

**GLEANINGS FROM  
THE SOUTH, EAST  
AND WEST**

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Gleanings from the South, East and West by Anna Elizabeth Nightingale

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# GLEANINGS

FROM THE

South, East, and West.

H. E. N.

The individual who travels and discovers nothing worthy to commemorate, virtually pronounces "that all is barren"—to such, nature in vain displays her stores; yet are there not?

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,"  
"Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

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Watford:

PRINTED BY J. PEACOCK.

MDCCCLXIII.



## The Huguenot Family.

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Truth is justly said to be stranger than fiction, an aphorism daily exemplified in the ever varying drama of real life, where coincidences of the most improbable nature frequently arise and form a chain of union between events apparently unconnected by one assimilating link. In illustration of this remark I will briefly review a series of transactions, that almost imperceptibly blend the fierce persecution, bigotry, and bloodshed of a past age, with the peaceful picture of rural pursuits and domestic enjoyments, beneath the roof of an exiled family, to whom the chances of travel, ("not of war") introduced me on the shores of Southern Africa.

Throughout the following recital, I shall adopt the plan of writers, who while detailing facts, by the substitution of fictitious appellations cast a partial

veil, over the realities they pourtray and waving any longer introduction to a short story, only add to this, initials which claim no higher distinction, than to compose the name of the most useful, if not most admired, of the feathered race. H. E. N.

It was in the commencement of November 18— at the close of a voyage, that had extended long beyond the average passage between England and the Cape of Good Hope, that the Southern shores of Africa first met my gaze. The usual signal had announced the proximity of an English vessel to Table Bay, so that a nearer approach enabled us to discern a vast number of human beings collected on the beach, eagerly awaiting its arrival; some perhaps in all the agony of "hope deferred" expecting intelligence from distant friends, others, actuated by mere curiosity, while a third class was there stationed, in pursuit of their usual vocation, the conveyance of luggage &c., to different parts of the town.

Scarcely had the first sensations of delight, at the consciousness of recovered freedom, after having been condemned for months to pace the narrow limits of

a deck subsided, when the new and unwonted aspect of surrounding objects completely riveted my attention—amongst the motley group assembled, were specimens of the variety in form, feature, and complexion, by which mankind is distinguished from the fair European, to the dark hued African—the strange garb and uncouth appearance of the latter, added to their unintelligible language, presented matter sufficiently novel and interesting, to create in the beholder that species of gratification mingled with astonishment, arising from the first contemplation of scenes, whose unfamiliar images, open to our view another page in the great book of universal knowledge.

The period of the year, at which my sojourn in this Colony commenced, was highly favourable to first impressions. Spring had just ushered in the fruits and flowers allotted to its reign, and the scorching heat of a more advanced season had not yet destroyed the verdure, covering the summits of those stupendous mountains, which seem from their lofty elevation, to look down protectingly on the capital below.

From Table Bay, a partial survey only of Cape town



is obtained, and not, until fairly within its precincts, are the architectural and other local features justly appreciated.

The streets are built at right angles, the houses large, commodious and well adapted to the climate, form in general a happy combination of English comfort and oriental style; in front of each dwelling, conformable to the Dutch custom, is a verandah, sometimes nearly parallel with the ground floor, and at others elevated several feet above it, this curious appendage to their mansions (called a *stoep*) affords an agreeable rendezvous to the respective inmates, who usually resort thither of an evening, to inhale the ocean breeze beneath the clear light of a Southern moon. The constant influx of strangers renders the *purchaseable* hospitality of the numerous boarding-houses Cape-town contains very desirable and a traveller need not wish *pro tempore* to be better domiciled than in one of these abodes, where he may enjoy, without any personal trouble a well appointed table, enlivened by the pleasures of social intercourse, this latter advantage is derived from the society of Officers, Naval and Military, passengers calling on their way to India, or New South Wales,

comprising individuals of both sexes and all ages, and last, tho' not of least importance to the *proprietor* of the Establishment, valetudinarians from the East, who during two years leave of absence, recruit their shattered health in this most salubrious of British Colonies—It was in the midst of such a party that myself and fellow voyagers were seated on the evening of our arrival, when the conversation fell upon those topics deemed most interesting to new comers, viz., the distinguishing characteristics of the strange land in which they are about to sojourn. As a matter of course on the present occasion, the various *Lions* within and around Cape-town were discussed and having arranged to glance *en passant* at these, we determined on extending our tour into the interior, after visiting Stellenbosch, Hottentot's Holland and Franschehoek; the two former places, were described as exhibiting beautiful specimens of the scenery peculiar to a country, where the vine covers acres of ground and the fertile soil yields its produce unaided by art, or labour—with Franschehoek a different sort of interest was associated;

"To this far nook the Christian Exiles fled,"

"Each fettering tie of earthly texture breaking;"

"Wealth, country, kindred, cheerfully forsaking,"

"For that good cause in which their fathers bled."

as the refuge of a persecuted enduring race, it seemed to possess pre-eminent attractions, and imagination readily endowed the present inhabitants with every personal and mental advantage; to behold these recluses in the far off land, where their forefathers had found a home, appeared at that moment the crowning charm of our projected excursion.—How rarely the actual equals the ideal, every day experience proves, yet the flights of fancy are not less enchanting, because often deceptive and who is not occasionally beguiled by these sweet illusions? in the present instance however, although my expectations were not destined to be fulfilled in the manner anticipated they were more than realized in the sequel, as the succeeding pages will develop.

To welcome the first blush of rosy morn, heralding the renewal of life and gladness to myriads of breathing creatures, is a privilege seldom enjoyed on Britain's shores, save by the husbandman hastening to his accustomed labour, but in more genial climes the benefit of early rising is practically exemplified and all classes of the community, commence with the sun the day's pursuits, whether of business, or pleasure. It being