

# SOUTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS.

## LETTERS FROM A NELSONIAN.

In view of the state of social and political affairs in South Africa, the appended extracts from letters written by Mr W. W. Anderson to his father, Mr W. B. Anderson, of Riwaka, on his way from the Transvaal to England, should be read with much interest:—

“ Delagoa Bay, 23rd Oct., 1898. . . .

It is possible that I may be able to write you a series of letters now that you may find rather more interesting than those which you have received from me during the past 12 months, as the boat calls at several ports on the voyage, and I shall make notes as I go on and embody them in letters to you. I shall take press copies of them as a record of the trip for myself. . . . I got a native to carry my luggage down to the Company's railway line, and travelled down to Avoca, hanging on to the back of my engine with my baggage in an empty coal truck which is the luxurious accommodation that the Sheba Company provide. It is about 170 miles to here; part of the journey I had the company of two other fellows who left the same day, for Johannesburg but the greater part of the journey I had the carriage to myself. The day was extremely warm, and we simply sat and perspired, staring out of the window. At a place called Kaapmuiden we changed trains and parted company after having lunch at the restaurant. And a very good lunch too—after Sheba fare we appreciated it. When I got back to the carriage I felt rather uncomfortable, as the leather belt round my waist and under my clothing in which I carry my money seemed to have become too tight. I passed Komati Port where John and Willie Finlayson were for some time constructing the railway, and where I think it was that Willie Finlayson took the fever that ended his life. I believe it is between there and the next station—Marsia—that the border is between the Transvaal and this Portuguese colony. The change is instantly apparent between the two stations. The country throughout the journey is very monotonous indeed—for the first 30 or 40 miles like the De

**Kaap district**—rugged, mountainous, and dreary. Then, as it were, the hills begin to subside, and the level country to extend until in some places we passed through what were plains, in some cases stretching as far as the eye could reach, but all through the same long, coarse, dried-up-looking grass and stunted trees and bushes in clumps or dotted over the land, at regular intervals. Away from the railway station no sign of a human being or even of sheep or cattle or cultivation of any kind. Towards the end of the journey I

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noticed a peculiar heavy haze in the atmosphere, which cut off the view behind a certain distance, and which at first made me look curiously to make sure that we had come suddenly in sight of the city. On arrival in this city—Lorenzo Marques—I got my luggage passed through the Customs without difficulty, and putting myself into the hands of a hotel tout and my luggage on to the shoulders of four or five natives, I tramped through the streets until I arrived at the hotel where I am staying. . . . They have the money exchange nuisance here. I called in at a French barber's last night and got my hair cut and a shave. "How much to pay?" "Eight hundred reis please?" "Eight hundred what?" I thought my trip was knocked on the head, and that if I managed to pay that bill and my fare back to the Sheba I should be lucky. However, Frenchy explained that 3s would do as well, So it ought—it is more than the other amount."

*(To be Continued.)*

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