myself, those reference are enormously enhanced by Professor Brian Warner’s very clear, unfussy explanations of celestial phenomena and the instruments of the astronomer.

Botanists can share the sustained love and enthusiasm of the author for Cape flora, especially via the eight colour plates of Lady Herschel’s drawings of Cape flowers magnificently reproduced. The architecture, climate and topography of the Cape Peninsula, particularly of Cape Town (especially pp. 25-27, 31, 36, 45) and also of Stellenbosch and Paarl (pp. 53-55) are vividly conveyed. Complementing these descriptions are Sir John’s own very fine, sensitive drawings, made with the aid of a camera lucida (a process also clearly explained by the editor; p.10).

For the historian, a careful reading of this volume uncovers material of immense value. Occasionally the significance of Lady Herschel’s observations reaches even wider than the nineteenth century Cape. A striking passage in her description of the voyage out to South Africa is just one example. This is where the regular family nanny, Mrs. Nanson, was indisposed and how, without a substitute in the person of any ayah, Lady Herschel comments, ‘I didn’t know what would have become of us’ (p.19). Thereby is conveyed with disarming and characteristic - frankness one most important aspect of nineteenth century English upper class survival, far too often taken for granted.

Once settled in Cape Town, Lady Herschel notes some of the subtle shadings of upper-class Cape society, and, therefore, also some of its snobbishness (p.37) and yet its also quite spontaneous good neighbourliness (p.44). Also of great value to the historian of Cape Town are the family’s household accounts, a representative sample of which forms the appendix to this volume (pp. 158-163).

Perhaps of greatest - and more general - interest are her political observations over a period of years that were some of the most crucial in the history of the Cape. These were the years of Slave Emancipation, Sixth Frontier War and the Great Trek.

Lady Herschel was no impartial observer. As a firm supporter and friend of Dr. John Philip, she championed the cause of the oppressed with a single-mindedness that betrays her upbringing as the daughter of a Scottish Presbyterian minister. The ‘tyranny’ of whites ‘over the black population’ was, according to Lady Herschel, something predestined; it was the result of ‘the inborn aversion a white has to a black’ (p.88). This is strong language - but to put it into context - it was provoked by a particularly glaring exposure of white exploitation, when 300 Khoi in the Uitenhage district who had fought as white auxiliaries in the 1834/5 war were “rewarded” for their loyalty by being forced from their homes and ripening fields so as to accommodate the demands of white farmers for more grazing (pp. 88-89).

Those among modern historians who argue that the roots of violence in southern Africa originated with the white intrusions of the nineteenth century will find much to corroborate in Lady Herschel’s observations. White ‘heroes’ and ‘martyrs’ like Lieutenant Charles T. Bailie, a casualty of the 1834/5 conflict, still a much revered figure in settler historiography today, are sharply cut down to size. According to Lady Herschel, Bailie got his just deserts. I quote:

"The private history of this gent won’t appear in your English Papers. He was the son of a settler, & employed by the Wesleyans as one of their local Preachers, but when the red coats came near his location, "from the love of the thing" he joined them, & made use of his knowledge of the haunts of the Caffers, to hunt them down like wild beasts (p.82)."

There, then, is a brief glimpse of some of the impact of this important collection of letters. Lady Herschel’s observations on the clever spoiling tactics of the Xhosa (pp. 71 & 81), the sensationalism of the colonial press which exaggerated black atrocities (p.81) and camouflaged the scorched earth methods of the colonial troops (p.84), and her portrayal of the Great Trek as just another form of white ‘encroachment’ on the black (p.147) are all examples of a contemporary’s perspective that cannot be ignored by historians. Lady Herschel’s letters, therefore, represent a very important, if controversial, source for the reconstruction of South Africa’s strife-torn past. The sweet, girlish countenance of Lady Herschel, as painted by Alfred Chalon and reproduced on the cover (and frontispiece) of this volume belies a mind whose opinions are as explosive today as they were then. This certainly is a case of "don’t judge a book by its cover"!!!

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This book is more than just another investigation of slavery at the Cape: it is about the link between an inconspicuous anti-slavery movement at the Cape in the 1820s and 1830s and the failure of early South African liberalism.

Apparently targeting an American readership, Watson constructs his stimulating arguments regarding the human rights problem and antislavery activity at the Cape in three parts stretching over eleven chapters. His arguments, based on information extracted from recent works of history and his own reading of early 19th century Cape newspapers, petitions, memorials, and related government correspondence, centres around the fear felt by Cape residents towards a forceful antislavery movement that would undermine the fundamental rights of property.
The first part of the book introduces this fear by way of a critical discussion of slavery's position in the social order in the colony. This is followed by a splendid analysis of the debate on the natural rights of liberty and property in relation to the slave question over four chapters in the second part. A significant notion introduced here is the view held by slaveowners that the amelioration regulations were an intrusion into their private affairs, and thus a violation of the colonists' basic rights. The process of amelioration culminated in Emancipation, an issue dealt with in the chapter about the Great Trek in which the responses of two Cape regions are contrasted. The less dramatic reaction of slaveowners in the Western Cape, Watson attributes to their economic interdependence with the colonial metropole. But the remote frontierfolk's response to it he ascribes to their strong views on the right to a proper and 'natural' social order.

The third and final part of the book has more of a comparative approach to the general topic. In its first chapter the inability of religious organisations operating in the colony to involve themselves more vigorously in antislavery activity is contrasted with that of the abolitionist movement in the USA. This is followed by a chapter in which Enlightenment philosophy regarding property rights and liberty is discussed to highlight the contradictory views held at the Cape which in the end led to an affirmation of the right of property over freedom.

The book concludes with a lengthy chapter comparing the American experience of abolitionism with the attitude of Cape residents to the antislavery movement. Its purpose probably is to contrast the respected American tradition of liberalism with the despicable systematic racial oppression in South Africa.

_The Slave Question_ is indeed a valuable contribution; and not only to the American understanding of a South African historical problem. To the South African reader the book also presents a much needed additional liberal perspective on a problematic aspect of colonial mentality in British Cape society. However, one finds Watson's explanation of an early nineteenth century Cape colonial problem as if it was a general South African phenomenon of the time somewhat annoying. Colonial Cape society of the nineteenth century, which represent the regional focus of the book, was but a segment of what was to become the South African state in this century. Also, one should not become oblivious to the fact that the defeat of liberalism in South Africa has many more complex roots than suggested here.

H.C. Bredekamp
U.W.C.

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**Kort Mededelings / Short Notices**


This publication is the eleventh in the _Graham's Town Series_ dealing with aspects of the history of the Eastern Cape region and is based on documents contained in the Kaysa-Family Archive lodged at the Kaffrarian Museum in King Williams Town. These have been ably edited by Prof. Chris Hummel of the History Department at Rhodes University.

Friedrich Gottlob Kayser was a German missionary who joined the London Missionary Society in 1826 and served under John Brownlee at the Buffalo River from 1827 to 1832. Thereafter he succeeded Rev. James Read as the missionary to the Xhosa chief, Maqoma. However, after 1838 Kayser had failed to hold onto Maqoma's Christian loyalties and this proved to be his great disappointment in life. This publication, based largely on his journals and letters for the period 1826 to 1853, recounts Kayser's experiences in the mission field at a time of great upheaval for the Xhosa nation. For the period 1829 to 1842 Kayser kept a full account of happenings with almost daily entries. The diary entries for the latter period are more sketchy but have been supplemented by Prof. Hummel with information from Kayser's reports and letters from his mission station at Knapp's Hope to the LMS. Kayser had two mission stations burnt down, one at Knapp's Hill and another at Knapp's Hope and these incidents illustrated the difficulties under which he had to try to spread the Christian Gospel amongst the Xhosa. In the aftermath of the Eight Frontier War and the 'Great Cattle-killing' episode Kayser had in 1859 handed over the running of Knapp's Hope Mission Station to his son Frederick. He died in 1868 while staying with his youngest son John at Tamacha Post.

Kayser was a well-intentioned and pious man whose first priority was to spread the word of Christ to the Xhosa, and in particular to Maqoma. However, he publicly criticised the blatant propaganda of Governor D'Urban's depiction of the Xhosa as cruel savages. This earned him the enmity of white colonists. Alternatively he also fiercely opposed his missionary colleagues, the Reads of Philippon, over their socially enlightened interpretation of the Gospel. Kayser had personally come close to being killed by the Xhosa on a number of occasions but he remained stoical in his perceived duty and responsibility towards his converts. Throughout he remained uncritical of Xhosa actions and singlemindedly and with courage pursued his work right up until his death.

Kayser's journal and letters reflect the realities, setbacks and hardships of mission life on the Cape Eastern Frontier while also highlighting the role played by the early missionaries in the life and politics of the region. Kayser