

It may be observed that the sizes marked in the above list are, as nearly as could be guessed, such as they run in general, but of both the Geelhouts abundance of trees may be met with, from seventy to ninety feet in length, and very proper for ships' masts, spars, and other timber used in ship building.

Between the foot of the Duyvil's kop and Plettenberg's bay, the latter of which is about fifty miles to the eastward of the former, the country is beautifully wooded, and intersected with numberless rivulets, issuing out of the forests: there are also several broad deep rivers, over which it is necessary to pass in boats. Some of these terminate in large sheets of water, forming beautiful lakes, whose margins are finely fringed with wood. One lake is sufficiently curious, having neither inlet nor outlet, and the water is greener than any part of the ocean, not salt, but so slightly saline as scarcely to be perceptibly so to the taste. One of the farmers told me, with great triumph, that he had puzzled the Governor Van Plettenberg, with respect to the water of the Green lake, by asking him whence the color proceeded. The governor had made him for answer, that it came from the surrounding shrubbery, being green matter washed away by the rains. Upon this the peasant shewed him some of it in a glass, where it appeared clear and colorless. There is a tradition among the Hottentots, that this lake, now six or seven miles in circumference, was, no very long time ago, a beautiful green meadow, and it is still said to be increasing in size. If the quantity of water thrown in by the rains, and its springs, should exceed the quantity that may escape by ab-

sorption and evaporation, the Green lake will one day, by its great pressure, break down the barrier that now divides it from the sea, which has evidently been the case with its neighbouring lake the Knysna. This, in fact, is now become an arm of the sea, into which the tide sets through a narrow passage or portal, as into a dock. This passage, though narrow, and not quite clear of rocks, appears to be capable of admitting small vessels; and within there is plenty of deep water stretching out into a bason of several miles in width. The surrounding hills are clumped with forest trees, and their sloping sides are clothed with shrubbery down to the water's edge. The lake is studded with a number of flat islands, covered with verdure. The arms of the Knysna stretch into the deep vallies at the feet of the mountains, and are there lost in impenetrable forests. The whole country is boldly marked, and most magnificently clothed, and may be considered, beyond comparison, as the grandest and most beautiful part of Southern Africa.

The farm-houses in this part of the country were also in a better style than they are usually met with at so great a distance from the capital. Being near the sea-coast, the proprietors incur the expence of burning shells into lime, and of white-washing all the buildings. A sort of chalky limestone was also here observed in large masses, lying upon the surface, but was not used for lime. To almost every house was attached, generally in a grove of trees, a small enclosure with ornamented walls, serving as the family burying-ground. The decorations usually bestowed on those mansions of the dead, appeared to have much more engaged the attention than

those of the living. In the interment of the dead, the Dutch have no kind of service or ceremony.

Close to the usual landing-place of Plettenberg's bay have lately been erected a neat and spacious dwelling-house ; a magazine for the reception of timber, two hundred feet in length ; and a strong and commodious building for the reception of troops. The intention of the Dutch government was to form an establishment here, for the purpose of deriving from it a supply of timber, to answer their demands for that article in the Cape. Strong prejudices, however, have long been entertained against the Cape timber, though perhaps without sufficient grounds. Few woods will stand the effects of alternate exposure to heavy rains, dry winds, and a scorching sun ; where such exposure has been guarded against, one of the slightest of the woods, the Geelhout, has been known to remain for more than a century, without shewing any symptoms of decay.

In the forests, near this bay, a creeping plant grows in great plenty, whose interior bark, drawn off in fibres of forty or fifty feet in length, seems to be an excellent substitute for hemp. The Hottentots twist these fibres into very strong cordage. The bark of another native plant, a species of *Hibiscus*, made very excellent hemp. The leaves of the plant were deeply divided, like those of the *Cannabinus*, a species of the same genus, cultivated in India, for the purpose of obtaining hemp from the bark ; but the stem of the African *Hibiscus* had small spines, and the flower was large, and of a sulphureous yellow color.

Among the useful trees of the forests, we noticed a species of wild fig, that grew to a very considerable size, and bore a fruit resembling in shape and appearance the Bergamot pear. It had a pleasant subacid flavor, and was greedily devoured by the birds. The leaves were oblong-ovate. A species of *Salvia*, or sage, grew wild, and was much esteemed for its healing qualities, when applied to green wounds. A species also of *Solanum* was in high reputation for the same purpose. The leaf resembled that of tobacco, on which account it was known by the name of wild tobacco; the upper side of the leaf was dark green, and smooth, the under side white, and woolly; the stem woody and prickly. The woolly side of the leaf applied to a swelling or gathering, quickly brings it to a head, and the green side afterwards as quickly heals it. I had an opportunity of seeing these effects in more than one instance. Not far from Plettenberg's bay, along the banks of a small rivulet, I met with a whole forest of the *Strelitzia Alba*, whose tall and tapering stems, like those of the *Areca* nut, or Mountain cabbage, were regular and well proportioned, as the Corinthian shaft. Many of them ran to the height of five and twenty or thirty feet, without a leaf. It is sufficiently remarkable, that the three *Strelitzias* of Africa should be found in three distinct situations, and at great distances from each other; and still more so, that the white species should grow so very abundantly along the side of one stream of water, and not a single plant be found near any of the rest in the same neighbourhood. From the great resemblance of this plant to the Banana tree, the peasantry call it the Wild Plantain. But the most elegant plant that occurred in the whole forest was the native vine



of Africa. This creeper ran to the very summits of the highest Geel-hout trees, and bore a fruit in size and appearance not unlike the Morelle cherry, seldom more than two or three in a cluster, of a very agreeable and delicate subacid flavor. The leaves of this vine are shaped like those of the ivy, dark green, and smooth on the upper, and rather woolly on the under, surface ; not deciduous, but evergreen.

From Plettenberg's bay we returned to the westward, crossing many deep and dangerous rivers. Of these, the Kayman, or Crocodiles' river, was by much the most difficult to pass with waggons, the banks on either side being several hundred feet high, steep, and rocky. It is confidently asserted, that the animal, whose name the river bears, occasionally appears in it, though none of the people who accompanied me could testify to have seen any other species of that genus frequenting the water, except Iguanas from six to ten feet in length. In the Nile only the crocodile is found in so high a latitude as  $31^{\circ}$  or  $32^{\circ}$  ; but the *Trichecus*, or Lamantin, frequents both coasts of Africa, from the Mediterranean to the Cape point, sometimes, though very rarely, entering the mouths of the rivers.

The Kayman's river separates the division of Plettenberg's bay from the Autiniequas land, a tract of country which the Dutch government kept exclusively for its own use, both on account of the grand forests that were here easily accessible, and the excellent pasturage it afforded for their cattle at all seasons of the year. The mountains here, being near the sea, attract the vapors, and cause a greater quantity of rain to

fall than in any other part of the colony. This division is terminated to the westward by the great Brakke river, which rises in the forests above-mentioned, and, running directly south, discharges itself into Muscle bay.

The general landing-place of this bay is upon a sandy beach, at the head of a small cove, into which runs a rivulet of water slightly impregnated with salt. This stream does not appear to be capable of filling above a dozen butts of water in a day. A magazine for the reception of grain is erected near the landing-place. It is a strong stone building, one hundred and fifty feet in length, and will conveniently hold ten thousand bushels of corn. The price of this article delivered here is about twenty-two rix-dollars the load of thirty-one Winchester bushels, or at the rate of two shillings and tenpence the bushel.

The bay abounds with excellent fish of various kind, with muscles that are large and of a strong flavor, and with oysters of an excellent quality; and, in the winter months, the black whale is very plentiful.

Great quantities of the common aloe grow upon the plains that surround Muscle bay. The inspissated juice of this plant was once an article that afforded a considerable profit to those who were at the trouble of collecting and preparing it, but the price is now reduced so low, about threepence the pound, that it is no longer considered as an object worthy the attention of the inhabitants. Three pounds are as much as one person can collect and prepare in one day.

On the fifth we crossed Gauritz river, the western limit of the division of Mossel bay. This river may properly be called the Sink of the Colony. All the waters that have their origin within the distance of one hundred and fifty miles to the eastward, and as far to the westward, upon the Great Karroo and the mountains to the northward of it, meet in one immense chasm of the Zwarteberg or chain nearest the seashore, and are discharged through the channel of the Gauritz river. The sudden and copious inundations of this river are almost beyond credibility. The ruins of a house are still to be seen, that is said to have been destroyed by a swelling of the river, though the site cannot be much less than a hundred feet above the level of the channel; at this time all its numerous branches scarcely supplied it with water sufficient to cause a current.

From Gauritz we proceeded to one of its branches, the False river, near which we observed a great variety of brown and yellow ochres, and an abundance of that curious stone already mentioned under the name of Paint stone.

On the sixth we passed several rivulets whose united streams form the Kaffer Kuyl's river. In advancing towards the Cape, the country became better inhabited; neat houses stood on the banks of all the rivers, and the gardens, and vineyards, and fruiteries, were more extensive, and kept in a better state of culture. The surface of the country interjacent between the rivers was very irregular, the soil dry clay and chalk, and was fit for little else than a sheep pasture. It produced a great quantity of shrubs, among which was one

called the *Guarrie bosch*, (Royena?) from whose berries, and those of the *Arduina*, some of the farmers had made a sweetish wine, not unlike that which in Europe is procured from the *Sambucus* or alder.

The forests of Plettenberg's bay, and the Autiniequas land, had ceased to clothe the feet of the mountains from the point directly north of Mossel bay. Another clump now appeared, about twenty miles to the eastward of the Drosdy of Zwellendam, called the Grootvader's bosch. This wood, in the early stages of the colony, contained as great a variety of large timber trees as the others, but being so much nearer to the Cape, is now stripped of most of the wood that was valuable.

From Grootvader's bosch a beautiful valley stretches along the feet of the mountains, as far almost as the Drosdy. This village is composed of about twenty houses, scattered over a fertile valley, with a perpetual stream of water flowing down it. The habitation of the Landrost stands at the head of the valley; is a very comfortable building, and has an extensive garden attached to it, surrounded with plantations of oaks, and well stocked with a variety of fruits.

The district of Zwellendam is composed chiefly of that tract of country lying between the Black mountains and the sea-coast, and stretches to the eastward, as far as the Camtoos river, where Graaff Reynet first begins. The number of families contained in it are between five and six hundred; and the whole population of whites amounts to about three

thousand. The number of Hottentots, in the whole district, does not exceed two to each family; and that of slaves is about five.

Zwellendam affords no great supply of cattle to the Cape market, and still less so of sheep. Horses are brought up for sale in considerable numbers. The revenue of the farmers is principally derived from timber, grain, butter, soap, and dried fruits. To a naturalist, this district is the least interesting, except in botany, and in this department it offers an ample field. Of the number of those who have made that branch of science their particular pursuit, and who have visited this colony, none have sufficiently attended to the native forest trees, so as to be able to assign them their places in the prevailing system of arranging the vegetable part of the creation. Few antelopes, except the Reebok, Steenbok, and Duyker, are now remaining in the district of Zwellendam. Formerly the Bontebok, the *Scripta* of the *Systema Naturæ*, was almost as numerous near the Drosdy, as the Springbok still continues to be in the Sneeuwberg. At present they are rarely seen in troops exceeding a dozen. At one time also in the vicinity of Zwellendam were a few of that elegant species of antelope, the *Leucophaea*, or blue antelope, an animal that is now no longer to be met with in the whole colony, at least none have been seen or heard of these ten years past. Hares and partridges are plentiful in every part of the district. The woods of Autiniequas land abound with a variety of birds, both great and small.

On the twelfth we entered the district of Stellenbosch, by crossing the river Zonder-end, and proceeded to Zoete Melk valley, a patch of excellent land belonging to government, and lately converted by it into a station for cavalry.

Proceeding up the valley through which the *Endless* river meanders, we halted, late in the evening, at a place called the Bavian's kloof, where there is a small establishment of Moravian missionaries, or *Hernhüters*, so called from a village in Saxony where an asylum was offered to them after their expulsion from Moravia. These people have been several years in this colony, for the express purpose of instructing the Hottentots in the doctrines of Christianity, but had met with little encouragement, in the object of their mission, under the Dutch government. The number of their proselytes have increased of late to such a degree, that they have found it necessary to send to Europe for more teachers of the gospel.

Early in the morning I was awakened by the noise of some of the finest voices I ever heard, and, on looking out, saw a group of female Hottentots sitting on the ground. It was Sunday, and they had assembled thus early to chaunt the morning hymn. They were all neatly dressed in printed cotton gowns. A sight so very different from what we had hitherto been in the habit of observing, with regard to this unhappy class of beings, could not fail of being grateful; and, at the same time, it excited a greater degree of curiosity as to the nature of the establishment. The good fathers, who were three in number, were well disposed to satisfy every question

put to them. They were men of the middle age, plain and decent in their dress, cleanly in their persons, of modest manners, meek and humble in their deportment, but intelligent and lively in conversation, zealous in the cause of their mission, but free from bigotry or enthusiasm. Every thing about the place partook of that neatness and simplicity, which were the strongest features in the outline of their character. The church they had constructed was a plain neat building; their mill for grinding corn was superior to any in the colony; their garden was in high order, and produced abundance of vegetables for the use of the table. Almost every thing that had been done was by the labor of their own hands. Agreeably to the rules of that society, of which they were members, each had learned some useful profession. One was well skilled in every branch of smith's work, the second was a shoemaker, and the third a tailor.

These missionaries have succeeded in bringing together into one society more than six hundred Hottentots, and their numbers are daily increasing. These live in small huts dispersed over the valley, to each of which was a patch of ground for raising vegetables. \* Those who had first joined the society had the choicest situations at the upper end of the valley, near the church, and their houses and gardens were very neat and comfortable; numbers of the poor in England not so good, and few better. Such of the Hottentots as chuse to learn their respective trades, are paid for their labor as soon as they can earn wages. Some hire themselves out by the week, month, or year, to the neighbouring peasantry; others make mats and brooms for sale: some breed poultry, and others



find means to subsist by their cattle, sheep, and horses. Many of the women and children of soldiers, belonging to the Hottentot corps, reside at Bavian's kloof, where they are much more likely to acquire industrious habits than by remaining in the camp.

On Sundays they all regularly attend the performance of divine service, and it is astonishing how ambitious they are to appear at church in neat and clean attire! Of the three hundred, or thereabouts, that composed the congregation, about half were dressed in coarse printed cottons, and the other half in sheep-skin dresses; and it appeared, on inquiry, that the former were the first that had been brought within the pale of the church; a proof that their circumstances at least had suffered nothing from their change of life. Persuasion and example had convinced them, that cleanliness in their persons not only added much to the comforts of life, but was one of the greatest preservatives of health; and that the little trifle of money they had to spare was much better applied in procuring decent covering for the body, than in the purchase of spirits and tobacco; articles so far from being necessities, that they might justly be considered as the most pernicious evils.

The deportment of the Hottentot congregation, during divine service, was truly devout. The discourse delivered by one of the fathers was short, but replete with good sense, pathetic, and well suited to the occasion: tears flowed abundantly from the eyes of those to whom it was particularly addressed. The females sung in a stile that was plaintive and

affecting ; and their voices were in general sweet and harmonious. Not more than fifty had been admitted as members of the Christian faith, by the ceremony of baptism. There appeared to be no violent zeal on the part of the fathers, which is the case with most other missionaries, to swell the catalogue of converts to Christianity, being more solicitous to teach their trades to such as might chuse to learn them. Adopting the idea of the ingenious Count Rumford, their first great object seemed to be that of making men happy, that they might afterwards become virtuous, which is certainly much sounder philosophy than the converse of the proposition.

It would be supposed that men like these, so truly respectable in their missionary character, and so irreproachable in their conduct, would be well received and encouraged in any country ; yet such is the brutality and gross depravity of the peasantry of this colony, that a party, consisting of about thirty, had entered into a confederacy to murder the three teachers, and to seize and force into their service all the young Hottentots that might be found at the place. These horrid wretches had actually assembled at a neighbouring house, on the Saturday evening, intending on the following day, in the middle of divine service, to carry their murderous purposes into execution. Luckily for the missionaries, they had intimation of what was going on through a Hottentot, who deserted the service of one of the intended assassins for that purpose. They laid their apprehensions before Sir James Craig, who, in consequence, issued his injunctions, in a letter to the overseer of the post of Zoete Melk valley, that no in-

habitant should in any shape molest the Hernhutters, on pain of incurring the heaviest displeasure of the government. The letter arrived on the very day they were assembled, and the poltrons, on hearing it read, sneaked off each to his own home, and the missionaries since that time have continued to exercise their functions unmolested. The cause of the farmers' hatred to these people is their having taught the Hottentots the use of their liberty, and the value of their labor, of which they had long been kept in ignorance.

At the point of a small detached mountain, to the southward of Bavian's kloof, is a warm spring, whose waters are pretty much used by invalids from the Cape. They are strongly chalybeate, like those near Olifant's river, and rise out of the same kind of black turfy ground, in which were large masses of a brown ponderous iron stone, that apparently contained from 60 to 70 per cent. of iron. The Dutch government had caused a house to be erected, for the accommodation of such as might be inclined to use the waters; which is now in so ruinous and filthy a state, that the appearance of it is much better calculated to hasten the progress of the disease, than the convalescence of the patient. Most of the English who have used the bath have taken their lodgings at a farm house, about a mile from the wells, where there are comfortable accommodations for a few persons. The temperature of the waters, where they first break out of the ground, is 114° of Fahrenheit, but in the bath they are reduced to 110°. They are chiefly recommended for rheumatic complaints and debilitated constitutions.

From the bath we proceeded to the westward, crossed a steep sandy hill, called the *Hou koeck*, and, on the seventeenth, descended the Hottentot's Holland's kloof, a difficult pass across the great north and south chain of mountains, but infinitely less so than either the Duyvil's kop, or the Kayman's river.

From the portal, or entrance of the kloof, is a grand view of the Cape peninsula, the sweeping shores of the two great bays, and the intermediate dreary isthmus appearing like a sea of sand, and enlivened only by a few neat farm houses, scattered over the fore-ground, at the feet of the great chain of mountains. The middle of the isthmus is inhabited only by a few poor people, who gain a subsistence by collecting the stems and roots of the shrubs that grow in the sand, and sending them in small carts to the Cape, where they are sold for fuel. The distance from Hottentot's Holland's kloof to Cape Town is about thirty-six miles, or an easy day's journey, which we made on the eighteenth of January; not sorry to have brought to an end a seven months' tour, in the course of which many personal inconveniences and difficulties had occurred, to be borne and surmounted only by a determination to gratify curiosity at the expence of comfort.

## CHAP. V.

*Sketches made on a Journey into the Country of the Namaaquas.*

THE breaking up of the south-east monsoon, which generally happens towards the end of April or the beginning of May, is a season of the year that, of all others, is worst calculated for undertaking a journey through the sandy deserts of Southern Africa. Should the change of the monsoon not have taken place when the traveller sets out, the long drought which always precedes it will have parched up and destroyed vegetation to such a degree, that his cattle would be in danger of perishing from scarcity of food, and still more so from want of water: and, should the contrary be the case, he is equally unfortunate, as not only for some time he will find no pasturage, but must also have to contend with all the inconveniences of stormy weather, and perhaps be retarded for weeks together by the swelling of the rivers.

Weighty as these objections appeared to be, it was thought expedient to commence a journey to the northern parts of the colony, along the western coast, at the very moment when the breaking up of the summer monsoon was expected. It was the tenth of April when I set forward from Cape Town, with a covered waggon, and twelve stout oxen, in good condition, a single horse, a slave, a waggoner, and leader, who

had accompanied me on the other journies, and an additional Hottentot to attend the oxen for relays: for it must not be supposed, that the same team of oxen should be able to draw daily for a length of time. The farmers, who live only at the distance of ten days' journey from the Cape, seldom come up with less than a couple of teams of bullocks to use alternately. They also travel at nights, for the sake of coolness, and that their cattle may graze or browse during the day.

But for the better convenience of those who travelled on the public service, government imposed a kind of tax on the farmers, by obliging them to furnish *Voorspans*, or teams of oxen, free of any expence, whenever they should be demanded. It was considered as a sufficient recompence for this service, that they were supplied by the government, without purchase, with powder and ball, to carry on their expeditions against their enemies, the Bosjesmans. In the present, as well as on the former tour, I availed myself of this privilege of ancient usage in the colony, and never met with a refusal, or even a reluctant compliance with the demand, which, indeed, was always requested not as a matter of right, but of favor.

As none of my Hottentots were acquainted with one step of the northern tour I was about to undertake, we had to depend entirely on the information of the farmers as to the road and most convenient halting places. The first day brought us to *Koeberg*, about eighteen miles from the Cape;

and the second to *Groene kloof*, about sixteen miles farther on a deep sandy road, which proved a hard day's drag for a dozen oxen.

*Groene kloof* is a division of the Cape district, consisting of several clumps of small hills, that cross the sandy slip, extending along the western coast. On the dales that lie within these hills are copious springs of good water, and excellent pasturage for cattle and horses. None of the ground near the Cape can be considered as remarkably productive in grain; it requires manure, or to lie fallow for two or three years, and even then affords nothing that in England would be considered as a crop. It appears from the returns of grain, which the farmers are obliged to deliver annually to government, that the average produce is under tenfold. In places close to the town, the returns are much less, the ground being worn out by a continual succession of crops of grain.

Among the hills of *Groene kloof* are considerable numbers of Steenboks, Duykers, and Reeboks, and a few Hartebeests, but frequent visits of sportsmen from the Cape have made them very shy. Hares, korhaens, grouse, and partridges, were sufficiently plentiful. Various species of the liliaceous tribe, particularly of the amaryllis, and other bulbous rooted plants, were now in bloom, but the long drought had left little verdure on the sides of the hills. At this season of the year that refreshing tint is only to be looked for in the neighbourhood of springs and rivulets.



The house of Slabert, the *Tea fonteyn*, is the next usual stage beyond Groene kloof. As this family holds a distinguished place in the page of a French traveller in Southern Africa, the veracity of whose writings has been called in question, curiosity was naturally excited to make some inquiries from them concerning this author. He was well known to the family, and had been received into their house at the recommendation of the fiscal; but the whole of his transactions in this part of the country, wherein his own heroism is so fully set forth, they assert to be so many fabrications. The story of shooting the tyger, in which his great courage is contrasted with the cowardice of the peasantry, I read to them out of his book. They laughed very heartily, and assured me that, although the story had some foundation in fact, the animal had been shot through the body by a *stell-roar* or trap-gun, set by a Hottentot, and was expiring under a bush at the time they found it, when the valiant Frenchman discharged the contents of his musquet into the tyger and dispatched him. The first book which he published, of his *Travels to the Eastward*, contains much correct information, accurate description, and a number of pointed and just observations. The sale of the copy of these travels encouraged, it seems, the making of a second, the materials of which, slight as they were, seem to have chiefly been furnished by the publication of an English traveller, whom he pretends to correct; and by an account of an expedition to the northward, sent out by the Dutch government of the Cape in search of a tribe of people reported to wear linen clothing. The family of Slabert assert that he left *Zwartland* in July, travelled to the Orange river, and returned at the beginning

of the following December, at which time, in his book, he is conducting his readers to the northward, as far as the tropic. The inventive faculties of the Abbé Philippeaux, who is the real author of the work, supplied what he conceived to be wanting in the traveller's remarks, and in the two above-mentioned publications.

From the house of Slabert we crossed over to Saldanha bay, and made a few observations on this commodious inlet of the sea, which will hereafter be noticed.

The general surface of the country, between the Berg river and Saldanha bay, is flat and sandy, covered, however, with a continued forest of shrubbery ; but thinly inhabited, on account of the scarcity of fresh water. The soil, though sandy, is uncommonly fertile ; the usual returns on wheat being from fifteen to twenty fold. Barley yields from thirty to forty. They use no manure, and in some places the soil is so loose and sandy, that even the operation of ploughing is unnecessary. Garden plants of all kinds thrive remarkably well. It is curious enough to see pumpkins, melons, cauliflowers, and other vegetables, growing luxuriantly in sheer sand. At one place they were rooting out sugar canes, that had overspread a garden, to give place for a plantation of tobacco. The greasy appearance, and the adhesive quality, of the sandy soil that covers the surface of this part of the country, arise probably from loamy or n' y particles that render it so particularly favorable to vegetation. From the chalky masses of stone that lie at certain depths and sometimes appear above, the sandy surface, ma perhaps be

disengaged, by some simple or combined action of the air and the saline bodies in the sand, that species of acritiform acid contained in chalk, which late experiments have shewn to be the kind of aliment most congenial to the nature of plants.

Notwithstanding the fertility of the ground, and the facility of tillage, an inconsiderable quantity of grain is produced, owing to the distance and the heavy roads to the only market in the colony. Draught oxen are scarce and dear in the neighbourhood of the Cape, and vast numbers are annually destroyed, in transporting the articles of necessary consumption to Cape Town. There is a curious paragraph in the Minutes of the Proceedings in the government of Van Riebeck, the founder of the colony, which shews the extreme scarcity of cattle in the early stages of the settlement, before some daring adventurers penetrated beyond the great ranges of mountains. It states, that the captains of four English ships having arrived in the bay and presented the governor and council with pipes, glasses, brandy, and other acceptable articles, the governor in council resolved, in order to shew that the Hollanders were not wanting in gratitude and civility, that the ox belonging to the Company, which had died, not of disease, but from hunger, should be divided into four quarters, and that one should be sent to the captain of each ship.

The bay of St. Helena is about fifteen miles to the northward of Hootjes bay. It resembles in shape the Table bay, than which it is a little more open and exposed to the northerly

and north-westerly winds, but is said to have better anchoring ground. There is a small spring of fresh water at the point of the hilly peninsula that runs along the coast from Saldanha bay. The Berg river, though an immense mass of water, is so sanded up at the mouth, that boats can enter it only at high water. There still remain a few Hippopotami towards the lower part of this river, but they are very shy, and come up at nights only, to the place where the water begins to be fresh. The Dutch government, in order to preserve this animal in the colony, imposed a fine of a thousand guilders on any person that should put one of them to death. Game of every kind is very plentiful towards the mouth of the river. The two large antelopes, the hartebeest, and the gemsbok, are occasional visitors of this part of the country.

At the distance of fifteen miles from the mouth of the river, I crossed it in a boat, and floated over the waggon with a cask. The road on the opposite side was so heavy, and so great the extent of country uninhabited, on account of the deep sandy surface, and the scarcity of water, that it was dark before the waggon could arrive at the place where it was proposed to halt for the night. The driver, though an inhabitant of the country, lost his way over the uniform surface of sand and bushes, and we were three hours dragging backwards and forwards before the house could be discovered, though close upon it the whole time. It was a wretched hovel of rushes, standing in the midst of a sandy plain. The night was very cold, and there was neither food nor shelter for the horses, nor water for the cattle. The shifting of the sand-drifts had choked up the briny spring, and the inha-

bitants had been obliged for some time to fetch their water from the Berg river, a distance at least of twelve miles. At the hazard, therefore, of losing our way a second time, I determined to proceed to the next habitation, which was said to be about four miles farther. On arriving there, at midnight, it was found to be very little better than the other. The house and its inhabitants wore evident marks of poverty. A cow or two, a little corn, a few sheep and goats, constituted the whole of their possessions which, though in Europe would comprehend both wealth and comfort, are incapable of conferring in this country either the one or the other.

It was on these miserable plains that the Abbé de la Caille terminated the measurement of his base from the Cape, in order to ascertain the length of a degree of the meridian in the southern parallels of latitude. Respecting this great mathematician and astronomer, and his arduous undertaking, the learned author of a Mathematical Dictionary, lately published, has the following remark: "Having thus executed  
" the purpose of his voyage, and no present opportunity  
" offering for his return, he thought of employing the vacant  
" time in another arduous attempt; no less than that of taking the measure of the earth, as he had already done that  
" of the heavens. This, indeed, had been done before by  
" different sets of learned men, both in Europe and America;  
" some determining the quantity of a degree at the equator,  
" and others at the arctic circle: but it had not as yet been  
" decided, whether in the southern parallels of latitude the  
" same dimensions obtained as in the northern. His labors  
" were rewarded with the satisfaction he wished for, having

“ determined a distance of 410814 feet from a place called  
“ *Klip fonteyn* to the Cape, by means of a base of 38802 feet  
“ three times actually measured : whence he discovered a  
“ new secret of nature, namely, that the radii of the parallels  
“ in south latitude are not the same length as those of the  
“ corresponding parallels in north latitude.”

If the observations of the Abbé be correct, and I believe they have never been called in question, the result of them, giving a larger bulk to the southern hemisphere of the earth than to the northern, may, perhaps, be sufficiently satisfactory to account for the equipoise of the globe without having recourse to a *southern continent*, which many learned and ingenious gentlemen imagined to exist, in order to counter-balance the great quantity of mountainous land in high northern latitudes.

The oxen for relays having followed the waggon alone, without the Hottentot who had the charge of them, his companions began to grow uneasy about him. Having had a violent headach the preceding evening, occasioned by repletion, he had asked me for an emetic. At first he took three grains of tartarized antimony, which produced no effect. In the course of half an hour, I gave him three more without success. The third time he swallowed a double dose, which answered the purpose. His companions concluded that he must have died on the road from the effect of the medicine, and were continually repeating in my hearing, that it was pity I had given him so much. Though perfectly at ease myself with respect to any harm that would come to the

Hottentot, having had former experience of the strength of their stomachs, yet it was no easy matter to convince the rest of it; and his absence was also a very serious inconvenience. In the morning, however, he made his appearance. He had fallen asleep, it seemed, about the middle of the preceding day, and had not awaked till night. Though very dark, and unacquainted with a single step of our route, he had found us out by following the tract of the waggon, a business in which a Hottentot is uncommonly clever. There is not an animal among the multitude which range the wilds of Africa, if he be at all acquainted with it, the print of whose feet he will not easily distinguish. And though the marks by which his judgment is directed are exceedingly nice, yet they are constant in animals in a state of nature, but domesticated animals are liable to many accidental variations. He will distinguish the wolf, for instance, from the domestic dog, by the largeness of the ball of the foot, and the comparatively smallness of the toes. The print of his companions' feet he will at any time single out among a thousand. The peasantry are also tolerably expert in tracing game by the marks of their feet; it is, in fact, a part of their education. An African boor gains a sort of reputation by being clever *op het spoor*. This is the method by which, on moonlight nights, they hunt down the poor Bosjesmans.

At the eastern extremity of the sandy plain, I was fortunate enough to procure fresh oxen, to enable me to pass the northern point of the *Picquet berg*, a clump of mountains probably so named from their position in front of the great chain. Grain, fruit, good tobacco, and a limited num-



ber of cattle, are the produce of the farms at the feet of these mountains. At one place they were distilling an ardent spirit of no disagreeable flavor from water-melons, the largest which to my recollection I had ever seen.

The deep sandy plains were succeeded by still deeper sandy hills, over which the waggon made but very slow progress, the wheels sinking to the axes every moment. These hills, or rather mountains, of sand, extended near thirty miles beyond the point of the Picquet berg, before they attained their greatest elevation, where a very curious and grand spectacle presented itself. Along the summit, which was several miles in width, rose out of the coarse crystallized sand and fragments of sandstone, a multitude of pyramidal columns, some of which were several hundred feet in diameter, and as many in height; these, viewed from a distance, had the regular appearance of works of art. The materials were also sandstone, bound together by veins of a firmer texture, containing a portion of iron. The cavernous appearance of these peaked columns, that had hitherto withstood, though not entirely escaped, the corroding tooth of time, and the vicissitudes of devouring weather, proclaimed their vast antiquity; and the coarse sand in which their bases were buried, and the fragments of the same material that were scattered over the surface, and not yet crumbled away, were sufficiently demonstrative that these pyramids had once been united, making at that time one connected mountain, similar to the great northern range. Out of the mouldered remains of these mountains had been formed the inferior hills of sand, while the finer particles, wafted by the winds and the torrents, have

rested on the plains that stretch along the sea coast. The united streamlets of water among these hills compose a sheet of considerable extent, called the *Verlooren valley*, or the Forlorn lake. It had some resemblance to the Knysna, near Plettenberg's bay, but was totally devoid of the appendages that beautify the latter. Instead of green knolls, skirted and capped by forest trees, the Forlorn lake was surrounded by barren mountains of sand, crowned with masses of naked rock. The margin of the lake, however, was belted with good ground, and seemed to be tolerably well inhabited.

It was three long days' journeys before the hills of sand were left behind, and a new sort of country, still sandy, presented itself along the banks of the *Olifant*, or Elephant's river, which, like the Berg, is one of the few rivers in the colony that is never entirely dried up. It receives a constant supply from the numerous rills that descend from the great northern chain of mountains, along the feet of which it flows, till their discontinuance in a connected range, between the thirty-first and thirty-second degree of latitude. Here they branch out into a number of rugged hills and detached masses, till at length they mingle with the Karroo plains. After the breaking up of the chain of mountains, the Elephant's river turns off to the westward, and falls into the sea, in latitude  $31\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north. The mouth of this river is contracted, rocky, and shallow, and seldom safe to be entered by boats. Within, it is navigable near thirty miles up the country, which is, however, wild, and almost uninhabited, owing to the scarcity of fresh water.

On the banks of the river, near the place where we crossed it, were several very excellent farms. Rice was here produced of a large heavy grain, and white as snow. The multitude of birds attracted by it was said to require a number of people to guard it from them. The small *Loxia Astrild* is particularly troublesome. The immense flocks of this species of Grossbeak may in some degree be conceived, from the circumstance of three-and-sixty having been shot at one discharge of a small fowling-piece.

On the twenty-first I attempted, with sixteen fresh oxen in the waggon, to cross the great chain of mountains ; which was effected in about eight hours. The passage had not been made at this place for a length of time by any waggon, yet as the usual circuitous road would have occasioned the loss of a whole day, I considered it as an object worth the trial.

This part of the chain of mountains was exceedingly grand and lofty, and the road serpentizing through the narrow passes whose massy sides rose into lofty pinnacles, was dreadfully steep and rugged. On approaching the summit, the same kind of pyramidal remains made their appearance, in the midst of a surface of sand and fragments of rock. These peaks were, some of them, a thousand feet high, and of such vast bulk, that each might be considered as a separate mountain. They form the very highest ridge of the great chain, but the extent of the summit which I had to cross might be considered at least five miles in width. The grotesque manner in which the resisting fragments grew out of this surface, or rolling from the upper ridges, had tumbled on each other, forming natural

chambers, arches, colonnades, and *Stonchenges*, to the magnitude of which, that on Salisbury Plain would appear but as a cottage by the side of that city's great cathedral ; all of these so wasted, and corroded, and cavernous, the skeletons only of what they once were, struck the mind with the same kind of melancholy awe, that the contemplation of the remains of ancient grandeur generally inspires. Seated in the midst of these antique ruins, my mind was in vain busied in trying to form some estimation of the measure of time that had passed away in effecting the general depression of the mountain, and equally vain was it to attempt a calculation, in how many ages yet unborn, the stupendous masses, of at least a thousand feet high, of solid rock, would dissolve, and "leave not a rack behind."

I could be at no loss, however, to comprehend, whence proceeded the sandy plains that stretched along the western coast of this country, to a distance yet untravelled. This range of mountains alone, taken at two hundred miles in length, five miles in width, and the general depression at a hundred feet only, would have supplied materials to cover uniformly to the depth of three feet, a plain of thirty-three thousand square miles. A farther idea suggested itself, that all the sand of the sea shores probably owed its origin to the remains of worn-down mountains, scattered by the winds, and borne down by torrents into the "bosom of the deep," and thence thrown back upon its shores. This theory seems to be established by facts. In Africa the whole coast is sand, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Gulph of Benin, under the equinoxial line, an extent through which it is more than

probable, the stratified mountains of sand-stone continue to run; whilst, on the opposite continent, the rocky shore extends from the line to the southernmost Cape, because the whole of the mountains there are composed of durable granite.

On approaching the upper part of the mountains, the weather became suddenly boisterous, and to a perfect calm and mild atmosphere succeeded, in the course of a few hours, a violent hurricane that roared through the vaulted rocks, and a cold and piercing air. Yet in this elevated situation, a small spring of water had tempted a peasant to erect his cottage, around which was just as much ground as was sufficient to afford a supply of bread to its possessor. Solitary and wretched as the hovel appeared to be, it was crowded with persons of both sexes, in the height of gaiety. The owner of the place had just returned from the Cape, and had brought with him a supply of brandy, with which they were making merry. The poorest peasant, on his annual visit to the Cape, never fails to lay in, among other articles of purchase, a cask of *sopic*, and this has little rest day or night till it be exhausted. Friends and strangers are equally welcome to it as long as it will run. Among the present company were two men whom, from their countenances, I could perceive to be Europeans. They had been long enough in the country to forget their own language, but not to have learned that of the Dutch, so that in fact they scarcely had the means of making themselves intelligible to any one. The one was an Irishman, the other English, and both were probably deserters from the army or the navy. The first had taken up the profession of

a *water wyzer*, or discoverer of water, and had shewn sagacity enough to establish a sort of reputation in the country. By speaking little, looking wise, and frequent application to the eye of a double convex lens, which happened to have an air-bubble within it, he had practised with great success on the credulity and ignorance of the Dutch farmers, and had obtained from them, by this and other means, a pair of horses, and several hundred rix-dollars of paper money. The lighting of their pipes at the sun by means of his glass, and the persuasion that the air-bubble within it was a drop of water that possessed the sympathetic quality of always turning towards its kindred element, had such an irresistible effect on the rude minds of the African boors, that the Irishman, like a true quack, soon learned to appreciate his consequence so highly, as never to pay a visit to any farmer, in order to examine the state of his water, without a previous fee. Observing me laugh at the credulity of the people gaping at his mountebank tricks, he took occasion to speak to me apart, begging, for God's sake, I would not detect the imposture, as he was now in such good practice that he was able to keep an assistant. Surprise ceases at the credulity of men born and educated in the wilds of Africa, on reflecting to what extent the impostors of Europe have succeeded, in living upon the folly of those who have been weak enough to listen to them. Animal magnetism has raised many a quack to a state of grandeur, at the expence of credulity ; and the nonsense of the *virgula divinatoria*, or divining rod has still its votaries.

There never perhaps was a set of men so void of resources in overcoming difficulties as the Dutch farmers of the Cape.

The inanity of their minds and the indolent habit of their bodies are not even surmounted by self-interest. Their ignorance cannot be a matter of wonder, but we often find in Europe unlettered men possessed of great talents and ingenuity. No printing-press has yet found its way to the Cape of Good Hope, except a small one for cards or hand-bills. They contrive, indeed, to publish a sort of almanac, but that of the current year has somewhat suffered in its reputation, by having stated an eclipse of the moon to fall on the day preceding the full, and to be invisible, when, unluckily for the almanac-maker, it happened at its proper time, visible, and nearly total.

The descent to the eastern plain was several hundred feet less than had been the ascent of the opposite face of the mountain. The country was now rough and stony, bounded by a high ridge of wall-sided rock, from five hundred to a thousand feet in height. The summit was a broad belt, of that kind of surface formerly spoken of under the name of Karroo. A partial elevation still higher than this surface, is called the Bokkeveld's mountain, and resembles, in its appearance and produce, the mountains of Sneeuwberg. In ascending the Bokkeveld, the south-east monsoon threatened a change. The wind having blown strong from that quarter for three days, suddenly changed to the northward, and the contention produced incessant peals of thunder the whole day, heavy rain, and the largest hailstones I ever saw. Some of them measured six-tenths of an inch in diameter; and a peasant who lived on the highest part, asserted that they fell near his house as large as pullets' eggs. On the weather clearing up at night, the temperature of the air had decreased from 78° at noon, to 40° of Fahrenheit's scale.



In the course of a very few days after the rain, the surface of the Bokkeveld became one verdant carpet of herbaceous plants, embroidered by a multitude of the humble, yet beautiful, *Oxalis*, some red, some white, and others yellow. Game of most kinds is very abundant in this district, particularly hares, bustards, and partridges, which we daily saw in thousands; and they were so very tame, that we had no difficulty in procuring whatever quantity we wished for.

The division of *Onder* or *Lower Bokkeveld*, being the remotest in the colony on this side, and bordering on the country inhabited by those Maroon Hottentots, called *Bosjesmans*, it became necessary, in order to proceed to the northward, to make an addition to my people, not only as a protection against the savages, but as guides over an uninhabited desert of the same nature as the great Karroo leading to Graaff Reinet. *Louw*, the *Veld Commandant*, readily offered his services, but he was totally unacquainted with the desert that skirted his district. A Hottentot, however, was soon found, to whom were known all the places where water was most likely to be met with, and he was glad of the occasion to act as guide.

Having procured a second waggon to carry the necessary provisions and grain for our horses, we set forward at an early hour in the morning, in order to arrive at the steep edge of the mountain before dark. From this precipice, which in many parts is not less than two thousand feet, the Karroo plains beneath appeared as a vast sea, and the horizon was interrupted only by a few distant hills, rising out of the dreary

waste like so many islands. We descended the precipice where it was least steep, and having reached in safety the bottom, just before dark, we yoked fresh oxen into the wag-gons, and launched forth upon the desert. About midnight we halted upon the Thorn river, which unexpectedly ran in a considerable stream, but the water was salt as brine. A spring near the river called the *Stink fonteyn*, threw out water that was saline to the taste, and had a most disgusting fetid smell. The thunder storm and heavy rain, that for a whole day had continued on the Bokkeveld, had not extended to the Karroo. The surface was dry and dusty, as in the middle of summer, and the few shrubby plants that are peculiar to this sort of country, generally of the succulent kind, were so parched and shrivelled, that vegetation seemed for a length of time to have been suspended.

We were here visited by a party of Bosjesmans, headed by a captain or chief. This man was well known to the commandant, having been of signal service to him in expeditions against his own countrymen, whose marauding way of life he had been prevailed upon to quit, with his whole horde, on promise of the pardon and protection of the government. It is now fifteen years since they had taken up their abode on the edge of the Karroo, where they had lived peaceably and industriously ever since. He said that, by making proper overtures to his countrymen, he had no doubt but many hordes might be brought to live quietly in the service of the farmers, for that their distresses, in their present way of life, were great and grievous.

Early on the morning of the twenty-seventh, with fresh teams of oxen, we proceeded to cross the desert. The wind still continued at south-east, and the weather was remarkably warm for the season of the year, the thermometer standing at  $59^{\circ}$  at sun-rise, and at  $80^{\circ}$  in the middle of the day in the shade. The waggons raised a cloud of dust that was almost insupportable. Except one solitary ostrich, not a living creature of any kind appeared the whole day. Having travelled near eight hours, our Hottentot guide pointed out a place under a small clump of naked hills, where water, he said, frequently lodged in the cavities of rocks. He called it the *Lietse kuyt*, or Lions' den. After a long search, a little water was discovered in a cavernous rock, fresh and sweet; and with this we replenished our vessels. Under one of the ridges of hills was a channel covered with small pebbly sand, which appeared in several places to have been scratched with hands in search of water; and thousands of the impressions of the feet of various antelopes, quachas, and zebras, were marked on the sand, but none of lions, of which the name of the place seemed to imply it to have been the resort.

On the twenty-eighth we entered a narrow pass among the hills that lay behind the Lions' den, which hills are considered as the commencement of the Namaaqua country. The surface continued to be broken into hill and dale, but both were destitute of plants, except indeed that along the stony sides of most of the hills were growing vast multitudes of a tree as unsightly as it was curious. It was a species of the aloe, called by botanists the *Dichotoma*, from the division and sub-

division of each branch into pairs. Each of these subdivisions is terminated by a tuft of leaves, and the whole forms a large hemispherical crown supported upon a tapering trunk, which is generally of large diameter, but short in proportion to the vast circumference of the crown. This has been said sometimes to amount to many hundred feet. The largest I met with was about one hundred feet. It is called in the country the *Kooker boom*, or quiver tree, its pithy branches being employed by the Bosjesmans Hottentots as cases for their arrows. In some of the passes of the hills were thinly scattered several species of the geranium, among which was one, whose branches were armed with strong spines; and also a tree *Cotyledon*, all the individuals of which appeared old, and stunted not unlike the artificial dwarf trees invented and cultivated by the Chinese.

Two mountain geese directed us by their flight to a spring of water, about twenty miles beyond the Lions' den. Though sufficiently copious for our present necessities, yet it was strongly impregnated with salt. At the distance of ten miles beyond this spot we arrived at the bed of the Hartebeest river, which, from the very lofty mimosas that skirted its banks, and entirely buried it within their extended branches, promised a plentiful stream. It happened, however, at this time, to be perfectly dry. The experiment of digging was made in the bed of the river, and, at five feet under the pebbly and crystallized sand, the fragments apparently of decomposed granite, we discovered a stream of clear fresh water; and from various experiments afterwards made in the

sandy beds of the rivers of the Namaaqua country, I am inclined to think, that subterranean streams of water pass under most of them in this part of Africa.

Near this river was situated a Kraal or horde of Namaaqua Hottentots. Their flocks of sheep, which were brought in towards the evening, might perhaps amount to three thousand. They possessed also a few cattle, and a herd of small handsome goats, that were spotted like the leopard. The sheep were totally different from the breed usually met with in the colony. Instead of the short, broad, and curling tails of these, those of the Namaaques were long and round like the common English sheep. The rams had small straight horns. The covering was a sort of hair, short, straight, shining, and spotted, and mostly bay and white. These, in all probability, were the indigenous sheep of the country, the broad-tailed ones having been brought into the colony from the northward. The assertion of Monsieur Vaillant is without any kind of foundation, when he says, that broad-tailed sheep transplanted into the Namaaqua country lose that part of their character, and obtain long round tails. There are Dutch peasants who have lived in this country thirty years, yet have not a long-tailed sheep in their whole flock. I could not hold any conversation with these people through the means of my Hottentots, the language spoken by the one being perfectly unintelligible to the other; nor could they speak or understand a word of Dutch.

Our next encampment was at the house or hovel of a Dutch peasant, situated at the entrance of a narrow defile between

two ranges of mountains. The figure that presented itself at the door might truly be said to represent a being of a different country from that which we had left behind. It was a tall old man, with a thin sallow visage, and a beard of dingy black, which, extending to the eyes, where it met the straggling hair of the forehead, obscured the face like a visor. Never was a finer figure for the inhabitant of a black tower or enchanted castle, in the page of a romance. Not accustomed to receive strangers, he seemed, on our arrival, to be somewhat agitated. In one corner of the chimney of his hovel, which consisted of one apartment, sat an old Hottentot woman, over whose head had passed at least a century of years. To her natural sallow complexion was superadded no small quantity of soot, so that she was at least as black as her bearded master. A female slave next made her appearance, of a piece with the two former. The faggot presently crackled on the hearth; a quarter of a sheep was laid on the coals to broil; and the repast was speedily served up on the lid of an old chest, for want of a table, and covered with a remnant of the same piece of cloth worn as a petticoat by the female slave, which, it seemed not unlikely, had also once been employed in the same sort of service.

It turned out in conversation, that the old gentleman had long resided in this sequestered spot far removed from all society; without wife or child, relation or friend, or any human being to converse with or confide in, except the old Hottentot and the slave, who were his only inmates, and a tribe of Hottentots living in straw huts without. With the appearance of wretchedness and extreme poverty, he possessed

immense herds of sheep and cattle, and had several large sums of money placed out at interest. He was literally what the world has properly called a miser. In justice, however, to the old man, he was one of the civillest creatures imaginable. On our return we were much indebted to him for the assistance of his cattle, which he very obligingly sent forward to fall in with our waggons on the midst of the Karroo desert. It is singular enough, that a brother and a sister of this man, both old, and both unmarried, should each have their habitations in separate and distant corners of these mountains, and live, like him, entirely in the society of Hottentots; they are nearly related to one of the richest men in the Cape.

On the twenty-ninth we crossed a chain of mountains to the west and, proceeding to the northward between it and another much higher, we came at night to the head of the defile, where it was found impracticable for the waggons to make any farther progress. We therefore encamped near a clear and copious spring of water, called the *Fleuris fonteyn*. The mountains, within the defiles of which we now were, are called in the Namaaqua language, the *Khamies*, signifying the cluster or aggregate. That which headed the several passes, or where as a center they all terminate, is a very high peak, not less than four thousand feet above the plain, on the western side, where it sloped gently to the sea-shore. These mountains, in their nature and composition, differ from all others in the colony. Except the high point just mentioned, they are neither peaked, nor tabular, nor stratified, but are composed of large rounded masses of granite, a whole mountain sometimes consisting only of one naked rock. To two of this sort, from



their similarity to those remarkable stones already noticed under the names of the Pearl and the Diamond, but ten times their size, as a point of distinction in the chart, I gave the name of the Namaaqua Pearls.

The loose fragments of stone on the sides of the Khamies berg, whether detached pieces of granite, or greasy quartz, or flinty pebbles, had almost invariably that side which lay next the ground, tinged of a blue or green color, but mostly of the latter. The veins that ran through the mountainous masses of granite were generally filled with semi-transparent quartz, among which were both metallic crystallizations and arborizations. In several places were curious flat rocks, colored red and yellow, which might be taken up in such large flags, and were so easily cut with a knife, that they had obtained the name of plank-stone. In the veins of this stone were also metallic plates of a pyramidal form, and a greenish color. All these appearances indicated the existence of abundance of copper in the Khamies berg. In fact, this is the commencement of what are called the Copper mountains, from the quantity of Malachite that is said to be strewed over their surface. In these mountains is also found, in large blocks, that species of stone to which mineralogists in Europe have given the name of Prehnite. This stone possesses most of the characters of Zeolite; but having some others from which it differs, it was considered as a new species. Some specimens are extremely beautiful; they are generally of an apple green ground marked with white, pale yellow, or brown stripes, or spots. The only use or ornament to which the Dutch apply it, is that to which it is least suited, namely, the converting it

into tobacco-pipes, as the heat soon destroys the colors ; and, if carried to redness, the form also ; for, like Zeolite, it possesses the character of intumescence by strong heat. It might be manufactured into vases, little inferior to the Derbyshire spar which, though much less esteemed than it deserves, because too common, has certainly few rivals in the lapidary's workshop.

We attempted to ascend the highest point of the Khamies berg on horseback, but before we had gained the general summit out of which it rises, we were buried in a thick mist, which shortly became heavy rain ; and the thermometer from 51° at the bottom of the mountain, had descended to 34°. We took shelter in the solitary hovel of a Dutch peasant, that stood on the sloping summit of the mountain. Cold as it was, the man and his family had no other habitation than a hut made of rush matting, and fashioned after the manner of the Namaaquas, which will presently be noticed. Though rich as to the number of his sheep and cattle, he could have no other comfort in life, except, like the miser at the foot of the mountain, the gratification arising from knowing how much he was worth. Fearful that the weather might become worse, and that from the encreasing cold the rain might be converted into snow, we thought it prudent to give up the attempt of proceeding higher, and to make the best of our way down. It frequently happens that the snow begins to fall on this mountain early in May. The inhabitants are then obliged to quit their elevated situation, and to establish themselves for the winter on the plains below. Neither the distance of the Khamies berg from the sea, which is only about fifteen

miles, nor its height, are sufficient to account for the early approach of winter, and the deep snows that fall there. Perhaps as this point is the termination of the periodical winds, and the commencement of those almost invariable breezes that blow between the tropics, and extend five or six degrees beyond them, called the trade winds, the frequent squalls and commotion in the air occasioned at the point of meeting, may have a tendency to lower the temperature. To the northward of the Khamies berg, on the sandy plains of the Namaaqua country, it is said that rain never falls. Whatsoever clouds may be borne from the sea, or formed in the atmosphere, are immediately attracted to this cluster of mountains.

In that part of the Namaaqua country, lying between the Khamies and the *Groote*, or *Orange river*, water is rarely met with, except in the periodical streams that flow from the mountain under beds of sand, in which the natives, when such existed, used to dig deep wells, and cover them over to prevent evaporation. These plains are now desolate and uninhabited. All those numerous tribes of Namaaquas, once possessed of vast herds of cattle, are, in the course of less than a century, dwindled away to four hordes, which are not very numerous, and in a great measure are subservient to the Dutch peasantry, who dwell among them. The latter, who have seized upon the choicest part of their country, allow them to erect their huts in the neighbourhood of their farms, on condition of their furnishing a certain number of people to protect their cattle against the attacks of Bosjesmans, or wild beasts of prey. A dozen years more, and probably a shorter period, will see the remains of the Namaaqua nation in a

state of entire servitude. Such are the effects of an encroaching peasantry, sanctioned by the low policy of a government that could descend to employ agents to effect the purchase of whole herds of cattle for a cask of brandy. To this government was so little a concern of such great magnitude, that it authorized those agents, for the greater convenience of transporting their brandy, to make an expensive road across a point of the Khamies berg, which still bears the honorable name of the *Company's road*. The government having fixed no limits to their colony, nor their subjects to their avarice, the latter found it still more convenient to settle themselves in the midst of the harmless Namaaquas, who considered them as the most acceptable neighbours in the world. For a bottle of brandy, which cost sixpence, they willingly exchanged an ox; and such is still the infatuation of this people for the noxious liquor, that they will even now exchange a sheep for the same quantity of it.

How great soever may have been the avaricious designs of the first settlers of the Khamies berg, and the degree of blame imputable both to them and the government, it is but justice to remark, that the present inhabitants have much the appearance of being a harmless and honest set of people. Those heroes in infamy, whose characters, as drawn in the page of the French traveller before alluded to, seem not to be in the smallest degree overcharged, have most of them met the fate they so well deserved. *Pinaar*, and *Bernfry*, the *Bastaards Piet* and *Klaas*, and many others of the same stamp, have murdered one another, or have fallen by the hands of their own Hottentots.

Though the Namaaqua Hottentots vary but little in physical character from the other tribes of this nation, their language is widely different. It is obviously, however, of the same nature, and abounds with the clapping of the tongue peculiar to the Hottentot. They are of a taller stature in general than the eastern tribes, and less robust. Some of the women were elegant figures, and possessed a considerable share of vivacity and activity; and they had the same conformation of certain parts of the body as the Bosjesmans women, and other Hottentots; in a less degree, however, than is usual in the former, but more remarkable than in those of the latter. Like the Hottentot women of the East, the most ornamental part of their dress was the little square leather apron, to which, in addition to the border of shells or beads, were appended six or eight chains, in pairs, whose points dragged on the ground; the upper part of each chain was copper, the lower of polished iron. They are supplied to them by the *Damqras*, a tribe of people to the northward, which will shortly be noticed.

The huts of the Namaaquas differ very materially from those erected by the Hottentots of the colony, or by the Bosjesmans, or by the Kaffers. They are perfect hemispheres, covered with matting made of sedges; and the frame-work, or skeletons, are semicircular sticks, half of them diminishing from the centre or upper part, and the other half crossing these at right angles; forming thus a true representation of the parallels of latitude and meridians on an artificial globe. They are in general from ten to twelve feet in diameter; and

so commodious, that many of the peasantry of the Khamies berg have been induced to adopt them.

These people, like the Kaffers, pay the greatest attention to their cattle; and, after the manner of that nation, they give to the horns of their oxen artificial directions, confining the shape generally to the spiral line, something like the Koodoo antelope. Those of the Khamies berg, in the possession both of Dutch and Hottentots, are large boney cattle, not in the least degree inferior to those of Sneuwberg. The people too in their persons are equally robust with those of Graaff Reynet. An old Namaqua Hottentot woman is a figure that the most serious could not behold without laughter, and an old Dutch woman of this part of the country without pity, the first being remarkable for the prominences of the body, the latter from its want of points and uninterrupted rotundity. The breasts of the former are disgustingly large and pendant; the usual way of giving suck, when the child is carried on the back, is by throwing the breast over the shoulder. In this formation of their persons, they agree with the Latin Satirist's description of Ethiopian women on the borders of Egypt:

*"In Meroë crasso majorem infante mamillam."*

In the women of ancient Egypt, enormous protuberances of the body were very common, and have been attempted to be accounted for, by various authors, from a variety of causes. Though one of these causes may probably exist in the impurities of the water, yet the essential difference in the effect produced on a Hottentot and Dutch woman, clearly shews

that different predispositions are inherent in the different varieties of the species.

It should seem, however, that some principle does exist in these highly elevated situations of Southern Africa, which sheds its influence on the animal, and even on the vegetable part of the creation. The withered stem of a liliaceous plant, apparently the same as that found on the banks of the Orange river, was seven feet long, and crowned with an umbel of more than fifty flowrets, each having a peduncle or foot-stalk of eighteen inches in length, making the diameter of the umbel to exceed that of three feet. The bulb, of which I could but conveniently carry a few, was as large as the human head. Of this enormous lily the people gave an account, not unlike that of the fictitious Upas of Java, rendered famous by a relation of it inserted in the notes to Doctor Darwin's fanciful, yet classic, poem of the Botanic Garden. They say, with regard to the lily, that the juice of its bulb is a strong poison; that the leaves occasion sudden death to the cattle which may chance to eat them; and that if small birds should happen to perch on its blossoms, they instantly roll off lifeless to the ground. A few of the bulbs of this specious plant arrived safe in England, where they have blossomed as freely as in their native soil. Another species of amaryllis, called by botanists the *disticha*, common on all the mountainous parts of the colony, was now on the Khamies berg throwing out its long broad leaves in opposite pairs, forming the shape of a fan. Both the bulb, and the leaves of this plant, have been ascertained to be, without any preparation, most virulent poisons, that act on the animal system, whether taken into



it by the stomach or the blood. The farmers pull up the root and leaves wherever they find them growing. It was said that the juice of this bulb, mixed up with the mangled body of a certain species of spider, furnishes the Bosjesmans with poison for their arrows, more deadly than any other they are acquainted with. This spider should seem to be peculiar to the western coast of the country, at least I never met with, nor heard of it, on the other side. Its body, with the legs, which are short, is three inches in diameter, the former black and hairy, the latter faintly spotted; the beak red. It lives under ground, constructing over its hole a cover composed of the filaments spun from its entrails, and earth or dung. This cover is made to turn on a joint. When the animal is watching for its prey, it sits with the lid half open, ready to sally out upon such insects as serve it for food. On the approach of danger it closes the cover, and in a short time cautiously opens it again to see if the enemy has retreated.

The Namaaqua Hottentots seem well acquainted with poisonous substances, though they now make use of none. The bow and arrow, their ancient weapons, are become useless. The country they now inhabit is almost entirely deserted by all kinds of beasts that live in a state of nature, and the dread of Bosjesmans prevents them from ranging far over the country in quest of game. Formerly, however, the kloofs of the Khamies berg abounded with elands and hartebeests, gemsboks, quachas, and zebras, and were not a little formidable on account of the number of beasts of prey that resorted thither. A few days before our arrival at the foot of

the mountain, a lion had occasioned some little stir in the country, which had not yet entirely subsided. A Hottentot belonging to one of the farmers had endeavoured for some time, in vain, to drive his master's cattle into a pool of water enclosed between two ridges of rock, when at length he espied a huge lion couching in the midst of the pool; terrified at the unexpected sight of a monster, whose eyes seemed to be fixed upon him, he instantly took to his heels, leaving the cattle to shift for themselves. In doing this he had the presence of mind to break through the herd, concluding that, if the lion should pursue, he might content himself with the first beast that came in his way. In this, however, he was mistaken. The lion rushed through the herd, making directly after the Hottentot, who, on turning round, and perceiving that the monster had singled him out for a meal, breathless and half dead with terror, scrambled up the stem of one of the tree Alocs, in the trunk of which had luckily been cut out a few steps, the more readily to come at some birds' nests that its branches supported. At the same moment the lion made a spring at him, but, missing his aim, fell upon the ground. In surly silence he walked round the tree, casting every now and then a dreadful look towards the poor Hottentot, who had crept behind the finches' nests that happened to have been constructed in the tree.

There is in this part of Africa a small bird of the *Loxia* genus, which lives in a state of society with the rest of its species, in the same manner as the locust-eating thrush mentioned in the account of a former journey. Like this bird, the finches also construct a whole republic of nests in one clump

and under one cover. Each nest, however, has a separate entrance on the under side, and has no communication with its neighbour from within. Sometimes one of these clumps of nests will extend a space of ten feet in diameter, and contain a population of several hundred individuals. The *aloe dichotoma*, being the only plant met with on the hills of this country approaching to the size of a tree, except the *mimosa*, which grows only on the borders of periodical rivers, is generally the resort of these gregarious birds, where they construct their temporary dwellings, when nature calls upon them to fulfil the end of their creation.

It was on one of these edifices that the Hottentot screened himself from the sight of the lion. Having remained silent and motionless for a length of time, he ventured to peep over the side of the nest, hoping that the lion had taken his departure; when, to his great terror and astonishment, his eyes met those of the animal, to use his own expression, "flashing fire at him." In short, the lion laid himself down at the foot of the tree, and stirred not from the place for four-and-twenty hours. He then returned to the spring to quench his thirst, and, in the mean time, the Hottentot descended the tree, and scampered to his home, which was not more than a mile distant, as fast as his feet could carry him. The perseverance of the lion was such, that it appeared afterwards he had returned to the tree, and from thence had hunted the Hottentot by the scent within three hundred paces of the house.

It seems to be a fact well established, that the lion prefers the flesh of a Hottentot to that of any other creature. He has frequently been singled out from a party of Dutch. The latter being disguised in clothing, and the former going generally naked, may perhaps account for it. The horse, next to the Hottentot, seems to be his favorite food ; but on the sheep, perhaps on account of his woolly covering, which he is too indolent to uncase, he seldom deigns to fix his paw.

From the Cape to the Khamies berg, very little occurs in the animal kingdom to interest the natural historian, especially one who may have made a previous journey to the eastward, where almost the whole tribe of quadrupeds peculiar to Southern Africa may be met with. In a Namaaqua hut I observed the skin of a jackal, with a black bushy tail, that seemed to be different from any I had seen on the other side of the continent. It was covered with thick fur. The dogs of the Namaaquas were of the same sort as those of the Bosjesmans ; and it was here observed of them, that their tails, contrary to the description of Linnaeus, given as the specific character to the domestic dog, were almost invariably recurved on the right side.

In our descent of the mountain, we were driven to seek shelter from the violence of the rain in a mixed hord<sup>e</sup> of Bastaards and Namaaquas. The chief was of the former description. In his younger days he had been a great lover of the chase, and his matted hut within still displayed a variety of the skins of animals that had fallen before his

piece. He boasted that, in one excursion, he had killed seven camelopardales and three white rhinoceroses. The latter is not uncommon on the skirts of the colony behind the Hantam mountain, and seems to be a variety only of the African two-horned rhinoceros. It differs from it in color, which is a pale carnation, in size, which is considerably larger, and in the thinness of its skin; all of which may perhaps be the effects of age. Of the figure and character of the common two-horned rhinoceros of Africa, which is altogether different from that of India, covered with its hide of mail, I have not seen any just representation, except in the drawings of Mr. Daniel; nor is any mention made of that species, or variety of a species, which, in a journey to the Booshuanas, this gentleman, since the present sketches were first published, met with sufficiently common, and of which the annexed print may be considered as an accurate representation. From what I could collect, by comparing the two descriptions, it is the same animal as that which our old sportsman called the white rhinoceros. The skin of all the two-horned species of Africa is comparatively smooth, having none of those folds which in the Indian species are so remarkable. The head is of a singular form and construction. It is strictly a *πίλον κέρας*, a *nose-horn*: these excrescences growing directly upon the nose. The eyes also may be said to be placed in this organ, being immediately under the root of the larger horn; and they are so minute that one would be apt to conclude they could not be of much use to so large an animal. But nature, always provident, has remedied this apparent inconvenience by placing them in projecting sockets, in which they turn in all directions like those of the

little camoleon. Had the eye been placed in the usual part of the face, just below the forehead, which is very large, the visual rays would have embraced only about 180 degrees, or half of the horizon; whereas, in their present position, they have a much greater range, the creature being able, I should suppose, without moving its head, to sweep a portion of the horizon equal to at least 260 degrees.

The people composing this little society seemed to live very happily together. They had horses, and cattle, and sheep, and gardens of no inconsiderable extent, well stocked with pumpkins, onions, and tobacco.

We met also, at this kraal, one of the nation above mentioned under the name of Damaras. From his appearance I took him to be a Kaffer, and he was unquestionably of that race of people. He represented the Damaras as a very poor tribe; that their country along the sea-coast produced nothing for the support of cattle; and that their whole existence depended on exchanging copper rings and beads, which they themselves manufactured, with the *Briquas* to the east, and the *Namaaquas* to the south. From the Orange river to the Tropic, under which these people live, runs a chain of mountains, which, from the various accounts of travellers, are so abundant in copper ore, that it is every where found upon the surface. From this ore, it seems, the Damaras are in possession of the art of extracting the pure metal. This man's account of the process of smelting the ore was as satisfactory as simple. They make a kind of charcoal from the wood of a certain mimosa, of which he gave me a large bean,

by smothering it when burning clear, with sand. They break the ore into small pieces. Thus prepared, they lay the materials in alternate strata, within a small enclosure of stones, on a clayey bottom. They set fire to the charcoal, and blow it with several bellows, each made from the skin of a gemsbok converted into a sack, with the horn of the same animal fixed to one end for the pipe. This is all that is necessary to procure the metal from the sort of ore they make use of; being that species called by mineralogists vitreous copper ore. It is in fact mineralized with sulphur, which a moderate heat will dissipate, and leave the copper in its pure metallic state. Such kind of ore is even more fusible than pure copper. The metal thus obtained is then manufactured into chains, rings, and bracelets, by means of two pieces of stone that serve as a hammer and anvil, and the workmanship would be no disgrace to an artizan furnished with much better tools. The links of the chains, however, are all open, as well as the rings, which shew that they have not yet discovered the art of soldering, or joining together pieces of the same metal by the interposition of a second, or a composition of a softer nature than those to be united.

As a nation of artists, and acquainted with metallurgy, they are, from all accounts, the poorest on the face of the earth. They keep no kind of cattle. Their country, in fact, is so totally barren and sandy, that no cattle could exist upon it. Though the Damaras are obviously the same race of people as the Kaffers, and these, as has in a former chapter been conjectured, of Arabic origin, yet there is no necessity of tracing them back to a more refined nation, in order



to account from whence they might have obtained the art of reducing copper ore into a metallic state. The accidental discovery is full as likely to have happened, as the Phenician story of the invention of glass related by Pliny.

The three tribes of Kaffers above-mentioned have each a different language, though they are all of the same nature, and have evidently been derived from the same source. This must be the case among every people who want a written character, especially when they become divided into tribes, and cease to communicate with each other. The different families of Hottentots all speak a different language, which, however, is very obviously perceived to have been derived from one common origin.

Having dried our clothes, we took leave of the kraal, and continued our descent of the mountain. It was night before we gained the plain, where we once more enjoyed a clear sky and a brilliant moon. The following morning the thermometer was down to the freezing point, and the whole surface of the country was covered with a hoar frost.

From this place we made the best of our way to the Bokkeveld, returning nearly by the same route that had brought us to it. At the edge of the desert the Bosjesmans' captain paid us a second visit, with the people of his kraal, and a whole string of Namaaqua Hottentots, generally women, whose husbands and children were in the service of the Dutch farmers. One of these appeared to be the oldest woman I had ever beheld. Much more than a century of years had

certainly passed over her head. She produced her eldest daughter, who headed five generations. On being asked whether her memory could carry her back to the time when the Christians first came among them? she replied, with a shake of the head, that she had very strong reasons to remember it, for that before she had ever heard of the Christians, she knew not the want of a bellyful, whereas it was now a difficult matter to get a mouthful. The condition of the whole horde certainly appeared to be very deplorable; but I feel a happiness in adding, that, by means of this captain and two or three well-disposed farmers, several hordes of the outcast Bosjesmans have since been brought in, and obtained by public subscription a considerable quantity of sheep and horned cattle, of which, it is to be hoped, they will speedily see the advantage of increasing the numbers.

On the morning of the fifth of May, after dropping the commandant at his own house, I proceeded inland to the eastward, and, passing over a rough stony country, reached in two days the foot of the Hantam mountain. The inhabitants at this time were in a state of alarm, on account of the Bosjesmans. A party of these people had carried off, into the kloofs of the mountain, several sheep and oxen, after severely wounding two Hottentots with poisoned arrows, one through the upper part of the arm, and the other in the ankle joint. The former seemed likely to do well, but the latter was in a very dangerous way. The point of the arrow had broken off and stuck in the bone. The leg was swollen as high as the knee, and gangrene appeared to have commenced round the wound. The people not knowing in what manner

to treat it, I directed them to apply poultices of bread, onions, and oil, and to wash the wound well with a solution of *armonia præparata*, and to give him plenty of vinegar to drink. At the end of four days, which it took me in rounding the mountain, the patient was no worse, but the wound, on the contrary, seemed to put on favorable appearances the other was nearly well.

The Bosjesmans have been generally represented as a people so savage and blood-thirsty in their nature, that they never spare the life of any living creature which may fall into their hands. To their own countrymen, who have been taken prisoners by, and continued to live with, the Dutch farmers, they have certainly shewn instances of the most atrocious cruelty. These poor wretches, if retaken by their countrymen, seldom escape being put to the most excruciating tortures. The party above-mentioned, having fallen in with a Hottentot at some distance from any habitation, set him up to the neck in a deep trench, and wedged him in so fast with stones and earth that he was incapable of moving. In this situation he remained a whole night, and the greater part of the following day; when, luckily, some of his companions passed the place and released him. The poor fellow stated that he had been under the necessity of keeping his eyes and mouth in perpetual motion the whole day, to prevent the crows from devouring him.

The habitations that compose the division of the Hantam, lie scattered round the feet of that mountain. The face of the country is similar to that of the Sneuwberg, and the breed

of cattle and of sheep are equally good ; the horses in general much better, but they are subject to the same endemic disease that prevails in most parts of Graaff Reynet. It is here, however, very partial, for while it rages at the foot of the mountains, there is not the smallest danger on the flat summit, on which account this part of the mountain is appropriated to the public use, each inhabitant having the privilege of sending thither eight horses during the sickly season.

As in the Sneuwberg, they are here also very much infested with locusts. One troop of these insects, in their last stage of existence, passed on the wing along the eastern side of the mountain, when we were encamped there. For several hours they continued to hover in the air as they passed along, at such a height as not to be individually distinguished ; but their immense numbers formed a kind of fleecy cloud, that completely took off the radiated beams of the sun, and made it appear as when seen through a mist. Like a thin cloud, also, they cast a confused shadow on the ground. In the Bokkeveld and the Khamies berg, for the two last years, these insects have been particularly troublesome. After repeated experiments to get rid of them, they at last hit upon one that at least saved their corn. This they effected by making fires of sour acrid plants, by the smoke of which they were driven away ; having, however, repeatedly extinguished the fires by the myriads that flew into them.

Leaving the Hantam, and proceeding south-easterly, I ascended the heights of Roggeveld, that are separated only

from the former by a narrow chasm or opening. These heights are so called from a species of rye-grass that is found very plentifully in most of the hollows, and on which the cattle, during the summer season, in a great degree subsist. In some places the Roggeveld presents to the next lower terrace, which is the Bokkeveld and Karroo plains, perpendicular faces of stone from two to four thousand feet in height. Yet from this great elevation, on the eastern side, the descent is scarcely perceptible. The Fish river, whose course is easterly, and which rises on the very summit of the mountain, scarcely has any current, but is a series of deep holes connected by periodical streamlets. The great inequality of the summit of the Roggeveld gives it the appearance of a chain of mountains rising out of the general surface of a mountain. Of these the *Kom*, or Cup mountain, is the highest. According to the information of a neighbouring peasant, who assisted Colonel Gordon in determining its altitude, it is fifteen hundred feet higher than the Table mountain, or five thousand feet above the Karroo plains. For several months in the year the Roggeveld is entirely under snow; the inhabitants are then obliged to descend upon the Karroo with all their cattle, where, in temporary dwellings of rushes or straw, they remain till the spring. This division of Stellenbosch is considered to produce the best breed of horses in the whole colony.

The country to the eastward of the Roggeveld is inhabited by different hordes of Bosjesmans. One of these, called the *Koranas*, dwelling on the right bank of the Orange river, directly east from the Roggeveld, is represented as a very

formidable tribe of people. The few that I had an opportunity of seeing were strong lusty men, apparently of the same tribe as the Namaaquas. They are considered as being more cruel, and at the same time more daring than any other tribe of this nation. They possess a few sheep and cattle, but have the same wandering inclination, and the same propensity to the chase and to plunder, with the other Bosjesmans. The Bricqua Kaffers, who inhabit the country close behind them, are very considerable sufferers from such daring neighbours. Of these people, the Koranas not only carry off large herds of cattle, but they also seize and make slaves of their children, some of whom have been brought into the colony, and purchased by the farmers in exchange for cattle. The Briequas, with their hassagais, have little chance of standing against poisoned arrows. The shields too of the Koranas are enormously large, and so thick that the hassagai cannot penetrate them. I saw one made from the hide of an eland, that measured six feet by four. These people make regular attacks, in large parties of four or five hundred. Though very good friends among each other while poor, from the moment they have obtained by plunder a quantity of cattle, they begin to quarrel about the division of the spoil; and they are said to carry this sometimes to such an excess, that they continue the fight and massacre till, like the soldiers of Cadmus, very few remain in the field,

“ ——— suoque

“ *Marte cadunt subiti per mutua vulnera fratres.*”

The miserably bad roads, the nakedness of the country, and the very few animals that are found in a state of nature,

upon the Roggeveld mountain, make it a disagreeable, uninteresting, and tedious route for one who travels with no other view than that of gratifying curiosity. Crows, kites, and vultures, are almost the only kinds of birds that are met with. Of the last, I broke the wing of one of that species called by Ornithologists the Condor, of an amazingly large size. The spread of its wings was ten feet and one inch. It kept three dogs for some time completely at bay, and having at length seized one of them with its claws, and torn away a large piece of flesh from its thigh, they all immediately retreated.

Having proceeded for twelve days along the summit of the Roggeveld, till I fell in nearly with the track that had carried me on a former journey to Graaff Reynet, I descended to the Karroo plains, which, in this part, employed me three days in crossing. These plains are every where of the same nature, presenting to the traveller "a scene of dreadful uniformity; where a barren level is bounded only by the horizon; where no change of prospect, or variety of images, relieves the traveller from a sense of toil and danger; of whirlwinds, which, in a moment, may bury him in the sand; and of thirst, which the wealthy have given half their possessions to allay."

Bordering these arid plains, on the west side, are several clumps of high mountains, enclosing meadows and vallies, covered with good grass, that are also called the Bokkeveld, but distinguished from the other by the names of Little Bokkeveld and Cold Bokkeveld. These are ramifications of



the Great Chain mentioned in the former part of this chapter; and the vallies and meadows within them appear to have been the beds of lakes, in which there still remains a number of springs and swamps, that never fail to furnish a copious supply of water in the very driest seasons. The ground is productive of good grass, and yields abundant harvests. The cold in winter obliges the inhabitants to drive their cattle upon the Karroo plains, but not to quit their houses, as is the case with those of the Roggeveld.

On the twenty-seventh of May I repassed the great chain of mountains, through a ravine called the Eland's kloof. Here once more I had an opportunity of contemplating the venerable ruins that lay scattered around, strongly displaying the havoc of old Time. The road over this part of the mountains was much better than I had any reason to expect from the representations of the peasantry. Indeed at this time it was by much the best of the four passes through which I had now crossed this great range of mountains.

The Olifant's river runs along the feet of the great chain on the west side, and is hemmed in between it and a parallel range of high hills, called the *Kardouw*. From one of these issues a plentiful spring of chalybeate water, of the temperature of 108° of Fahrenheit's thermometer. The Dutch government caused a house to be erected at this place for the accommodation of such as might be inclined to use the waters, but, like all the public buildings of the colony, it has been suffered to go out of repair.

On the west side of the Kardouw lies the division of the Four-and-twenty Rivers, extending from thence to the banks of the Berg river. This part of the country to the sea-shore, including Zwartland, consists of a flat extended plain, very fertile in corn, grass, and fruits, and being well watered, is more populous than most parts of the colony. With a proper degree of labor and management in the culture of the land, by plantations and inclosures for shelter, warmth, and moisture, that part of the colony alone, which lies within the great range of mountains, would be fully sufficient to supply with all the necessaries of life the town and garrison of the Cape, and all the shipping that will probably ever frequent its ports.

Crossing the Berg river, I entered Zwartland, where, in consequence of a shower of rain, the inhabitants were busily employed in ploughing the ground, which the long drought this year had hitherto prevented them from entering. In this division there is no scarcity of water in springs or wells, but it is universally, and so strongly, impregnated with salt, as not only to be disagreeable, but almost impossible to be taken by those who have not been long accustomed to it. By such it is preferred to the purest water; this being accounted insipid and tasteless. An old man in the Bokkeveld, who, from his infancy till a few years past, had lived in Zwartland, never missed an opportunity of sending thither a few bottles to be filled with the briny water for his own particular use; the pure stream of the mountain, as he asserted, not being able to quench his thirst. Similar instances of habit, or of fancy, appear in ancient history. Some of the

princesses of the Ptolemy family would drink no other water but that of the Nile, though it is sometimes so strongly impregnated with nitrous and other salts, as to possess a purgative quality ; and superstition directed the same water to be carried from Egypt into Syria and Greece, for the sole purpose of sprinkling in the temple of Isis.

Leaving Zwartland, and its saline springs to those who could relish them, I directed my route across the Tiger berg to the Cape, where I arrived on the second of June, without having experienced any of those inconveniencies which the season of the year seemed to threaten.

## CHAP. VI.

*Miscellaneous Observations, made on a military Expedition to the Kaffer Frontier, intended chiefly to shew the Character and Disposition of the Boors.*

FROM the moment that the departure of the Earl of Macartney for England was made known in the distant parts of the colony, the ignorant and misguided boors, excited by that party of mischievous, and not less ignorant, persons in Cape Town, who had long shewn their hatred to good order, seemed to think that with his Lordship had departed all authority and the means of bringing them to legal punishment. Their restless and turbulent minds and, above all, their avaricious and iniquitous views upon the harmless Kaffers, could no longer brook restraint; and they determined, at a select meeting, as one of them observed in a letter to his friend at the Cape, "Now that the old Lord was gone away, to prove " themselves true patriots."

The first act of their patriotic spirit was an attempt to take by violence, out of the hands of justice, a criminal whom the Landrost, or chief magistrate of the district, had forwarded, under the escort of a dragoon, towards the Cape. His crime, which was an act of forgery on orphan property committed to the care of a constituted board in the Cape called the *Weeskammer*, or chamber for managing the effects of minors and

and orphans, had been fully proved against him before the provincial court of judicature ; but being one of the patriotic party, and a very distinguished character in all the disturbances that had taken place in this district, he was considered as too valuable a subject to be taken off by a regular course of justice. Accordingly, about fourteen boors, each armed with an enormous musquet used for killing elephants and other wild beasts, were dispatched upon the Karroo, or great desert, on the meritorious enterprize of restoring the culprit to the society of which he was a member. The dragoon, however, into whose custody he had been committed, thought proper to demur, and told them, in a very resolute and spirited manner, that sooner than surrender him into their hands, or suffer him to be taken out of his, he should certainly blow out his brains. But the Landrost's secretary, who had also been sent in joint charge of the prisoner, no less frightened than the boors were at the determined manner of the dragoon, prevailed upon the latter, if not to relinquish the criminal, at least to suffer him to be conveyed back to the drosdy, and delivered up to the Landrost ; to this he reluctantly assented ; the courageous boors keeping at a proper distance from the waggon.

Having, however, proceeded thus far, without displaying any extraordinary exploits of patriotism, the shame of their failure seemed to require that they should go a step farther. With the assistance of a schoolmaster, whom they found no difficulty in persuading to be of their party, they issued circular letters to their brother boors, entreating such as they knew to be well disposed to act with them, and commanding, in a