

Massey's Illustrated

(PUBLISHED MONTHLY.)

A Journal of News and Literature for Rural Homes

NEW SERIES.]

TORONTO, CANADA, MARCH, 1895.

[Vol. 7, No. 3.

A Tour through South Africa

INTERESTING LETTER TO MASSEY'S ILLUSTRATED FROM MR. J. D. PATTERSON.

LAST wrote you just on the eve of leaving for the fruit and grain districts to the south east of Cape Town,

Arriving by train at Sir Lowry Pass, 30 miles from the city, we engaged a Cape cart, a sorry pair of small horses, and a bright boy to drive us through the Pass to Caledon.

We saw a good deal of growing grain in our 30 mile journey by rail, but little of it, however, would yield even fair results when harvested; the shocks were not thick on the ground, nor were the heads well filled.

The vineyards along this line and the small market gardens were well kept and thrifty. The land is well adapted to fruit culture, not grapes alone yielding abundantly, but peaches also and nectarines, apricots, pears, figs, etc., etc., where planted give large returns for the meagre attention the small fruit orchards are apt to receive. Cape Town furnishes a good market for all this fruit, but it is hoped that extensive orchards in the near future will be planted with a view to furnishing fruit for canning, both for the South African market and for export, in addition to any local demand that may be created for the first fruit. One or two canning factories are already in operation, and with most gratifying results.

At the foot of the mountain there is a somewhat heavy growth of small trees and low bushes, but these soon give way to scant grasses, the many brilliant heathers and other mountain flowers. The ascent was tedious but not difficult, and as we went so slowly along we had ample time to look over the valleys below, across Kalk Bay, and out over the Indian Ocean.

The mountains are of volcanic formation, many hued, and quite rugged, their sharp edges standing out with great distinctness against the sky. This district is evidently the home of the Gladiolus so often grown in our gardens, and there we picked our first everlasting flowers, the Immortelles of commerce. For many years the country around Caledon has derived a large revenue from the sale of these flowers to the buyers for the French markets and the other markets of Europe. While there are many varieties of everlastings—white, pink, bright crimson, orange and light yellow, purchasers are found for the white variety only. Unfortunately I am not able to give you a report of the recent exports, but you will gather something of an idea of the extent of this trade when you know that throughout the day we were continually passing huge wagons piled

high with boxes filled with these flowers, each wagon drawn by from 14 to 20 oxen.

Before we had covered the distance from the railway terminus to Caledon we learned not to despise our ill-kept and ill-looking horses. The road wound away over the huge rolling foothills, but we made this 42 mile journey in seven hours including stops, without at any time urging the horses. A good deal of wheat is grown in the district, but owing to the long continued drought the crops were hardly worth harvesting. The ground received but a minimum of attention and the wonder is that the average results are even as good as they appear to be.

The method of planting is as follows: The available manure is first scattered over the field, and on top of this the grain is sown broadcast by hand when the manure and grain are plowed in together. The ground is then harrowed once, but nothing more is done until the grain is ready to harvest. The following year the ground is again cropped, but after this it is before again being planted allowed to lie fallow for three years.

To the east of Caledon for 20 miles there is a larger percentage of good ground, the crops are consequently more abundant, the flocks and herds larger, and the buildings much better.

Water was everywhere scarce, the supply for the cattle being collected in drains at the time of the abundant rains, and throughout the dry season the supply is augmented by the heavy thunderstorms, which in South Africa

are not infrequent. Small surface streams are most rare, large areas of the Colony are consequently dependent on the drains for their water. Some of the wheat fields were extensive, and the grain when rubbed out in the hand proved an exceedingly fine sample. Quite as much of the cultivated land was given to the oat crop as to wheat, but the oats throughout South Africa are cut for fodder before the grain is matured. This is not threshed but the bundles of forage find a ready sale at a good price. It is known as "Oat Hay," and at the present time is worth from 5 to 7 shillings per 100 pounds. A much less figure, however, usually rules.

We had the pleasure of spending a night at Apples Krall, one of the best farms in the whole south east district. Few farms in our own western country are better managed or give better results. The buildings were spacious and comfortable, the land was worked and the crop harvested with the most improved labor-saving machinery. An abundance of pure water for all purposes was piped from the mountains to the buildings, young orchard and gardens. We afterwards visited, in company with the owner of this farm, a large area of the surrounding country, and from him we gathered much valuable information in regard to South African farming in general. Our way lay through Swellendam, a very pleasing old-time Dutch town, splendidly shaded with avenues of oak and fir trees, and through Southey's Pass, one of the most beautiful mountain drives



WASHING IN THE RIVER.