Major Hendrick-Cooke, O.B.E., F.R.G.S., who was for some years the moving spirit in the Cape Peninsular Publicity Association. Knowing every part of South and East Africa well,—in addition to most of the rest of the globe!—he has established this bureau with a special regard for visitors to those regions. By

regarding all who consult him as individuals, with individual tastes, aims, and idiosyncrasies, Major Hendrick-Cooke is able to make their ways exceptionally easy and pleasant. He is creating a long-wanted and badly-needed enterprise,—the personal, experienced, and understanding direction of visitors to, and potential settlers in, our own particular land of Hope and Glory.

And at the Offices of the High Commissioner, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square; and of Rhodesia, North and South, in Kingsway, are the Fountain-heads of all information, with kindly and knowledgeable advisers on every aspect of the question. Here may be studied files of the local papers, with all the Blue Books, Statistics, Reports, and other Weighty Matter that the aspirant cares to digest. By arrangement he can, too, actually see something of the country on the cinematograph screen.

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So a trip to South Africa is, to-day, all in the ordinary routine of an up-to-date member of the trading world anxious to extend, or to improve connections already made. There is nothing formidable about it. It is not even expensive, considering that lodging and food are included in the cost. And it can be made the occasion of the usual annual holiday.

South Africa is a land of enchantment; of grandeurs, mysteries, sweetnesses, and charm impossible to convey in words.

It has its ugly aspects, too—its cruelties, tragedies, sordidness, meannesses. . . . But so, God wot, has Great Britain!

To the adventurous, the gallant-hearted, the ambitious, the enterprising—even to the merely persistent plodder—it offers a million chances to one at home, with immense possibilities for fresh custom, increased output, bigger profit. . . . Yet, not with ease are these treasures to be found. The seeker must be dogged, enduring, determined; reliable; absolutely straightforward; and . . . keep his sense of humour bright. Above all, he must leave every

atom of prejudice behind,—prejudice in all and every form—personal, social, racial, religious, commercial. . . .

.

A lot of baggage is always a nuisance, but rarely more so than in Africa. And it is totally unnecessary, since everything can be bought on the spot. There are excellent shops in all the big towns, with ample choice at remarkably moderate prices. Unless going out in the winter time to the regions of the high veld there is no need for heavy clothing of any kind. For women, a light overcoat, an "invisible" mackintosh (for use against dust rather than rain) and a light-weight coat and skirt for contingencies; the rest, frocks of washing silk or uncrushable cotton. Not too many, but all very simple. Men wear light tweeds and flannels; in the hottest weather mixtures of silk and fine wool, or simple tussorees, seem most popular.

There is no need to carry books. There are well furnished libraries on board for the voyage; and every town in Africa has book-shops.

All chemists, in addition to stationers and most of the booksellers, stock Kodaks, with all accessories. But it is difficult to get parts, or repairs done, for any other make of camera.

Umbrellas are needed about once in a thousand years. But rain-proof sunshades, with short handles so that they can be packed into suit-cases, are necessary. And the chiffon veil that can be twisted round the crown, or left to hang down at the back when not needed, is a most useful protection against dust when motoring, and flies and mosquitoes when walking or sitting still.

The light, inexpensive suit-cases are in every way preferable to leather. They are easily handled; and when damaged, easily replaced. Heavy, silver-mounted, costly dressing-cases are more nuisance than they are worth; and a needless temptation to put in the way of the usually remarkably honest railway folk who act as housemaids on the trains and handle the baggage at stations.

A light woollen rug, and a down cushion in leather carrying case, are always useful, and can with advantage take the place of bedding on the trains.

.

Lastly, there is the Spanish proverb :

“Dete Dios, hijo, ventura, que ella traera lo demas.”
(God give thee luck, my son ; with that, the rest will come.)

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* *My Memories*. Lord Suffield.

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APPENDIX I

SOME EXCURSIONS FROM CAPE TOWN

SOMERSET STRAND. 25 miles. Close to Capex Works. From here it is easy to get to Gordon's Bay, Sir Lowry's Pass, and Caledon,—where there are chalybeate baths and a sanatorium. A flower show is held here early in October.

STELLENBOSCH. 31 miles. Wellington, 36 miles, for the Huguenot Seminary, founded on the lines of the famous Holyoke Seminary of U.S.A.

PAARL. 36 miles. Nice old village, and the jumping-off place for Frenchhoek and other valleys of the Groot Drakenstein and Berg River,—all a fruit district, and reminiscent of the French Huguenots who were the first settlers there.

TULBAGH. 75 miles. Famous for wild flowers. The Dutch Reformed Church built here in 1743 is now a Museum of Antiques.

CERES. 95 miles. Famous for fruit and good fishing, and the famous Mitchell's Pass.

All these are within easy motoring distance, but the railway is much less expensive than car-hire, when cost is a consideration.

APPENDIX II

DISTANCES BY RAIL FROM CAPE TOWN

GARDEN ROUTE

	Miles.	Feet above sea level.
Paarl	36	405
Worcester	109	795
Mossel Bay	311	21
George	391	740
Oudtshoorn	396	1,005
Uitenhage	652	169
Port Elizabeth	673	13
Port Elizabeth by sea from Cape Town	428	

DISTANCES BY RAIL FROM CAPE TOWN

	Miles.	Feet above sea level.
Beaufort West.. .. .	339	2,792
De Aar	501	4,079
Bloemfontein	750	4,568
Aliwal North from Bloemfontein tein	182	4,447
Kimberley	647	4,012
Vryburg	774	3,890
Mafeking	870	4,194
Buluwayo	1,362	4,469
Salisbury	1,659	4,825
Victoria Falls	1,642	2,994
Broken Hill	2,017	3,874
Elizabethville	2,308	3,500
Bukama*	2,600	2,600

* Limit of present line due north.

Bukama to Lake Tanganyika is approximately	380 miles.
Bukama to Lake Victoria Nyanza is approximately	675 ..
Bukama to present nearest point, Egyptian Railways, approximately	1,600 ..

NORTH-WEST FROM CAPE TOWN

	Miles.	Feet above sea level.
Johannesburg	1,011	5,735
Pretoria	1,040	4,471
Messina	1,385	1,948
Beira	2,034	
Lourenco Marques	1,350	
Durban	1,265	

JOHANNESBURG TO DURBAN

	Miles.	Feet above sea level.
Heidelberg	33	5,026
Standerton	105	5,022
Volksrust	165	5,429
Majuba.. .. .	174	5,225
Newcastle	205	3,898
Glencoe Junction	242	4,302
Elandslaagate	267	3,614
Ladysmith	283	3,284
Colenso.. .. .	300	3,156
Estcourt	327	3,738
Cedara	389	3,541
'Maritzburg	402	2,218
Durban	473	I

APPENDIX III

BY RAIL FROM PORT ELIZABETH

	Miles.	Feet above sea level
Klipplaat	128	2,032
Kendrew	165	2,015
Graaff Reinet	185	2,463
Rosmead via G. Reinet ..	283	4,007
Rosmead via Alicedale ..	243	4,007
Naauwpoort	270	4,884
De Aar	339	4,079
Cape Town	839	15
Grahamstown via Alicedale ..	107	1,745
Addo (for Sundays River) ..	32	116
Cookhouse	127	1,900
Adelaide	169	1,966
Adelaide, Cradock	181	2,855
King William's Town ..	259	1,275
East London	301	151
East London (by sea) ..	65	
Durban (by sea)	384	

APPENDIX V

RAILWAY AMENITIES

THE fastest trains now scheduled between Johannesburg and Cape Town are the *Union Express*,—leaving Cape Town every Monday at 10.45 a.m., to arrive in Johannesburg at 5.25 on Tuesday afternoon; and the *European Mail*,—leaving Johannesburg at 8.45 p.m. on Sundays and Thursdays, and arriving at Cape Town at 2 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays. The distance is 965 miles, the time occupied 29 hours, 23 minutes.

There are many arrangements on the railways in South Africa for the convenience and pleasure of passengers that our railway authorities at home might copy with great advantage and profit. Travellers from overseas, for instance, who purchase return tickets for distances of over 100 miles from their port of disembarkation, are allowed 13 months to complete the return if they show, when booking, a certificate from their S.S. company to prove that they have come from abroad and hold return S.S. tickets. Similar privileges are granted to passengers proceeding overseas; and the tickets may, if necessary, be extended, on payment of certain charges.

Ten-day excursion tickets at single fares for the double journeys are granted at Easter and certain other seasons; week-end tickets are from Friday at 5 p.m. to midnight on Mondays, at single fares; and there are evening excursions every night between 5 p.m. and midnight, at single fares for the double journey, so that seaside and country people can get into town for the evening, as well as town people being able to enjoy an evening by the sea or in the country. Then

there are most generous arrangements for circular tours, made in conjunction with the various S.S. lines ; and long-distance tours at greatly reduced fares according to the mileage. 1,000 miles at £8 7s., 2,000 £16, 3,000 £20 6s., and 4,000 £23 8s. 5d., with a special discount for overseas tourists. In addition there is a special rate for return tickets to the Victoria Falls, from any station in the Union, between September 1 and May 1 inclusive, valid for thirty days, and allowing breaks on the return journey.

By taking a book of coupons for the meals on the train, a reduction is made for the three meals, working out at 7s. 6d. a day. A "round" charge is made, also, for bedding, of 3s. 6d. for one or more consecutive nights of a journey.

There is no extra charge for use of the dining-car, as on our Pullmans,—the dining-saloons are for the use of the passengers, and not for the profit of concessionaires.

But goods rates are high,—very much to the detriment of fruit and produce growers, much of whose profits are consequently lost, to their great discouragement. As the Railway Administration is, on the whole, very fair and liberal-minded, this will, no doubt, be remedied ere long.

Baggage : 100 lbs. is allowed to first class passengers ; 75 lbs. to second ; and such articles as typewriters, sewing-machines, saddles, musical instruments, perambulators, chairs,—including invalid's chairs,—are permitted as ordinary baggage if accompanied by the owner.

The charges for collection of baggage are remarkably small compared to ours, ranging from 3d. per packet of 100 lbs. or less in some places, to 1s. per packet of 100 lbs. or less in others,—where facilities are not so good. In Cape Town the charges are regulated according to distance : in zone 1, 8d. per 100 lbs. or 4d. per packet, or 1s. per consignment ; up to 1s. per 100 lbs. in zone 3, 6d. per packet, and 2s. per consignment ; and as cab fares are high, and the cabby charges for each package, however small, it is best to let the railway take it all to its destination, even when cabbng oneself.

APPENDIX VI

THE POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS

THE Post Office, too, has admirable points. Agricultural parcel post enables parcels of any local produce,—groceries, fruits, vegetables, dairy produce, eggs, poultry, plants, —to be carried at cheap rates throughout the Union. A parcel of vegetables or fish, or fruit, for instance, weighing 19 lbs. costs only 1s., though its destination may involve carriage of 200 miles by rail, post-cart, and native runner.

The total sum of money passing through the combined Departments of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone amounts to over £2,000,000 a year,—pretty good, with a population of under two million.

Demands for debts up to £10 may be served through postmasters. And depositors with savings bank certificates draw 4% per annum; and are able to obtain, for use when travelling, books of circular warrants up to £50, payable at sight at any savings bank post office in the Union. Further, they can transfer their deposit without charge to the United Kingdom, India, or any other British possession, and have them retransferred when desired.

APPENDIX VII

A MOUNTAINEERING EXCURSION

As an example of a modest mountaineering excursion, the following notes from an article by W. M. F., in the *Argus* of April, 1927, will be useful to those who have time to spare and inclination to attempt a small ascent :

“Many people in rambling round the Cape,—even members of the Mountain Club,—miss the ascent of the Devil’s Peak. There is more than one way to the summit, but the best lies over the north slope of the range. In hot summer days the path seems like a trip through the Inferno, but at this time of the year, just before the rainy season sets in, and while the weather is cool, it makes a pleasant day. . . .

“An experienced guide is not necessary unless mist is expected, but his presence may be of great help to a party of novices. The ramble needs a whole day . . . so we leave town by an early bus on the de Waal route, and alight at the tickey stage.* From there an old car road leads gently up the hill towards the peak, marking the first stage of the journey.

“The ascent is very gradual. After an hour’s walk we reach the Forester’s Cottage, 1,400 feet, which stands just below the King’s Blockhouse,—guarded by two ancient cannon. Follow a path leading to the left, for a quarter of a mile before coming to the Waterfall Ravine,—an ideal spot for a rest, surrounded on all sides by luxuriant undergrowth and towering cliffs, with a stream of water that makes it the right place for morning tea. The views are among the best in the Peninsula. . . .

“After this, the best way is to retrace one’s steps until a

* A tickey is the local term for a threepenny bit.

point immediately above the blockhouse is reached ; from there take up the old route. There is wide choice of paths here. Turning to the left, we walk in the direction of Kloof Nek ; then take the first zigzag path leading upward, and follow, always ascending, until the broad, grassy shoulder between peak and mountain is reached.

“ This is 2,700 feet above sea level. Those who climb the remaining 300 odd feet to the summit will be rewarded by the view. Half an hour’s easy walking up the grassy slope will bring the rambler on to the peak proper, and in sight of a most impressive panorama.

“ Away in the north is Dassen Island ; in the bay Robben Island stands out of the sea ; over towards the east lie the flats, with the sombre purple background of Hottentot’s Holland mountains ; to the south the deep blue waters of False Bay wash the shores of the Peninsular, whence jut out Cape Point and Hangklip. In the foreground, but far below, are the vineyard and orchards of Constantia, and the beautifully wooded slopes of Groote Schuur. Turning back to the north is Table Bay . . . and all the landmarks of the city spread behind it can be picked out. . . .

“ Water can be obtained on the saddle in wet weather, but in dry, sufficient should be carried. Firewood and shade are easily found for a camp.

“ An alternative route for the descent is to make for the Contour Path and Kloof Nek. A short walk from the saddle to the side of Table Mountain leads to a steep and well-beaten path leading down into the woods below. This track, easily followed,—and found,—will carry one over the slope and through the woods to the Contour Path, and on in the direction of Lion’s Head. Above and under the entrance to Platte Klippe Gorge will be seen the stream overflowing the path. This is the place for supper, if late,—for tea, if early. The Contour Path broadens out into a roadway as it proceeds towards the Nek ; passes the workings of the aerial way to the summit of Arrow Face, and joins the Camp’s Bay tramway lines under the shadow of Lion’s Head . . . and so, by tram or car, back to Cape Town. . . .”

NOTE TO READERS

SHOULD further information be needed, the author will be very pleased to answer any letters sent to the publisher's care : and can recommend, to any wishing to tour South Africa with a private guide-companion, a lady who knows the country very well, and is an excellent traveller.

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