

## SOUTH AFRICAN SUNDRIES.

Owing to the machinations of Oom Paul et al, a large part of public attention is at present directed towards South Africa. The many conflicting reports regarding the country and the state of public opinion there, are more or less confusing, and therefore a few disconnected notes received by us at first-hand may not be without interest. Mr. O. C. Macpherson, son of Lieut.-Col Macpherson, of Ottawa, a graduate of the Royal Military College, and known to some extent at Trinity, has written us a number of newsy letters, but most of the events touched on therein have now, through the medium of the press, become ancient history. Mr. Macpherson is occupying a prominent position on a government survey of railroad between Modderpoort and Ficksburg, in the Orange Free State near the borders of Bechuanaland. The Free State has recently come within the sphere of interest from our point of view owing to the rumoured defensive alliance proposed by President Kruger between it and the Transvaal. An incident like the following throws more light on the actual state of public feeling, than columns of vague generalities. Our correspondent writes:—"The Free State people, who are mostly Boers, have instructions from their Government not to interfere with us in any way. They have in most cases carried out these instructions well, but last Saturday as two of our chaps were running the line, a Boer, from his house 800 yards away, commenced firing at them with a Martini rifle. He fired twelve shots, but none of them took effect. Our fellows started towards him although they were unarmed, and he then stopped. They got his name, and although they laid the matter before the Landrost nothing has been done to the rascal. It's going to be rather too much of a good thing if they can make targets of us whenever they feel inclined. I must say this, that some of the Dutch people have been very nice to us, and the fellow who did the firing belongs to a bad class."

In a letter dated March 14th, Mr. Macpherson says:—"The Transvaal Government is arresting people right and left. The manager of the De Beers' mines was the latest, and now they seem to want Rhodes, in fact several papers are clamouring for his arrest. At any rate his political career seems to have come to an end. Many think that he is implicated in the Johannesburg raid, and startling developments are daily expected. Jameson's surrender is a perfect mystery to everyone yet, but no doubt we shall be enlightened before long."

The country through which the survey is being made is 5,600 feet above the sea level, and agricultural. Farm implements of American manufacture are to be seen standing in the fields. The climate is thoroughly healthy, the days being very hot but the nights cool.

The occasional exigencies incident to native labour are illustrated by a little anecdote as follows.—"All our Kafirs, except one or two, deserted the other day after being paid. They had worked a month and had earned what to them was a fortune, and they must needs go off and spend it. No more 'boys' will be paid after this until the work is all finished. Just after these boys skipped off, a small army of Basutos came along and we hired fifteen of them. They are fine looking chaps and rank about next to the Zulus. Three of them are my personal property. They work with me in the field and look after my wants in camp. Their names in English are Thomas, John and David, but their looks belie them, suggesting rather 'Hit-him-in-the-eye,' 'Jump-on-his-neck,' and 'Tear-him-limb-from-limb.' They appear good natured, however, and I don't anticipate trouble. I gave Thomas a shirt to-day; it had a starched front. He carefully put it on back to front and now imagines he looks like a chief." Returning to Oom Paul and the rest of that ilk, we learn that "what

they want over here to wipe out the Boers is a few battalions like the Queen's Own"—this is embodied in a message to an officer of that excellent corps—"who can shoot and won't make — fools of themselves by walking around the open veldt while the Boers are shooting at them from the cover of rocks, etc. The bloomin' Dutchmen think they can lick the world. A man near here said the other day that he was ready at any minute to commence firing on the Uitlanders—which soubriquet includes your 'umble servant—and that if only they had three ships they would go over and take England. The ordinary Boer is so densely ignorant that there is no limit to his gall."

A few remarks on another subject may not be uninteresting to anyone who is concerned in the study of females of other races. "The black ladies continue their engagement as living pictures. That is to say, they come down every morning to draw water at a pool near our tents. Having drawn the water, they then draw their breath, place the vessels on their heads and pose. One forgot her drapery this a.m., and I, as stage-manager, had to warn her. They are very pretty and wear their rings in their noses instead of on their fingers, their bracelets on their ankles and their hair-pins through their ears. They also have pleasing little designs tattooed on their cheeks in red, blue and green. This constitutes their walking out dress when they are in a hurry. On other occasions they wear the additional covering of a string of beads placed carefully on the neck. The hair is considered an inconvenience and is shaved off close to the skin, its place being taken by a thick layer of shiny grease or vaseline, according to rank. Thus they are appreciated better at a distance."

Descriptions of the country and climate, about which our correspondent is enthusiastic, the excellent outfit provided the surveying parties by the Government, and the management of an African camp, together with sundry items of news not necessary to set down here, make up the rest of Mr. Macpherson's interesting letters. Small hope is held out of employment for other than skilled labour. A salutary warning is given to University men, in the fact that a waiter and a billiard-marker in a Cape Town hotel hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cambridge and Dublin respectively.

## "THE MIDNIGHT SUN."

A sea of gray  
That spreads away  
To a grayer sky.  
A line of white  
Sparkling bright  
O'er reef-rocks breaking high.  
A muffled roar,  
Waves surging o'er  
The rock that gazes north.  
And storm winds sigh,  
And sea mews cry  
Round the crag where their young come forth.  
The sun I wist  
Behind the mist  
Glazes red as dragon's blood,  
Now he sips  
With glowing lips  
The oceans pulsing flood.  
Waves of red gold  
From the orb are rolled  
Magic, by alchemy wrought.  
And the subtle light,  
Half day, half night,  
Breathes life on our unformed thought.  
Deep grows the red,  
The day is dead,  
But lo—the night—  
Is day begun  
For the rising sun  
Bathes us in rosy light.