

A Soldier of Fortune at the Cape.

The strange history of a Prussian soldier of fortune who enlisted in the service of the Dutch East India Company, and rose to a position of wealth and influence at the Cape in the first half of the eighteenth century, was recently brought to light by the Van Riebeeck Society of Cape Town. The manuscript, excellently translated from the German by Margaret Greenless, M.A., is by no means always historically correct, but the inaccuracies have been pointed out by a careful editor, and detract not at all from a lively picture of manners in the Company's dominions at this period.

The hero of the story, Herr Rudolph Siegfried Allemann, owes his biography to Mentzel, also a German and a soldier of fortune, who came to the Cape in the Company's service. In time he became tutor to Allemann's children, and writes from an intimate knowledge of official circles, in which it seems there was plenty of crooked dealing.

Allemann's career was curiously adventurous. He began life as a lieutenant in the army of Frederick William I. of Prussia, and having been slandered to his master, he thought it advisable to ride across the frontier before he was arrested. He afterwards wrote asking leave to return and make his defence, but received no answer, nor was his family permitted to send him money.

His plight was serious, and he was obliged to sell his uniform and his horse, and eventually arrived in Amsterdam without a penny in his pocket. Like many another soldier who had fallen on evil days, he decided to enter the service of the Dutch East India Company, and thanks to the good offices of a friend, he was admitted by a private entrance to the room where sat the Commissioners

appointed to enroll recruits. The eagerness to enlist can only be explained by his desperate straits, for this pay was miserable and the prospects poor. Nevertheless, the doors of the East India House were besieged by hundreds of despairing men who fought like wild beasts for admission. Europe at this time swarmed with ragged adventurers who had borne arms, and to whom civil life offered even fewer advantages than marching at the heels of wrangling monarchs. Dreams of wealth in the golden East may have tempted some, but such dreams were rarely fulfilled, for the Company was a close oligarchy, and gains, honest or dishonest, fell to few except high-placed officials; to most enlistment meant but the immediate starving off of starvation. The test for the recruit was not exacting, and Allemann who picked up a musket in the approved Prussian manner, was accepted without further proof of his military knowledge.

He was fortunate in being told off for service at the Cape, where the climate was healthy, and pay slightly better than in Batavia. But even there it was so poor that he could hardly feed himself out of his earnings. It is true that his biographer tells us with an amusing simplicity that the fresh vegetables and delicate Cape mutton tempted our hero to live somewhat generously while he was a member of the Castle forces, but good trencherman as he appears to have been, he was of sober habits and ran up no heavy scores at the tavern.

Hoping to better his position, he accepted an offer to become one of the Governor's huntmen, who had full leave to roam all over the country provided they sent a regular supply of game to the Castle kitchen

every week. Allemann was a good shot and liked the pleasant free life, and the generous hospitality of the Cape farmer made him sure of bed and board wherever he went, but game was so scarce that his difficulties were many. His fellow-huntmen refused to tell him of the secret haunts of buck and wild fowl, and he was often reduced to buying from them to furnish his quota for the Governor's table. The fear of hunger, however, was banished, and Allemann became so popular with the farmers that they allowed him the run of their land, and even sent the game into town by their own slaves.

It was as the guest of a certain wealthy Heer, Melboom, that Allemann met his future wife, Juffrouw Abbetje Melboom who kept house for her father, treated his guest with such scant respect that he was given a bed in the kitchen, a slight which Allemann bitterly resented, and the lady afterwards regretted. On one of his shooting expeditions Allemann encountered an official of the Government, Eusign Rhenius, who persuaded him to go back to his military duties, promising to watch over his fortunes. The promise lightly made was forgotten, and Allemann soon found himself worse off than before.

He had to buy himself a new outfit, and his healthy appetite had increased with his open-air life on the veld, and now, instead of enjoying good food, provided by his farmer friends, he was reduced to living on ration bread and tea. His troubles, however, had a dramatic solution. One day, exhausted by hunger and by his watch on the Castle walls in the fierce heat of noon, he determined to take his life. He was just about to blow out his brains when two of his comrades rushed forward and snatched the musket from his grasp. The news of his intended suicide spread rapidly, and came to the ears of Rhenius, who, overwhelmed with remorse, not only plied his famishing friend with food, but secured for him the post of Corporal at the schuur or barn on the Company's estate, where

the wagons and teams of oxen were kept.

A sober and industrious man, Allemann brought order among his subordinates, and in time was rewarded by being made Oppenbaas with a house and kitchen garden. By the sale of his vegetables and by means of various other sales and perquisites he added to his income.

He had other ways of making money also which were not quite so reputable. He stood well with the acting Governor de la Fontaine, for whose private use he was commissioned to gather the Company's wood, and deliver it secretly. In payment for this patron gave him part of his unlawful gains.

In 1727 the new Governor, the infamous van Noot, arrived; according to a picturesque legend, he died at the moment when he was summoned before the judgment seat of God by a man whom he had unlawfully condemned to death. Van Noot had a grudge against his predecessor, and by bribes and threats tried to force Allemann to betray de la Fontaine by giving away the secret of his gains. Sycophant though he was, Allemann was man enough to stand up for his former master, a loyalty which van Noot rewarded by ordering him to be shipped off to Batavia as a common sailor. But fortune was to favor him again, and once more his Prussian military training was to serve him in good stead.

Van Noot, knowing that he would have to travel from one station to another, had brought with him a military tent of a capacious and comfortable kind. To set this up, however, was beyond the powers of any soldier at the Cape, and in vain the Governor invoked all the devils in hell to come to his aid. This time Rhenius, not forgetting his protégé, asked Allemann whether he could perform the service. Allemann declared himself capable, and in the presence of the Governor set up the tent, and so charmed was van Noot that he took Allemann into his private room and, after dismissing his attendants, said: "Allemann, will you serve me as faithfully and discreetly as you did Heer de la Fontaine?"

"Sir," replied the pliable Allemann, "Des Brod ich esse, des Lied ich singe."

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IT IS PUT TO ALL SORTS OF USES.

Not many years ago scientists discovered that the air we breathe could be made to change from its gaseous state to that of liquid. This was brought about by a special apparatus which reduced the temperature of the air enclosed in it to something like 192 degrees below freezing-point.

This, finally enough, is also the temperature at which liquid air will actually boil.

It has been the means of saving many lives in mine explosions, for in such cases oxygen has to be brought immediately in great quantities. The method previously employed, that of lowering tubes of compressed oxygen, was very slow and generally unsatisfactory.

By using liquid air, however, not only can larger supplies of the much-needed oxygen be conveyed more easily and in quicker time, but the unbreathable gases formed after the use are in far smaller quantities than when the old method was used.

Atman also use it. At certain altitudes where the air is so thin that artificial breathing apparatus is necessary, liquid air is caused to evaporate and the gas formed goes into a breathing bag and through a tube to the pilot's mouth.

Recently this wonderful liquid has been put to a further use. It satisfactorily replaces dynamite as an explosive—in fact, it proved better, as it is not so dangerous to use as dynamite.

In Middlesex an eight feet diameter tree-trunk which would have taken two men over a week to saw, was blown up by this means.

Explosion made with liquid air can be prepared on the spot where it is to be used. The liquid is conveyed in special vacuum flasks to keep it as far as possible, at its exceedingly low temperature.

Laboratory workers and specialists also use liquid air to help them in collecting scattered particles of valuable radium and mercury after experiments are operation. It will collect these minerals as a magnet will.

A few queer experiments can be performed with it. A piece of rubber soaked for a few moments will be taken out as hard as lead, and will require a hammer to break it. This is because it has become frozen and stiff. A piece of iron or other metal soaked in this manner will be covered with frost after having been put in a fire! Of course, as it becomes hotter the frost will disappear.

Still further developments are expected shortly, but its chief use for some time will be as an explosive, and it is now employed to a great extent in stone quarries for blasting with great success.

Surplus Women.

EMIGRATION PLANS.

The problem of Britain's two million surplus women is to be dealt with by the emigration authorities.

"At their next meeting the Overseas Settlement Committee will most probably consider the matter in the light of the Census report," said the secretary to a Daily Mail reporter recently, "and they will formulate suggestions to be placed before the Treasury."

More than 2,000 men, women, and children left this country last week for Australia, and 1,250 more will sail on September 23 in the P. and O. liner Buradine.

A large proportion of recent emigrants to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland have been ex-Service men granted free passages under the Overseas Settlement scheme, but the numbers of unassisted emigrants to Australia are increasing.

"On an average," said the director of emigration at the office of the High Commissioner for Australia, "well over 1,000 ex-Service men and their wives and children are being sent to Australia each month. The need is for rural workers."

"We expect a big rush next year, and the Australian Government, I understand, are preparing to grant 2,500,000 for free passages. Ex-Service men and women, provided they make application for a free passage before the end of the year, will be allowed to make use of the privilege any time during 1922."—Daily Mail.

Lonely Island Girl.

QUEST'S ROMANTIC MAIL.

Romance lies hidden in a parcel sent to the Shackleton-Rossett exploration ship Quest for delivery at the lonely British island of Tristan da Cunha, in the South Atlantic. It is being sent to a young woman by a sailor who formed a strong attachment for her during his stay on the island. He is anxious that a photograph of her should be taken and sent to him. This will probably be done.

Among other parcels sent to the island are some addressed to "The Oldest Inhabitant" and "The Principal Lady." It is believed that the oldest inhabitant is by common consent the moral ruler of the island, but there may be a delicate conference with regard to "The Principal Lady."

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Children's Hose.	Boys' School Hose.	Striped Flannelette.
Children's Brown and Black Hose in sizes 6 to 9½ inches; suitable for present wear, only 25c. pair.	A heavy Black Cotton Hose, specially made for boys; sizes 7 to 11 inches. 50c. per pair.	A good fluffy make, 36 inches wide; a large assortment of patterns. 35c. per yard.
Men's Sweater Coats	Ladies' Brown Hose.	White Flannelette.
These are of Heather mixture yarn, fitted with collars; sizes 38 to 44. Good value. \$2.90 each.	A few more dozen of these popular shade Stockings. Left. Don't fail to secure a pair, only 28c. per pair.	Fully 36 inches wide. Last year's price for this same material was 55c. per yard. Now only 38c. per yard.

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