

**BUSH LIFE; OR,
WOMAN'S ADVENTURES
AMONG THE CAFFRES**

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Bush Life; Or, Woman's Adventures Among the Caffres by Mrs. Fenton Aylmer

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A WOMAN'S ADVENTURES AMONG
THE CAFFRES



LONDON
WARD AND LOCK, FLEET STREET
MDCCLXII

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BUSH LIFE;

OR,

A WOMAN'S ADVENTURES AMONG THE CAFFRES.

EDITED BY

MRS. FENTON AYLMER,

AUTHOR OF

"MEMOIRS OF A LADY IN WAITING."

"Charity is praised of all, and fear not thou that praise; God will
not love thee less because men love thee more."

TURPIN'S Proverbial Philosophy.

LONDON

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE interesting narrative of Mrs. Colonel Somerset's adventures in Caffraria is compiled from letters and notes placed in the keeping of a regimental school-master. Having permission to make what use of them he pleased, he had them arranged, during his stay at the Cape, in the form of a journal. This document fell under my eye, and my attention was so powerfully drawn to the contents of the little volume, that I could not refrain from soliciting permission to place it before the world in its present dress, with the fervent hope that it might be the means of perpetuating the recollection of the self-sacrifice of Helen Somerset (whom many will, no doubt, recognise), as well as of securing for a misguided but noble people the powerful advocacy of every inhabitant of this great empire.

BUSH LIFE ;

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CHAPTER I.

"Out upon time ; it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before."

BYRON.

"I know not how it is,
But a foreboding presses on my heart."

PROCTOR.

PEOPLE who visit Cape Town now have little idea what a different place it was about thirty years ago.

Strange old observances were then still kept up. Laws—or, more correctly, shadows of laws—introduced by the earliest settlers, had become a mere name ; and where any single custom still existed, it had become so tainted and perverted that the

mother country would undoubtedly have denied her child.

Gradually English habits began to take a lead, and with them English justice stole in, silently but eventually eradicating the weeds of former years ; and, though little permanent good was yet effected, and no very evident change visible, the old residents began to talk of the changes that had taken place, of the way things were done in their day, and to look cheerfully forward to a settled government.

It was about this time that Mrs. Somerset reached Cape Town. The change in society since she had spent some months there, as a girl, was very evident, and afforded her great amusement during the time she awaited the arrival of her two daughters, who, having been sent to England when children, for the double purpose of avoiding the climate of India and obtaining a good education, were now upon the point of being reunited to their anxious and loving parent. Of Mrs. Somerset little need at present be said. The only daughter of an old Indian officer, she had married, when almost a child, a subaltern in a British regiment, whose noble relations, after pointing out his folly in thus hampering himself with a wife at such an age, one by one gave up writing to him. The last letter he received enclosed a cheque for a hundred pounds from the uncle who had acted through life as his parent, and from whom, naturally enough, he looked

for a parent's help. With the hundred pounds was a great deal of good advice, and much praise of a young lady to whom he had imagined his nephew attached, but, on finding his mistake, chose to make Lady A——, by marrying her himself.

Nowise disconcerted by the changes at home, Harry Somerset, as he said himself, "kicked care to the winds"—wrote a polite set of congratulations to his uncle and new aunt, and, trusting to his own right hand, took Fortune by the forelock.

Chance gave him an opportunity of sailing out, and obtaining a cadetship in the Hon. East India Company's service; and there, with his father-in-law's ready help, he rose rapidly and steadily, inwardly blessing the day that saw him change his uniform, and perfectly careless as to the numerous cousins who grew and multiplied between him and the old title. Many children had blessed his union, though two only survived the first few days of life; and bitter was the trial experienced by the Colonel and his wife when the medical men pointed out the necessity of sending their last two treasures to health-restoring England. Weary had been the years that passed by while the children sprung up from little pale infants to blooming, lovely girls. Likenesses were sent every year, and every year the Colonel saw he might well be proud of his daughters; yet, to Mrs. Somerset's heart, the frank,