development than the Bushmen and Hottentots living farther south. The part played by the various native races in modifying the character of the European colonization will be best considered as they successively came into contact with the white settlers. At this point it is only necessary to state that at the same time as the Europeans were slowly extending northward from the south-western point of the continent, a conquering race of Bantu negro stock, originating from somewhere beyond the Zambezi, was spreading southward along the western side of the country.

A. *From the Discovery of the Cape to the Great Trek.—*What led to the discovery of America led also to the discovery, exploita­tion and colonization of South Africa.· In the 15th century the great Eastern trade with Europe was carried on by the Venetian Republic—Venice was the gate from West to East, and her fleets, richly laden with goods brought down to the shores of the Mediterranean in caravans, supplied Europe with the luxuries of the Orient. It was in that century that Portugal rose to prominence as a maritime power; and being anxious to enjoy at first hand some of the commerce which had brought such prosperity to Venice, Portugal determined to seek out an ocean pathway to the Indies. It was with this intention that Bar­tholomew Diaz, sailing southwards, discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1488.@@l Nine years after the discovery of the Cape by Diaz another Portuguese expedition was fitted out under Vasco da Gama. Da Gama entered Table Bay, but did not land. Thence he pushed on round the coast, landed in Mossel Bay, then sailing up the south-east coast he sighted land again on the 25th of December 1497, and named it in honour of the day, Natal. Still proceeding northwards he entered the Quilimane River and eventually reached India.

For many years subsequent to this date South Africa repre­sented merely an inconvenient promontory to be rounded on the voyage to the Indies. Ships stopped at different ports, or rather at such few natural harbours as the inhospitable coast offered, from time to time, but no attempt was made by the Portuguese to colonize the southern end of the continent. On the west coast their southernmost settlement for a long period was Benguclla, and the history of Angola *(q.v.)* had not until the last quarter of the 19th century any close connexion with that of South Africa. On the east coast the Portuguese were masters of Sofala by 1506, and a trading-post was first established in Delagoa Bay in 1545. Here alone Portugal obtained an impor­tant foolhold in South Africa. But between Benguella on the west and Lourenço Marques on the east the Portuguese made no attempt to form permanent settlements or trading stations along the coast. It was too barren a shore to prove attractive when the riches of East Africa and India were available.

The first Europeans to follow in the wake of the Portuguese voyagers were the English. In 1601 the English East India Company fitted out a fleet of five vessels, which sailed from Torbay. After four months at sea they dropped their anchors in Table Bay, where they remained for seven weeks before proceeding eastwards. From that time forward Table Bay was used as an occasional port of call for British ships, and in 1620 two English captains formally took possession of the Cape in the name of James I. This patriotic act was not, however, sufficiently appreciated by either King James I. or the English East India Company to evoke any official confirmation on their part. Meanwhile the Dutch East India Company had been formed in Holland, and the Dutch had entered keenly into the competition for the glittering prizes of Eastern commerce. In 1648 one of their ships was stranded in Table Bay, and the shipwrecked crew were left to forage for themselves on shore for several months. They were so pleased with the resources of the country that on their return to Holland they represented to the directors of the company the great advantages that would accrue to the Dutch Eastern trade from a properly provided and fortified station of call at the Cape. The result was that in 1652 a fort and vegetable

gardens were laid out at Table Bay by a Dutch expedition sent for the purpose under a surgeon named Jan van Riebeek.

In 1657 a few soldiers and sailors, discharged by the Dutch East India Company, had farms allotted them, and these men constituted the first so-called “ free burghers.” By this step the station became a plantation or settlement. More settlers were landed from time to time, including a number of orphan girls from Amsterdam, and during 1688-1689 the colony was greatly strengthened by the arrival of some three hundred Huguenots (men, women and children), who were located at Stellenbosch, Drakenstein, Frenchhoek and Paarl. In process of time the French settlers were absorbed in the Dutch population, but they have had an enduring influence on the character of the people. The little settlement gradually spread eastwards, and in 1754 the country as far as Algoa Bay was included in the colony. At this time the white colonists numbered eight to ten thousand. They possessed numerous slaves, grew wheat in sufficient quantity to make it an article of export, and were famed for the good quality of their wines. But their chief wealth was in cattle. Such prosperity as they enjoyed was in despite of the system of government prevailing. All through the latter half of the 17th and the whole of the 18th century troubles arose from time to time between the colonists and the government. The adminis­tration of the Dutch East India Company was of an extremely despotic character. The most complete account of the com­pany’s tenure and government of the Cape was written in 1857 by E. B. Watermeyer, a Cape colonist of Dutch descent resid­ing in Cape Town. He points out that it was after failing to find a route by the north-east to China and Japan that the Dutch turned their eyes to the Cape route. The Cape of Good Hope subsequently “ became not a colony of the Republic of the United Provinces, but a dependency of the i Nether­lands Chartered General East India Company ’ for mercantile purposes; and to this fact principally can be traced the slow progress, in all but extension of territory, of a country which was settled by Europeans within thirty years of the time when the Pilgrim Fathers, the founders of a mighty empire, landed at Plymouth to plant democratic institutions and European civilization in the West.”

On the settlement under van Riebeek, and the position in it which the so-called “free burghers” enjoyed, this candid Dutch writer throws an interesting light.

“ The people,” he says, “ who came here with Riebeek himself were not colonists intending permanently to settle at the Cape. . . . The proposition that any freemen or burghers not in the pay of the company should be encouraged to cultivate the ground was first made about three years after Riebeek’s arrival. Accordingly, some discharged sailors and soldiers, who received on certain condi- tions plots of ground extending from the Fresh River to the Liesbeek, were the first free burghers of the colony. . . . Here it

is sufficient to say that, generally, the term ‘ free burgher' was a complete misnomer. The first burghers were, in truth, a mere change from paid to unpaid servants of the company. They thought, in obtaining their discharge, that they had much improved their condition, but they soon discovered the reverse to be the fact. And henceforward, to the end of the last [18th] century we find the constantly repeated and well-founded complaint, that the company and its officers possessed every advantage, while the freemen were not allowed even the fruit of their own toil. . . . The natural effect of this narrow and tyrannous rule was discontent, amounting often to disaffection. After a time every endeavour was made to escape beyond the immediate control of the authorities. Thus the ‘ trekking' system, with its attendant evils, the bane of South Africa, was born. By their illiberal spirit, which sought but temporary commercial advantage in connexion with the Eastern trade, the Dutch authorities themselves, although generally humanely disposed towards the natives, created the system which caused their oppres­sion and extermination."

When it is borne in mind that the Dutch at the Cape were for one hundred and forty-three years under the rule of the Dutch East India Company, the importance of a correct appre­ciation of the nature of that rule to any student of South African history is obvious. No modem writer approaches Watermeyer either in the completeness of his facts or the severity of his indictment. Referring to the policy of the company, Watermeyer says:—

@@@1 The date usually assigned (1486), on the authority of De Barros, has been shown to be incorrect (see Diaz).