

happened to be term-day, when an almost uninterrupted series of observations are taken; our stay was therefore but short, as I was disinclined to interrupt the constant duties of the observers. During our visit at the observatory, the weather was beautifully clear; no clouds were to be seen except over the Table Mountain, and objects viewed across the sandy plain were much distorted by refraction.

The botanists attached to the Expedition attempted, during our stay, to ascend to the top of Table Mountain; but having taken a path different from that usually pursued, they were arrested by the perpendicular wall when about six hundred feet below the top. A great collection of botanical specimens amply repaid them for their disappointment. They visited the valley between Table Mountain and the Devil's Peak, and found it to consist of a dry spongy soil, densely covered with Rutaceæ, intermixed with low bushes of Heath, Thymelaceæ, Diosmas, and Compositæ, having a close resemblance and analogy to the upland bogs of New Zealand.

The drives around Cape Town are pleasant; the one to Green Point is the most agreeable: this is a straggling village, with the houses having pretty gardens in front, laid out in the English style: the distant view of the ocean, with the heavy surf breaking upon the rocky coast, are fine objects to seaward. The sides and tops of the hills in the rear are bare of trees, but the roads are lined with Cacti of large growth, giving to the scenery a decidedly tropical character. Green Point has a municipal government, and elects its commissioner and ward-masters in the same manner as Cape Town. The lighthouse is within this district: it is quite unworthy of the name, being decidedly the most inferior British establishment I have seen. This surprised me the more, because there is here a great necessity for a brilliant light.

There is a Commercial Exchange at Cape Town, possessing a public library, consisting of about thirty thousand volumes, and containing a reading-room, as well as a large hall, which is used for the public meetings and festivities of the inhabitants.

Different sects of Christians are vying with each other, to carry civilization and the gospel to the tribes in the interior; but as usual, there are many who deny the purity of their principles, and spread scandalous reports concerning their operations.

The walks near the town are pretty, and kept in neat order. One that leads along the brook in the rear of the town, whose banks are occupied by hosts of washerwomen, is peculiarly picturesque; as soon as you ascend to the top of the hill, you overlook the town, bay, and