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HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY
OF
AFRICA SOUTH OF THE ZAMBESI
VOL. I.
1505 to 1795

By Dr. G. M. THEAL.

SERIES I.

HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF AFRICA
SOUTH OF THE ZAMBESI

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PORTUGUESE AT SOFALA IN
SEPTEMBER 1505 TO THE CONQUEST OF THE CAPE
COLONY BY THE BRITISH IN SEPTEMBER 1795.

VOL. I.—The Portuguese in South Africa from 1505 to 1700.

VOL. II.—Formation of the Cape Colony by the Dutch.

VOL. III.—Account of the Dutch, Portuguese, Hottentots, and
Bantu.

SERIES II.

HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1795.

VOL. I. . . . 1795—1828.

VOL. II. . . . 1828—1846.

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VOL. IV. (The Republics) 1854—1872.

VOL. V. . . . 1861—1872.

HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY
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FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PORTUGUESE AT SOFALA IN
SEPTEMBER 1505 TO THE CONQUEST OF THE CAPE
COLONY BY THE BRITISH IN SEPTEMBER 1795,

BY

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FORMERLY KEEPER OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE CAPE COLONY, AND AT PRESENT
COLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHER

IN THREE VOLUMES

WITH MAPS AND PLATES

VOL. I.

THE PORTUGUESE IN SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1505 TO 1700



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P R E F A C E.

IN this, the third edition of my history of South Africa before the conquest of the Cape Colony by Great Britain in September 1795, I have added so largely to the information previously given concerning the Bushmen, or the aborigines of the country, the Hottentots, and particularly the Bantu immigrants, that I think it right to alter the old title by inserting the words "and Ethnography" in it.

Each volume, as before, covers a distinct period, and may therefore be regarded to some extent as a complete work of itself. Thus, the one in the reader's hands deals with the Portuguese in South Africa before the close of the seventeenth century, volume ii is devoted to an account of the Dutch colony in its early days, and volume iii brings the whole down to the fall of the Netherlands East India Company and the substitution of the British for the Dutch flag on the castle of Good Hope.

The history of South Africa after the British conquest forms a separate work, and consists of five volumes, including one just sent to the press.

Before I entered the civil service of the Cape Colony in 1877 I had been engaged for many years in studying the traditions, habits, and power of thought of the Bantu tribes of the south-eastern coast, and the knowledge gained thereby led, on the outbreak of the ninth war with the Xosas, to my being requested by Governor Sir Bartle Frere to fill a post then considered to be one of considerable difficulty. I had already prepared a short History and Geography of South Africa, which was printed at the Lovedale missionary institution, and quickly passed through three editions. I had also collected among different Bantu tribes a number

of folklore tales, some of which were published in magazines, and others at a later date in a small volume issued in London. I had likewise gradually got together an excellent library of books in different languages relating to South Africa, but had not been able to consult the early manuscript records of the Portuguese, Dutch, or English governments, which, indeed, were then generally believed to have perished.

An opportunity to make the researches necessary for a larger and more accurate history than the one I had already prepared was given to me by the different ministers of the Cape Colony that held office from the 9th of May 1881 to the 21st of February 1904, who provided me with such employment that I had access to records of all kinds out of office hours. While nearly every member of those ministries expressed a warm interest in the work I was doing, I must particularly mention the names of three men to whom I am deeply indebted for encouragement and such assistance as I have mentioned.

The first of these is the honourable J. W. Sauer, always the staunch supporter of thorough research, a close student of history himself, and interested to a very high degree in South African ethnology. To him I owe so much that I am well within the bounds of truth when I say that without his aid these volumes could not have been written. To him students are indebted for the publication of the *Basutoland Records* and the *Genealogical Register of old Cape Families*, for both were carried out by his instructions.

The second is the late right honourable C. J. Rhodes. It was by his wish that the Dutch edition of one of my books was published, and it was he who initiated my visit to different archive offices in Europe in search of ancient records relating to the Portuguese in South Africa and to the Bantu. On this duty I was engaged from 1896 to 1904, though, as was always the case in South Africa, I had other work more properly connected with the duties of a civil servant to do during ordinary office hours. In

this instance my regular employment was the copying and publication of the English records of the Cape Colony commencing with the year 1793, to be found in the Public Record Office, the Colonial Office, and the Library of the British Museum in London, but I was allowed the privilege of working three or four hours every day beyond those usually spent by public servants in offices, and making use of as much time as was gained in this manner in researches on the continent. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to the ministers who gave me this privilege, and I think I can add that I did not abuse it, for during the nine years that I was so engaged I published for the Cape government thirty-six volumes of those English records, all minutely indexed. In referring at the end of volume iii of this work to the nine volumes of Portuguese *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, with English translations, that I also published during this time, I shall speak more fully of the part taken by Mr. Rhodes in this matter.

The third is the right honourable Sir J. Gordon Sprigg, than whom no one could have shown more sympathy with this work than he did from the time that he succeeded Mr. Rhodes as prime minister to the day when he vacated office in February 1904. It was with him and with the honourable W. P. Schreiner—who also during his term of office as prime minister expressed warm interest in the researches I was making—that all my official correspondence was carried on during the time I was engaged in Europe down to February 1904. In every way that was possible, consistently with public duty, I received encouragement from Sir Gordon Sprigg.

To different governors of the Cape Colony I am likewise indebted for the interest they took in my work. Sir Bartle Frere, the highly gifted, assisted me in various ways, planned out sections for me, discussed various details, and the last letter that ever he wrote, or one of the very last, was to me in connection with it. His interest in South Africa ceased only with his life.

Cheery Sir George Grey, as long as his faculties lasted, corresponded with me about it and gave me information of importance. He was a man whose good opinion any one might have been proud of having.

To Lord Loch too, who as high commissioner often entrusted me with duties connected with Bantu beyond the Cape Colony, and who in that way gave me opportunities of acquiring information of value, whose warm letter of sympathy when many of my books and all my papers were destroyed by fire I cannot forget, my sincere thanks are due.

Another honoured name that demands acknowledgment from me is that of President Brand, the peacemaker of South Africa. He threw open to me the archives of the Orange Free State without any reserve, supplied me with the proceedings of the volksraad and all printed papers as soon as they were issued, and expressed his desire to assist me in any way that he could.

President and governors and Mr. Rhodes are all now in the silent land, where my voice of thanks can no longer reach them, but to their memories what I have said is due. They held opinions in politics differing widely from each other, and I avoided politics most carefully in order that my narrative should be absolutely unbiassed, but they all approved of my motive and did what they could to forward my work. Many other names too of individuals connected with South Africa I might mention, but it is impossible to place on record more than these.

Generally to the officers of archive departments and public libraries in London, Paris, Rome, the Hague, and elsewhere, I am under obligation for unceasing kindness and courtesy in assisting me, though I fear I must often have given them more than a little trouble. Many a time have some of them gone far beyond their official duty in trying to help me, when they noticed how anxious I was not to lose a moment that could be made use of.

And now my work is brought to a close, though it does not extend so far into the past as I hoped before 1904 to

carry it. I cannot say, for I do not know, why the ministry that came into power in February 1904 chose to bring my researches to an end. I can only say that pecuniary reasons had nothing whatever to do with it, for it would not have cost the public treasury a sixpence had I been permitted to continue my work two or three years longer in the manner I proposed, but which was not agreed to. I had reached one of the most important periods in the past of South Africa, and not unnaturally my inclination was to make researches in it and to complete as far as was in my power the work that so many of the highest intellects in the country had taken an interest in. The ministry decided otherwise, and as my pecuniary means would not admit of the severance of my connection with the government in order to go on with it, there was nothing for me but to carry out the instructions I received. I then turned my attention from collecting more materials, probably for other men to use, to making use myself of a quantity of material already in my possession, and which I have incorporated in the edition of my *History and Ethnography* now being issued. I must therefore beg of my readers to be generous and forgive me for the shortcomings in my book, for commencing my narrative with the arrival of the Portuguese instead of with the crossing of the Zambesi by the first Bantu invaders of the south and giving a detailed account of the movements of the tribes thereafter. That must be done by some other hand more favoured by fortune than mine.

GEO. M. THEAL.

WYNBERG, CAPR COLONY, *May*, 1907.

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