

THE LETTERS OF  
LADY ANNE BARNARD  
TO HENRY DUNDAS

FROM THE CAPE AND ELSEWHERE / 1793-1803

TOGETHER WITH HER  
JOURNAL OF A TOUR INTO THE INTERIOR  
AND CERTAIN OTHER LETTERS

*Newly edited with an introduction and notes by*

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A.A. BALKEMA / CAPE TOWN / 1973

Letter 11

*The Barnards lost no time in becoming thoroughly involved in the life of the Cape, as the following letter amply shows. Enclosed with it were two other letters, the first a revealing letter in French to Lady Anne from the Fiscal, Willem Stephanus van Ryneveld, to which she refers on p.57, and the second one to Dundas by Andrew Barnard. This was clearly a personal letter and in no way official.*

*Also enclosed were three sketches, the first of General Hartley (see Letter 9, note 4) made on shipboard, the second of Simonstown and the third of the Hottentots Holland Mountains. With them was a semi-humorous depiction of the small shadows cast by General Hartley and the younger Ann Barnard at the Equator, stated to be the work of Andrew Barnard.*

Cape of Good Hope  
July 10 1797

From the Castle of good Hope, situated in the inside of the garrison, over which rises the Table mountain at a considerable *real* distance the close apparent vicinity from the effects of its height, & from the window of my bedchamber which overlooks the offices, built in a colonade round a spacious square pond of water supplyd from the head & tail of a spouting dolphin, I begin this letter to my dearest friend, firmly convinced that he will be as much interested in its contents from private affection to the writer as from curiosity to know every point however minute which regards a publick concern — . I am perfectly convinced also however that you must receive along with this such numberless letters from others so *much better* qualified to give you an account of every thing worth your knowing, that it woud seem almost *conceited folly* in me to describe things as they appear around me, or still more to give my miserable *female notions* on any thing, was it not for the above reason, that your friendship for me will contrive a general apology for every thing silly or erroneous & while all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye, all will seem rose color & interesting to that partial pair of *black sparklers* with which you read the Epistles of your female friends, but to land us here properly, let us first return to the ship & bring up matters with a little regularity. — our voyage on the whole was a prosperous one, we sailed from plymouth the 23<sup>d</sup> of Febr: and landed at the cape

comfortable he now was than he ever had been, that his income was fixed equal to his best hopes thro yrs & Lord Ms kindness & that from its date he even now possessd a little matter to make him clear with the world — inshort I thought him rather a happy man, he was not however altogether in good Health, as I afterwards heard, & had been taking I believe some physical prescriptions — I thought by a transient glance I had of him one day after that his countinancse seemd heated & confused, but I never saw him again — he left universal regret behind him & the full conviction that mental malady had been produced by bodily malady only; for he had done nothing to reproach himself with — I never cease thinking of him when I drive past his grave which must be passd, on going to the review ground — talking of reviews — the troops here I fancy are esteemd to be in fine order — to me they appear well dressd — well matchd men & better looking than any of the lately raised Reg'ts that I saw in England — I hear of no disturbances & sleep secure every night in the garrison with 700 men — desertion is over & many of those that had deserted is returned since the proclamation — amongst others a man who has been absent above a year, who bears an unletterd testymony to a matter which had been doubted [,] the existence of the unicorn in the interior parts of Africa — some years ago, some of the natives had expressd their surprize at seeing it in the Kings armes & when they were askd if they coud procure such an animal for a sum of money they had shudder'd saying 'aye to be sure' but he was 'their god' — this soldiers evidence corroborates this, he describes him to be much larger than a horse tho less than a small Elephant — about as high he said as the room — he had on shoes made of the hide of one, they are of immoderate strength & the skin more of the horse hide sort than of any other\* — Mr Barrow who went up the country to the Boschemens Land\* will may be see something of this animal but he will be chiefly in quest of a still better thing a good silver or gold mine, of the first there is no doubt of there being several & containing a much greater quantity of silver than is to be found in any of the mines we have in England, I hear there is also gold mines\* — if we coud pay off *our paper debt* with some of this & hand you over some to pay off your national it woud be pretty; he is to bring me down a little girl from a particular country, far — far in the inner parts of this wide continent where the people do not exceed four feet in stature & females have little pads or footboards behind which serve for a seat for their children, instead of carrying them on their shoulders — \*they are clever & faithfull

I hear the day before yesterday a sad incident happend or rather a wicked act, the son of our Butcher being killd by his slave, a Malisse\* in revenge for having been refused liberty to go out on Sunday, tho it was *not* his turn to do so — after he had stabbd him he attempted to murder his mistress, & stabbd one of her slaves, I suppose the unfortunate wretch woud have *run Muck* as is the term in this country of Frenzy from despair & the certainty of death, when they kill every one they meet, it is some years since an instance of this kind has happend, the unfortunate man had been wounded in his attempts & must have died, but life was abridged by the gallows an hour after the affair happend, to deter others — but thank god the days of Torture are over, & the sad evidences of what

*other\**

The rhinoceros. The white rhino was identified by Burchell in the Cape interior in 1817.

*Land\**

Bushman Land, just south of the Orange River.

*mines\**

Although the early Dutch governors spent much time searching for precious metals there is no proof that silver was actually discovered at the Cape. South Africa's present output is from the Witwatersrand. Gold was said to have been mined south of the Limpopo in ancient times but its discovery by white men dates only from 1867 in Matabeleland.

*shoulders—\**

Clearly a description of a Bushman girl with her enlarged posterior. The Dutch settlers first came in contact with Bushmen in 1655.

*Malisse\**

i.e. Malice.