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From the Gold Region in the Transvaal to Delagoa Bay

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the Fantis and Ashantis. Fetishism is the prevailing form of belief, though the miners are far more superstitious than their agricultural countrymen. For instance, they believe that gold will run away from a man who has boots on, and on several occasions I have, by stepping on a heap of quartz, driven the owner shrieking away. Then again, if a man works on the king's birthdays (a weekly institution), he will obtain no gold; and if his lamp goes out he must do no more work that day. Gold moves about under the ground, and can only be found by a select few.

Such is a brief account of a country which, but for its being peopled by a race whose laziness is only equalled by their mendacity, might become as productive as India, but, until foreign labour is introduced, will remain in utter stagnation.

VIII.—*From the Gold Region in the Transvaal to Delagoa Bay.*
By Captain C. WARREN, R.E.

[Communicated by His Excellency Sir BARTLE FREERE, Bart.,
Governor Cape Colony.]

THE few observations I am able to make upon the country above mentioned refer to that portion between the Gold Regions about Leydenburg and Delagoa Bay, about 40 miles north of the proposed line of railway.

There appear to be three roads or tracks from the Gold Fields to Delagoa Bay, viz. :—

1st. From Pilgrim's Rest by Macmac to Pretorius Kop to Lorenzo Marques.

2nd. From Leydenburg by Spitzkop to Pretorius Kop to Lorenzo Marques.

3rd. From Leydenburg to New Scotland, and thence to Lorenzo Marques.

The road from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay also lies by New Scotland. The route taken by our party in June 1877 was (No. 2) that from Leydenburg *viâ* Spitzkop Diggings.

The distances, approximately, are as follows :—

	Miles.
Leydenburg to Spitzkop	35
„ Pretorius Kop	30
„ Lions Spruit	17
„ Crocodile River	15
„ Komatie River	15
„ Lebomba Bounds	10
„ Lorenzo Marques	46

The heights, ascertained roughly with an aneroid berometer, are as follows:—

	Feet above the Sea.									
Leydenburg	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4350
Top of Pass	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6700
Spitzkop diggings	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4050
Pass	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4700
Niekerk's farm	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4200
Top of Pass	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5050
River	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1800
Camps near Pretorius Kop	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2100
Lions Spruit	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1350
Crocodile River	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	450
Komatie River	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	250
Lebomba Boundary	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	450
Lorenço Marques	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

From Leydenburg a district road has been laid out as far as Macmac with some care, with numerous cuttings in the rocky sides of the mountains, extending for several miles. Along this road the route to Spitzkop extends for about 20 miles, until the Macmac road passes near the Devil's Knuckles down by the Sabia River, and the Spitzkop track leads on over the mountains.

This road to Spitzkop at present is not much used, as the diggers at Spitzkop communicate with Pilgrim's Rest over the Spitzkop Pass *via* Macmac; it appears, however, to be used by the Boers to some extent.

No attention has been paid to draining or metalling that portion cut in the steep mountain sides, and consequently there are gutters running along and cutting up the roadway often two feet deep, making travelling with waggons very dangerous.

It has been laid out with due regard to the requirements of a Boer waggon-road, that is to say, it is carried along the sides of the hills at a slope of about $\frac{1}{40}$ to $\frac{1}{10}$, and on reaching a very steep place is carried straight down it. In some cases these passes resemble a series of broken staircases with steps two feet high; in other cases they are simply steep slides. The road, as it at present exists, is only available for the transit of the strongest kind of South African waggon. We took down with us, on the occasion of our visit, a Scotch-cart with four oxen; the two wheels were lashed tight, and yet the slopes were so steep that it was necessary for four men to pull behind in order to prevent the carrying the oxen down the hill.

This road could not be made useful for general traffic without a very heavy outlay.

As far as could be learnt, the road from Pilgrim's Rest to Pretorius Kop is vastly superior to that from Leydenburg to Pretorius Kop, and could be made a good carriage-road. We

had no opportunity of seeing this road, which we heard had been much improved by M. Nellmapius, the ex-director of the Delagoa Road Company.

We joined this road of M. Nellmapius at Pretorius Kop, and proceeded along it to Delagoa Bay.

From Pretorius Kop to the Komatie River the ruling gradient is very gentle, the whole fall being only 1850 feet in 47 miles.

The ground here passed over consists of a succession of rounded hills with a fall to the north-east, with gulleys about 10 feet deep, at intervals of about one mile.

At 10 miles from the Komatie, the Lebomba range is crossed, at this point only 200 feet above the Komatie and 450 feet above the sea-level. Here is the boundary stone between the Transvaal and Portuguese territory.

From the foot of this range for about 20 miles the slope of the ground is scarcely apparent, and the soil is moderately hard for a road, but for the remainder of the distance into Lorenzo Marques the ground is swampy and uncertain, and is so light that even when quite dry the oxen sunk in 18 inches. On this road M. Nellmapius had evidently expended much labour to great advantage. Through the bush veld he has cut down a belt of trees about 15 feet wide; in the rocky ground he has removed the more prominent rocks, and in the marshes he has made a log-road in the worst places. He has also erected station-houses at intervals of about 15 miles, which are still in a good state of preservation, although they have been plundered during the Kafir war, and one of the station-masters murdered.

Timber and Fuel.—In the deep kloofs of the mountain-side there is much timber between Leydenburg and Spitzkop, but it is difficult of access. From Pretorius Kop to Delagoa Bay the bush veld extends, with more or less dense forests of hard- and soft-wooded trees; these trees do not grow to any size, being seldom more than five feet in girth. Various varieties of the acacia-tree abound. The wood might be made available for log-timber through the marshes, though not so well adapted to this purpose as pine-trees. It would also be sufficient for the supply of fuel for a line for railway for many years, provided the trees are properly thinned instead of being cut down *en masse*. The wood would also be available for sleepers, but it seems probable that they could be obtained cheaper from Europe.

Labour.—At the present time Kafirs from Delagoa Bay are coming to work on the Cape Town Railway. They take readily to clothes, are a merry people, and work well on a spurt, but are not steady workmen. These men would be available in

great numbers for any railway from Delagoa Bay into the Transvaal; they could probably be obtained for about 20s. per month, with food. Food is at present very cheap in the bush veld, as game abounds, and the Kafirs are for the most part provided with fire-arms. It is probable that in the prosecution of railway works it would be necessary to confine the working period to certain winter months, for the fever rages over the marshes and lowlands about Delagoa Bay, and the Kafirs are said to fall victims and die of it in a few hours. Europeans and Afrikanders are also very subject to this fever.

Climate.—The Delagoa Bay fever appears to be of a bilious remittent type, and is ascribed generally to the malaria from the swamps around Lorenzo Marques; the intensity of the fever may probably be due to these causes, but as the same fever prevails in some of the hill districts of the Transvaal, it is possible that the true cause of this dangerous fever may be found elsewhere. Until the present year every facility has been given at Lorenzo Marques for the production of malaria and fever, but at the present time exertions are being made to drain the swamps surrounding the town and otherwise to render it healthy.

Tsetse-fly.—This fly is said to follow the game, and if the Kafirs continue their present use of fire-arms, not only the fly but also the game will be exterminated in a few years. Should this take place, one bar to easy transit between Delagoa Bay and the Transvaal will be removed. But even at the present time it appears that the tsetse-fly country can be passed through at times without great difficulty. Two of our oxen were said to have already been down to the Bay and back again from Pilgrim's Rest; and the four oxen arrived at Lorenzo Marques without apparently having suffered in any way, although we had to drive them nearly 40 miles on the last day. They accomplished the 165 miles in eight days, giving an average of 21 miles per diem. We are not aware that we saw the fly during our journey, and the oxen sold for 5*l.* each on arrival.

Lorenzo Marques is a small town built on a sand beach on the shores of the Bay: around it the sea has hitherto washed, at spring tides, with impunity; but Portuguese engineers are at the present time draining this lowland and banking out the sea. There is a headland adjoining the town, supplied with a spring of water, where houses might be built to advantage. The trade in the place appears at present to be very slack; there are but six stores. There appear to be about fifty white men in the place, and very few white women. No jurisdiction appears to be exercised over the Kafirs beyond the walls of the town. There are several Banyan traders, who possess small shops.

Prospects of a Road from Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal.—Judging by the high price of all European produce at Leydenburg, it would be highly advantageous to the country to open up a good road from the Bay, and, as far as we could ascertain from the state of M. Nellmapius' road, after it had been closed for several months during the war, the original road company commenced their work very thoroughly. The station-houses are as well made as the better class of Boer houses in the Transvaal, and the kraals for cattle, &c., are well designed.

The country between Pretorius Kop and the Bay appears to be swarming with Kafirs, who, though fond of hunting, evidently pay great attention to their crops, principally mealies and manioc.

At present the Kafirs carry up burdens of about 75 lbs. weight on their heads from the Bay, and from their kraals to Pilgrim's Rest. An organised party of men to carry goods along the road might assist in supplying the Gold Fields, but the difficulties of establishing a waggon transport with oxen do not seem insurmountable. The climate does not appear to be adapted to horses.

Railway.—As regards the prospects of a railway:—looking to the expenses of such works in other parts of South Africa, it does not seem probable that it could be constructed under 12,000*l.* per mile. Assuming that the distance to the high veld will in no direction be less than 150 miles, the cost would not be less than 1,800,000*l.*; but 3,000,000*l.* is not too high a sum to allow, keeping in view the nature of the work. The maintenance expenses over a line which passes for 40 miles over a swamp, and for 110 miles continually ascends to a height of 7000 feet will be very great. There appears to be no prospect of such a line paying for several years to come; but that it would materially help and hasten the development of South Africa there can be no doubt. At the present time, progress is very much retarded for want of iron and timber at reasonable prices.

IX.—*Report on the General Features of the Interior of South Africa, between Barkly and Gubuluwayo; to accompany Map of the Route.* By ALEX C. BAILIE, Government Land Surveyor.

THE route about to be described leads *via* Taongs, the Batlapin capital, where Mankoroane is chief; Mamusa, which is David Massouw's station (he being head of a very large Koranna family); Rietfontein, which is where Montsioa, the chief of the Baralongs, now lives; Kanye, the chief town of the Bamanketsi,