

**SOUTH AFRICA A CENTURY
AGO; LETTERS WRITTEN
FROM THE CAPE OF GOOD
HOPE (1797-1801)**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649709458

South Africa a Century Ago; Letters Written from the Cape of Good Hope (1797-1801) by Anne Barnard & W. H. Wilkins

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ANNE BARNARD & W. H. WILKINS

**SOUTH AFRICA A CENTURY
AGO; LETTERS WRITTEN
FROM THE CAPE OF GOOD
HOPE (1797-1801)**

TO
THE VISCOUNTESS MELVILLE
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

THE letters which form this book were written by Lady Anne Barnard from Cape Colony to the first Viscount Melville, then the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, Treasurer of the Navy, and President of the Board of Control in Pitt's first Administration, during the earliest British occupation of South Africa, a century ago.

These letters remained among the archives at Melville Castle for a hundred years. They are now published by permission of the present Lord Melville, to whom the manuscripts belong. There is no need to dwell upon the peculiar fitness of their publication at the present time, when South African affairs loom large in men's minds. But the circumstances under which they were written lend to them an especial interest. They are not merely the letters of a clever woman to her intimate friend, but those of the wife of the first Secretary of Cape Colony to the Secretary of State at home. Lord Melville was the Minister

chiefly responsible for the annexation of Cape Colony by the English. Almost alone among British statesmen, he early recognised the importance of our keeping the Cape, not only because of its value as a station on the road to India, but because of the internal resources of the Colony and its great possibilities of development. He called the Cape his 'favourite child,' he watched over it with unflinching zeal, and he resigned office rather than be a party to its cession to the Dutch.¹ He appointed Lord Macartney first Governor of Cape Colony, and Mr. Barnard, Lady Anne's husband, Secretary. The charm, talent, and rare social qualities of Lady Anne Barnard led Lord Melville to give this appointment to her husband. The Governor's wife (Lady Macartney) was not accompanying her husband; the wife of the Secretary would therefore be the first lady of the Colony, and have to perform many of the social duties which usually fall to the lot of the Governor's wife. Lady Anne was admirably fitted to fill such a position, and she enjoyed

¹ As a small illustration of this I may mention that in the library at Melville Castle there is an old volume entitled *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope*, by Robert Temple, 1803. It is dedicated to the first Lord Melville, and in the dedication the writer says: 'I have been induced to request the permission of affixing your lordship's name hereto, solely from the conviction that no man in Great Britain has paid so much attention to the affairs of the Cape, or has so intimate an acquaintance with every subject relative to that Colony, as your lordship.'

the friendship and confidence of the Secretary of State in no ordinary degree. Lord Melville charged her to conciliate the Dutch as much as possible, and to write to him freely about everything that occurred. These letters will show how well she fulfilled his wishes in both respects. They cover the period of the Administrations of the first two English Governors (Lord Macartney and Sir George Yonge), and, in addition to giving vivid descriptions of South Africa at that time, they are full of shrewd observations and wise suggestions as to the government of the Colony, especially with regard to the treatment of the natives and the conciliation of the Dutch. The student of history will note, too, that many of the same problems presented themselves for solution a century ago in South Africa as present themselves to-day; the same difficulties arose, and perhaps the same mistakes were committed on either side.

Lady Anne Barnard was also the authoress of that ever-popular ballad *Auld Robin Gray*, and one of the best-known figures in the literary and social world of her day. Her fascinating personality is all too little known. I have therefore prefaced her letters from South Africa with a brief memoir, and have incorporated in it certain other letters which she wrote from Ireland and elsewhere. They reveal, like everything else she wrote, the same sterling

qualities—a keen perception, a liberal mind, a warm heart, and a magnetic gift of sympathy.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to LORD MELVILLE not only for his permission to publish this correspondence, but for much valuable aid and kind encouragement. I have also to thank MR. G. FYDELL ROWLEY and MRS. ATHOLL FORBES for leave to reproduce the miniature of Lady Anne Barnard by Cosway as a frontispiece.

W. H. WILKINS.

MEMOIR