

wife, children, slaves, and Hottentots. The appearance was patriarchal and picturesque, and recalled to my mind the ancient poet's description :—

“ On came the comely sheep,  
From feed returning to their pens and folds,  
And those the kine in multitudes succeed ;  
One on the other rising to the eye,  
As watery clouds which in the heavens are seen,  
Driven by the south or Thracian Boreas ;  
And numberless along the sky they glide ;  
Nor cease ; so many doth the powerful blast  
Speed forward : and so many, fleece on fleece,  
Successive rise reflecting varied light.  
So still the herds of kine successive drew  
A far-extended line ; and filled the plain  
And all the pathways with the coming troop.”

Throughout the whole of the Colony it is highly necessary to secure the herds and flocks at night, in folds or kraals fenced round generally with a strong hedge of *mimosa* or other thorny bushes. Here this precaution is doubly necessary, both on account of the roaming Caffers, and the great numbers and ferocity of the beasts of prey. A few days before, a lion had killed two horses near the house, and had bit the head completely off one of them. Espagh had lost fourteen horses, besides other cattle, within the last two years, by the lions, which are numerous and daring in this vicinity.

I slept this night in the outer apartment (*voor-kamer*) or sitting-room of the house, which was without a door ; and was much annoyed by a number of large dogs running out and in continually all night, and making a dreadful clamour.

19.—Proceeded this morning about an hour before daylight with two fresh horses and a guide. The waggon road which goes up the right bank being obliged to follow the circuitous bends of the river, we left it

occasionally, and crossing the channel, cut off considerable angles by stretching athwart the country on the opposite side. These deviations, however, from the beaten track were not very safe nor comfortable, especially in the dark, when, besides the apprehension of encountering lions or Caffers in the intricate paths through the thorny jungles on the river bank, our horses were in continual danger of falling or breaking their legs, from the innumerable holes of ant-eaters, porcupines, and jackals with which large patches of country were perforated like a rabbit-warren. At daybreak we found ourselves surrounded by flocks of quaghas, ostriches, springboks, and other wild animals; and soon after, we came suddenly upon a numerous pack of jackals, not less than thirty in number, who scampered off very nimbly into the bushes. These last were a different species from what is commonly found near Cape Town, having a rougher fur and more bushy tail.

Saw on the opposite side, the confluence of the Little Fish River with the principal stream; and about 8 o'clock again crossed to the colonial side at the residence of Adrian de Langè, where I procured some refreshment. Here I learnt that the Caffers had carried off from this boor, on the 15th instant, thirty-two head of cattle; and parties of these plunderers were supposed to be still lurking in the neighbouring thickets. Continued our route through a brown and barren-looking country, except along the immediate course of the river, which consists of deep alluvial soil, thickly overgrown with *mirfosa* trees. It was in this vicinity that the traveller Vaillant resided among the Gonaqua Hottentots, and romanced about the pretty Nerina.

This once numerous tribe, like many other Hottentot clans mentioned by earlier travellers, is now entirely extinct. The residue of the Gonaquas sought refuge among the Caffers a few years ago, and they are now finally incorporated with that people. In this vicinity we passed an old herdsman tending his master's flocks, who looked like the last of his race. He was not a Gonaqua, but he well remembered the days, he said, when that tribe and

his own were the masters of the country, and pastured their flocks and herds, or hunted the buffalo and the eland on the banks of the Fish River. Now the white men claim the entire property of the soil, and have even deprived the original possessors of the privilege of living *free* upon roots and game. They are accounted an inferior race, and born to servitude. They feel their degradation, but cannot escape from it: they are oppressed alike by the unjust regulations and the illiberal prejudices of the colonists. But happier times are now dawning upon them; and in the new arrangements about to be introduced, and the better code of laws soon to be conferred upon the Colony, the Hottentot race will find, I trust, that their case has not been overlooked by the beneficent Government of England.\*

At noon, we unsaddled and rested our horses for an hour near the deserted military post of Van-Aards. It was on a hill opposite, that the

\* The vignette at the head of this chapter, from a drawing by my friend Dr. Heurtley, gives a very accurate and characteristic representation of an old Hottentot herdsman, such as I have mentioned above: and the following sonnet, by my friend Mr. Pringle, almost seems as if it had been intended for a motto to the drawing, though written in the interior of the Colony long before he had seen it. The coincidence is easily accounted for—both *drew from life*.

#### THE HOTTENTOT.

Mild, melancholy, and sedate he stands,  
Tending another's flocks upon the fields—  
His father's once—where now the white-man builds  
His home, and issues forth his proud commands:  
His dark eye flashes not; his listless hands  
Support the boor's huge firelock; but the shields  
And quivers of his race are gone: he yields,  
Submissively, his freedom and his lands.  
Has he no courage?—Once he had—but, lo!  
The felon's chain hath worn him to the bone.  
No enterprise?—Alas! the brand, the blow  
Have humbled him to dust—his *HOPES* is gone.  
"He's a base-hearted hound—not worth his food"—  
His master cries;—"he has no *gratitude*!"

insurgent boors in 1815 showed themselves in a strong body under the command of Piet Erasmus, and sent a summons to Captain Andrews to surrender the post to them; to which, in conjunction with Major Fraser, who had just arrived, he returned such a resolute reply, that, although he had only a handful of men, the cautious Africaners did not think it prudent to attack him.

A ride of about three hours farther across a more open country, pretty well clothed with grass, brought us to Somerset Farm, at the foot of the Boschberg ridge of mountains. This place is distant about fifteen miles from the course of the Great Fish River. It is watered by the stream called the Little Fish River; but the arable land, which lies in a sort of basin in the form of a horse-shoe, is not irrigated from the river, but from various fountains which issue from the steep woody kloofs of the Boschberg, the principal of which drives a large cornmill before it is brought upon the land. There is, however, not nearly enough of water to supply the whole extent of land under cultivation on this farm, which amounts to about 600 acres; but the greater part of the arable soil having been formed out of a swamp, which, though drained on the surface, is still full of springs and moisture underneath, it is seldom requisite, even in the hottest seasons, to irrigate more than the drier portions around the borders of this marshy basin.

The farm-house and offices are delightfully situated close to the foot of the mountain, which rises steep behind to the height of 2000 feet, most picturesquely diversified with hanging woods, rocks, and waterfalls; and seemingly supported at regular intervals, like the wall of a gothic cathedral, with narrow sloping buttresses covered with a smooth turf of the liveliest verdure. The garden is watered by a little brook, and contains a few fine orange trees, and a variety of other fruits. These trees are some of them of considerable age, having been planted by the boors who first occupied this fine country about sixty years ago. It was, I believe, at this very spot, or at a farm in its



immediate vicinity, then occupied by a family of the name of Prinsloe, that the Swedish traveller Sparrman resided some time in 1776; the banks of the Fish River in Agter-Bruintjes-Hoogte being the farthest limit attained either by Sparrman or Vaillant. A descendant of Sparrman's host, who occupied the farm adjoining to this, was the principal leader of the rebels in 1815, and was one of the five individuals executed in consequence of that foolish and criminal insurrection.

Somerset Farm, at the time I visited it, was an extensive Government establishment, under the superintendence of Mr. Hart, formerly adjutant of the old Cape Corps, assisted by Lieut. Devenish of the same corps, and Mr. J. Pringle, a practical farmer, from the Scotch party of settlers. The agricultural part of the concern was by no means the principal department. The supply of rations to the British settlers for two years after their arrival, and the provisioning of the troops on the frontier for several years past, was committed to this establishment. It was in fact rather a commissariat depôt than a farm; and the purchasing of cattle, sheep, and corn from the boors, and forwarding them as required to the various military posts, constantly occupied a great number of Hottentot herdsmen, and waggon drivers. Five or six English ploughmen and three or four mechanics, with a clerk or store-keeper, were the whole of the British population of the place, exclusive of the three superintendants and their families. The greatest activity and bustle appeared to pervade every part of the establishment; and even the languid Hottentots seemed here to emulate the ardour of Englishmen, as if they had caught a portion of the activity and enterprize for which the indefatigable Mr. Hart has been long distinguished.\*

In January 1825, Somerset Farm was established as the site of a new Drostdy of the same name, and the plan of an extensive village was laid down. At the public sale of the *erven*, or lots of ground for houses and gardens, there was great competition, owing to the concourse of purchasers from all parts of the eastern districts, especially from Albany; and the prices ran very high. The progress of building in the new village has, however, scarcely cor-

20.—Having spent the preceding evening very pleasantly in conversation with Mr. Hart, (who is a very meritorious man, and extremely well informed in regard to the capabilities of the eastern districts) I proceeded as usual at an early hour upon my journey. Leaving the course of the Great Fish River, I pursued the nearest route through the mountains to the village of Cradock. My road lay for about an hour along the foot of the Boschberg to the westward. We then struck into an opening of the mountains on the right, and following the course of the Little Fish River towards its source, passed many comfortable-looking farm-houses, at some of which I alighted and partook of a cup of coffee, or a dram (*soopie*) with the hospitable boors. These people I found generally to be in much more comfortable circumstances than their countrymen along the coast. They had generally substantial houses, and gardens well stocked with fruit-trees and vegetables: all of them had good bread, too, for their own consumption; and many had sold quantities of wheat to the Somerset establishment, the blight in the crops having been less destructive here than nearer the coast. Their gardens and corn-fields were all irrigated either from the river, or some of its tributary streams. This valley branches out as it ascends into a variety of glens and dells, almost all of which are inhabited and covered with herds of cattle and sheep. It is on the whole a fertile and populous district, and has been long settled, and comparatively little disturbed by the Caffre wars. It is known by the name of Zwagershoek, or "Brother-in-law's Corner."

At the Veld-Cornet, Paul Plessie's, I got fresh horses; and, pursuing my route through the devious windings of the mountains, again changed horses

responded with this eager desire to obtain property in it; for, by the latest accounts, not above a dozen private houses have been yet erected. The district of Somerset comprehends the whole of the Sub-Drostdy of Cradock, part of the Graaff-Reinet, and Albany districts, and the finest portion of the territory lately wrested from the Caffers beyond the Fish River.

at a boor's of the name of Malan. Soon after leaving the latter, I got upon the ridge which divides this *hoek* from another winding glen called Gannahoek. The latter, which runs down towards the Great Fish River, makes an extensive sweep round the other extremity of the Boschberg ridge. The mountains I now stood upon were of very considerable elevation, for I had been ascending, though gradually, all the way from Somerset. It took us nearly an hour to descend the steep declivity into the Gannahoek, and the sun sank down just as we reached the level plain extending to the banks of the Great Fish River. The country here again was of quite a different character from the grassy pastures of Somerset and Zwagershoek, being what they call *Karoo* soil, and covered with a short shrub much resembling heath. On this pasture, sheep and goats thrive better than even on the finest grass, and the greater part of the Cradock district, containing the best sheep-farms of the Colony, possesses this description of soil.

We continued our journey about three hours by moonlight, when coming to a respectable-looking farm-house, and understanding from my guide that I was still an hour's ride from Cradock, I rode up to the door and solicited lodgings. My request was instantly complied with, and I was welcomed in and invited to take my seat at a plentiful supper which was just serving up. My host, a jolly consequential-looking person, was, I found, a Mynheer Van Heerden, a *heemraad* and *kerkraad* of the district (i. e. a member of the district-court and a churchwarden), and who did justice to the reputation for hospitality still maintained by the farmers of this remote part of the Colony. I had travelled this day about fifty-six miles, the last thirty at full gallop on a hardy African pony, saddled for me fresh from the pasture. This would have killed almost any English horse, but the country breed of Cape horses is far more hardy than ours, and the grass less relaxing and approaching more to the character of hay ; so that upon a long journey,

although the horses seldom get any other food than what they can pick up while the traveller is resting, yet upon this scanty fare they carry on at a spirited canter the whole day long.

21.—After a cup of coffee with my host I proceeded, and passed through the village of Cradock without stopping. It contains about twenty houses with gardens and orchards, watered by irrigation from the Great Fish River. A decent-looking church was erecting. The country around is bleak and desolate, and presents no capabilities of improvement or of alteration from what it is—a heathy range for sheep and goats. The village contains a couple of small retail shops, or *winkels* as they are called, and two or three mechanics. The clergyman and one or two of the families in the village are English. It is supported merely by being the residence of the magistracy and the clergyman, which brings the inhabitants from very distant parts occasionally to visit it, and insures it a trifling share of small trade. The residence of the deputy landdrost is a farm-house fitted up for his accommodation about three miles distant, no drostdy-house and offices having been yet erected. To this place I proceeded, and met with a cordial welcome from the magistrate, Captain Harding, and his amiable lady.

After breakfast I went to see a hot mineral spring, about two miles distant: the thermometer when placed in it rose to about 86°. The taste of the water much resembled that of the Harrowgate or Gilsland Spa. It is resorted to for bathing in several complaints. It issues from the ground close to the bank of the Great Fish River, which is here but a small stream, being about two hundred miles from the sea. The ground in the vicinity is much impregnated with saltpetre, and I was informed by Captain Harding that considerable quantities of this substance in a pure state are to be found in the neighbouring mountains. Throughout all this quarter indeed of the Colony the soil is profusely impregnated with nitre, and in many places is even rendered barren by its superabundance. At no great distance from Cradock, near the Bamboo Mountains, there

are three salt lakes similar to those in the vicinity of Algoa Bay, from which the neighbouring colonists supply themselves with excellent salt.

I spent the day at the Deputy Landdrost's, and had much agreeable conversation with this intelligent officer, who had seen a great deal of service in different parts of the world; having been in Egypt with Abercromby, in Spain with Sir John Moore, in the deplorable expedition to Walcheren, in Sicily, Malta, &c. Yet in all his campaigns he told me he had never seen a more spirited little action than that at Graham's Town three years ago, when 10,000 Caffers stormed the town and barracks, which had only about 250 soldiers to defend them. For a considerable time, Capt. Harding declared he absolutely thought the savages would have gained the day; and had they possessed better arms than their slender missiles, the handful of troops certainly could not have withstood them. But at length they gave way, and some field-pieces being turned upon their encumbered masses, upwards of 1300 were left dead on the ground. They had been excited to this assault, and wrought up to a high pitch of enthusiasm by their prophet Makanna, (or *Lynx*, as the Dutch call him,) who on this occasion, it is said, assured his countrymen that his powers of magic would render the English troops an easy prey to them, and change the balls even of their destructive guns into water. An old Hottentot chief of the name of Boesak, who happened accidentally to be present at Graham's Town, greatly distinguished himself in repulsing the Caffers at the most critical moment of this assault, and obtained a high and deserved reputation for good conduct and intrepidity.

The sub-district of Cradock forms part of the extensive province of Graaff-Reinet, on which it is partly dependent; and the magistrate here, who transacts all business with the Colonial Office through his superior officer the Landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, is called Deputy Landdrost. Cradock district, though generally of a dry and desert aspect, is rich in sheep and cattle: and produces also by irrigation corn more than sufficient for the consumption of

its inhabitants. The boors here are generally thriving and affluent in stock, though few of them, perhaps, possess much money, or many of those comforts which in Europe we have accustomed ourselves to consider indispensable. The farms here, and indeed throughout all the frontier districts except Albany, are of the average extent of 6000 acres; this large extent only being considered a *full place*. But they are in general merely cattle farms, not above two or three acres probably of this large extent being on an average capable of culture; and even where a larger extent might be irrigated, the great distance from any market, and the precarious demand, will not admit of its being profitably cultivated. In general, therefore, the boors only raise corn for their own use, or to exchange in barter with such of their neighbours as have not the means of cultivating corn at all.

The blight or *rust*, though also prevailing here of late years, has never been so universal or inveterate as in Albany and other tracts along the sea-coast. Captain Harding himself cultivates, by means of an abundant spring, a large field of corn-land, and also a well-stocked garden and vineyard. From the latter he makes some very good wine for his own use, the best I had yet tasted of frontier manufacture. This farm, called Drie-Fonteyn, (Three Fountains) where he resides, had been formerly occupied by an extensive cattle boor, who had left a memorable monument of his residence in a prodigious dunghill just in front of the house. This had been the station of his cattle kraal, and the manure had accumulated in the shape of a solid mountain, which Captain Harding had for several years been exerting himself to reduce, though with but little apparent effect, by cutting it out in square pieces like peats, and erecting out of this material, extensive enclosures, and farm-yards. In the vicinity of London this mountain of manure would be worth many thousand pounds.

Capt. H. informed me that, desolate as the country looked, he could call out in six hours upwards of 1000 Burghers, armed and mounted, and



that he required nothing but a sufficient supply of ammunition to be perfectly prepared to repel any irruption of the native tribes upon his extensive frontier. At present the inhabitants were harassed chiefly by the hordes of wild Bushmen, who still infest the mountainous regions, which indeed may be said to be their native territory, and from which the colonists had in the first instance unrighteously expelled them. But it does not seem improbable that they may have some day a more formidable enemy to encounter on the north-eastern frontier. The Tambookie tribe of Caffers, indeed, who have for some time lived close upon this frontier along the banks of the River Zwart-Kei, have hitherto conducted themselves in the most quiet and inoffensive manner. But to the north and east of the Tambookie nation are other tribes, who seem to be in a state of commotion, and to be hostilely impelled upon the Colony by the warlike and marauding hordes beyond them. A few days before my arrival, three fugitives from some tribe, entirely unknown to the colonists, were found in the Tarka, and were made prisoners with some difficulty, and sent down to Cape Town. It was ascertained from them that they belonged to a remote country north from Tambookie land, from which they had been several moons in travelling; and that their country had been overrun and plundered by a numerous and fierce nation who press upon them from the north and east. I have got in my possession their weapons, which are merely assagais of a somewhat lighter construction than those of the Caffers. I shall hereafter revert to the discussion of the disturbances among the native tribes, and bring down the details I have collected respecting them to a more recent period.





## CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY OVER THE MOUNTAINS.—DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN OF GRAAFF-REINET.—THE LANDDROST STOCKENSTROM.—CONDITION OF THE SNEEUWBERG BOORS.—JOURNEY ACROSS THE SNEEUWBERG RIDGE TO THE NORTHWARD.

MAY 22.—Having been provided by Captain Harding with fresh horses and a guide, I proceeded towards Graaff-Reinet, to which my road now lay south-west over part of the Sneeuwberg range of mountains. The mountains in view were mostly of the tabular conformation, and some of them assumed very regular and curious shapes. I saw at a distance the

elevated peak called the Taay-Bosch-Berg, a singular hill resembling a cylinder placed upon a cone. The country through which I passed abounded with springboks and ostriches. At three o'clock, P. M. arrived at the Veld-Cornet, Van Wyk's, close under the Agter-Sneeuwberg, where I stopped for the night. I had still thus far the company of the Great Fish River, but it had now become a diminutive brook, its source being only a few miles distant from this place. I found the boors in this remote quarter extremely hospitable, but also exceedingly inquisitive—a circumstance perhaps not to be wondered at, when it is considered how seldom a visitor, especially an European, appears among them. The same questions were put to me at almost every place I came to:—"Who are you? Where do you come from?—Whither are you going?—What is your profession?—What is your age?—Are you married?" and a hundred other interrogations equally uninteresting to a weary traveller. This practice recalled to my mind the plan fallen upon by Dr. Franklin, when travelling in the United States, where the people are equally inquisitive. As soon as he arrived at a house he immediately called all the family together, and said, "I am Dr. Franklin, from New York, on my way to Philadelphia,"—adding all the other information he knew he must otherwise give by detail; by which means he obtained quietness for the rest of the evening. And this communicative system is so much more popular and preferable in every respect to the morose and dogged silence which many English travellers resort to when pressed by the familiar but good-natured interrogations of the colonists, that I often adopted it to a considerable extent. It is obvious, that while a stranger by his frankness thus gains the good graces of his hosts, he need not tell more of his private affairs than he thinks proper.

I was often much amused, too, by the curiosity and wonder of those rustics, when I placed my map, compass, and thermometer on the table, and proceeded to fill up my daily journal,—the whole household gathering

round me and staring, open-mouthed, as if I had been a magician, or astrologer.

This Veld-Cornet Van Wyk is in some respects superior to the generality of his countrymen, and had considerable merit in aiding the Landdrost Stockenstrom to arrest the progress of the insurrection in 1815. But he is, nevertheless, a bitter hunter of the Bushmen.

23.—Proceeded at an early hour, with a son of Van Wyk's for my guide. The morning was fair; but we saw about two miles ahead, upon the mountains which we had to cross, the driving of a snow-storm. On approaching the foot of the mountains we secured ourselves with our great coats and caps. The sun was yet shining brightly on us, while only a few hundred yards higher the storm raged in grand array, and produced a magnificent effect. We now began to ascend, and were soon enveloped in the rolling blast; and the drift was so dense, that we could scarcely discern our path. I was soon completely cased in snow, which I in some measure enjoyed, not having seen any, except at a great distance, during the last five years. As we approached the summit, the storm became more violent, and it was not without difficulty that we were enabled to proceed. My thermometer immediately fell to 32°.

Having at length passed the heights, we gradually gained, as we again descended, a more genial climate; and about noon arrived at Karel Okom's, where I found horses ready,—having sent forward a messenger from Van Wyk's to order them. The snow had now given way to rain, and I was already wet through; but finding no comfort in a *Vee-boor's* open house without a fire-place, in this cold region, I thought it best to proceed in my wet clothes; and accordingly set forward, after some slight refreshment.

While at this place, I heard that a *Commando* (or expedition of armed boors) had been recently out against the Bushmen in the mountains, where

they had shot thirty of these poor creatures. I also learned that above 100 Bushmen had been shot last year in the Tarka. This is certainly lamentable work, whatever be the cause of it,—that we should be under the necessity of hunting down our fellow-men like the wild beasts of the field. On this subject I shall have occasion to animadvert more particularly hereafter.

After travelling about five hours from Karel Okom's, always gradually descending, I reached the town of Graaff-Reinet just at nightfall. Captain Stockenstrom, the Landdrost, to whom I had letters of introduction, not being at home, I took up my lodgings at a Mr. Minaar's.

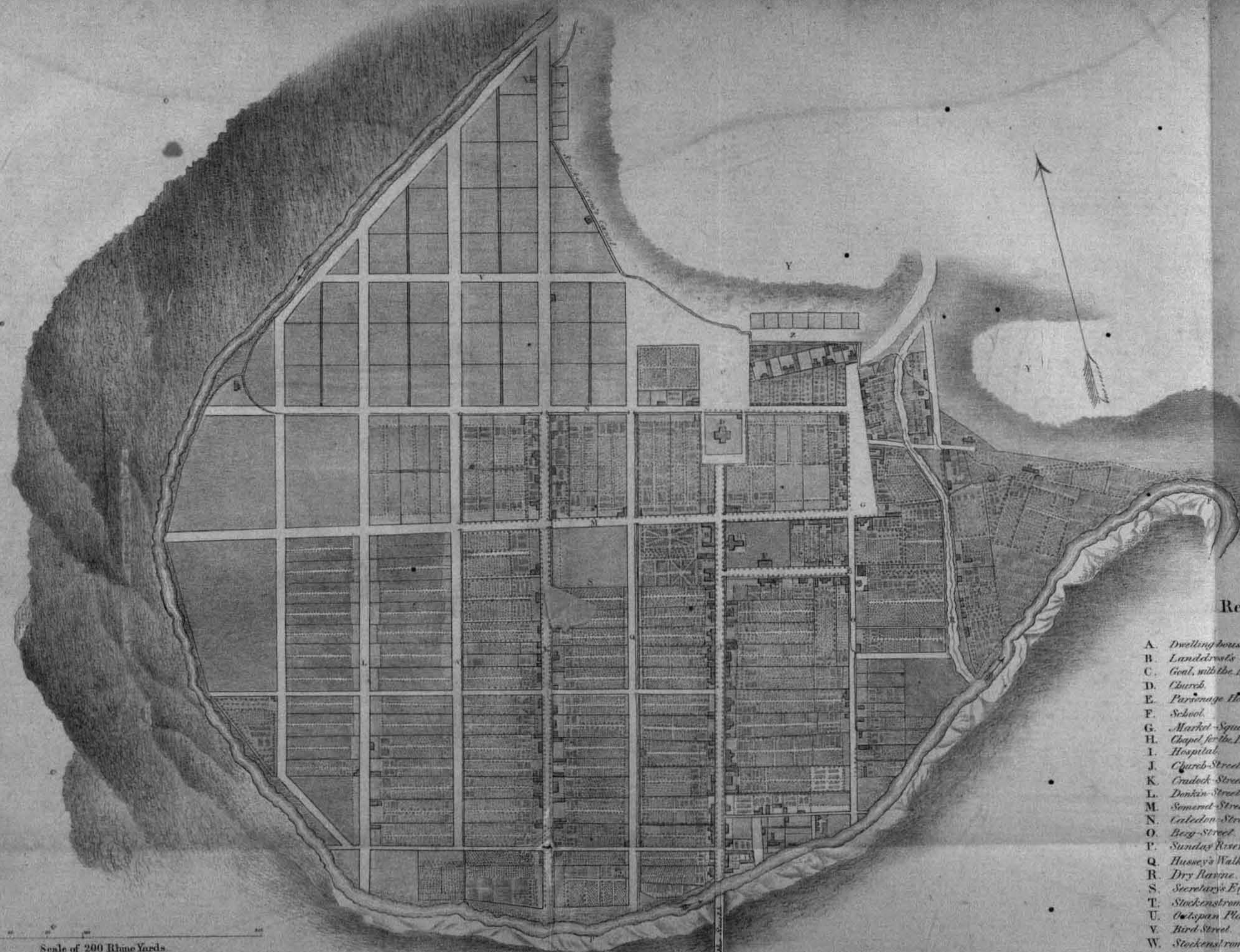
24.—I spent this forenoon in transacting some commercial business, and in surveying the town and its vicinity. In the course of the day, Capt. Stockenstrom returned home, and immediately sent me an invitation to the Drostdy, to which I accordingly shifted my quarters.

I had here the satisfaction of receiving letters from my relatives and friends in England, which in this remote quarter of the world, and previous to my proceeding farther into the interior, afforded me peculiar satisfaction.

25.—This being Sunday, I attended divine service with the Landdrost's family at the district church, and heard the Rev. Mr. Murray preach in Dutch to a numerous and attentive congregation. Mr. Murray, like all the late-appointed clergymen of the colonial establishment, is of the Church of Scotland, which in doctrine and discipline corresponds almost entirely with the Dutch Reformed communion.

26—29.—I spent these four days in Graaff-Reinet. This place is wonderfully improved since the days of Barrow, when it consisted merely of a few miserable mud and straw huts. It contains now about 300 houses, almost all of which are neat and commodious brick edifices;—many are elegant. The streets are wide, laid out at right angles, and planted with rows of lemon and orange trees, which thrive here luxuriantly, and give to the place





# References.

- A. Dwelling house of the Landdrost, and other Buildings
- B. Landdrost's Offices
- C. Goal, with the House of the Under-Sheriff
- D. Church
- E. Parsonage House
- F. School
- G. Market-Square
- H. Chapel for the Instruction of the Heathen
- I. Hospital
- J. Church-Street
- K. Cradock-Street
- L. Denkin-Street
- M. Somerset-Street
- N. Caledon-Street
- O. Berg-Street
- P. Sunday River
- Q. Hussey's Walk
- R. Dry Ravine
- S. Secretary's Edf.
- T. Stockenström's Canal
- U. Outspan Place
- V. Bird-Street
- W. Stockenström Street
- X. Mill
- Y. Two Hills
- Z. Viersterkfontein

Scale of 200 Rhine Yards

VILLAGE OF GRAAFF REINET.

Printed by C. Bullemundel

a fresh and pleasing appearance. Each house has a large allotment of ground behind it, extending in some instances to several acres, which is richly cultivated, divided by quince, lemon, or pomegranate hedges, and laid out in orchards, gardens, and vineyards. These are all watered by a canal from the Sunday River, which branches out into a number of small channels, and each inhabitant receives his due portion at a regular hour. This canal has been greatly improved, or rather constructed anew, on a much higher level, by the present Landdrost, who, by indefatigable exertion and entirely at his own risk, has carried it along the front of a rocky precipice, and by these means gained a large addition of arable ground, and a more certain and abundant supply of water. I was not a little surprised to find that this arduous task had been accomplished without even the aid of blowing irons or gunpowder, merely by kindling large fires upon the rocks, and when they were well heated, dashing buckets of water upon them. By this simple process immense blocks had been split, and rolled from the path of the water-course. This useful work, so essential to the prosperity of the town, was effected almost entirely by the labour of the convicted felons of the district under the immediate superintendence of the Landdrost.

The population of Graaff-Reinet, of all colours, amounts to about 1800 souls. The town is built in a sort of basin, almost encircled by the deep channel of the Sunday River, and closely environed by an amphitheatre of steep rugged mountains. This position, and the arid quality of the red Karroo soil, render it oppressively hot in summer. At that season, however, the atmosphere is sometimes agitated and cooled by violent thunder-storms, accompanied by heavy rains. In winter the weather is frequently rather cold, owing to the elevated situation of the country just at the foot of the Snow Mountains: but while I was there, the air was delightfully temperate, and the sky cloudless and serene.

Formerly, a considerable trade was carried on between this place and Cape



Town, by means of waggons, which crossed the Great Karroo (or Arid Desert) in the winter or spring, and returned before the summer heats had destroyed the vegetation and dried up the springs and rivers. By this road the Cape butchers still procure a large proportion of the sheep and cattle which are wanted for the use of Cape Town and the shipping in Table Bay. But of late years most of the merchandise required by Graaff-Reinet, which forms a sort of emporium for a large extent of country, is brought by coasters to Algoa Bay, and forwarded by waggons from that port. This reduces the land-carriage to about one-third of the distance through the Karroo.

This town owes much of its prosperity and embellishment to Captain Stockenström, who, though an African born, and educated entirely in the Colony, has been long distinguished as one of the most intelligent, enterprising, and public-spirited magistrates which the Cape settlement has ever possessed; and his district, though far the most extensive, and the wildest in South Africa, is administered on a system at once mild and efficient; so that I found every where and among all classes his character respected and beloved. At Graaff-Reinet he had just established an agricultural society, to promote emulation and European improvements among his countrymen. On the recent appointment, too, of an English teacher for that district by Government,\* he added 600 rix-dollars to his salary from his own pocket, in order to secure the opening of a class for the classics at the teacher's leisure hours. Besides this, he provides a salary of 400 rix-dollars to encourage a day-school for females, just opened here by the daughter of an English settler: and what seems to me no less worthy of notice than all this, he has lodged his private library, collected with much expense and difficulty, in one of the school-rooms, and rendered it accessible to every respectable person who in this remote quarter of the world may be disposed to avail himself of such a privilege. Many of

\* A teacher of respectability has lately been sent by the home government to every Drostdy to teach the English language gratis to the inhabitants.



these circumstances I only became acquainted with after my departure from Graaff-Reinet, as Captain Stockenstrom's house, where I resided, was the last place where I was likely to hear them spoken of.

I now made arrangements for extending my excursion beyond the northern limits of the Colony, in which I was much facilitated by the fortunate coincidence of the Landdrost being about to proceed, on the 30th, to the Zeekoe River upon that frontier, in order to inspect lands to be granted to the boors. On this expedition he was to be accompanied by a land-surveyor and one of his heemraden, and by two waggons to carry tents and baggage, besides his travelling horse-wagon, in which he kindly offered me a seat. Without this friendly furtherance, I should have found it almost impossible to proceed through the Sneeuwberg Mountains at this season of the year, when the greater part of the farmers abandon their dwellings in that cold and stormy region, and retreat with their flocks and herds to spend the winter months in the more genial climate of the plains; returning again in the spring, when the melting of the snows leaves the mountains covered with vegetation.

A dispatch, which arrived on the 29th from Mr. Melvill, the government resident at Griqua-Town, mentioned, that some civil broils had arisen in his semi-barbarous community; and that gentleman strongly urged Captain Stockenstrom to send a commando against the party which he accounted disaffected; an application which, however, the Landdrost was too prudent to accede to. This information indicated that my journey through the wild and wandering hordes of the interior might not be unattended with difficulty, and perhaps some danger; but I determined to encounter these, rather than lose the present favourable opportunity of prosecuting an excursion on which I had long set my heart.

30.—Accordingly, the baggage-waggons having been dispatched at an early hour, the heemraad, land-surveyor, and myself, started at noon in the lighter vehicle, drawn by eight fine horses. The Landdrost, being detained by some urgent business, was to follow on horseback next morning. We winded

for some time up the valley of the Sunday River ; then mounting the Sneeuw-berg ridge by a long and steep ascent, in two hours more reached the place of a boor named Vandermerwe, where we stopped for the night, the bullock-waggons being still a-head of us. From this place I took a ride of about two miles before sun-set, to see a very fine waterfall, where a considerable stream dashes itself over a smooth ledge of rock about 200 feet perpendicular into a romantic glen.

The farm where we now stopped is named Modder-Fonteyn (Muddy Fountain), an appellation so common in the Colony, that I have visited, I believe, above a dozen places of that name. It is strange to observe the barrenness of fancy of the boors in giving names to places. In every quarter of the Colony we find *Brak Rivier*, *Zwart Rivier*, *Zeekoe Rivier*, *Palmiet Rivier*, *Baviaan's kloof*, and so forth ; the appellation being given generally from some quality common to many places, and seldom with that nice and accurate discrimination which seizes the distinctive and peculiar features alone, and embodies them in the name. This may, perhaps, be ascribed in a great measure to the sameness and monotony of South African scenery : it, however, occasions much inconvenience and confusion to the traveller.

At this place I learned from the conversation between our host and my fellow-travellers, that we were approaching the haunts of the Bushmen ; all the talk of the evening being about this unhappy race. There is considerable risk in travelling through the mountains, not only from the lurking Bushmen, but also from runaway slaves, who occasionally rush down and plunder the solitary traveller.

The farm-houses in the Sneeuwberg, and in most of the colder districts of the Colony, are usually of the following description.—The house resembles a large barn divided into two or three apartments. One of these is the kitchen, which also serves for the sitting and eating apartment. In the

others the family sleep; while, in the outer one already mentioned, visitors and travellers are accommodated with a rush mat, a feather-bed, and a coverlet spread on the clay floor. In this situation I have often enjoyed, after a fatiguing day's ride, the most balmy repose; while a swarthy train of slaves and Hottentots were moving round the embers of the fire, wrapped in their sheepskin mantles, and dogs, cats, and fowls, were trampling over my body. The more wealthy and long settled families, however, usually have the kitchen separate from their sitting-room. In such houses curtained beds, and other articles of decent furniture, are not unfrequently found; but the poorer classes are content with a few thong-bottomed chairs and stools, two or three waggon chests, and a couple of deal tables. At one of the latter sits the mistress of the house, with a tea-urn and chafing-dish before her, dealing out every now and then *tea-water*, or coffee, and elevating her sharp shrill voice occasionally to keep the dilatory slaves and Hottentots at their duty. In this same apartment is also invariably to be seen the carcase of a sheep killed in the morning, and hung up under the eye of the mistress, to be served out frugally for the day's provision as it may be required. The houses, being without any ceiling, are open to the thatch; and the rafters are generally hung full of the ears of Indian corn, leaves or rolls of tobacco, slices of dried meat, called *bill tongue*, &c. The last is a sort of ham from the muscular part of the thigh of the ox, or the larger species of antelopes; it is very convenient for carrying on journeys, and is found in the boor's houses in every part of the Colony. It is cut into very thin slices, and eaten with bread and butter, or with bread and the melted fat of the sheep's tail, which is a common substitute for butter: either way it is no contemptible dish when one is a little hungry, and many a time I have heartily enjoyed it.

A traveller, on arriving, if it does not happen to be meal-time, is always presented with a cup of tea, without sugar, milk, or bread; unless occasionally, when you may be favoured with a small piece of sugar-candy out of a

tin snuff-box, to be kept in your mouth to sweeten the bitter beverage as it passes. When their tea and coffee is exhausted, a succedaneum is found in roasted grain, prepared in the same way as Hunt's *radical coffee*, which, if not very palatable, is nevertheless a refreshment to a thirsty and weary traveller. They never think of asking you to eat, unless at meal-time; but then you are expected to draw in your chair, and help yourself, without invitation, in the same easy manner as one of the family. The dishes consist for the most part of mutton stewed in sheep's tail fat, or boiled to rags; sometimes with very palatable soup, and a dish of boiled corn, maize, or pumpkin. Cayenne pepper, vinegar, and a few home-made pickles, are also usually produced to relish the simple fare, which, served up twice a day, forms, with tea-water and the *soopie*, or dram of Cape brandy, the amount of their luxuries. In this quarter of the Colony, however, I found everywhere excellent bread; and, upon the whole, the farmers of Bruintjes-Hoogte and the Sneeuwberg appeared to be in much more independent and comfortable circumstances than those along the coast.

31.—Being moonlight, we proposed to proceed at three o'clock, A. M.; but a storm of snow and hail raging at that hour, we delayed *inspanning* till it had blown past, the horses being in the meanwhile put loose into an out-house. At daybreak, however, we found that they had all disappeared. The boy who had charge of them had laid himself down across the open doorway, and soon falling fast asleep, the horses had escaped by stepping over his body. All our people were instantly dispatched in search of them; and it was soon discovered by their traces that they had gone off towards Graaff-Reinet. We waited with the peevish patience which travellers usually muster on such occasions, until one o'clock, when the Landdrost joined us; and two hours afterwards our messengers returned with them, having had to follow them to a farm within a few miles of the Drostdy, where they usually grazed.

At length, about half-past three o'clock, we got again in motion, and continued our journey long after nightfall, which at this season is about five o'clock, with a very brief twilight. Notwithstanding the darkness of the beclouded and boisterous night, it was surprising to see with what dexterity swarthy coachmen drove on at a great rate on a road scarcely discernible, and in many places narrow and broken by rocks and gullies. I really could not see the fore horses. Yet, on we dashed, one of our drivers holding the reins and guiding the horses, the other smacking and lashing them up with his gigantic whip. This driving would astonish the best coachman in England, and shake the nerves of even our first four-in-hand men, till they got accustomed to it.

After passing through a dismal ravine, which I found was the bed of a *riviertje* or rivulet, we reached a boor's house, where we took up our quarters for the night.

June 1.—This morning opened clear and frosty, and the air, free from vapours, was bracing, and gave an exhilaration to the spirits which I had not felt for some time, although the scenery around our road through these lofty regions looked bleak and uninteresting. At seven we took leave of our talkative, but hospitable host, who, by the bye, was in his own opinion, and that of his countrymen, a great doctor—in our's a great quack—but a mighty harmless sort of a fellow withal. As we proceeded we saw the lofty Compass-berg (or Spitskop) towering on our left. This mountain received its present appellation from the late Colonel Gordon, who estimated its height to be 6500 feet above the level of the sea. It is considered the highest point in the whole Colony, unless the Winterberg, on the eastern frontier, should be found, as some think, to equal or surpass it: the height of the latter has not yet been scientifically ascertained. From the Compass-berg, on the south side, flows the principal source of the Great Fish River; and on its north side is the source of the Zeekoe River, a large branch of the Gariep,

or Orange River; so that its waters flow equally into the Atlantic and Indian oceans.

After resting and feeding our horses at a farm-house named Zuur-plaatz, we proceeded over the highest part of the Sneeuwberg range, where we felt the air very keen and piercing; but the fleecy clouds rolling around the mountain peaks, and gilded by the declining sun, had a gorgeous and agreeable effect. From this part of the road we had a very extensive prospect. The Bambus-Bergen, or Bamboo mountains, and the country called New Hantam, which form the north-eastern extremity of the Colony, lay far to our right. A few days' journey from the Bambus-berg is the residence of one of the Tambookie chiefs, whose people frequently visit the colonists in that quarter, and live on friendly terms with them—unlike their Caffre countrymen near the coast.

In the course of the afternoon we overtook our bullock-waggons at the place of a rich boor,—whose entertainment, however, we found so indifferent, (unlike the frank hospitality of his countrymen in general,) that we preferred proceeding; and at sunset *outspanned* (unyoked) in the wilds, and pitched our tent, with a large fire in front of it, which kept us tolerably comfortable. The night was starlight but very cold. We had eight Hottentots in our party, who seemed to enjoy the fire exceedingly; and it was pleasing to see them smoking, and cracking their jokes all the evening, unchecked by the presence of their masters. At nine o'clock we retired to sleep in the tent, the Hottentots stretching themselves, wrapped up in their sheepskin *carosses* (blankets), around the fire.

## CHAPTER V.

LIONS.—DESERTED DWELLINGS.—ZEEKOE RIVER.—BUSHMEN.—BACK  
SETTLERS.—THE CRADOCK RIVER.

AT break of day we found the country covered with a thick white rime, or hoar frost, and the ice on the pools half an inch thick. At this time the thermometer stood at 26°, six degrees below the freezing point. After refreshing ourselves with a cup of warm coffee, we proceeded. Passed a boor's place, where an immense dunghill had been set on fire, as the only mode of removing it. It had already been burning for nine months, and would yet require double that period to burn out. An instance was mentioned to me of one of those masses of manure which had burned for seven years!

Since passing the heights of the Sneeuwberg we had been continually descending. Our road now followed the course of the Zeekoe River—as yet only a rill,<sup>\*</sup> with scarcely any stream in it. The country gradually became more open, and the plains spread out covered with game. At noon we overtook the bullock-waggons which we had dispatched, as usual, several hours before we started ourselves in the morning. The horse-waggon travels at the average rate of six miles per hour, while the ox-waggon only goes at half that rate, or a little more if the road is good and level.

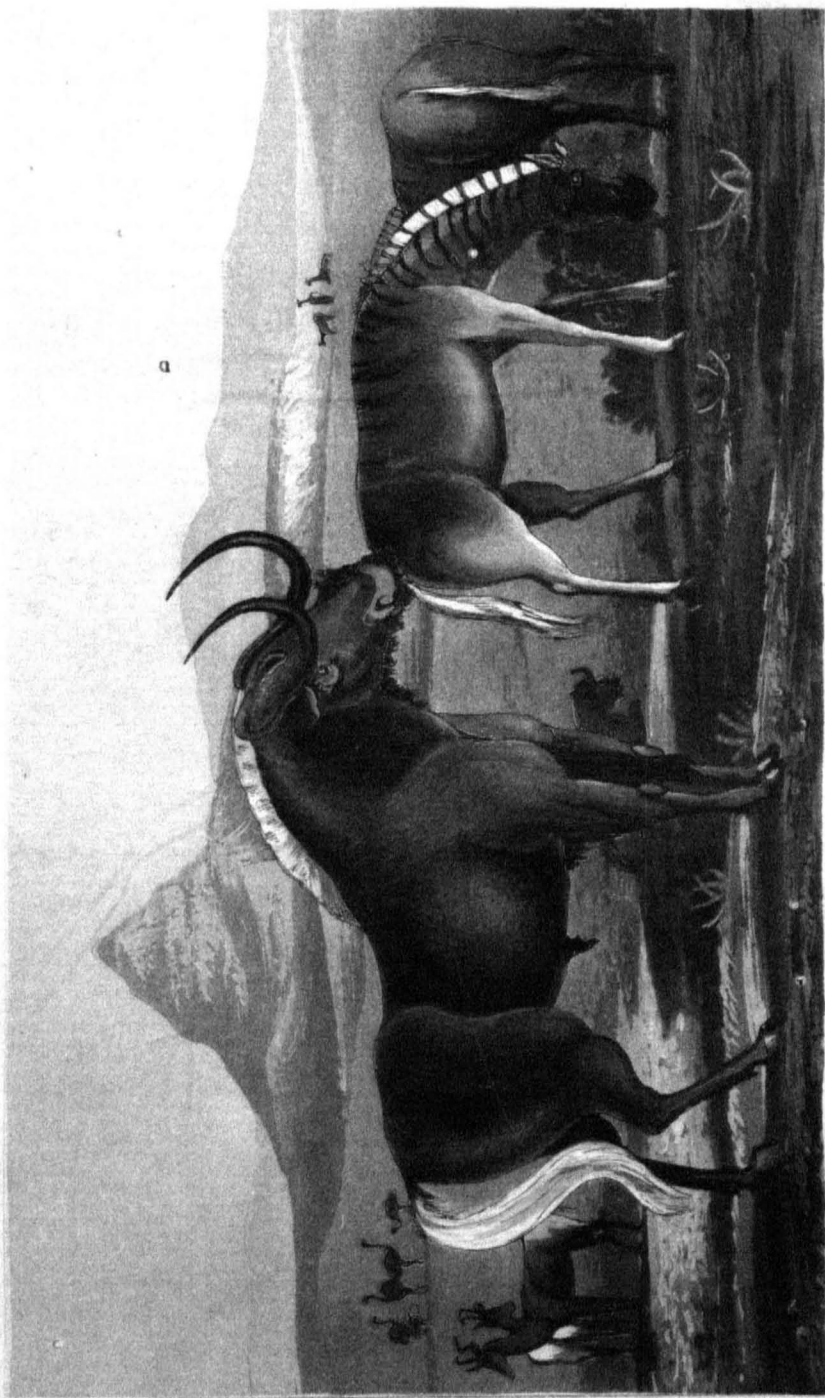
When we had *outspanned* at mid-day, and were busy cooking a mutton chop for dinner, we were startled by the appearance of two lions, which pass-



ing within 400 yards of the waggons, proceeded to a neighbouring height that overlooked our encampment, and there lay down and gazed at us. This was the first sight I had had of those magnificent animals roving in power and freedom over their native plains. During our repast we kept a watchful eye upon them, having our fire-arms all ready for action in case of an attack. They remained, however, perfectly quiet, and in about an hour we proceeded, leaving them undisturbed.

The lions in this quarter of the Colony are often very destructive to the property of the farmers, especially to horses, of which they appear to be particularly fond. They are, therefore, often hunted by the boors in self-defence, and the following is the method described to me as usually pursued :

Ten or twelve colonists, mounted, and armed with their large guns, go out; and having, with the assistance of their dogs or Hottentots, ascertained where the spoiler lies, approach within a moderate distance, and then alighting, make fast the horses to each other by their bridles and halters. They then advance to within about thirty paces, backing the horses before them, knowing that the lion will not spring till within half that distance, and being aware from his aspect and motions whether he is likely to anticipate their attack. As they advance, the lion at first surveys them calmly, and wags his tail as if in a pleased or playful humour; but when they approach nearer, he begins to growl, and draws his hind parts under his breast till almost nothing of him is seen except his bushy bristling mane, and his eyes of living fire gleaming fiercely from the midst of it. He is now fully enraged, and only measuring his distance, in act to spring upon his audacious assailants. This is the critical moment, and the signal is given for half the party to fire. If they are not successful in killing him at the first volley, he springs like a thunderbolt upon the horses. The rest of the party then pour in their fire upon him, which seldom fails to finish his career, though, perhaps, with the



QUAGGA.

THE KUDU.

London: Published by J. & J. Colburn, Strand.

J. Thompson del. 1846.

loss of one or more horses ; and sometimes, though more rarely, some even of the huntsmen are destroyed in these dangerous encounters.

As we proceeded along the plains gently declining from the Sneeuwberg, we discovered thousands of antelopes, quaghas, and gnoos.\* This was the first time I had seen the last-named curious animal, which has been minutely described by Barrow, Lichtenstein, and Burchell. Hundreds of them were now playing round us, and ever and anon a troop of these fantastic animals would join a herd of quaghas, and all bound off helter-skelter across the plains, throwing up clouds of dust from the arid ground, which is here quite a karroo, and miserably parched and poor. The numbers and variety of the game formed, indeed, the only feature of animation and interest throughout this desolate region. Among the antelopes I observed a species only found in this quarter, and called the *bles-bok*. It much resembles the *bontè-bok*, which is found in the vicinity of Swellendam.

Since leaving Graaff-Reinet, I had not observed a tree or bush ; the country both in the Sneeuwberg and the northern plains being altogether naked and sterile-looking. The farmers suffer much from the scarcity of fuel in these barren regions, and are obliged to burn either some very small shrubs, or the dry dung of their cattle. The feathered tribes seemed also to have deserted these barren and shelterless tracks. I saw only a few of the larger and more hardy species, such as the ostrich ; the *pouw*, which is a sort of large bustard, and very delicate eating ; the *korhaan*, a smaller sort of bustard, also prized by epicures ; cranes, Namaqua partridges, and white-necked crows.

After a journey of about forty miles this day, we reached a boor's resi-

\* The two latter animals are accurately represented in the annexed plate, with other varieties of wild game, scattered over the plains, and the curious mountain called Bushman's Kop, in the background. The Quagha (or Quagga,) is the wild ass of South Africa.

dence, at a place called Elands-Kloof. The house was locked up and deserted; the family having gone, like many other inhabitants of the higher country, to spend their winter with their flocks and herds in the more genial climate down the Zeekoe River. We took the liberty, however, of breaking into the house, and took up our quarters there for the night. We found a large quantity of the herb called *dacha*, a species of hemp, hung up on the rafters. The leaves of this plant are eagerly sought after by the slaves and Hottentots to smoke, either mixed with tobacco or alone. It possesses much more powerfully stimulating qualities than tobacco, and speedily intoxicates those who smoke it profusely, sometimes rendering them for a time quite mad. This inebriating effect is in fact the quality for which these poor creatures prize it. But the free use of it, just like opium, and all such powerful stimulants, is exceedingly pernicious, and gives the appearance of old age in a few years to its victims. It is, therefore, the more extraordinary, that the whites, who seldom use the *dacha* themselves, should cultivate it for their servants. But it is, I believe, as an inducement to retain the wild Bushmen in their service, whom they have made captives at an early age in their *commandoes*,—most of these people being extremely addicted to the smoking of *dacha*.

3.—This morning was very cold. On looking back towards the Sneeuwberg, we perceived that all the mountains were covered with snow, and congratulated ourselves on having got through with fair weather. After breakfast, prosecuted our journey through the same description of country as formerly, and frequented by the same sort of animals. Passed the skeletons of several gnoos and quaghas which had recently fallen victims to the lions. The country still declining towards the north with many insulated hills dispersed over it. These appeared often so close in front, that there seemed no passage except over a ridge of mountains, yet on approaching, we always found that they stood quite detached, the plain spreading around

and between them, while they rose abrupt and separate, like sugar-loaves placed upon a table.

At noon, reached a deserted boor's house, where we outspanned to refresh. Near this we discovered a Bushman and his family in a small hut of rushes. These were some of the race who live on friendly terms with the colonists. They were miserable, poor-looking objects, being almost entirely destitute of clothing, in these cold regions, which scarcely afford even the means of kindling a fire to warm them. They seemed not to be in the boor's service, but enjoying their freedom undisturbed. The man had just killed a gnou with his poisoned arrows. The part pierced by the arrows he had cut out and thrown away; the rest of the carcase he and his family had carried to their hut, and were busy feasting on it.

We were now fast approaching the country of these bandit tribes, or rather we were at present traversing wilds from which they had been partially expelled by the gradual encroachments of the colonists towards the north. Of their astonishing powers of sustaining hunger Captain Stockenström mentioned a remarkable instance to me. He had once found a Bushman in the wilderness, who had subsisted *fourteen days* without any other sustenance than water and salt. The poor creature seemed almost exhausted, and wasted to skin and bone, and it was feared that if allowed to eat freely, he might injure himself. However, it was at length agreed to let him have his own way, and before many hours had elapsed, he had nearly eat up half the carcase of a sheep. Next day the fellow appeared in excellent plight, and as rotund as an alderman. These people appear, indeed, to have acquired from habit, powers of stomach similar to the beasts of prey, both in voracity, and in supporting hunger. But I shall have occasion to revert again to their condition more fully.

In the evening we reached another boor's house, also deserted, into which, as usual, we admitted ourselves without ceremony, and made good

our quarters for the night. I now saw clearly, how unpleasant, if not impracticable, it would have been for me to travel alone through such a country, deserted at this season by the few civilized inhabitants who occupy it, and on whose hospitality and assistance I must have been in a great measure dependent. My good fortune in reaching Graaff-Reinet, just in time to accompany Captain Stockenstrom was, therefore, most satisfactory. In the evening it blew a storm attended with sleet and rain.

4.—Found another Bushman family at our *outspann*, apparently not so well supplied with food as the one we last met.

This day at noon, passed Plettenberg's Baaken, a stone erected by the Dutch governor of that name to mark the limits of the Colony in this direction. But this boundary has long been passed over. Near to this spot resided the Veld-Cornet Vanderwalt, whose house, or rather hut, we reached at two o'clock. This being the extent of Captain Stockenstrom's excursion for the present, we outspanned for the night.

We had hitherto been travelling on the east side of the Zeekoe River, but here we crossed. It was still an inconsiderable stream, but standing here and there in large pools, or as the colonists call them, *Zeekoe-gats*, deep enough to float a man-of-war. About thirty-five miles below this place it falls into the *Cradock*, which is one of the principal branches of the Gariep. The confluence of the Cradock with the latter is about one hundred miles farther down.

At Vanderwalt's we found a number of the Sneeuwberg boors, who retire to this quarter during the winter season. Some were also assembled here to accompany the Landdrost on the surveys he was going upon; and many others to make applications for grants of the places they already occupy.

It is the practice of the boors here, when one of them wants a farm, to proceed beyond the nominal boundary of the Colony, and take possession



of the choicest situation he can find in the Bushman country. This they notify to the landdrost, forwarding, at the same time, a memorial through him to the governor, praying for a grant of the farm. This memorial is remitted to the landdrost to be reported upon, &c. and in the mean time the boor is generally allowed to retain the occupation under the title of a "request place." The great ambition which the African colonists have to see all their children settled upon "full places," that is, farms of 6000 English acres in extent, is very detrimental to the improvement of the Colony; inducing the population to spread itself out much beyond its competent means of occupation, and habituating them to a lazy, wandering, nomade life,—content to subsist on mere animal food, rather than by regular industry to earn a comfortable livelihood as mechanics. At the same time it is also true, that in this quarter of the Colony but few of the large farms could be with any advantage subdivided, the country being so arid, and water so scarce, that 6000, or even 10,000 acres of land are frequently not supplied with water more than sufficient for one family; and large tracts of good pasture (or what is called good in South Africa) are often entirely useless from the total want of water in their vicinity.

The want of timber is also a great drawback to the settlers here. I had not seen a tree, nor even a bush large enough to supply a walking-stick, since we left the banks of the Sunday River, near Graaff-Reinet. For fuel the inhabitants are forced to use dried cow-dung. Timber, for building and other purposes, they procure with much labour, and of indifferent quality, from the Cradock River, about forty miles distant. In consequence of this, and of the wild and wandering life which most of them lead, their dwellings are extremely small, and chiefly occupied by their valuables, the people themselves passing most of their time in the open air. Many are even destitute of a hut, and live entirely in their waggons. The climate favours this sort of life, being very dry and salubrious, and considerably milder than in the



mountains. No rains fall except in the summer months, and these not regular, but proceeding from passing thunder-clouds. Enough falls, however, to nourish the hardy pasturage with which the country is covered; and this pasturage is salubrious and capable of supporting a great quantity of stock. Some boors here, living in the rude way I have described, possess 10,000 sheep and goats, and 1500 or 2000 head of cattle. Others are comparatively poor, and are anxious to spare their scanty flocks by hunting the wild game for subsistence for their families and servants; the latter not unfrequently eating the flesh of the quagha or wild ass. These boors are a very hospitable, but at the same time a boisterous and unpolished class of people. The men are tall and athletic; the women also are usually of a goodly size, and on the whole rather good-looking.

This morning I was busied with preparations to prosecute my journey alone into the wilderness. Captain Stockenstrom, finding me determined to proceed farther North, pressed me with the most urgent kindness to accept of his waggon and two Hottentots, as far as the ford in the Cradock River, about two days journey from this place; and at the same time he ordered a Veld-Cornet also to accompany me thither with four good horses,—with which, and one Hottentot, I was to launch myself into the wilds. The friendly solicitude of Captain Stockenstrom to facilitate my journey evinced a degree of kindness, which, on so brief an acquaintance, I was quite unprepared to expect, and which I shall ever remember with gratitude. He provided me, moreover, with a pass, and an official order addressed to all the Veld-Cornets and other colonists of his extensive district, to provide me with horses, guides, and every other assistance which I might require on my return into the Colony by a different route.

5.—At sunrise I bade adieu to Captain S. and my two other agreeable and obliging fellow-travellers, and set off in the eight-horse carriage, attended

by the cavalcade of two boors, two Hottentots, and the four led horses for my future use.

The country preserved the same monotonous aspect, relieved only by the appearance of the wild animals scattered over its surface. As we proceeded, however, the soil looked more fertile, and was covered with fine grass; and the detached hills, diminished in size and number, having the odd and regular appearance of hay-ricks scattered over a level meadow.

In two hours we passed Biscuit-Fonteyn, and in two hours more Hamel-Fonteyn (Wether Fountain). At both these places I found a number of boors, from the Sneeuwberg, with their families and flocks. They were very anxious to know who, and what I was, and whither I was bound. On learning that I was going to cross the Great River and the Bushman Country with a single Hottentot, they expressed their astonishment, and their apprehensions that I should either be destroyed by the Bushmen or devoured by the lions. Some of them urgently entreated me to give up thoughts of it and turn back; but having fully made up my mind on the subject, I was not much moved by such representations. I had, however, had some hopes, previously, of persuading a boor or two to accompany me; but such expectations were soon abandoned, when I came to talk with them, and found them to be so timorous and unenterprising.

I was told here that a lion had just killed an ox, and been shot in the act. It is the habit of the lion, it seems, when he kills a large animal, to spring upon it, and, seizing the throat with his terrible fangs, to press the body down with his paws till his victim expires. The moment he seizes his prey the lion closes his eyes, and never opens them again until life is extinct. The Hottentots are aware of this; and on the present occasion, one of the herdsmen ran to the spot with his gun, and fired at the lion within a few yards distance, but from the agitation of his nerves entirely

missed him. The lion, however, did not even deign to notice the report of the gun, but kept fast hold of his prey. The Hottentot reloaded, fired a second time, and missed; reloaded again, and shot him through the head. This fact, being well authenticated, seemed to me curious and worthy of being mentioned.

At noon left Hamel-Fonteyn, and after five hours hard driving we reached Rhinoster-Fonteyn (Rhinoceros Fountain), where we found a small hut occupied by boors, the last wanderers from the Colony, with their numerous flocks. The climate here was much warmer, and the country more expanded and pleasing, than any part I had yet seen on our route from Graaff-Reinet.

The principal boor residing here was named Vanderwalt. He had been wounded about thirty years ago by a Bushman's arrow, and although the poison had not been strong enough to prove fatal, it had inflicted an incurable wound, which to this day gives the old man, now about eighty years of age, excruciating pain.

These farms lie so near the wild Bushmen that the inhabitants are all extremely watchful and well armed; guns, indeed, seemed almost the only furniture of their cabins.

Understanding that a *Kraal* or horde of Bushmen was close by, the inhabitants of which were on good terms, or partly in the service of the colonists, I set off with some of the boors to visit them. A set of beings in more miserable plight I could scarcely have conceived: they were nearly destitute of any sort of clothing, crouching together under a few thorn bushes, which formed but a poor defence from the chill night blast; nevertheless they seemed in excellent spirits, and instantly commenced begging tobacco, which they are immoderately fond of, and will do almost any thing to procure. They exhibited several feats to me, and gave me ocular proof

of the accuracy of their aim, and the great distance to which they can shoot their slender but dangerous arrows.

These poor creatures subsist chiefly upon certain wild bulbs which grow in the plains, and also upon locusts, white ants, and other insects. The bulbs and ants they dig up by means of a hard pointed stick, with a piece of stone fixed on its head to give it sufficient impetus. Living on friendly terms with the boors, and doing little services occasionally, they also come in for the offals of the cattle killed for food, and of wild game which their patrons sometimes shoot for them. This miserable fare, with a supply of tobacco, and a few sheep-skins, satisfies all the wants of these degraded beings.

In the evening a small tent was pitched for me near the boor's little cabin. Four or five large fires were kindled near the kraals, partly to warm the slaves and Hottentots who slept around them in the open air, and partly to scare the beasts of prey from approaching the kraals. The flaming of these fires, the people moving round them, their wild laughter mingling with the lowing of the oxen, and the bleating of four or five thousand sheep, had altogether a striking effect.

In the course of the evening I learned that one of the boor's wives had been safely delivered of a stout boy. In these affairs the South African females seem to require very little assistance or care. Medical aid is of course out of the question.

6.—Proceeded on my journey, and having now got beyond the remotest colonists, I soon passed several Bushman Kraals, and saw numbers of Bushwomen on the plains digging up roots in the manner I have mentioned. This is all they have to subsist upon, except where now and then the men succeed in killing game with their poisoned arrows, or in destroying still more rarely the larger antelopes, or the hippopotamus, on the banks of

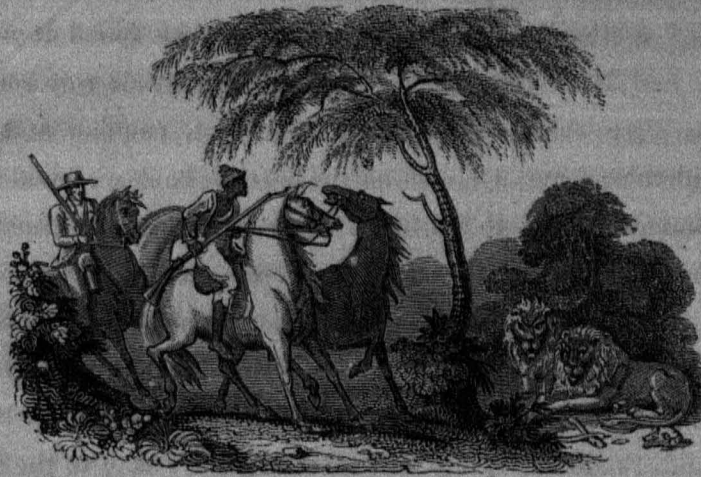
the Cradock River, by pits dug in the ground, with a sharp stake fixed in them. Some of the women on the plains seemed to evade us, others approached to beg tobacco.

This day and the preceding, my course being across the wilds, where there was no beaten track, the motion of the waggon was very unpleasant, jolting over the grassy tufts and irregular ground; and occasionally we ran no small risk of being overset by the excavations of the great ant-eater, which were sometimes sufficiently large to admit a man and horse into them. Captain Stockenstrom mentioned to me that a friend of his once owed his life to one of these holes. He and Captain S. were hunting gnoos on the plains, and one having been wounded by a musket-ball, (in which condition these animals are very furious,) it gave chase to the gentleman, and was gaining fast upon him, when all at once he disappeared by tumbling into an ant-eater's hole which was concealed by long grass. There he lay for some time secure from the enraged animal, which, after searching for him in vain, scampered off in another direction; nor could Captain S., who was galloping up to his assistance, conceive what had become of him, until he saw, to his great satisfaction and amusement, his head cautiously emerging from the bowels of the earth.

About two o'clock we reached the bank of the Cradock River. It was at this place about 400 yards broad, and gliding down with a steady current. The banks were lined with fine willow-trees, which hung gracefully bending over the stream; and altogether it was a magnificent and beautiful scene, and doubly impressive from the contrast presented by such a body of fresh water, to the parched and dreary deserts through which I had lately passed. I had some debate with the boors as to the practicability of fording it, of which they seemed doubtful, from its discoloured and swollen appearance. I was determined, however, to make the attempt, and after taking some refreshment I

got ready, and mounted with my Hottentot, Frederick, he leading one spare horse, and I another. On entering the stream we found it was about four feet deep, and it continued nearly the same the whole way across—just low enough to allow the horses to keep their feet, running at the same time with considerable force. On nearing the opposite bank we found our horses put to their strength, owing to the heavy sand, or rather quicksand, with which the bottom was lined. However, by great exertion, they carried us safe through. Our escort on the southern side were watching us all the while with great anxiety, and as soon as we were fairly through we gave them three cheers, which they cordially returned. They then turned back towards the Colony, and Frederick and I pursued our solitary way to the northward.





## CHAPTER VI.

DESERTED GRIQUA HAMLET.—PERILS OF THE WILDERNESS.—LIONS.—  
ESCAPE FROM DROWNING.—YELLOW RIVER.—KORANNAS.

FREDERICK had been informed that a party of *Griquas* (or Hottentots of the mixed or bastard race) resided not far from the ford where we had just crossed; and I directed him to lead me to their Kraal,—being desirous of acquainting myself with the condition of this class of people, and willing besides to shelter ourselves in the dwellings of human beings, however rude, rather than be exposed in the wilderness by night to the beasts of prey.

The country we had now entered upon was very different from the dry and naked deserts we had lately traversed. The magnificent windings of the Cradock were full in view; and to the west and north-west an extensive and almost boundless landscape opened out, adorned with thickets, and enlivened with multitudes of large game. Turtle doves, wood-pigeons, eagles, and

others of the feathered tribes, were likewise seen in great numbers. While contemplating these agreeable objects, we were speedily recalled to less pleasant reflections, by observing the fresh traces of lions and Bushmen,—neither of which, in present circumstances, we had any inclination to encounter.

At sunset we reached the expected station, or hamlet, to which Mr. Campbell, the missionary traveller, has given the Scriptural name of *Ramah*, but were not a little disappointed to find it totally deserted, and only the miserable ruins of four or five huts left. Of the two best of these we immediately took possession; and having kindled a fire in one, we made it our kitchen and sleeping-room; in the other we secured our horses, after having let them graze till it grew dark. Beside the latter, too, we kindled a large fire, to prevent the lions from carrying them off in the night.

Near the huts we found a fountain of excellent water. But another consideration now claimed our anxious attention:—it was still a long distance to Griqua Town, and I had brought no supply of provisions, having calculated upon meeting with Griqua or Koranna Kraals,\* and on procuring from them flesh and milk. However, upon questioning the Hottentot, I found that he had been somewhat more provident than myself, having in his wallet a couple of small loaves and a sausage, which he had intended for this day's consumption. This slender supply we were now obliged to husband with care.

After supper we sat ruminating on our forlorn situation, and I found my guide already quite chopfallen: and not altogether without cause; for it appeared that he was entirely ignorant of the road, and had depended upon the Griquas he expected to meet here, to direct him. He had indeed been at Griqua Town some years before with a missionary's waggon, but he had either now forgotten the road (track there was none), or pretended to have forgot-

\* The Dutch word *Kraal*, as used in the colony, has three different significations:—A string of beads, a cattle fold, and a native horde or encampment.

ten it, to induce me to return. He told me, moreover, that I had acted very imprudently in coming into this wilderness without more company. Though vexed by this awkward explanation in the midst of a desolate and unknown country, and somewhat irritated by his presumption in blaming my conduct, yet I saw the necessity of suppressing my feelings, lest I should lose him altogether: so I assumed a gay air, laughed at his apprehensions, and told him I would myself find the way by my map and compass, which I displayed to him. My assumed composure soon restored his confidence; and, chatting pleasantly together, we heaped more fuel on the fires, and then laid ourselves down to sleep; having previously inspected our guns, and put them in proper trim in case we should have occasion to use them in the night. But, though somewhat disturbed by the wild animals assembling at the fountain to drink, we were left unmolested, and a little before day we turned out our horses to graze before we proceeded.

7.—At sunrise we left the desolate station of Ramah, and having now little dependence on my guide, I determined to steer our route towards Griqua Town, partly by the compass and partly by keeping near the course of the Cradock River, which I knew joined another large branch called the Yellow River, and that these had their confluence at no very great distance from Griqua Town. My previous intention had been to recross the Cradock about a day's journey further down, and then cross the united streams (which form the Orange River or Gariep) at Read's Drift, from whence the road leads straight to Griqua Town. Frederick's ignorance of the country now rendered a more intricate and circuitous route indispensable.

Soon after leaving Ramah, we again approached the river, at a place where there is a curious rapid, occasioned by the whole body of water being compressed into a narrow defile between rocks. The eddies and whirlpools produced by the force of the stream, had formed cavities in the rocks resembling large cauldrons, in which were a number of round stones continually

in motion; these cavities being in fact formed by the attrition of the stones, especially when the river is flooded, as it always is for several months during the summer.

The river soon afterwards taking an extensive sweep to the westward, I steered our course over a sandy plain, bushy in some places, but entirely destitute of water. Of this we soon felt the want, the weather being very warm; and before mid-day we became quite faint with heat and thirst. At noon we unsaddled on a rising ground, to refresh the horses; but there was no appearance of water, and scarcely a bush at this spot to shelter us from the scorching sun. The heat in the shade by the thermometer was nearly 80°. What a contrast to the chilly Sneeuwberg which I had so lately left! I was not able to eat my small morsel of food on account of thirst, although I had not yet broken my fast. I had two bottles of brandy in my holsters, but I could only taste it, and would now most willingly have exchanged the whole for one glass of water.

• In an hour we remounted, and proceeded on our course, over extensive plains, sprinkled with numerous herds of game—quaghas, elands, gnoos, koodoos, hartebeests, gemsboks, and smaller antelopes, the movements of which helped to relieve our lonely journey. The gnoo here was of a larger size, and apparently different from that on the other side of the Cradock, being of a dark blue colour, and having a black bushy tail, instead of a white one. I observed also two sorts of hartebeests.

As we travelled along, I observed my Hottentot continually looking out for the *spoor* (track) of human feet, being exceedingly anxious to get to some kraal before night: but the only tracks he could discover were those of the wild animals abovementioned, and of their pursuer, the lion. The footprints of the latter were so frequent and so fresh, that it was evident these tyrants of the desert were numerous and near to us. Frederick also remarked to me, that wherever such numbers of the large game were to be seen, we

might be certain lions were not far distant. The numerous skeletons of animals scattered over the plain, presented sufficient proofs of the justness of our apprehensions, and these were soon confirmed by ocular evidence. We were jogging pensively along, the Hottentot with two horses, about ten yards before me,—I following with the other two: Frederick was nodding on his saddle, having slept little, I believe, the preceding night. In this posture, happening to cast my eyes on one side, I beheld with consternation two monstrous lions reclining under a mimosa bush, within fifteen yards of our path. They were reclining lazily on the ground, with half-opened jaws showing their terrific fangs. I saw our danger, and was aware that no effort could save us if these savage beasts should be tempted to make a spring. I collected myself, therefore, and moved on in silence; while Frederick, without perceiving them, rode quietly past. I followed him exactly at the same pace, keeping my eyes fixed upon the glaring monsters, who remained perfectly still. When we had got about seventy or eighty yards from them, I rode gently up to Frederick, and, desiring him to look over his shoulder, showed him the lions. But such a face of terror I never beheld, as he exhibited on perceiving the danger we had so narrowly escaped.\* He was astonished, too, that he had not previously observed them, being, like most of his countrymen, very quick-sighted. He said, however, that I had acted very properly in not speaking nor evincing the least alarm while passing the lions; for, if I had, they would probably not have let us pass so quietly. Most likely, however, we owed our safety to their hunger being satiated,—for they appeared to have been just devouring some animal they had killed; a quagga,—as it seemed to me from the hurried glance I had in passing.

Redoubling our speed, in about an hour afterwards we discovered a fountain, where we and our horses quenched our raging thirst. Thus refreshed,

\* The prefixed vignette is drawn from the recollection of this scene.



we pushed on, and about four o'clock obtained a distant view of the Cradock river, but remote from the course it was necessary for us to keep. We continued to observe numerous traces of lions, and began to look forward with some anxiety for a place of rest during the night. In passing down a valley, we came upon a chain of deep pits dug right across it, and adroitly concealed by reeds slightly strewed over with sand. Fortunately some of them had been recently broken down, otherwise we should most likely have fallen into them, and been impaled on the sharp stakes fixed in their centre. These are contrivances of the Bushmen or Korannas, to entrap the larger game.

About 5 P. M. we fell in with another fountain; but, as there was no wood near us, we were forced reluctantly to proceed, after filling with water one of my bottles, out of which I poured the brandy to make room for it. Our situation now began to be very unpleasant. No wood was to be seen as far as the eye could reach; and without fire we should run imminent risk of losing our horses in the night by the hyænas and lions; and might not improbably fall a prey ourselves. As we galloped on in this anxious mood, the sun seemed descending with unusual speed. Not a bush appeared over the naked surface of the desert. At length, just as the day was closing, and the sun already sunk below the horizon, we reached a rising ground, and discovered, close at hand, a clump of camel-thorn trees (*acacia giraffæ*) a species of mimosa, with beautiful branching top, spreading like an umbrella. No time was now to be lost. Our horses were hastily *knee-haltered* (i. e. tied neck and knee to prevent their running off) and turned to graze till the night closed in; while Frederick and I set eagerly about collecting wood to make fires for our protection. Having chosen our resting-place under a large camel-thorn, we lighted one huge fire there, and others at a little distance on our flanks, front, and rear. I then began to feel

somewhat more comfortable ; and overhauling our wallet, we found a small piece of coarse bread and sausage remaining, which Frederick and I divided. With this short allowance, a glass of brandy, and a grateful draught from the bottle of water which I had providently brought from the last fountain, I made my breakfast, dinner, and supper all at once, with a good appetite.

Our horses, which we had tied up within a few yards of us, seemed to enjoy our company, lying down with the greatest confidence near our fire. Poor animals ! we had rode them above fifty miles this day, and as far on each of the two preceding, so that they stood in great need of rest ; and during the journey they had seldom had an opportunity of feeding.

The ground here I found covered with nitrous particles like a hoar-frost. Such a couch is considered, I believe, rather dangerous to sleep upon. In India, as I have heard, it often proves fatal to the weary traveller, lying down never more to rise. The soil was also sprinkled with the seed of a plant covered with prickles, making it very unpleasant to sit or lie down. These seeds are jocularly called by the colonists *dubbeltjes* (twopenny-pieces). Making my bed, however, as comfortable as circumstances admitted, I wrapped myself in my great coat, with my saddle as usual for my pillow, and my loaded gun by my side. We knew pretty well that the fires were sufficient to scare off the lions, but we had some fears of the crafty hyæna attempting a snatch at our horses. Nor were we altogether without apprehension of the Bushinen, some of whose traces we had seen during the day.

As I lay thus beside our watch-fire, I could not avoid some sombre reflections upon my present forlorn predicament, uncertain of our route, and surrounded by savage hordes, and ravenous beasts of prey. The

flashing of our fires only added to the gloominess of the scene, making the heavens appear a vault of pitchy darkness; nor was there any kind moon to cheer our solitude. Thus ruminating, I unconsciously gave utterance to my feelings—lamenting the uncertainty of our situation, and how unfortunate it was that we did not know our road better. This stung poor Frederick, who with much emotion exclaimed—"Oh! that I had wings like a bird, that I might fly and bring from the landdrost a better guide than I have been!" Finding him in this disconsolate mood, which was not unmixed with terror for his own safety, I changed the subject, spoke to him cheerfully, and committing my safety to Providence, I turned myself to sleep. After enjoying a couple of hours' refreshing repose, I was awakened by the shrieking of the jackals. I rose and replenished the fires with fresh fuel, and after smoking a segar, again addressed myself to sleep. Frederick expressed his surprize at my composure in falling asleep in such a hazardous position. For his part, poor fellow! he was too much alarmed to sleep, and comforted himself with smoking away the principal part of the night, a pipe being the Hottentot's usual solace in all his distresses.

8.—We hailed the first dawn of morning with no common pleasure, and with feelings of thankfulness for our safe preservation through the dreary watches of the night. On looking round our station, we perceived, by the fresh traces of lions and hyænas, that numbers of these ferocious animals had been prowling round within two hundred yards of us during the darkness, being evidently prevented solely by our watchfires from making their supper of us.

We immediately saddled up, and pursued our journey, for at this spot we had neither grass nor water to refresh our horses. At starting, our road lay through a narrow defile, which opened upon more extensive scenery.

This defile Frederick thought fit to name "Thompson's Poort," (i. e. Gate or Pass,) in honour of the narrator. On clearing the ravine, we could descry the mountains beyond the Vaal or Yellow River. We travelled on two hours without seeing any object worthy of notice. Fine grass we found in abundance, but there was no water, without which our horses could not eat. At length we came again suddenly upon the banks of the Cradock, where we immediately unsaddled our exhausted steeds, and turned them loose to drink and graze their fill. Our own rations consisted of a small crust of dry bread, now as hard as a piece of wood; but we soaked it in water, and ate it with all the relish of hungry men. Here we observed fresh marks of Bushmen.

On examining my map, I found that the nearest way from our present station to Griqua Town, would be to recross the Cradock, and proceed athwart the country to Read's Drift, in the Orange River. As soon as I proposed this route, however, Frederick remonstrated against it most strenuously; maintaining in the first place, that it was impossible to cross the river; and next, that the lions on the opposite side were more *kwaad* (angry or fierce) than those where we now were. To these objections I paid little attention, considering them mere pretences to cover his timidity.

Having carefully examined the river, I determined on crossing; for it appeared at this place not so deep, though somewhat broader than at Vanderwalt's Drift. We accordingly saddled and mounted our steeds; but I found it impossible to persuade Frederick either to lead the way, or to accompany me. My utmost urgency could only extort from him a promise to follow me across, in the event of my getting safe over. To this condition I agreed, and immediately plunged into the stream. I found it only about three feet deep, and it continued nearly the same till I had got about three-fourths across. I already considered this difficulty surmounted; a few yards more and I was safely ashore—when all at once down plunged both my horses into deep

water, and into the power of a rapid current. Fortunately for me, the animals proved manageable. I grasped the mane of the one I rode, with one hand, and with the other contrived to turn his head back towards the side where I had entered; and in a short time got him again upon his feet, and reached the shore—thankful to God for my escape from the most imminent danger I had ever encountered. My guide met me as I reached the bank, and eagerly grasping my hand, with tears in his eyes, testified the most lively joy at seeing me safe out of danger; adding, that if I had been drowned, he could never have looked Captain Stockenstrom in the face, as he had particularly charged him never to leave me on any account. I was pleased by Frederick's display of feeling on this occasion, and the danger I had now escaped, as well as the alarms and privations we had shared together, contributed to attach him more and more to me; nor can I ever sufficiently express my obligations to Captain S. for his considerate kindness in providing me with such a faithful attendant.

• Having now abandoned all idea of re-crossing the Cradock River, I resolved to follow its course, at no great distance, to its junction with the Yellow River; and crossing the latter at the first convenient place, to proceed by that way, either to Griqua Town, or to Campbell's-dorp, a small Griqua village, at no great distance from its banks. Soon after recommencing our journey we met a Koranna riding on a bullock. We accosted him with a view to learn intelligence as to our route, but could not by any method make him understand our meaning. The Korannas are a tribe of independent Hottentots, nearly allied to the Namaquas who reside on the west coast: I shall have occasion to speak more fully of both these tribes hereafter. We had scarcely left the Koranna when we fell in with a solitary Bushman, who appeared much surprised by our appearance. A little farther on we came unawares upon a large party of the same



people, but being not at all desirous of nearer acquaintance, at this time, with these suspicious savages, we galloped past them with all speed; while they seemed completely taken by surprise, and remained, as if rivetted to the spot, gazing after us as long as we were within view. I took it for granted, that they would imagine that we were the outriders of a larger party, such a thing as single individuals crossing this country being unprecedented, and I did not give them leisure to discover our weakness. We still kept the banks of the Cradock, and were frequently struck with the picturesque views it presented; its deep solemn waters, flowing along under the shady willows which every where overhung its banks, afforded a fine contrast to the parched country at a little distance from its course. At one place, the stream, for a space of about two hundred yards, is confined in a narrow defile, not more than forty yards broad, through which it rushes with amazing violence, roaring tremendously. By the vestiges of inundations on the banks it appears to swell up at certain periods, like an immense lake, above this narrow.

The day being warm I soon got dried from the drenching I had received in the river. About noon we reached the confluence of the Cradock and Yellow Rivers.\* The latter, to my astonishment, was at this time much the largest; and I now saw clearly that it would have been very hazardous, if not quite impracticable, to have crossed the Gariep at Read's Drift, where the waters of the two streams are united, had I effected my plan\* of getting across the Cradock. It was, therefore, extremely fortunate that the attempt had been frustrated.

The scenery, at the junction of the two great branches of the Gariep, was

\* The English name of this latter branch is a translation of the original Koranna appellation, *Ky Gariep*. The Griquas and Boors give it the Dutch name of *Vaal rivier*, which has nearly the same meaning. The Cradock is termed by the Korannas *Nu Gariep*, or *Black River*. The word *Gariep*, signifying simply *river* in the Koranna tongue, is applied by way of eminence to the united streams, or main trunk, generally known in the colony by the epithets of *Groote*, or *Orange River*.

the most magnificent I had yet seen in this country. The immense confluence of waters,—the steep banks overhung with majestic willow-trees,—the sedgy recesses of the hippopotamus, which abounds here, all contributed to fill the mind with sublime emotions, and with admiration of the wisdom and power of the great Creator.

We were now obliged to wind up the banks of the Yellow River for some miles in search of a ford where we might safely cross. In our way we passed several Koranna kraals, and stopped at one or two of them to make enquiries; but we found only women and children at home, who could understand neither our language nor our signs. The men we supposed to be out hunting. These simple people seemed astonished at our appearance, and uttered a wild cry of admiration—"ah! ah!"

A little way from these kraals, as I afterwards learned, are very large, natural salt-pans, of the same description as those near Zwartkop's River, from which the neighbouring inhabitants supply themselves with salt.

In about an hour we found a place which we considered fordable. We immediately entered, and found the water about three feet deep, but very rapid, so that we were obliged to keep the heads of the horses strongly up the stream all the way through. The river was here about two hundred yards wide, and was much more discoloured than the waters of the Cradock. Both these rivers are now ascertained to be chiefly fed by the periodical rains which fall among the mountains near Delagoa Bay. From December to April they are at their highest, during which time they can only be crossed by rafts, or by swimming. At this time they were rapidly decreasing, and next month would be at the lowest.