

off in full gallop the same way they had approached, and were out of sight in a few minutes. This manœuvre was intended as a salute in honour of the landrost; and such a welcome reception, so very different from that he had experienced on a former occasion, from the inhabitants of the first division of his district, was no bad omen of the change of sentiments, or of conduct at least, that had taken place since his expulsion.

After a journey of nine days over a dreary and barren desert, the traces of human industry, though in a wild sequestered corner, hemmed in by huge barren mountains, had no less charms than the discovery of land, after a long sea-voyage, to the weary passenger. We found here not only a most friendly reception, but also such refreshments as we began to be in want of. Two kinds of wine, the produce of the place, were very tolerable. Various sorts of fruits, all of good quality. The oranges were already ripe and gathered, and the peach and almond trees were in full blossom. Vegetables were unusually luxuriant in their growth: some of the cauliflowers measured eighteen inches in diameter. The rapidity of vegetation, at this place, appeared the more remarkable on account of its situation at the feet of mountains whose summits were buried in snow. It was, however, exposed only to the warm north, and completely screened from all other winds. The thermometer, during the three days we remained here, was never lower than 46°, at the same time that the appearance of the weather indicated a severe frost every night at the distance of a very few miles on the desert.

The mistress of the mansion, at the age of sixty, and the mother of sixteen children, was a tall, straight, well-looking,

and active woman ; and all the people, who made their appearance from the Black Mountains, were of a stature much exceeding the common size of man. The peasantry of the colony have always been represented as a gigantic race of men. Living nearly in a state of nature, with the advantage of having at all times within their reach a supply of food, procured without bodily exertion or the fatigue of labor, they sometimes attain the greatest possible size to which the human species seems capable of arriving.

From this place may be seen to the northward, across the Karroo plains, the chain of mountains which forms the highest step or terrace that has yet been ascended by European travellers. The desert rises towards them in a fine swell that is clearly perceptible to the eye. An attempt to estimate the height of the *Nieuwveld Mountains*, by having merely passed over the country, can be considered as little better than a guess. I should suppose, however, from attending to the general slope of the country to the northward, as well as the sudden elevation from one terrace to another, that the summit of this screen of mountains cannot be less than ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. Snow falls upon them to the depth of five or six feet, and continues to bury them for as many months. The inferior range of *Zwarteberg* was at this time, for a considerable distance from the summit, covered with snow. These mountains were apparently composed of the same materials as those already passed ; but the detached hills, near their base, consisted entirely of that species of rock called by Mr. Kirwan the *amygdaloid*, which is nearly allied to the stone that the miners of Derbyshire have distinguished by the name of *toad-stone*. The rounded

pebbles, embedded in this argillaceous matrix, were almost invariably tinged with a bright grass-green color. The substratum of the mountains still continued to be a blue and purple-colored schistus.

Having completed our stock of provisions, and procured from the inhabitants of Zwarteberg the loan of sixty stout bullocks, we once more launched upon the wide desert, and proceeded, on the twenty-third, near thirty miles to a spring of water called the *Sleutel fonteyn*, and the following day encamped on the banks of the *Traka* or Maiden river. The little water it contained was both muddy and salt, and the sand on its banks was covered with a thin pellicle of nitre, out of which was growing abundance of the *salsola* before mentioned.

At sun-rise this morning the thermometer was down to five degrees below the freezing point. This great diminution of temperature appeared the more extraordinary, as no change, either in the direction or the strength of the wind, had taken place. The air was clear and serene, without a cloud in the sky, and the weather apparently the same it had been for several days in every respect, except in the degree of temperature. The snow on the mountains could have had little influence. The Black Mountains only were near, and they were to leeward; the light wind that blew being from the west, in which quarter scarcely a hillock occurred for the space of an hundred miles.

On the twenty-fifth we skirted the banks of the *Traka* about ten miles, passed the *Ghowka* or Boor's river, which was per-

fectly dried up, and in the evening arrived at the *Great Loory fonteyn*, in which was only a very small quantity of water standing in holes, and this was muddy, salt, and bitter. As there was neither herbaceous nor shrubby plants, and as, since our departure from Zwarteberg, the oxen had scarcely tasted vegetable food, for, independent of the little time allowed them to browse, the desert offered only the shrivelled stems of the mesembryanthemum tribe, it was thought adviseable to continue our journey, though in the dark, in search of a better place for the refreshment of our cattle ; and as there was reason to suspect that it would be some time before we should meet with water, we filled our casks with the execrable mixture of the Great Loory fonteyn. In the middle of the night we arrived at a place where once had flowed a rill of water, and where still were growing clumps of mimosas, patches of the *sal-sola*, and a few other succulent plants. These, like some animals that are said to have the faculty of supplying their own nutriment, are capable of existing for a length of time by the juices which their own roots throw out. Our oxen devoured them with great avidity : and the horses made a hearty meal on the branches of the mimosa, at the expence of a considerable quantity of blood which the strong sharp thorns drew from their mouths. The acrid juices of the succulent plants, and the sour herbage of Africa, oblige the cattle to make use of various correctives ; and in the choice of these they are not very nice. Old rags, pieces of leather, skins with the hair on them, dried wood, bones, and even small pebbles and sand, are greedily devoured by them. African horses very commonly eat their own dung ; and numbers have been destroyed in consequence of taking into the stomach vast quantities of flinty sand.

From the *Little Loory fonteyn*, the place where we halted for the refreshment of our cattle upon the shrubbery that grew there, we advanced on the following day near thirty miles over a bed of solid clay, and late at night pitched our tent in the midst of a meadow covered completely with herbage knee-deep. A transition so sudden from unbounded barrenness, that on every side had appeared on the preceding day, to a verdant meadow clothed by the most luxuriant vegetation, felt more like enchantment than reality. The hungry cattle, impatient to satisfy the cravings of nature, made no small havoc in liberating themselves from the yokes and traces. The name of this spot was *De Beer Valley*; it was a plain of several miles in diameter, stretching along the feet of the Black Mountains, and seemed to be the reservoir of a number of periodical rivers, whose sources are in the mountains of *Niewveldt*, of *Winterberg*, and *Camdeboo*. One of these running at this time with a considerable current, was as salt as brine. To the taste it appeared to be as strongly impregnated as the water of the English Channel; that is to say, it might contain about a thirtieth part of its weight of salt. Another river, with little current, called the *Karoolka*, joined the salt river at the head of the valley, the water of which was perfectly fresh, but combined with earthy matter. The surface of the valley was entirely covered with two or three species of coarse rushy grasses; and all the swamps and springs were buried in large clumps of the *arundo phragmites* or common reed. The streams that fell into the valley were finely skirted with tall mimosas, which, at their confluence, spread out into a forest of evergreens.

Such a delightful spot in the midst of a barren desert, affording shelter, and food, and water, could not fail of attracting to

it the native inhabitants of the surrounding country ; and here accordingly we met with vast variety of game, particularly of the antelope family, three different species of which we had not before observed. These were the *spring-bok* or leaping antelope, the *pygarga* of the *Systema Naturæ* ; the *gems-bok* or *pasan* of *Buffon*, the *Egyptian antelope* of *Pennant*, and the *oryx* of the *Systema Naturæ* ; and the *koodoo* or the *strepsiceros* of *Pallas*, and *striped antelope* of *Pennant*.

The spring-bok is a gregarious animal never met with but in large herds, some of which, according to the accounts of the peasantry, will amount to the number of ten thousand. The Dutch have given a name to this beautiful creature indicative of its gait. The strength and elasticity of the muscles are so great that, when closely pursued, he will spring at a single leap from fifteen to five-and-twenty feet. Its usual pace is that of a constant jumping or springing, with all the four legs stretched out, and off the ground at the same time, and at every spring the hair on the rump divides or sheds, and, falling back on each side, displays a surface of snowy whiteness. The swiftest dog in vain attempts to approach the old ones ; but the young kids, which were now numerous, are frequently caught after a hard chace. Both old and young are excellent venison ; and vast numbers are destroyed by the Dutch farmers, not only for the sake of the flesh, but also for the skins, of which they make sacks for holding provisions and other articles, clothing for their slaves, and, at the time of the capture by the English, for themselves also and children. The poverty and miserable condition of the colony were then so great, that all their numerous flocks and herds were insufficient to procure them decent clothing.

The gemsbok is also a very beautiful animal, and of a size much larger than the springbok. It has none of that timidity which generally marks the character of the antelope; but, on the contrary, if closely pursued or wounded, will coolly sit down on its haunches, and keep both sportsman and dogs at bay. Its long, straight, sharp-pointed horns, used in defence by striking back with the head, make it dangerous to approach. Dogs are very frequently killed by it; and no peasant, after wounding the animal, will venture within its reach till it be dead, or its strength at least exhausted. The flesh of the gemsbok is reckoned to be the best venison that Africa produces.

The koodoo is still larger than the gemsbok, and the most timid perhaps of the Antelope tribe. The usual size of the male is six feet in length and four feet ten inches high. The horns of the male, for the female has none, are more beautiful than those of any other species yet known of the numerous family of antelopes; they are twisted in a spiral form, and run from three to four feet in length, but are apparently ill adapted for the convenience of the animal whose residence is mostly in the woods and thickets among the ravines of the mountains. The ground of the body is that of a bluish mouse colour, transversely marked with white stripes; on the face are also two white oblique bands. A black mane adorns its neck, and along the spine there is a ridge of white hairs; the throat from the chin to the chest is furnished with a crest of brown hair; the flesh is dry and without flavour.

The beds of sand, upon the margin of the valley, were all covered with saltpetre as white as snow. The production of

this substance has certainly an influence upon the temperature of the air, causing a considerable degree of cold. A full hour after the sun had risen the thermometer stood, in the shade, at 26° , or six degrees below the freezing point. At Little Loory fonteyn, where the soil was hard, dry, and stoney, it was ten degrees above freezing; and about the same time on the preceding morning, on the banks of the Traka, where there was also much nitre, the mercury was five degrees below the freezing point. The weather during the three days was perfectly clear, and the wind had not shifted a point. That the great changes in the temperature of the air upon the desert, whilst the weather apparently remains the same, arise from some local rather than general cause, is pretty evident from another circumstance: in travelling at night upon the Karroo, if the wind should happen to blow upon the side, it is very common to pass through alternate currents of hot and cold air, whose difference of temperature is most sensibly felt. Whether the cooler columns of the atmosphere may have been owing to the subjacent beds of nitre, which frequently occur on the Karroo plains, or to some remoter cause, I have not grounds sufficiently strong to determine; but a variety of circumstances seem to favor the former supposition.

In looking through the exhalations of these beds of nitre, a meteorological phenomenon, of a different nature, was also here accidentally observed. In marking, about sunrise, the bearing by a compass of a cone-shaped hill that was considerably elevated above the horizon, a peasant well acquainted with the country observed that it must either be a

new hill, or that the only one which stood in that direction, at the distance of a long day's journey, must have greatly increased of late in its dimensions. Being directed to turn his eyes from time to time towards the quarter on which it stood, he perceived, with amazement, that, as the day advanced, the hill gradually sunk towards the horizon, and at length totally disappeared. The errors of sight, occasioned by the refractive power of the air, are so singular, and sometimes so very extraordinary, as hitherto to have precluded the application of any general theorem for their correction, as it is not yet ascertained even through what medium rays of light, in their passage, suffer the greatest and least degree of refraction. Were this precisely known, observations on the subject might lead to a more intimate knowledge of the nature of the different currents of air that float in the atmosphere, and which without doubt are the cause of extraordinary appearances of objects viewed through them. A gentleman, (the late Mr. Ramsden,) to whom the world is much indebted for his many ingenious and useful inventions and discoveries, once proposed to determine the refractive power of different liquids and aeriform fluids; but he died before he had completed a course of experiments on this subject, which is not less important than curious.

Our cattle being well refreshed on the meadows of De Beer Valley, we advanced about twenty miles, and encamped for the night on the banks of Hottentot's river, in the narrow deep channel of which were only a few stagnant pools of muddy water. Here we were met by some of the inhabitants of Camdeboo, who, being apprised of the approach of the landrost,

had come a journey of two days, and brought with them several teams of large fat oxen to hasten his arrival at the Drosdy, where he was informed the orderly and well-disposed part of the district were anxiously expecting him.

On the twenty-eighth we pitched our tents at the *Poort*, so called from a narrow passage through a range of hills that branch out from the mountains of Camdeboo and run across the desert. The plains were here a little better covered with shrubbery, and abounded with duikers and steen-boks, whole herds of spring-boks, and qua-chas and ostriches.

A heap of stones, piled upon the banks of a rivulet, was pointed out to me as the grave of a Hottentot; and on enquiring from our people of this nation if the deceased had been some chief, they informed me that with them no distinction was conveyed after death; and that the size of the heap depended entirely upon the trouble that the surviving friends chose to give themselves. The intention, it seemed, of the pile was very different from that of the monuments of a similar kind that anciently were erected in various parts of Europe, though they very probably might have proceeded, in a more remote antiquity, from the same origin, which was that of preventing the wolves, or jackals, or other ravenous beasts, from tearing up and mangling the dead carcase. The progressive refinement of society converted, at length, the rude heap of stones, originating in necessity, into the sculptured marble, the useless flatterer of vanity.

Though the *Poort* may be considered as the entrance into Camdeboo, the first habitation is twelve miles beyond it,

and the second ten miles beyond the first. No others appeared either to the right or to the left, and the surface of the country was just as barren and naked as any part of the Karroo. The third farm-house we passed was fifteen or sixteen miles beyond the second; and this was the last that occurred till we reached the Drosdy, or the residence of the landrost, which was about ten miles farther. It was late in the evening of the thirtieth before we arrived at this village, at the entrance of which the landrost was received by a body of farmers on horseback, who welcomed him by a discharge of several platoons of musquetry.

CHAP. II.

Sketches made on a Journey into the Country of the Kaffers.

IMMEDIATELY after our arrival at Graaff Reynet, the Provisional Landrost, in his list of grievances under which the district was then laboring, represented the deplorable state of some of its dependencies from the incursions of the tribe of people known by the name of Kaffers. Certain chiefs of this nation, he said, with their families, and vassals, and cattle, were overrunning the whole country : some had even advanced as far as the borders of the district of Zwellendam ; others had stationed themselves on the banks of the *Sondag*, or Sunday river, within fifty or sixty miles of the Drosdy ; but that the great bulk of them were in that division of the district called the *Zuure-veldt*, or Sour Grass plains, which stretch along the sea-coast between the Sunday and the Great Fish rivers : that an inhabitant of *Bruyntjes Hoogté*, another division of the district, who, during the late disturbances that had prevailed in Graaff Reynet, had on all occasions acted a busy part, had now sent him a letter, demanding that a command should be given to him of a detachment of the farmers against a party of Kaffers who had passed the borders of this division of the district with three or four thousand head of cattle : that he, the provisional landrost, had, from certain intelligence of the coming of the actual landrost, fortunately withheld his answer

to the said letter ; as in the present state of affairs, he would not have dared to give a refusal. To all the measures indeed of the leading party, this poor man had been compelled to give his assent : he had in fact been forced by the anarchists, as a sanction to their proceedings, to take upon him the title of an office, the duties of which he was neither qualified, nor indeed suffered, to perform.

The first business, therefore, of the landrost, after his arrival at the Drosdy, was to stop the preparations of the farmers for commencing hostilities against the Kaffers, by making it publicly known that it was his intention to pay a visit to the chiefs of that nation, and to prevail on them, if possible, to return quietly and peaceably into their own country beyond the settled limits of the Great Fish river. This, no doubt, was an unwelcome piece of intelligence to the writer of the letter, and to those of the intended expedition who were to share with him the plunder of the Kaffers' cattle, which, in fact, and not any laudable motive for the peace and welfare of the district, was the mainspring that operated on the minds of those who had consented to take up arms against them. To the avaricious and covetous disposition of the colonists, and their licentious conduct, was owing a serious rupture with this nation in the year 1793, which terminated with the almost total expulsion of the former from some of the best divisions of the district: and though in the same year the treaty was renewed which fixed the Great Fish river to be the line of demarcation between the two nations, and in consequence whereof the Kaffers retired within their proper limits, yet few of the colonists had the confidence to return to their

former possessions, particularly those in the Zuure Veldt; a circumstance, no doubt, that induced the Kaffers once more to transgress the fixed boundary. So long as they remained in small numbers in these forsaken parts, and during the confusion that existed in the affairs of Graaff Reynet, little notice had been taken of their encroachments; but of late they had poured over in such multitudes, and had made such rapid advances towards the interior and inhabited parts of the district, levying at the same time contributions of oxen and sheep on those colonists whose habitations they approached in their passage through the country, that their incursions became every day more seriously alarming.

As soon therefore as the landrost should have held a meeting of the inhabitants for the purpose of administering to them the oath of allegiance to His Majesty, of reading his commission, appointing the Hemraaden or members of the Council, and settling some other necessary business at the Drosdy, it was resolved to proceed to the spot where the Kaffers had posted themselves in the greatest numbers; and, should it be found necessary, to continue the journey from thence to the residence of their king; at the same time to pass through and examine as many parts of the country, under the jurisdiction of Graaff Reynet, as could be done without too great an expenditure of time; and particularly to visit the bay that was said to be formed where the *Zwart-kops* river falls into the sea.

In the mean time I had an opportunity of looking round me and taking a cursory view of that division of Graaff Reynet,

properly so called. It occupies about ten miles on every side of the village. On the north and east it is terminated by the *Sneeuwberg* or Snowy mountains, and on the south and west is inclosed by the division of Camdeboo. It contains only twenty-six families, twelve of whom inhabit the village : the rest are scattered over a wild barren country almost destitute of tree or shrub, and very little better than the Karroo desert. The Sunday river, in its passage from the Snowy mountains, winds round the small plain on which the Drosdy is placed, and furnishes it with a copious supply of water, without which it would produce nothing. The whole extent of this plain is not more than two square miles, and it is surrounded by mountains two thousand feet in height, from whose steep sides project, like so many lines of masonry, a great number of sand-stone strata ; so that the heat of summer, increased by the confined situation and the reflection of the sun's rays from the rocky sides of these mountains, is intensely great ; whilst the cold of winter, from their great height, and the proximity of the Snowy mountains, from whence the northerly winds rush with great violence through the kloof that admits the Sunday river, is almost intolerable ; not merely on account of the decreased temperature, but from the total impossibility of stirring abroad during the continuance of these winds, which in whirling eddies carry round the plain a constant cloud of red earth and sand.

The village of Graaff Reynet is in latitude 32° 11' south, longitude 26° east, and the distance from Cape Town about 500 miles. It consists of an assemblage of mud huts placed at some distance from each other, in two lines, forming a kind

of street. At the upper end stands the house of the landrost, built also of mud, and a few miserable hovels that were intended as offices for the transaction of public business : most of these had tumbled in ; and the rest were in so ruinous a condition as not to be habitable. The jail is composed of mud walls, and roofed with thatch ; and so little tenable, that an English deserter, who had been shut up in it as a suspicious character for having amused the country people with an account of a conversation he had held with some French officer, made his escape the first night through the thatch. The mud walls of all the buildings are excavated, and the floors undermined by a species of *termes* or white ant, which destroys every thing that falls in its way except wood ; and the bats that lodge in the thatch come forth at nights in such numbers as to extinguish the candles, and make it almost impossible to remain in a room where there is a light.

The village is chiefly inhabited by mechanics, and such as hold some petty employment under the landrost. Its appearance is as miserable as that of the poorest village in England. The necessaries of life are with difficulty procured in it ; for, though there be plenty of arable land, few are found industrious enough to cultivate it. Neither milk, nor butter, nor cheese, nor vegetables of any kind, are to be had upon any terms. There is neither butcher, nor chandler, nor grocer, nor baker. Every one must provide for himself as well as he can. They have neither wine nor beer ; and the chief beverage of the inhabitants is the water of the Sunday river, which, in the summer season, is strongly impregnated with salt. It would be difficult to say what the motives could have been

that induced the choice of this place for the residence of the landrost. It could not proceed from any personal comfort or convenience that the place held out; perhaps those of the inhabitants have chiefly been consulted, being the situation nearly central with respect to the district; though it is more probable that some interested motive, or a want of judgment, or a contradictory spirit, must have operated in assigning so wild, so secluded, and so unprofitable a place for the seat of the Drosdy.

On the eleventh of August we set out from Graaff Reynet on our projected expedition, accompanied by two hemraaden whom the landrost thought it advisable to take, as he intended to assemble the farmers of the distant divisions of his district as he passed through them, to read his commission, administer the oath of allegiance, and to proclaim such parts of his public instructions as might particularly relate to the respective inhabitants. He thought by doing this to spare them the trouble and expence of a long journey to the Drosdy.

Our first route lay directly to the southward towards the sea-coast, through a country as sandy, arid, and sterile as any part of the Great desert, and equally ill supplied with water. Two farm-houses only were passed on the first day's journey, which was in the division called Camdeboo, a Hottentot word, signifying *green elevations*, a term applied to the projecting buttresses which support the Snowy Mountains, and which are mostly covered with verdure. The farmers here are entirely graziers; and to enable them to feed their numerous herds,



S. Daniell del.

T. Millard sculp.

Broad-tailed Sheep of Southern Africa

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each occupies a vast extent of country. Notwithstanding the barren aspect of the plains, the bullocks were large and in excellent condition, and the sheep were in tolerable good order; but the broad-tailed breed of Southern Africa seems to be of a very inferior kind to those of Siberia and oriental Tartary: they are long-legged, small in the body, remarkably thin in the fore quarters and across the ribs: have very little intestine or net fat; the whole of this animal substance being collected upon the hind part of the thigh, but particularly on the tail, which is short, broad, flat, naked on the under side, and seldom less in weight than five or six pounds: sometimes more than a dozen pounds; when melted, it retains the consistence of fat vegetable oils, and in this state it is frequently used as a substitute for butter, and for making soap by boiling it with the lie of the ashes of the salsola. This species of the sheep is marked with every tint of color; some are black, some brown, and others bay; but the greatest number are spotted: their necks are small and extended, and their ears long and pendulous: they weigh from sixty to seventy pounds each when taken from their pasture; but on their arrival at the Cape are reduced to about forty; and they are sold to the butchers who collect them upon the spot for six or eight shillings a-picce. The annexed is a very accurate portrait of a South African sheep. The price of a bullock is about twelve rixdollars, or forty-eight shillings, and the average weight is about four hundred pounds. The graziers seldom kill an ox for their own consumption, unless it be to lay up in salt. Their general fare is mutton and goats' flesh. The African goat is the finest of the species I ever saw, and so wonderfully prolific that it is considered as the most profitable ani-

mal for home consumption, that can be kept. They go twenty weeks with young, and seldom have less than two at a birth, very commonly three, and frequently four. The flesh, though much inferior to mutton, is thought quite good enough for the Hottentots in the service of the farmer ; and the choice pieces, well soaked in the fat of sheeps' tails, are served upon his own table.

The wool of the sheep may more properly be considered as a strong frizzled hair, of which they make no kind of use except for stuffing cushions or mattresses. They neither wash nor shear their sheep, but suffer this hairy coating to drop off on its own accord, which it usually does in the months of September and October. The skins are used only as clothing for the Hottentots, aprons for their children, bags for holding various articles, and other household purposes.

A hog is a species of animal scarcely known in the district. No other reason than indolence can be assigned for the want of it. To feed hogs there would be a necessity of planting, and to this kind of labor they seem to have a mortal antipathy. It requires indeed more than usual exertion to throw a little corn into the ground for their own bread. Many are not even at the trouble of doing this, but prefer the making a journey of several days to exchange their cattle for as much corn as they may stand in need of. To potatoes they have an aversion ; and, according to their report, the Hottentots even, whose stomachs are not very nice, refuse to eat them. It is curious enough that this salutary root (though of a poisonous nature in its raw state) has been generally rejected at first by

most nations. Strong prejudices existed against it when first it was introduced into England, where the privation of it at this time would be one of the greatest calamities that could befall the country. The same reasons which prevent them from breeding hogs operate against their keeping poultry: these would require grain, and this labor. Of wild fowl, such as ducks and geese, they can procure in most parts of the country almost any quantity, at the expence of a little powder and shot. The larger kind of game, however, are generally the objects of the Dutch farmers. They have penetration enough to calculate that the same quantity of powder required to kill a duck will bring down an antelope. Of this tribe of deer, that species mentioned in a former Chapter under the name of the spring-bok, is met with on the plains of Camdeboo in such vast numbers as are almost incredible. A thorough-bred sportsman will kill from twenty to thirty every time he goes out. This, however, he usually does by a kind of poaching. He lies concealed among the thickets near the springs or pools of water, to which the whole herd, towards the close of the day, repair to quench their thirst, and by discharging among them his enormous piece loaded with several bullets, he sometimes brings down three or four at a shot. Ostriches we met with on the same plains in great plenty, and often refreshed our whole company with the spoils of their nests.

On the twelfth, in the space of twenty miles, we saw only two farm-houses, one of which was deserted from scarcity of water; and the following day we also passed two habitations. Having crossed the Sunday river nine times since our departure from Graaff Reynet, and every time in great danger of

overturning the waggons, we now quitted it altogether, and encamped on the arid plain at a distance from any water. This part of the district is called the *Zwart Ruggens* or black ridges. Except the small plain of our encampment there scarcely occurred, in the distance of forty miles, a hundred yards of level ground. The roads over the ridges were execrably bad, constantly ascending or descending, covered with large fragments of loose stones, or carried over ledges of firm rock.

Though vegetation in general was thinly scattered over the stony surface, stunted, and languid, yet some of the eminences were tolerably well clothed with a species of *euphorbia*, whose luxuriance of growth shewed it to be congenial to the soil and the situation. The leaves were erect, hexangular, and armed with a row of double spines along each edge. It appeared to be the same species of which Mr. Patterson has given a drawing; but it is not here considered as a poisonous plant, as he has represented it, though a very obnoxious one, as by its spines it prevents the cattle from picking up any little herbage that may be growing about its roots. Another species of *euphorbia*, scarcely rising above the surface of the ground, is here also very common. From a central *corona* issue, as so many radii, a number of round imbricated leaves, containing, like all the rest of this genus, a white milky fluid: the central part of a full grown plant incloses not less than a pint. The oxen pierce the corona with their incisive teeth, and drink the milk; and it is the opinion of the farmers that they become fat by feeding upon it. Though less astringent than the fluid

that is usually produced by this tribe of plants, it possesses that quality to a very considerable degree; yet no sort of inconvenience is known to attend the use of it to the cattle. The peasantry collect it for another purpose. When warmed over the fire, and stirred round with a soft ochraceous stone, it takes the consistence of tar, and in that state is considered as an excellent grease for the axes of their waggon wheels.

We passed, on the fourteenth, a narrow opening, called the Poort, through a long range of hills running east and west, and extending each way beyond the reach of the eye. The approach to the chasm was beautiful and magnificent in the highest degree. For the space of three or four miles, on the northern side, the road serpentized through a tall shrubbery diversified with some of the most elegant and showy plants of Southern Africa. Among these were now in the height of their blossoms a great variety of the *crassula*, a beautiful scarlet *cotyledon*, many species of the *aloe*, some throwing out their clusters of flowers across the road, and others rising above the rest in spikes of blood-red blossoms not less than fifteen feet in height, African *briony* clasping every bush with its vine-like leaves, and a beautiful plant resembling the jessamine, whose clusters of white flowers scented the whole country. The road through the shrubbery was composed of a smooth, yellowish, sandy earth without a stone, and did not contain in any part the length of a hundred yards in a straight line. The *Riet berg*, or Reed mountain in the back ground, blushed to the very summit with a wood of tall smooth-stemmed aloes bearing long spikes of pink-colored flowers.

Having passed the kloof, or poort, we crossed a plain of six or seven miles in width, and encamped on the *Wolga fonteyn* at the feet of another range of hills parallel to the Rietberg, and still more thickly covered with frutescent plants. Here we started a herd of fourteen large buffaloes that had been rolling in the spring. They were very shy, and scampered away at a great rate into the thickets which covered the sides of the hills. For three days' journey from this place the road lay over a country that was finely marked with bold hills, plains, gradual swells, and hollows; but it was wholly covered with a forest of shrubbery. Sometimes, for the distance of ten or twelve miles, there was not the least opening to allow of our turning a yard out of the path either to the right or to the left; and from the heights, where the bushes were less tall, the eye could discern only an uninterrupted forest. Nothing could be more beautiful nor more interesting than these grand and extensive coppice woods appeared to us for the greatest part of the first day's journey; but the inconvenience they occasioned towards the evening, when we wished to halt, was seriously felt. There was not a sufficient space of clear ground for the tent and waggons, nor to make fast the oxen; and, what was the worst of all, not a drop of water. The weather had been very sultry, the thermometer fluctuating generally from 75° to 80° in the shade during the day; yet the cattle had only tasted water once in three days. The two nights when they were unyoked it was necessary to bind them fast to the waggons, that they might not stray into the thicket, where they would infallibly have been lost, or devoured by lions. The prints of the feet of this destructive animal were every where fresh on the road, and every night we heard

them roaring around us ; and, in addition to these, our ears were assailed with the various cries of a multitude of ferocious beasts that nightly prowl the woods in quest of prey. The roaring of lions, the bellowing of buffaloes, the howling of wolves, the yelping of jackals, and the timid lowing of our oxen, were parts in the nocturnal concert that could not be said to produce much harmony to us who were encamped in the midst of a forest of which we could discern no end.

On the slope of a hill, towards the southern verge of the forest, I distinguished among the clumps of frutescent plants several flowers of a *strelitzia*, which I took for granted to be the *reginæ*, but on a nearer approach it turned out to be a new species differing remarkably in the foliage from the two already known. Instead of the broad plantain-like leaves of these, those of the new species were round, a little compressed, half an inch in diameter at the base, tapering to a point at the top, and from six to ten feet high : the flowers appeared to be the same as those of the *reginæ*, the colors perhaps a little deeper, particularly that of the nectarium, which was of a beautiful violet blue. I procured half a dozen roots, which I sent down to the botanic garden at the Cape ; and the plant is now in England, and likely to become as common as the other species. A beautiful plant of the palm tribe was growing near the *strelitzia*, from the pith of which the Hottentots were said to make a kind of bread. It was a species of *zamia*, apparently a variety of the *cycadis* described by Mr. Masson. The leaves were of a glaucous color and lanceolate ; the leaflets nearest the base pointed with one, those about the middle with two, and those at the extremities with three, strong spines.

On the evening of the seventeenth we encamped on the verdant bank of a beautiful lake in the midst of a wood of frutescent plants. It was of an oval form, about three miles in circumference. On the western side was a shelving bank of green turf, and round the other parts of the bason the ground, rising more abruptly, and to a greater height, was covered thickly with the same kind of arboreous and succulent plants as had been observed to grow most commonly in the thickets of the adjoining country. The water was perfectly clear, but salt as brine. It was one of those salt-water lakes which abound in Southern Africa, where they are called *sout pans* by the colonists. The one in question, it seems, is the most famous in the colony, and is resorted to by the inhabitants from very distant parts of the country, for the purpose of procuring salt for their own consumption or for sale. It is situated on a plain of considerable elevation above the level of the sea. The greatest part of the bottom of the lake was covered with one continued body of salt like a sheet of ice, the crystals of which were so united that it formed a solid mass as hard as rock. The margin or shore of the bason was like the sandy beach of the sea coast, with sand-stone and quartz pebbles thinly scattered over it, some red, some purple, and others grey. Beyond the narrow belt of sand round the margin, the sheet of salt commenced with a thin porous crust, increasing in thickness and solidity as it advanced towards the middle of the lake. The salt that is taken out for use is generally broken up with pick-axes where it is about four or five inches thick, which is at no great distance from the margin of the lake. The thickness in the middle is not known, a quantity of water generally remaining in that part. The dry south-easterly winds of

summer agitating the water of the lake produce on the margin a fine, light, powdery salt, like flakes of snow. This is equally beautiful as the refined salt of England, and is much sought after by the women, who always commission their husbands to bring home a quantity of snowy salt for the table.

In endeavouring to account for the great accumulation of pure crystallized salt at the bottom of this lake, I should have conceived the following explanation sufficiently satisfactory, had not some local circumstances seemed to militate strongly against it. The water of the sea on the coast of Africa contains a very high proportion of salt. During the strong south-east winds of summer, the spray of the sea is carried to a very considerable extent into the country in the shape of a thick mist. The powerful and combined effects of the dry wind and the sun carry on a rapid evaporation of the aqueous part of the mist, and of course a disengagement of the saline particles: these, in their fall, are received on the ground or on the foliage of the shrubbery. When the rains commence they are again taken up in solution and carried into the salt pan, towards which the country on every side inclines. The quantity of salt thus separated from the sea, and borne upon the land, is much more considerable than at the first thought it might seem to be. At the distance of several miles from the sea-coast, the air, in walking against the wind, is perceptibly saline to the lips. It leaves a damp feel upon the clothes, and gives to them also a saline taste. The ostrich feather I wore in my hat always hung in separate threads when near the sea-coast in a

south-east wind, and recovered itself immediately when the wind shifted. In short, the air becomes so much obscured with the saline particles that objects can only be distinguished through it at very short distances. And as these winds prevail for seven or eight months in the year, the mind can easily conceive that, in the lapse of ages, the quantity of salt carried upon the surrounding country, and wafted annually from thence into the common reservoir, might have accumulated to the present bulk.

Were this, however, actually the case, it would naturally follow that all the reservoirs of water in the proximity of this sea-coast should contain, more or less, a portion of salt. Most of them in fact do so. Between the one in question and the sea; a distance of six miles, there are three other salt lakes, two of which are on a plain within a mile of the strand. None of these, however, deposit a body of salt except in very dry summers when the greatest part of the water is evaporated. One is called the Red Salt pan, the crystals of salt produced in it being always tinged of a ruby color with iron. This lake is about twice the size of that above described. All these should seem to favor the supposition of the salt being brought from the sea, were it not that close to the side of the lake that produces the greatest quantity is a stagnant pool or *valley*, the water of which is perfectly fresh. Another strong argument against the hypothesis above assumed is the circumstance of our having discovered, on a future journey, several salt pans of the same kind behind the Snowy mountains, at the distance of two hundred miles from the sea-coast, and on an elevation that could not

be less than five or six thousand feet. The soil too on all sides of the Zwart-Kop's salt pan was deep vegetable earth, in some places red and in others black, resting upon a bed of clay, and without having the smallest vestige of salt in its composition. That salt in a soil was inimical to and destructive of vegetation was well known to the ancients. In the metaphorical manner of the eastern nations in treating things as well as ideas, it was usually ordained, after the destruction of a city, to "throw salt upon it that nothing afterwards might grow there." The shrubbery, however, upon the banks of this salt lake was beautifully luxuriant to the very water's edge.

A cause, then, less remote remains to be adopted; and the only conclusion seems to be that either salt-water springs must exist towards the center of the lake, or the water that rests in it must come in contact with a stratum of sal gem or rock salt. The latter supposition is perhaps the only satisfactory way of accounting for the saltiness of the sea; and if the subterranean strata of this substance be among the number of those that are most commonly met with in the bowels of the earth, as has been supposed, the effects that exist may easily be conceived to arise from it. The salt of Poland alone would probably be more than sufficient to salify the Northern Atlantic.

We happened to visit the lake at a very unfavorable season, when it was full of water. About the middle it was three feet deep, but sufficiently clear to perceive several veins of a dark ferruginous color intersecting in various directions the

sheet of salt. These were in all probability springs whose action had impeded crystallization, and brought up a quantity of ochraceous matter. I caused a hole four feet in depth to be dug in the sand close to the edge of the water. The two first feet were through sand like that of the seashore, in which were mingled small shining crystals of salt. The third foot was considerably harder and more compact, and came up in flakes that required some degree of force to break, and the last foot was so solid that the spade would scarcely pierce it; and one-fifth part of the mass at least was pure salt in crystals. The water now gushed in perfectly clear and as salt as brine.

Another object of natural history was discovered about five miles north-west from the salt pan. This was on the side of a small hill down which ran a streamlet of chalybeate water from a spring situated about midway of the ascent. Immediately below the spring the stream ran through a chasm of five or six feet deep, in the midst of a mound of black boggy earth which seemed to have been vomited out of the spring. The mound was completely destitute of any kind of vegetation, and so light and tumefied that it would scarcely support the weight of a man. The water was clear, but the bottom of the channel was covered with a deep orange-colored sediment of a gelatinous consistence, void of smell or taste. In every part of the bog was oozing out a substance, in some places yellow, and in others green, which was austere to the taste like that of alum. When exposed to the flame of a candle it swelled out into a large hollow blister, of which the external part had become a red

friable clay, and the interior surface was coated over with a black glassy pellicle. The smell given out was at first slightly sulphureous and afterwards bituminous. Great quantities of a dark, red, ochraceous earth was thrown out from the bog in small heaps like mole-hills. This when taken between the fingers became oily and adhesive, and the color brightened to that of vermilion. Both the red, the green, and the yellow substances, when boiled in water, deposited a smooth clayey sediment, unctuous to the feel, tasteless and colorless. The water had imbibed a strong acid, and had dissolved part of the copper kettle in which it was boiled, as appeared by this metal being brought down on pieces of polished iron. The impregnated water changed the color of blue paper. The want of chemical tests prevented any farther experiments; but I imagine the substances were sulphuric acid in combination with clay forming alum, and the same acid in union with iron, composing green vitriol or copperas, which the mixture of bituminous or other heterogeneous matter had prevented from forming itself into regular crystals.

The water of the spring was of the same temperature as the surrounding atmosphere; but a farmer who was with us asserted positively that fifteen years ago, when last he was on the spot, the water was thrown out warm to a considerable degree. His assertion, however, was liable to some doubt. Periodical hot springs are phenomena in nature not frequently, if ever, met with. It is just possible that a portion of unsaturated sulphuric acid coming in its disengaged state in contact with the water might occasionally raise its temperature; but the information of the peasantry on any subject,

and in all countries, should be received with a degree of caution. Those of Africa, I have generally observed, are much disposed to the marvellous. Before I ascended the hill in question I was told that the suffocating smell of sulphur constantly given out was scarcely to be supported, and that there was always a prodigious smoke, both of which were palpable falsehoods.

We found encamped on the borders of the salt-water lake a farmer and his whole family, consisting of sons and daughters, and grandchildren; of oxen, cows, sheep, goats, and dogs. He was moving to a new habitation; and, in addition to his live-stock, carried with him his whole property in two waggons. He advised us to make fast our oxen to the waggons, as two of his horses had been devoured on the preceding night by lions. This powerful and treacherous animal is very common in the thickets about the salt pan; treacherous, because it seldom makes an open attack, but, like the rest of the feline genus, lies in ambush till it can conveniently spring upon its prey. Happy for the peasantry, the Hottentots, and those animals that are the objects of its destruction, were its noble and generous nature, that so oft has fired the imagination of poets, realized, and if his royal paw disdained to stain itself in the blood of any sleeping creature! The lion, in fact, is one of the most indolent of all the beasts of prey, and never gives himself the trouble of a pursuit unless hard pressed with hunger. On our arrival at a farm-house on the banks of the Zwart-kop's river, a lion had just been shot by a trap-gun; and shortly after one of the Hottentots had brought down a large male buffalo. This animal (the *bos caffer* of the *Systema*

Natura) is the strongest and the fiercest of the bovine genus. Nature seems to have designed him as a model for producing extraordinary powers. The horns at the base are each twelve or thirteen inches broad, and are separated only by a narrow channel, which fills up with age, and gives to the animal a forehead completely covered with a rugged mass of horn as hard as rock. From the base they diverge backwards, and are incurved towards the points, which are generally distant from each other about three feet. About the height of a common-sized ox, the African buffalo is at least twice its bulk. The fibres of its muscles are like so many bundles of cords, and they are covered with a hide little inferior in strength and thickness to that of the rhinoceros. It is preferred by the peasantry to the skin of all other animals for cutting into thongs to be used as traces and harness for their carts and waggons. The flesh is too coarse-grained to be good; yet the farmers generally salt it up as food for their Hottentots. It is curious enough that the teeth of this species of buffalo should at all times be so perfectly loose in the sockets as to rattle and shake in its head.

The lion frequently measures his strength with the buffalo, and always gains the advantage. This, however, he is said to accomplish by stratagem, being afraid to attack him on the open plain. He lies waiting in ambush till a convenient opportunity offers for springing upon the buffalo, and fixing his fangs in his throat; then striking his paw into the animal's face, he twists round the head and pins him to the ground by the horns, holding him in that situation till he expires from loss of blood. Such a battle would furnish a grand subject for the powers of a masterly pencil.

If the Dutch have been too indolent to domesticate the quacha and the zebra, it is less a matter of astonishment that no attempts have been made on the fierce and powerful buffalo. Any other nation, having possession of the Cape for one hundred and fifty years, would certainly have effected it. A male, if taken very young, and suffered to run among the cattle, would in all probability have intercourse with the cows; at least the other species of the bovine tribe, when domesticated, have been found to mix together without any difficulty. Such a connection would produce a change in the present breed of cattle in the colony, and without doubt for the better: a worse it could not well be than the common long-legged ox of the country.

On the evening of the eighteenth we arrived at *Zwart-kop's*, or *Algoa-bay*, and found his Majesty's brig, the Hope, which had been sent expressly by Admiral Pringle to meet us, riding at anchor there. Here we remained for a few days, in order to make such observations on the bay, the coast, and the circumjacent country, as we deemed to be necessary, and the result of which will hereafter be given.

At the distance of fifteen miles to the westward of the bay, and close to the sea-shore, we were agreeably surprized in meeting with a large forest of many thousand acres of ground covered completely with trees of various kinds and dimensions; the most common was the *geel-hout* or yellow wood, (*taxus elongatus*) erroneously called by Thunberg the *ilex crocea*. These trees grow to the amazing size of ten feet in diameter, and to the height of thirty or forty feet of trunk, clear of branches. The wood is serviceable for many pur-

poses, but will not bear exposure to weather. Next to the yellow wood is the *zyer hout*, iron-wood, (a *sideroxylon*), growing to the size of three feet in diameter, the trunk straight and very high. The wood of this tree is close-grained, ponderous, and of great hardness. *Hassagai hout* (the *curtesia faginea* of the *Hortus Kewensis*) is a beautiful tree, which grows to the size of the iron-wood, and is used for naves, fellies, and spokes of waggon wheels, and for most implements of husbandry. The grain of this wood is somewhat closer and the color darker than those of plain mahogany. *Stink hout*, or stinking wood, takes its name from an offensive excrementitious odor, which is exhaled from it while green, and which it retains till perfectly seasoned. It grows to the size of the *geel hout*, and is by many degrees the best kind of wood that is produced in the colony. The grain and the shades are not unlike those of walnut; and many specimens from old trees make exceedingly beautiful furniture. It appears to be well calculated for use in ship-building, either as knees, beams, timbers, or plank. The *stink hout* is the native oak of South Africa, and I believe the only species found at least in the southern part of that continent. It may therefore not improperly be called the *Quercus Africana*. Several other timber-trees of vast size were growing here, and in other places along the southern coast, the number of which procured by us amounted to more than forty different kinds, of which a list will be given in a future Chapter; yet in Cape Town there is a general complaint of a want of wood; and the extravagant demand of six hundred *per cent.* profit has been made there for European deals.

In addition to the forest-trees, we also met with a great variety of small coppice wood ; and the whole coast, for more than a day's journey to the westward of Zwart-kop's bay, was skirted with a belt of thick brushwood almost down to the water's edge. The greater part of the forests of South Africa appears to be encumbered with a species of *lichen* that covers nearly the whole foliage, and hangs from the branches in tufts of a foot to three feet in length. This lichen was observed particularly to be growing upon the *geel hout*, and evidently impeded the growth of its branches.

In the midst of all these forests the miserable hovels in which the graziers live are the pictures of want and wretchedness. Four low mud-walls, with a couple of square holes to admit the light, and a door of wicker-work, a few crooked poles to support a thatch of rushes, slovenly spread over them, serves for the dwelling of many a peasant whose stock consists of several thousand sheep and as many hundred heads of cattle. The oxen in this particular pasture were not so large nor fat as those farther up in the country, nor were the sheep nearly so good as those of Camdeboo. One principal article of their revenue is butter. An African cow, either from its being of a bad breed, or from the nature of its food, or the effects of the climate, or perhaps from a combination of these circumstances, gives but a very small quantity of poor milk. Four quarts a-day is considered as something extraordinary, and about half the quantity is the usual average of a cow at the very top of her milk. The butter is sometimes tolerably good ; but the custom of plunging the whole milk into the

churn without suffering it to stand and cast the cream, operates generally against its being so; and the management of the dairy being entrusted to the care of a Hottentot, whose cleanliness is not the most prominent feature in her character, does not enhance its goodness either in idea or reality.

The country about Zwart-kop's bay seems to be well adapted for the cultivation of grain. The farmers here give themselves no trouble to manure the land, yet reckon upon a return of twenty-five, thirty, and even forty, for one, especially if a stream of water can occasionally be turned upon the ground. On stiff clayey land a small quantity of sheep's dung is sometimes employed to prevent the fragments from clogging together, and to make their parts less tenacious. The little value they attach to manure is obvious from the heaps of dung that are piled up about the houses in those places where the cattle, in order to preserve them from beasts of prey, are pent up at nights. These consist of circular or square spaces, shut in by dead branches of the thorny *mimosa*, which are called *kraals*, a name they have also thought proper to transfer to the collected huts of the Hottentots or Kaffers. The beds of some of these *kraals* were not less than twelve feet deep of dung, unmixed with any other material; but this is neither the only nor the least offensive nuisance with which the hovel of a Dutch peasant is usually surrounded.

The great fertility of the land in this part of the colony is not however any inducement for the farmer to extend the cultivation of grain beyond the present limited quantity, as he can have no demand for his produce unless a regular coasting trade were

established. They would be very glad to find a market for their grain at a fixed contract price, even as low as two shillings and eight-pence for a Winchester bushel delivered at Zwart-kop's bay. The wheat of the Cape is a large full grain, weighing usually from sixty-one to sixty-five pounds a bushel. Immediately after the capture, a small cargo was sent to Europe, which sold in Mark-lane market at a higher price than the best English wheat that appeared on the same day.

The valley through which the Zwart-kop's river meanders in its course to the bay, is a fertile tract of country, the greater part of it capable of being laid under water. It is twenty miles in length and between two and three in width. The hills, that on each side rise with an easy slope, exhibit an unbroken forest of evergreen plants holding a middle rank, in point of size, between shrubs and trees. The tree *crassula*, several species of the *aloe*, of the *euphorbia*, and other succulent plants, were also mixed with the shrubbery, and grew with remarkable exuberance. The whole of this beautiful valley is divided between four families, each having not less than five thousand acres of land independent of the enclosing hills covered with wood. Yet not satisfied with the possession of this enormous quantity, they have made several attempts to burn down the forest, that the cattle might more conveniently come at the tufts and patches of sweet grass that abound within it. Hitherto all their endeavours have proved fruitless. The moment that the succulent plants, particularly the great *aloes* and *euphorbias*, became heated, the expanded air within them bursts open the stems, and their juices, rushing out in streams, extinguished the fire.

In one part of the valley there is a morass of considerable extent, which however, by cutting one single drain, might be converted into a very beautiful meadow. The vast numbers of the Egyptian and the Mountain goose, of teals, and several other species of ducks, that harbour in the reeds by which the swamp is covered, are incredible, and the damage which the farmers sustain by them in their crops is said to be very considerable. I have seen indeed a field literally covered with them; and they were too bold to be driven away by shooting at them. The buffalos also descend from the thickets by night, and commit great depredations among the corn. These huge animals are, however, much more easily chased away than the geese, and make a precipitate retreat at the report even of a musquet.

This marsh or morass concealed also a species of antelope, or goat, called the *riet-bok*, or reed-goat, which does not appear to be described in the *Systema Naturæ*. In color and size the male has a considerable resemblance to the *leucophæa* or blue antelope. Its horns are from nine inches to a foot in length, diverge a little towards the points which are bent forwards, and are annulated about one-fourth of the length from the base. A crest of short hair runs from the throat to the chest, which circumstance may probably assign it a place in the goat genus. The distinction however between these two genera seems to be arbitrary and not drawn by nature. The reed goat is a very rare animal, and known only in few parts of the colony. Another species of antelope is very common in the neighbourhood of Zwart-Kop's bay. It is known by the Hottentot name of *orabie*. Except in color and

size, being of a darker brown and a little larger, it bore a considerable resemblance to the steenbok : it is marked on the face with two yellow lines. Here also we met with that beautiful little animal the *royal antelope* of Pennant, and the *pygmæa* of the *Systema Naturæ*. Excepting the pigmy musk-deer, the royal antelope is the smallest of the hoofed quadrupeds : the height is from nine to twelve inches ; the sides of a light brown passing into an ash-colored blue on the back : the horns are about an inch and half long, erect and parallel, black, polished, and shining like marble : its habits are mild and innocent. The *boschbok* or wood-deer, the *antelope sylvatica*, with its white-spotted haunches, was common among the thickets, and the griesbok, the steenbok, and the duiker, were equally plentiful upon the plains.

Of birds, beside the ducks and geese already noticed, there was a great variety of water-fowl, such as flamingos, pelicans, and several species of cranes. Partridges, pheasants, and bustards were also abundant. The bird which at the Cape is called a pheasant is in fact a *tetrao* or grouse, with remarkably strong spurs on the legs, and two spurious ones just below the knee joint. In addition to the two species of bustards, known in the colony by the name of *korhaans*, at this place we procured a third, which appeared to be by much the finest bird we had hitherto met with in Southern Africa, and which, though sufficiently common, is not described in the *Systema Naturæ*. It is called here the *wilde pauw*, or wild peacock, a name common with another large and elegant bird, the *ardea pavonina* or balearic crane. The bird in question is a species of *otis*, and is nearly as large as

the Norfolk bustard. The feathers of the neck are long, very thick, and loose, like those of a domestic fowl, of a bright chesnut color on the upper part, and an ash-colored blue under the throat and on the breast. The feathers of the back beautifully undulated with black and brown lines, the belly white; the tail feathers from sixteen to twenty in number, marked across with alternate bars of black and white; the spread of the wings seven feet, and the whole length of the bird three feet and an half. It is generally met with in the neighbourhood of farm-houses; and to all appearance might very easily be domesticated: the flesh is exceedingly good, with a high flavor of game. In the vicinity of the woods we saw a great number of the *falco serpentarius*, called, ridiculously enough, the secretary bird, from the long feathers of its crest being supposed to resemble the pens that it was the custom for merchants' clerks to stick in the hair. The *serpentarius* is the avowed enemy of snakes, on which account he is considered, both by the Colonists and the Hottentots, as a sort of privileged bird. Of the several kinds of snakes which they here enumerate, one only was considered as innoxious; this was the *boom slange* or tree-snake, so called from its being generally found coiled round the branches of trees; it is from six to ten feet in length, very thick, and of a dark steel-blue color approaching nearly to black. It is said to take its abode in trees for the sake of procuring its food with the greater convenience, which in general consists of the smaller kinds of birds. The fascinating power ascribed to certain snakes of drawing animals within their reach by fixing their eyes upon them, or by some other means, has often been mentioned and as often doubted. When a fact is

stated of so extraordinary a nature that the generality of mankind could not have observed it, individual testimony is not always of sufficient force to establish general belief. In the southern part of Africa, where snakes are every where met with in great abundance, the fact with regard to their fascinating power over birds is so well known that very few of the peasantry will hesitate to vouch for the truth of it from personal observation; but I have never heard it supposed here that the influence of the charm was extended to the human species, as has been asserted, seemingly on good authorities, to be the case in parts of Asia and North America. The most formidable species of this venomous tribe of animals in the colony of the Cape is the hooded snake, which they call the cobra capella. The Hottentots, though well acquainted with several vegetable antidotes against the poison of serpents, are very much afraid of this particular species. The most approved remedy among the Dutch is the *slange steen* or snake-stone, which they hold to be infallible. This antidote appears to be in fact nothing more than a piece of firm bone of some animal made into an oval shape, and burnt round the edges so as to leave a whitish spot in the middle. The country-people, who purchase this remedy under the idea of its being a stone taken out of the head of a certain species of serpent, were very much astonished on being told that it was only a piece of bone; and the more so on finding that this substance stood their test of the goodness of the *slange steen*, which was that of throwing out bubbles on the surface when immersed in water. To the porosity of the bone may be ascribed its healing qualities, if it actually possesses any; for which reason any other substance made up of capillary

tubes, as common sponge for instance, might perhaps be equally efficacious.

About twenty miles to the westward of Zwart-kop's bay is another wide, open, unsheltered indentation in the coast, called Camtoos bay, into which fall the Krommé river, the Camtoos river, Van Staaden's river, and several other inferior streams. At the mouth of the Krommé river two or three ships may ride at anchor in tolerable good shelter from most winds except the south-east. The country that surrounds this large bay is covered with thick brushwood, and in places with clumps of forest-trees. Near the mouth of Van Staaden's river we found, in the steep sides of a deep glen, several specimens of a lead ore. It was of that species known by the name of galena, or lead mineralized with sulphur. The masses had no appearance of cubic crystallization, but were granular and amorphous in some specimens, and the surfaces in others were made up of small facets. This sort of galena is sometimes called by miners *white silver ore*, on account of the large proportion it has been found to contain of that metal. It is well known that all galenas contain more or less of silver; and it has been observed that those whose configuration is least distinct have the greatest proportion, the heterogeneous metal having disturbed and obstructed the natural arrangement of the particles, which would be that of a mathematical cube if perfectly pure. The vein of the ore was about three inches wide and an inch thick, and it appeared to increase both in width and thickness as it advanced under the stratum of rock with which it was covered. The *gangue* or *matrix* was quartzose sand-stone of a yellowish

tinge, cellular and fibrous, harsh to the feel, and easily broken.

Some experiments were formerly made, in a rough way, at the Cape of Good Hope, upon specimens of this identical vein of lead-ore, by Major Van Dhen, an officer in the Dutch service, and the result of these proved it to be uncommonly rich in silver. According to this gentleman's statement of the assay, two hundred pounds of the ore contain one hundred pounds of pure lead and eight ounces of silver. Should this on a more accurate trial turn out to be the case, it may hereafter prove a valuable acquisition to the colony. Lead mines, it is true, are generally very deep below the surface of the ground, and the working of them is both troublesome and expensive. But here a vein of rich ore, shewing itself at the surface, gives reasonable grounds for presuming that the large body of the mine may not lie at any great depth, and if so it would be worked advantageously. The surrounding country is particularly favorable for the prosecution of such an undertaking. Wood is in such abundance both for building and for fuel, that it would not be exhausted in an age. Two streams of water unite in the bottom of the glen. The country would support with cattle and corn any number of people that might be required to carry on the works; and the distance of the mine is only five miles from the mouth of Van Staaden's river in Camtoos bay.

Having finished our observations on Zwart-kop's bay and the adjoining country, the next step was to make the best of our way to the eastward along the sea-coast where the Kaffers were said to have stationed themselves in the greatest num-

bers. An old Hottentot, who on former occasions had served as interpreter between the landrosts of Graaff Reynet and the Kaffer Chiefs, had, according to appointment, joined us with his suite, consisting of about half a dozen of his countrymen. The landrost, on his joining us, invested him with his staff of office, a long stick with a brass head on which was engraven the king's arms. By such a staff, in the time of the Dutch government, a Hottentot was constituted a captain; and, by the number they created of these captains, the ruin of their respective hordes was much facilitated. But these captains are now no more; they and their tribes have entirely disappeared, and our old *Captain Haasbeck* commands in Graaff Reynet without a rival.

Twenty years ago, if we may credit the travellers of that day, the country beyond Camtoos river, which was then the eastern limit of the colony, abounded with kraals or villages of Hottentots, out of which the inhabitants came to meet them by hundreds in a groupe. Some of these villages might still have been expected to remain in this remote and not very populous part of the colony. Not one, however, was to be found. There is not in fact in the whole extensive district of Graaff Reynet a single horde of independent Hottentots; and perhaps not a score of individuals who are not actually in the service of the Dutch. These weak people, the most helpless, and in their present condition perhaps the most wretched, of the human race, duped out of their possessions, their country, and their liberty, have entailed upon their miserable offspring a state of existence to which that of slavery might bear the comparison of happiness. It is a condition,

however, not likely to continue to a very remote posterity. The name of Hottentot will be forgotten or remembered only as that of a deceased person of little note. Their numbers of late years have been rapidly on the decline. It has generally been observed that wherever Europeans have colonized, the less civilized natives have always dwindled away, and at length totally disappeared. Various causes have contributed to the depopulation of the Hottentots. The impolitic custom of hording together in families, and of not marrying out of their own kraals, has no doubt tended to enervate this race of men, and to reduce them to their present degenerated condition, which is that of a languid, listless, phlegmatic people, in whom the prolific powers of nature seem to be nearly exhausted. To this may be added their extreme poverty, scantiness of food, and continual dejection of mind, arising from the cruel treatment they receive from an inhuman and unfeeling peasantry, who having discovered themselves to be removed to too great a distance from the seat of government to be awed by its authority, have hitherto exercised, in the most wanton and barbarous manner, an absolute power over these poor wretches, whom they had reduced to the necessity of depending upon them for a morsel of bread. There is scarcely an instance of cruelty, said to have been committed against the slaves in the West-India islands, that could not find a parallel from the Dutch farmers of the remote districts of the colony towards the Hottentots in their service. Beating and cutting with thongs of the hide of the sea-cow or rhinosceros, are only gentle punishments, though these sort of whips, which they call *shambocs*, are most horrid instruments, being tough, pliant, and heavy almost as lead. Firing small shot

into the legs and thighs of a Hottentot is a punishment not unknown to some of the monsters who inhabit the neighbourhood of Camtoos river. And though death is not unfrequently the consequence of punishing these poor wretches in a moment of rage, yet this gives little concern to the farmer ; for though they are to all intents and purposes his slaves, yet they are not transferable property. It is this circumstance which, in his mind, makes their lives less valuable, and their treatment more inhuman.

In offences of too small moment to stir up the phlegm of a Dutch peasant, the coolness and tranquillity displayed at the punishment of his slave or Hottentot is highly ridiculous, yet at the same time indicative of a savage disposition to unfeeling cruelty lurking in his heart. He flogs them, not by any given number of lashes, but by time ; and as they have no clocks nor substitutes for them capable of marking the smaller divisions of time, he has invented an excuse for the indulgence of one of his most favorite sensualities, by flogging them till he has smoked as many pipes of tobacco as he may judge the magnitude of the crime to deserve. The government of Malacca, according to the manuscript journal of an intelligent officer in the expedition against that settlement, has adopted the same custom of *flogging by pipes* ; and the fiscal or chief magistrate, or some of his deputies, are the smokers on such occasions.

By a resolution of the old government, as unjust as it was inhuman, a peasant was allowed to claim as his property, till

the age of five-and-twenty, all the children of the Hottentots in his service to whom he had given in their infancy a morsel of meat. At the expiration of this period the odds are ten to one that the slave is not emancipated. A Hottentot knows nothing of his age; "he takes no note of time." And though the spirit that dictated this humane law expanded its beneficence in favor of the Hottentot by directing the farmer to register the birth of such children as he may intend to make his slaves, yet it seldom happens, removed as many of them are to the distance of ten or twelve days' journey from the Drosdy, that the Hottentot has an opportunity of inquiring when his servitude will expire; and indeed it is a chance if he thinks upon or even knows the existence of such a resource. Should he be fortunate enough to escape at the end of the period, the best part of his life has been spent in a profitless servitude, and he is turned adrift in the decline of life (for a Hottentot begins to grow old at thirty) without any earthly thing he can call his own, except the sheep's skin upon his back.

The condition of those who engage themselves from year to year is little better than that of the other. If they have already families, they erect for them little straw-huts near the farm-house. Their children are encouraged to run about the house of the peasant, where they receive their morsel of food. This alone is deemed sufficient to establish their claim to the young Hottentots; and should the parents, at the end of the term for which they engaged, express a desire to quit the service, the farmer will probably suffer them to go, perhaps turn them away, but he will detain their children.

Those who are unmarried and free are somewhat better in their situation than the others, though not much. The pitiful wages they agree for are stopped upon every frivolous occasion. If an ox or a sheep be missing, the Hottentot must replace them; nor would he be suffered to quit his service till he has earned the value of them. An ox, or a couple of cows, or a dozen sheep, worth forty or fifty shillings, are the usual wages of a whole year; and it frequently happens that a bill for tobacco or brandy is brought against him to the full amount of them.

In such a situation, and under such circumstances, it may easily be supposed that the Hottentot has little inducement to engage in marriage. Those who do so have seldom more than two or three children; and many of the women are barren. This, however, is not the case when a Hottentot woman is connected with a white man. The fruit of such an alliance is not only in general numerous, but are beings of a very different nature from the Hottentot, men of six feet high and stout in proportion, and women well made, not ill-featured, smart, and active. These people, whom the Dutch call *bastards*, generally marry with each other, or with persons of color, but seldom with Hottentots, so that it is probable this mixed breed in a short time will supplant that from which they are descended in the female line. The Hottentot girls in the service of the colonists are in situations too dependant to dare to reject the proffered embraces of the young peasantry.

It has frequently been observed that a savage who dances and sings must be happy. With him these operations can

only be the effects of pleasurable sensations floating in his mind : in a civilized state, they are arts acquired by study, followed by fashion, and practised at appointed times, without having any reference to the passions. If dancing and singing were the tests by which the happiness of a Hottentot was to be tried, he would be found among the most miserable of all human beings ; I mean those Hottentots living with the farmers of Graaff Reynet in a state of bondage. It is rare to observe the muscles of his face relaxed into a smile. A depressed melancholy and deep gloom constantly overspread his countenance. A Ghonaqua man and a young Hottentot girl from Sneuwberg, both of them in the service of one of the farmers who crossed the desert with us, were the only two I had hitherto met with who seemed to have any taste for music. They had different instruments ; one was a kind of guittar with three strings stretched over a piece of hollow wood with a long handle ; it was called in their language *gabowie*. The other instrument was extremely simple : it consisted of a piece of sinew or intestine twisted into a small cord, and fastened to a hollow stick about three feet in length, at one end to a small peg, which, by turning, brings the string to the proper degree of tension, and at the other to a piece of quill fixed into the stick. The tones of this instrument are produced by applying the mouth to the quill, and are varied according as the vibratory motion is given to the quill and string by inspiration or expiration. It sounds like the faint murmurs of distant music that " comes o'er the ear," without any distinct note being made out by that organ. This instrument was called the *gowra*.

Of the very few Hottentots in the district of Graaff Reynet, who, besides our interpreter, had preserved a sort of independence, and supported themselves, partly by the chase, and partly from the labors of their children who were in servitude, was a small party of four or five old men who paid us a visit near the woods of *Bruyntjes Hoogté*. These men carried the ancient weapons of their nation, bows, and quivers charged with poisoned arrows. The bow was a plain piece of wood from the *guerrie bosch*, which is apparently a species of rhus; and sometimes the Massagai wood is used for the same purpose. The string, three feet long, was composed of the fibres of the dorsal muscles of the spring-bok twisted into a cord. The stem of an aloe furnished the quiver. The arrow consisted of a reed, in one extremity of which was inserted a piece of highly-polished solid bone from the leg of an ostrich, round, and about five inches in length; the intent of it seemed to be that of giving weight, strength, and easy entrance to this part of the arrow. To the end of the bone was affixed a small sharp piece of iron of the form of an equilateral triangle; and the same string of sinews that bound this tight to the bone, served also to contain the poison between the threads and over the surface, which was applied in the consistence of wax or varnish. The string tied in also at the same time a piece of sharp quill pointed towards the opposite end of the arrow, which was not only meant to increase the difficulty of drawing it out, but also to rankle and tear the flesh, and to bring the poison more in contact with the blood. The whole length of the arrow was barely two feet. There are several plants in South Africa from which the Hottentots are said to ex-