

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM KLAARWATER TO KAABI'S KRAAL.

THE sun had scarcely risen above the horizon, when already we had begun to prepare for departure. Some further arrangements, together with packing our baggage upon the oxen, yoking the team to the waggon, and taking leave, each one of his particular friends, detained us still four hours longer at Klaarwater, notwithstanding the eagerness which the whole party evinced to commence the journey. For my own part, taught by past experience how soon disappointments and unforeseen difficulties might overtake me at this unpropitious place, I dreaded every moment's delay; and therefore hurried my Hottentots away, taking the lead myself, and ordering the ox-riders to follow immediately. They were assembled before the hut of the captain, who, with his companions and partisans, continued to express their disapprobation of my plans, and to consider the undertaking as an ill-advised and perilous attempt,

which might lead to our destruction ; and which, at best, presented, according to their views, little probability of a successful result. The principal inhabitants of the kraal, when we bade them farewell and rode off, viewed us as persons whom they had no expectation of ever seeing again.

As soon as we had lost sight of the village, and my party had all joined company, I rejoiced at finding myself once more free ; and felt relieved from an oppressive and teasing load of daily vexations, which the lightness of my spirits now assured me I had left behind. As the African custom (Vol. i. page 173.) of accompanying a traveller for a short distance out of their kraal, was in this instance either forgotten or intentionally omitted, our communication with the inhabitants of Klarwater ended when we passed their huts : and we were thus left sooner at liberty to turn all our thoughts forward.

Not to allow time for the disheartening and ill-foreboding remarks which had just been sounded in our ears, to make any impression on the minds of my men, or to shake the courage, or cloud the alacrity, with which they had commenced the undertaking, I seized the first moments to speak of our journey in a manner which should convince them that there was in my own mind not the least doubt of success. I know not whether such an address might have been at that time really necessary, or how far it might have operated in re-inspiring them with confidence ; but I felt truly happy at noticing the pleasure with which they talked on the subject, and their congratulations to each other on having at last completed all arrangements, and on being now actually on the road.

We drove with us six sheep, as a resource whenever our hunting should fail to supply us with game ; and the appearance of the party was much enlivened by the company of our faithful dogs ; to all of which, I confess, I felt a kind of attachment which derived additional strength from the peculiar circumstances of the journey now before me. But Wantrouw had gradually rendered himself the favorite, and seemed conscious of the preference, as he always kept close by my side, excepting when the chase, in which he was eager to excess,

called him away. Having been for a long time past disused to travelling, the sharpness of the road soon rendered their feet sore; and it was fortunate that at the beginning of the journey we had an opportunity of letting the poor animals ride in the waggon.

In seven hours we reached Gattikamma, where we halted and passed the night.

25th. As the sun, rising in a cloudless sky, announced that the day would be oppressively hot, we resumed our journey early in the morning and while the air still retained some of the coolness of night.

I now looked in vain for that rosy wild flower-garden which decorated these plains on our former visit to the Asbestos Mountains. It had totally disappeared; and so astonishingly, and almost incredibly rapid, is the progress of vegetation in these regions, with respect to bulbous flowers, that in the short space of ten days the beautiful lilies *, then observed just coming into bloom, had completed their flowering, and ripened their seed; the flower-stems were dried up, had parted from the roots, and were nearly all blown away.

Many burrows of the *Springhaas* † attracted our notice. These animals, making their holes in soft sandy ground, were said to derive great assistance from their hinder feet, in throwing out the sand which they loosen with their fore paws; and which, as the nails of these paws have so little the appearance of being worn, may perhaps be the only reason why they have been supposed to dig only with their hinder feet; a supposition which I have before recorded, although contrary to my own opinion.

The heat of the day compelled us to rest during three hours at Aakaap; but we arrived at the Kloof village an hour and a half before sunset. Here we found Ruiters waiting in readiness for us; although Captain Berends had not been able in the mean time to

* *Amaryllis lucida*: noticed in the first volume at pages 536. and 541.

† *Pedetes Caffer*. — Compare the above remarks with what has been said in Vol. I. at page 487.

procure any further addition to our number : I was, however, well satisfied at having secured even one more.

Our *viaticum* of corn consisted only of about half a bushel of wheat, which the people immediately set about grinding ; the mill at this place being fortunately in better order than the one at Klaarwater.

26th. We obtained a quantity of *dakka*, or hemp-leaves, a very acceptable present to the Bushmen, who, as before stated, use it for smoking instead of tobacco. As a precaution, I ordered a large jug of milk to be boiled, that we might take it with us ; for I had remarked, that when not boiled, it had, in a few hours' travelling, either turned sour, or by the constant motion become buttermilk, the butter having been completely separated by this kind of churning, and formed into round balls, which floated on the surface. We also cast an additional store of bullets, that we might be prudently prepared against any attack from the inhabitants of the country through which we were about to pass, and whose disposition was equally unknown to all of us ; although, while making this provision, we were more inclined to believe it would only be consumed in hunting. I made another drawing of the village and surrounding mountains, from a point of view different from those of my former sketches.*

The business of grinding corn detained us till past three in the afternoon ; when I took my leave of the friendly Captain Berends, to whom, indeed, I was indebted, in the affair of hiring men, for all the assistance which I had received, beyond what had been afforded by my own Hottentots. The inhabitants of his kraal assembled around us to witness our departure, and bade us farewell in a manner which afforded pleasure to myself, and animated all my party with the highest spirits, and raised their confidence in a safe return ; a confidence of no small importance on such occasions, and not of mere imaginary utility in contributing to ultimate success.

We followed the course of the rivulet as it winds along the nar-

See the Vignette in Vol. I. at page 323.

row valley which conducts it through the Asbestos Mountains towards the Gariép. * This valley is more romantic and picturesque than any which I had seen since leaving the Hex-river kloof. The mountains, which are essentially the same sort of clay-slate which has been already described, rose close on either hand in bold majestic forms, in some places clothed with luxuriant verdure, or more frequently exhibiting their steep rocky sides sprinkled here and there with light bushes growing out of their crevices, and enlivening with tints of verdure the rich and varied browns of their broken crags. Along the dale below we rode in many places over a thick and verdant carpet of the most beautiful grass †, shaded often by the soft foliage of large trees of acacia, whose branches were loaded with festoons of *clematis* hanging wild with all the grace and charms of Nature, and decorating them with a profusion of white flowers, which diffused their delicate and grateful odor through the airy grove. In one spot, an immense mass of rock, or rather a mountain, reared its lofty precipice high above our heads, and, partially covered with evergreens and various shrubs, presented a subject for both admiration and regret, since time and circumstances allowed me no opportunity for making a drawing of the scene.

Our road became more irregular and hilly, leading us sometimes through the dry bed of the rivulet ; sometimes halfway up the sides of the mountain ; and often through thickets of acacias, which abounded throughout the whole length of the valley ; and, as we passed, lent their friendly aid in sheltering us from the burning rays of the sun.

A clear refreshing spring which we perceived hard by beneath the trees, tempted us to halt a few minutes to quench our thirst : it was the cool fountain of a *Kraal of Koras*, whose sheep and oxen were in sight grazing upon the sides of the hills around. A few of

* Vol. I. page 334.

† Catal. Geogr. 2570. Exceedingly like the *Wire-grass* of the island of St. Helena (*Agrostis linearis*, Willd. S. P.), and near akin to that which is called *Cocksfoot-grass* by the English farmers. (*Panicum Dactylon*, Linn. *Cynodon Dactylon*, Pers.)

its inhabitants advanced to greet us as we rode by, and one or two of the men acknowledged us as old acquaintances, having met us before when we were hunting hippopotami on the banks of the Kygariep.

To avoid a long circuit, which the rivulet now began to take, we quitted the deep valley and ascended to an elevated level country, very thickly covered with large trees of the Hookthorn, between which we were obliged very cautiously to wind our way for about a mile and a half. After this we descended again into the valley, and continued, among acacias, to follow the bed of the rivulet, which at this season was every where dry.

A little farther we came to another spring of water equally pure and delightful, and our party again felt it necessary to quench their thirst. This fountain was occupied by a kraal of Mixed-Hottentots, the friends and relations of those who dwelt at the village of the Kloof. The men and women were at this hour absent, hunting or tending their cattle, or in search of wild roots, or collecting firewood; but several little groups of children ran out from the thickets which concealed their huts, to view us as we passed. They knew old Cobus and Ruiter, and were therefore not afraid to creep out of their hiding-places and run towards us; but they eyed me with some doubt and shyness, and seemed half-inclined to run back again.

At a short distance beyond this kraal we found another, consisting of seven huts and a large proportion of inhabitants, who were also of the race of Mixed-Hottentots; their chief was named *Jan Bloem*.* With the people of this kraal most of our party were well acquainted, and, as few amongst us were good swimmers, and nearly all of these were expert in that art, from having resided so long on the banks of the Gariiep, they were easily persuaded to lend us their assistance in crossing the river; especially as I promised to reward them for their services. It was therefore agreed, it being already past sunset, that we should pass the night at this kraal, that they might put themselves in readiness to accompany us in the morning.

* He was son of a freebooter of the same name, hereafter mentioned under date of the 17th of June.

The situation of this little village, if such an appellation does not express too much, was exceedingly sheltered and rural: on one side embosomed in a grove of tall acacias, overtopped by the surrounding mountains; on the other, enclosed by a rocky precipice, under which stood their mat-houses and the cattle-kraals. Their oxen and goats appeared to be numerous, and were seen every where around, coming home from pasture. There was a small garden fenced round with a dry hedge, and irrigated by a trench which conducted water from a spring not far off; and in it were cultivated chiefly tobacco, maize, pumpkins, and dakka. The lowing of the oxen, the milking of the cows, and the playfulness of the goats butting against each other, or familiarly browsing close to the huts, or mingling with the dogs and cattle, gave a truly pastoral character to the spot; while the abundance of trees rendered the scene rich and harmonious to the eye, and solicited the attempts of my pencil.

In verdure and beauty, the *wire-grass* far excelled every other grass of the valley; and I doubt not that its qualities, in an agricultural view of them, would equally prove its superiority in the climate of the Gariep. At least, analogy with the *wire-grass* of St. Helena and the *doop-grass* of India, induces me to form this opinion, and to recommend a trial of it to the agriculturists of Africa: and if, indeed, this be not identically the same species, it so closely resembles it, as hardly to be distinguished but by a botanist. In this romantic valley it formed a thicker turf, and appeared of a softer and finer nature, than any other grasses which have fallen under my notice in these regions.

A trifling circumstance which happened here, is worth mentioning, because it confirms what has been asserted on a former occasion *, respecting the faculty possessed by these natives, of distinguishing and recognising their cattle individually. In the team which drew my waggon, were several oxen, all of an uniformly black color, and ap

* Vol. I. page 175.

parently of equal size and form. Immediately on my arrival here, one of them was, without any previous examination, or the least hesitation, pointed out by one of the Hottentots of the kraal, as having several years before, when he lived in Namaqualand, belonged to him; and on my expressing a doubt that it could be the same ox, since I had purchased it in the neighbourhood of Cape Town, he desired my driver to put his finger into its nostrils, when he would feel the hole through the septum, which had been made by him to receive the bridle, as it had been trained, while in his possession, for a riding-ox. And this was directly ascertained to be the fact; although the hole had hitherto escaped the notice of my own people; who, now, were pleased at finding that we possessed a riding-ox among the number. This animal, which perhaps originally had been obtained by barter from some more inland tribe, happened, as its owner recollected, to have been one of a large herd which had been brought into the colony and exchanged to some of the boors, for articles of which they were then more in need. In this manner it had changed masters till it became Frans Van der Merwe's, and had now completed the tour of Southern Africa; but it was yet destined to visit other regions in the interior, until at last it was, I believe, one of the four-and-twenty which were stolen from me one night by the Caffres in the Zuureveld.

My people were supplied by their friends here with pumpkins and milk for their supper. In the evening, Gert, who was exceedingly attentive, and desirous of evincing, by every act of service in his power, his gratitude for my past kindnesses towards him, came to me to beg in the name of the rest that I would play on the *flute*, as this was to be the last evening they could have an opportunity of hearing this instrument until my return. I willingly granted their request; and thus myself took leave of a valuable friend: for the fear of accidents, on so rough a journey, prevented my taking it with me farther than the river. Perhaps this was the first time since the creation, that these groves and rocks re-echoed the sound of the flute; and the novelty of the entertainment commanded the attention of the whole kraal, who had for this purpose assembled at a little distance round my waggon.

The complete silence which prevailed, indicated their fondness for music; however rude the sounds which the wild uncultivated *Hottentot* himself may be able to produce. He will sometimes take his *goráh*, and, unintelligible as his notes may seem to a more polished ear, will sit by his fire, or in his hut, playing them over for hours together, with increasing pleasure and satisfaction: while his friends around him listen without growing weary; and perhaps among their number some one, captivated by so great a display, as they may deem it, of musical power, may catch the spirit of emulation and long to play as well: or even may his notes inspire more tender feelings; and youth and innocence may listen to them with delight. I confess that I warmly participated in the amusement of the evening; and never before felt so satisfied and proud of my own performance: but my pride was surely allowable on such an occasion, and I doubt whether the most accomplished performer in Europe, feels at the rapturous applauses of a refined audience, a gratification greater than that which I received on witnessing the pleasure which my music afforded to a kraal of simple Africans. It was the pride of being able to render my fellow-men happy, even though but for a few hours: it was the heart, and not the head, which claimed the whole enjoyment. How often, when far removed from these wild regions, has memory carried me back to scenes and amusements such as these, again to try the question whether man find not an equal portion of happiness, and feel not equally the care of a kind Providence, in the civilized, and in the uncivilized state. How often have I travelled over my journey again, to dwell a longer time at those places where the goodwill of my fellow creatures, and innocent pleasures, have beguiled my hours, and soothed the pains of the more rugged and unkind parts of my road.

27th Early the following morning we left *Jan Bloem's Kraal*, accompanied by its chief and six of his people. The distance to the river was not more than four miles; but having quitted the valley, that we might take a more direct road to the ford, we no longer met with the same romantic scenery, nor even with rocks of the same nature; these appearing every where, in this day's journey, to consist

of a stone formed of various fragments conglutinated by a calcareous basis * ; and such as might be classed as a species of “pudding-stone.”

The spot where we had intended to cross the river, bore the name of *Engelsche Drift* (English Ford) among the Klaarwater people, on account of its having been passed eleven years before, by a party from Cape Town, sent into the Transgariepine to purchase cattle for the government. The river, being here divided into two streams by an island, was found to be at this time too rapid and rough to be forded without danger: we therefore again yoked the oxen to the waggon, and proceeded to another place about two miles and a half higher up the stream. It was at this spot where the unfortunate Cowan and his party forded the Gariep, never more to return.

Here we found a *kraal of Koras* stationed with their cows, oxen, and goats: they appeared, like most of the natives in this part of the country, to possess but few sheep, a fact which is to be accounted for, perhaps, by the greater care, and better pasture, required for these, than for the rearing of goats. Their huts were irregularly placed in the acacia groves, and so completely concealed by intervening thickets, that we might have passed the river without discovering them, if their inhabitants had not, in their usual friendly way, come out to make their salutations, as soon as they knew we were arrived.

The branches of the acacias here were frequently decorated with a handsome kind of Mistleto (or, more correctly, a species of *Loranthus*,) whose fine scarlet berries appeared very conspicuous and ornamental. The *delightful scenery* of the Gariep had lost nothing of its power of pleasing, by having been admired so often before; but as I had not till now beheld the willows in their sober *autumnal colors*, they possessed for me, a new charm. In Africa we look in vain for those mellow beautiful tints with which the sun of autumn dyes the forests of England. Examples of this change of color meet the eye so rarely in these arid deserts, that whenever they do perchance occur, they will forcibly, and by a natural association of ideas, remind

* To this rock may be referred generally the description and remarks given in the first volume, at pages 398 and 399.

the European traveller of his native land. To call the shrubs and trees of these countries, *evergreens*, would occasion very erroneous ideas to those whose notions are formed by what are commonly denominated so, in the gardens of our own country: although, in fact, there are few which are at any season quite destitute of leaves. But that broad and green foliage, that fresh and lively complexion, do not belong to the general character of the woods and thickets of the Interior; notwithstanding some exceptions. These last remarks, however, must be considered as applicable only to the regions remote from the sea-coast: there are forests and woods in other parts, which exhibit a very different and superior character.

As it could not be expected at this season of the year, that the waters of the Gariép would be so low as to admit of our fording it, our object had been to find a part of its course where the stream was of the least width, or of greatest depth; as in this latter case the surface would be more still and smooth, and the current less rapid and powerful. We now, therefore, had to construct a raft fit for conveying over our bedding and goods, our guns and ammunition, as well as those of our party who were unable to swim across.

With this view, our first business was to collect a number of logs of dead willow wood; the acacia and other woods being too heavy for the purpose; and even the willow when green, having the same defect. *The raft* was made of a quadrangular form, of six feet in length and the same breadth, by several regular layers of logs crossing each other, and bound together with long strips of acacia bark. The Hottentots have found by experience that, on such occasions, green bark is preferable to thongs of leather or raw hide; because the leather or hide, when soaked in water, soon grows soft, stretches, and becomes loose.

The raft being launched and loaded, was found not capable of carrying more than the half of our goods; and it then required ten men to manage it. Some swam before and dragged it on by a rope, while others behind pushed it forwards; but the strength of the current continuing to carry them down the stream, they crossed in

an oblique direction ; so that the point where they landed made an angle of about fifty degrees with the point directly opposite to that from which they set out.

Two of my own men who went over with the raft, to the other bank, were left there to guard the goods ; and when the others returned, a glass of brandy to each was found very necessary for reviving their courage for another trip. But they had meditated a scheme for obtaining payment for their services on their own terms, and this they deemed the proper moment for putting it in execution, when one half of our goods and two of my best swimmers were on one side of the river, and the rest on the other ; for they perceived that the raft required a greater number of hands to conduct it, than I had with me. I had intended to pay them in tobacco and some other useful articles ; but, it seems, they had resolved on having *gunpowder*, which they knew to be a commodity I was not willing to spare, as they found from my own Hottentots that I had brought with me no more than it was judged we should require for our present journey.

They therefore made their demand, and considering the circumstances in which I stood, I at last consented to pay them what they asked, and even more, at my return, when I could better give up my ammunition, without risking the lives of my party by rendering ourselves defenceless. But as they were too cunning not to know how far I was in their power, they resolved to be paid on the spot, and therefore, without saying any thing further, walked away, as if to return to their kraal. My own men, though they felt as much as myself, how little we could spare that which was so essentially necessary, both for our safety and for procuring food, begged me at all events to agree to their terms ; especially as the late hour of the day admitted of no delay. They immediately ran to inform them of my consenting to their terms ; and soon brought them back. They then resumed the work, and plunged into the stream with another raft-load.

In the meantime I concerted the arrangements for Gert's return with my waggon to Klaarwater, and left with him a goat and some

goods with which he might purchase provisions during our absence. I gave him instructions to meet me on our return, at the river with the waggon, should he be able in time to get intelligence of our being on the road. He then, with the assistance of Old Daniel's son and Muchunka, began to put the oxen to the yoke, and, as soon as he perceived that I was safely landed on the other side, set out on his journey home.

To save the swimmers the fatigue of bringing over the raft when they returned, we were obliged for each load to construct a new one; and as soon as the third raft was put together, I seated myself upon it, with four of my dogs, and launched into the stream. I was attended by twelve swimmers, including all the remainder of my men, excepting Ruiter and Nieuwveld, who remained behind to bring over the horse, and the oxen and sheep.

We reached the southern bank just at sunset, and as soon as Jan Bloem and his people had received the gunpowder, they returned to the other side on 'wooden horses.'* As they had exerted themselves to their utmost in transporting our baggage over the river, and must have been excessively fatigued before they reached home, I freely forgave them the unfair stratagem by which they had outwitted me; and allowed them to plead their own necessities in excuse. We parted good friends, and they promised to give their assistance in swimming the cattle through in the morning; as it was become too late to attempt it this evening.

At the place where we landed, a high precipitous bank confined us close to the water's edge, where it would have been highly imprudent to have remained till morning, exposed to the risk of being swept away, should the river suddenly swell. It grew dark before we had removed the goods to the higher ground; and in this operation fate seemed to declare that no luxuries were to be allowed me on this journey; for the only article I had provided, which could be considered so, excepting tea and a bag of biscuits, was a stone bottle,

* An explanation of this term, has been given in the first volume, at page 415.

wine; but which a small fragment of rock accidentally rolling down from the top of the bank, now broke to pieces.

The difficulties which heavy *baggage* might occasion, and the impediment it might become in crossing a pathless or mountainous country, were considerations sufficient to restrain us from taking any thing which was not absolutely indispensable; and when, in debating this question, I put aside the influence of habit and custom, and of those necessities which belong only to civilized society, I discovered that we might dispense with nearly every thing; even with all our cooking utensils, excepting a small tin pot and a tea-kettle. Without either gridiron or saucepan, we cooked all our meat, either broiled on the embers, or stuck on forked sticks before the fire. Nor could we admit the encumbrance even of plates and forks. We therefore entered upon this journey with no other provision than our watch-coats and covering for the night, our guns and ammunition, a hatchet, a quantity of tobacco intended principally for presents to the Bushmen, and five sheep. To this I added for myself, three blankets, an umbrella, and two tin boxes, one to hold my papers, my journal, and sketches, my compass, and a few other light articles of this kind; and the other, a change of linen, and a small assortment of the more important medicines, particularly the volatile alkali, or liquid ammonia, for the bite of serpents.

28th. We passed the night without having been observed by the natives; and rose at day-break, hoping to see Ruiter and the cattle: but neither were visible, though we repeatedly called over to them so loudly that our words must have been distinctly heard, had any person been there. Hour after hour elapsed, and no answer was given; nor was any human being to be seen along the bank. Our uneasiness continued increasing, and every unpropitious accident was in turn surmised, to account for their absence.

At last towards noon they made their appearance on the shore, and in less than an hour afterwards, I had the satisfaction of viewing the whole of my party safely landed on the southern side of the Gariep.

Ruiter's delay had been occasioned by an untoward circumstance,

and which now deprived us of the use of one of the cattle. The ox on which Cobus was to ride, was missing; and, having been supposed to have strayed back again to the village at the Kloof, one of the Hottentots was despatched thither in search; yet after wasting much time, it was at last found on the road not far off, its rein having been accidentally caught by a bush, from which the poor animal had not only been unable to extricate itself, but in the struggle had dislocated its foot. Being therefore unfit for service, it was left under care of the people at the kraal; and we were obliged to give up one of the pack-oxen to supply its place; although we were then left with no more than three for carrying all our goods, together with the game which we might expect to shoot from day to day.

At length all being ready and the baggage properly adjusted, we commenced our journey in the *Cisgariepine*, my party consisting of six Hottentots, the Bushman Nieúwveld, and Rúiter the Bachapin whose proper name amongst his own countrymen, was *Mákhówa*.

Having gained intelligence that a *friendly Bushman*, who, by frequent visits to the Hottentots of the Asbestos Mountains, was personally known to one of my men, had lately pitched his hut on the banks of the river a few miles lower down, we bent our course that way, intending to persuade him to accompany us; not indeed as a guide, but for the purpose of introducing us as friends, at the different kraals of his countrymen, at which he might be known, and of assuring them of our good intentions towards them and of our peaceable disposition; but more especially, of testifying that I was not one of the boors,—men with whom they have been unfortunately too often on hostile terms, and of whose views they are generally too suspicious, to allow them to pass through their country without molestation.

We traversed a very extensive plain, covered with grass so tall that the dogs were completely hidden by it; but the ostriches stalked through exposed to view, and stonebucks* here and there starting up, bounded over it and were soon out of sight.

* *Antilope rupestris*, mentioned in the first volume, at page 202.

We reached the *Bushman kraal* at a little before sunset. It consisted only of three huts, where we found no one at home but the women. They informed us that all the men were out hunting or in search of food, but would return in the evening. They seemed already satisfied of our friendly disposition, and appeared to rejoice at the arrival of men with fire-arms, for they immediately told us that a hippopotamus had just that moment been heard snorting in the river close by, and begged us go and shoot it for them.

At about eight the Bushmen came home, but we found that the man whom we wished to see, and whose name was *Riizo* (Reezo), had parted from them and gone to a kraal situated at a considerable distance farther down the river. Our communication with these people was attended with no difficulty, as three of our party fortunately could speak their language; Hans Lucas, Ruiter, and Nieuwveld: although the latter understood nothing of Dutch, but was sufficiently acquainted with that dialect of the Hottentotish, which is spoken by the people of *Klaarwater*.

One of these natives was therefore immediately sent off to inform *Riizo* of our wishes, and to desire him to come to us. In the mean time I had the satisfaction of learning that he and some others had long meditated an excursion to the southward, and, if it could be done with safety, a friendly visit to the borders of the colony.

Our station, with all its living appendages of men and cattle, presented a scene so romantic, so curious, and so fit for a picture, that I employed the remainder of the daylight in making a drawing of it. It was in a thick grove of acacias on the top of a high bank, at the foot of which flowed the *Gariep*, extending its stream to a greater breadth as it here changed the direction of its course, glittering with the reflection of the warm harmonious colors of the western sky, and the last rays of the setting sun. Evening was quickly leading forward the darkness of night, when the broad moon in unclouded brightness rose to give us a day of milder and serener light, and as she cast her beams obliquely through the branches of our sylvan hall, made us forget the hour of rest, and pass our time as if the night were not yet come. On one side the Bushmen and my

own men mingled in a group round the fire, sat with mutual confidence, talking and laughing with each other, or silently engaged in smoking, though frequently taking the pipe from the mouth to join in the laugh. The subject of their conversation I could not discover; but the women were eager to bear their share in it, and it was I believe merely a natural overflowing of pleasure which they felt at receiving a present of tobacco. In another quarter, our patient oxen lay quietly chewing the cud; and nearer at hand the sheep with their heads turned towards the light, stood peacefully looking on. Some of the dogs lay in different places, asleep at the foot of the trees, while others familiarly took their place in the circle round the fire. Various parts of our baggage, the guns and the saddle, the karosses and skins of my Hottentots, were hanging on the branches. Every nearer object within the grove was partially illuminated by the blaze, and their reddened hue contrasted strongly the pale silvery light which the bright moon shed on all without, and which here and there gleamed between the stems, or played upon the thin and feathery foliage. On the edge of the bank, under a wide-spreading acacia of many stems, my own sleeping-place and baggage appeared at the distance of a few paces, in a more retired situation; while close at hand, but lower down the bank, stood my horse made fast to one of the trees. Between the light foliage above our heads, the twinkling stars enlivened our ærial canopy; and at that hour the brilliant *Sirius* in the zenith, rivalled the brightest of the planets. For a long time after I had lain down for the purpose of taking my night's rest, the novelty and singularly romantic character of the scene kept me from sleep; and admiration at the objects by which I was surrounded, gave rise to the most agreeable sensations and reflections, the pleasure of which was enhanced more especially by the friendly reception which, it now began to appear, we were likely to meet with.

29th. I awoke long before sunrise, and watched the gradual approach of day. As soon as the eastern sky began to assume the rosy tints of morning, the moon faded slowly away, and a

multitude of *birds*, which every where inhabit the groves of the Gariép, commenced their early song, and charmed me with their soft enlivening notes. Notes which, though they presume to no comparison with those of our thrush or nightingale, delight and soothe the ear not less, and are equally expressive of the peace of nature, and the happiness of the feathered tribe, the unmolested tenants of these woods.

Having waited at this spot till more than two hours after midday, in fruitless expectation of seeing *Riizo*, we took our departure ; and had scarcely advanced a mile when we met the Bushman who had yesterday been sent to the kraal lower down the river. He brought a message from *Riizo*, that we should come to that place and wait till he returned from the village at the Asbestos mountains, whither he was going to fetch some tobacco which he was to receive from the Hottentots at that place. Hearing this, I immediately sent off *Ruiter*, to bring him to us without delay ; promising that he should be well supplied with tobacco from our own stock.

We then proceeded in a southward direction, and, leaving the valley of the Gariép, ascended a rocky cliff, at the top of which the surface of the country continued at the same level. Hence we had a commanding view of the river and its winding course for several miles ; and of the Asbestos mountains to the north, and some other distant mountains on the west. The most remarkable feature of this plain was a number of scattered trees, distinguished from all I had hitherto seen, by the color of their trunks, which appeared at a little distance as if they had been whitewashed. From this singular character, they have gained the name of *Wit-gat boom*, which may be represented in English by that of *White-stem*. *

After quitting this plain and crossing an extensive level covered with abundance of fine grass three feet high, we came to the bed of a considerable periodical *river*, where, as it was now past sunset, we unpacked our oxen and took up our station for the night. This

* *Capparis albitrunca*, B. — Vide p. 343. Vol. I.

proved to be the new river, which hitherto was known to the Klaarwater Hottentots, only at its confluence with the Gariiep, and for a few miles higher up its course. The water in the pools along this part of its bed, being of a strongly brackish quality, they had designated it merely as the *Brak rivier*. This name, at length, was taken into common use by our party, and occasioned us totally to neglect inquiring of the natives its proper name: a neglect which I the more regret as the name of *Brak rivier* has already been given to too many streams in the colony, to admit of increasing the number by fixing it upon this one; to which indeed it is not applicable, excepting a few miles of the lower part of its course. As a river of this length bears, doubtlessly, some distinctive appellation among the Bushmen, I have not presumed to give it one of my own; but leave this blank in my map to be filled up by some traveller who may hereafter discover the name by which it has been always known to the aboriginal inhabitants of the country.

The spot where we now for the first time fell in with it, is pointed out on the map by the words *First Station*. At this season its bed was in most places dry; and that which in the time of the rains, must be a deep river, was now merely a line of ponds or pools, separated from each other, in some places by only a few yards of dry ground, and in others by the distance of a quarter of a mile. That pool, by the side of which we had halted, was of an intolerable *alkaline* taste; but the people were obliged to drink from it, and gladly took advantage of the excuse it afforded, to ask for a glass of brandy to counteract its nauseous effects. It was the more fortunate that the water of this river was nowhere of this unwholesome nature, excepting at the lower part of its course, as our whole stock of brandy was contained in a quart bottle.

The country every where around us, was flat and open; and though lightly covered with low stunted bushes, not a tree was to be seen. At night we tied the horse and oxen to the strongest of the shrubs; and pulling up a quantity of others, formed them into a semicircular hedge, to shelter us from the wind and rain with which the clouds began to threaten us.

March 1st. We remained at this station till half-past eight in the morning, in the hope that Ruiters would join us; but as we knew that he and the Bushman could easily overtake us, we were glad to depart from this miserable lodging. Our good-fortune conducted us by a solitary Buffalo-thorn (*Buffel doorn* *) where we found a small pond of fresh water.

Having halted a few minutes to quench our thirst, and allow the oxen to drink, we rode forward by the guidance of the compass in a southerly direction over a *sandy plain* of fourteen miles; in which the river twice crossed our course. In some places I observed *swallows* circling in the air, a cheering sight to the thirsty traveller, and a sure indication of water being near.

In our way over the plain, we fell in with an *ostrich's nest*; if so one may call a bare concavity scratched in the sand, six feet in diameter, surrounded by a trench equally shallow, and without the smallest trace of any materials, such as grass, leaves, or sticks, to give it a resemblance to the nests of other birds. The ostriches to which it belonged, must have been at that time feeding at a great distance, or we should have seen them on so open a plain. The poor birds at their return would find that robbers had visited their home in their absence; for we carried off all their eggs. Within this hollow, and quite exposed, lay twenty-five of these gigantic eggs, and in the trench nine more, intended, as the Hottentots observe, as the first food of the twenty-five young ones. Those in the hollow, being designed for incubation, may often prove useless to the traveller, but the others on the outside will always be found fit for eating. In the present instance the whole number were equally good.

The expedient resorted to by *Speelman* on a former occasion, was now adopted to a certain extent: after filling all our bags, the sleeves of their watch-coats, and their second pair of trowsers were crammed full of eggs. It was considered as an auspicious omen

* *Zizyphus bubalinus.*

that at the commencement of our journey, so valuable a prize had been placed in our way. Our faithful dogs were not forgotten in the division of the spoil; and their share, which we immediately broke into a bowl, was eaten up on the spot.

Meeting again with *the river*, we halted and unpacked our oxen, that they might graze for an hour or two; though little benefit was to be derived from the situation, as the pool at this place was quite salt, and not less unfit for use, than the alkaline water at the First Station. The quality of the ponds in the lower part of this river, is probably not at all seasons equally objectionable, and while the stream continues to flow along its bed, the *water* will every where be serviceable, because the saline solution from the soil, is then constantly weakened and carried off by the accession of fresh water from the higher part of its course. At other times, when the stream ceases to run, the pools remain, at first tolerably drinkable; but in proportion as the quantity of water is lessened by evaporation, this solution becomes more concentrated. It should not be supposed that occasional showers in the immediate vicinity of these brackish ponds, would tend to improve them, because those showers must wash down more of the same salts from the surface of the soil, which, at the part where we had now halted, was covered principally with such shrubs and plants as afford *alkali*: these were the *Kanna-bush*, and another whose name of *Brak-boschjes** (Brackish Bushes) indicates that their nature has been well observed by the inhabitants.

We made our dinner from the *ostrich-eggs*; each of the Hottentots eating a whole one, although containing, as already mentioned, as much food as twenty-four eggs of the domestic hen. It is therefore not surprising that I found myself unable to accomplish my share of the meal; even with the aid of all the hunger which a long morning's ride had given me. The mode in which they were cooked, was

* A shrubby species of *Atriplex*, probably the *A. candicans*. Yet the name of *Brak-boschjes* does not exclusively belong to this plant.

A sort of *Statice* was found growing in abundance on spots of the saline nature here described. (Compare with p. 454. of Vol. I.)

one of great antiquity ; for all the Hottentot race, their fathers, and their grandfathers' fathers, as they express themselves, have practised it before them. A small hole the size of a finger was very dextrously made at one end, and having cut a forked stick from the bushes, they introduced it into the egg by pressing the two prongs close together ; then by twirling the end of the stick between the palms of their hands for a short time, they completely mixed the white and the yolk together. Setting it upon the fire, they continued frequently to turn the stick, until the inside had acquired the proper consistence of a boiled egg. This method recommends itself to a traveller, by its expedition, cleanliness, and simplicity ; and by requiring neither pot, nor water ; the shell answering perfectly the purpose of the first, and the liquid nature of its contents, that of the other.

During the time of our halt, the weather which had been fair all the forenoon, began to change ; and clouds thickening over the sky, threatened us with instant rain. Seeing this, the Hottentots were preparing a shelter, with the view of remaining at this spot till the morrow ; but deeming it better to be riding, than sitting still, in the rain, I ordered them to re-pack the oxen, that, by proceeding farther, we might reach some better water before dark.

We had but just set out, when a party of eight people was perceived hastening towards us ; and a nearer approach enabling us to discover that *Makhowta* (Ruiter) was of the number, we halted till they came up with us. He had not only, without much difficulty, prevailed on *Riizo* to relinquish his tobacco journey, and come directly to us, but our good fortune had so arranged it, that there happened to be at the same time at that place, *the captain*, or chief, of a large kraal which lay exactly in the direction of our course. This man, being about to return home, had himself proposed to join our party, and was now, with that intent, accompanied by three of his men, and three women, one of whom was his wife.

I immediately fulfilled the promise of tobacco which *Makhowta* had in my name made to *Riizo* and at the same time made a present of an equal quantity to the captain, and to each of his party. This

act of generosity at once established me in their good opinion, and *Kaabi*, for that was the chief's name, to express his gratitude, pledged himself for my safety while I remained in his part of the country, and for a friendly reception at his village.

We then rode forward; our Bushman friends following on foot, and evidently as happy at having gained my friendship, as I was at securing theirs. Guided only by my compass, as the day was dark and cloudy, we continued for nearly three hours travelling over a plain having no visible termination, nor any eminence to break its perfect uniformity. Its soil differed totally from that of the plain which we had crossed in the morning: the surface was of a harder nature, and in some places it was strewed with pebbles; but scarcely any grass, and not a bush or shrub higher than half a foot, was any where to be seen.

A herd of antelopes* of the species known among the boors by the misapplied name of *Gemsbok* † was observed at a distance, but on account of the openness of the country, it was useless for us to pursue them, as we could never have approached within musket shot.

It rained incessantly the whole afternoon; but towards sunset the weather began to clear up; and, as all were most uncomfortably wet, we resolved to unpack at the first spot which offered any shelter for the night, and the means of making a fire to dry our clothes. But no such place presenting itself, we were at last content to take up a station amongst a few stunted *Driedoorns* ‡ (Threethorns) the largest of which was not higher than three feet. Here, exposed upon the bare open plain, we passed the night.

* *Antilope Oryx*.

† The name of *Gemsbok* belongs properly to the *Antilope rupicapra* of Europe, the *Chamois* of the Alps. By the same misuse of names, the *Kanna* of the Cape Colony is called *Eland*, which is the proper name of the *Cervus Alces* or *Elk*. So also is the name of a common European animal, the *Reebok* or *Roebuck*, applied to two animals of another genus, and which are found only in Southern Africa.

‡ *Rhigozum trichotomum*; described in the 1st volume, at page 299.

Only one of the *Bushmen* had kept up with us; all the rest having parted company during the rain. As soon as we halted, his chief care was to make a call to his companions, to inform them where we were; and for this purpose he continued for some time at intervals to blow his *pipe*. This was nothing more than the *tibia*, or shin-bone, of one of the smaller antelopes, into which he blew at one end, in the manner of a 'Pan's reed.' It produced an exceedingly sharp and shrill sound, which might easily, in so open a plain, have been heard at a great distance. To this noise we added a shout from our whole party at once.

But these signals were not answered, nor did any of the *Bushmen* join us that night; having either missed our track in the rain, or preferred remaining under shelter during the heavy showers. As two of the women were loaded, each with an infant at her back, I could not but feel compassion for them, exposed all night, perhaps without shelter, food, or fire. I was, however, wrong in measuring their sufferings by the standard of European hardships: they are accustomed, from their birth, to such a mode of life, and have been gradually inured to all the inclemencies of the weather. They feel, possibly, much less of these hardships than we may suppose; because they are never made sensible of them by the contrast of luxuries enjoyed at other times. But to a European, the case is widely different; and some powerful feelings of the mind are required for supporting the body through all the inconveniences and privations of *savage life*.

The rain had ceased; but lightning at a distance in every quarter, made us to look around for materials to form some shelter from the gathering storm; but nothing could be found suitable to this purpose, and the threethorns, being scantily furnished with leaves, were not better than dead sticks. Our cattle supped sufficient water from the puddles, but we ourselves remained without any till the morning.

Philip and Nieuwveld were sent to explore a narrow *beaten track* which had been made by the wild animals. From the long-trodden appearance of this path, we knew that it would conduct us ultimately to *water*, but in the dusk of the evening, they were unable

to discover the right direction, and unfortunately took that which carried them farther from it; for, in the morning, it was found close at hand on the opposite side.

In this wet and cheerless state, and to console them for the disappointment, the Hottentots begged that the remainder of the brandy might now be distributed; and, heedless of the prospect of being more in want of it than at present, seemed glad at any excuse for asking for it.

We spread our skins and bedding upon the wet ground; and, if *Wantrouw* felt the advantage of being my favorite, I now reaped the benefit of being his; for he slept so close to my feet that I passed the night without the least inconvenience from cold, although my blankets were covered with a heavy dew.

Under my saddle, which at night was always used as a pillow, I found in the morning that two *lizards*, induced also by the warmth, had taken their lodging. Harmless as I judged them to be, and little as these creatures excited any apprehension, they could not but remind me that I was now exposed to the risk of sometimes having more dangerous bedfellows — snakes and scorpions.

2nd. At sunrise we were joined by *Kaabi* and his companions. This man seemed to be about the age of forty; sedate, and rather reserved in his manners: but *his wife* could not have been more than fifteen, and among Bushwomen might certainly pass as pretty. Her height was less than five feet, and her figure proportionally delicate. Her face was plump and oval; and, owing to her youth, had not yet begun to exhibit that peculiar Hottentot feature; the narrow pointed chin. Her eyes were remarkable for being bright and open; a beauty which is never retained beyond the days of youth; as constant exposure to the winds, and the glare of light in a dry open country, soon induce the habit of always keeping their eyelids half-closed. She wore a leathern cap ornamented with beads, in the manner represented by the engraving at the head of this chapter*,

* The figures there, of *two young women* of the *Cisgariepine* tribe of *Bushmen*, are intended for giving a general idea of their dress and appearance.

and was not without some personal vanity, as may be concluded from her wearing a great number of leathern bracelets, and a pair of cowry shells hanging from her forehead, similar to the ivory ornaments described on a former occasion * ; and to which was added a large copper ring in each ear. The beads, which were displayed upon her cap, were arranged not without some taste, and with great attention to regularity. Her child, of which she was very careful and fond, seemed to be at least eight months old, and was never, during the whole day, removed from her back. It was supported there by one of the hinder aprons, turned up and tied over the shoulder ; and in this situation the poor little infant was suckled, by bringing its head forward under the mother's arm.

At her back also she carried a roll of skins : these being spread on the ground at night, served both for bedding and for a protection from the dampness of the earth. To this load were added a sifting-mat, and three sticks about five feet in length, used either for assisting in walking, or for digging up the wild roots which she might happen to observe on the way.

These *sifting-mats* are about three feet long and two broad, extended by a stick tied along each side, and by others fastened to them transversely. They are made in the same manner as other mats, excepting that the rushes are not so close together. When a spot of ground is met with, where abundance of little roots are to be found †, the earth is broken up and carefully sifted with these mats ; by which

The figure on the right hand is represented with a leathern kaross wrapped close about her, as it is usually held in cold weather. The cap is also of leather, and ornamented with beads, as here described. In her ear are two small copper ornaments of Bichuana manufacture, better represented in the 37th vignette, and more particularly explained in that place.

The figure on the left is clothed in a sheep-skin kaross ; and wears a copper ring in each ear, two cowry shells pendent from a lock of hair on her forehead, and a row of buttons surrounding the head and fixed also to the hair. The crown of the head is shaved bare ; this being considered a very becoming fashion for girls and young women.

* Vol. I. page 414.

† The roots of *Cyperus usitatus*, called *Boschman's uyentjes*, (see Vol. I. p. 417.) are those which are most plentiful in this part of the country.

contrivance a quantity of such small roots are collected in a much shorter time than could possibly be done by digging them up singly with the stick.

Just as we were beginning to pack up our baggage, we were suddenly surprised by a sound from a distance, which all of us believed, or rather fancied, to be the report of a musket. Thinking it might possibly be a signal from some one sent after us by captain Berends, we fired a gun in answer; but as no reply was made, I sent off Speelman, Daniel, and Hendrik in that direction to reconnoitre, and ascertain if any person with fire-arms was on that side. But in less than an hour they returned without discovering any traces of strangers; and we at last were satisfied that we had mistaken the sound. Yet I continued, for a day or two, a little uneasy at the circumstance, until convinced that it could only be a mistake; since no stranger could come into the country of the Bushmen, without his arrival being immediately known to them.

We had at this time advanced much beyond the farthest point to which the Klaarwater Hottentots had ever extended their huntings; and Hans and Cobus, the most experienced of our party, considered that we were now on unexplored ground. We became therefore the more watchful and observant of every occurrence connected with our safety and success.

We departed from *Drie-doorn station* at eight in the morning, and continued our course over a plain as level and boundless as the ocean, excepting on the west, where the rocky mountains near *Modder-gat* interrupted the evenness of the horizon; and before us, where the *Nappika mountain*, and the very distant summits of the *Hyena mountains*, presented a faint object on which the sight could rest. These latter are distinguished by the natives, with a name of correspondent import in their language, but which in our hurry I neglected writing down.

I here, for the first time, had an opportunity of observing that singular *phenomenon* and optical illusion, of the appearance of water, which has often been seen in the deserts of Northern Africa. It exactly resembled a distant and extensive lake, receding from us

as we advanced ; and offered a prospect the most tempting and delightful, but at the same time the most tantalizing, to a thirsty traveller ; and, to complete the illusion, its surface seemed to play in a lively rippling motion. The day was warm and cloudless. The cause of this phenomenon is, very probably, the vapor and heat of the sun's rays, reflected from a great extent of level surface. A similar effect, on a small scale, may be observed even in England, on very hot days : not asserting that it ever produces the appearance of water ; but meaning only that the operation of the same cause may often be witnessed, by looking obliquely along any heated and extensive surface. In the present example of this phenomenon, and in all others which I have seen in Africa, the *optical lake* is only visible when backed by very distant mountains, whose angle of altitude is not greater than ten or fifteen minutes of a degree ; that is, just appearing above the horizon : for, as the traveller advances, and these mountains appear higher, the lake always vanishes. Consequently, it divides itself into separate lakes or ponds, as soon as the spectator's nearer approach occasions the higher mountains of the range, or the loftier peaks, to rise above that angle ; a fact which I have invariably noticed in such circumstances.

As if in compensation for this tantalizing illusion, we soon afterwards came to a large pool of real water, and had cause for rejoicing when we found it perfectly fresh. The newly-discovered river, which we had hitherto wronged by the name of the " Brackish river," seemed as if kindly resolved to keep us company and lend us its friendly assistance during this journey ; for it held the same general course, which, according to my calculation, we ought to take towards the Colony ; although in its meanderings it often quitted us, and as often crossed our track. From this spot, which is marked on the map with the name of *Freshwater Halt*, the river in every part upwards affords abundance of wholesome water ; and its pools, which occur at very short intervals, are in many places nearly confluent.

Reeds, exactly resembling the common reeds of the English rivers, almost every where mark its course. These are a sure

indication of fresh water, and, if attended to, will often be of service in pointing out a spring at a distance, which might otherwise be passed unnoticed. In cases where a traveller may be in want of water while traversing the arid regions in the interior of Southern Africa, he may sometimes be relieved from his distress by ascending the nearest eminence, and thence carefully examining the country with his telescope; when he may chance fortunately to discover some clump of reeds, to which he may direct his steps, with the greatest probability of finding sufficient for quenching his thirst. Some species of trees, easily distinguishable from afar, are also peculiar to moist situations*, and are therefore equally useful as guides to a spring or rivulet. These facts are well worth an African traveller's attention; and a little observation will bring to his knowledge many others of the same kind.

We immediately unpacked the oxen, and turned them loose to graze in some meadows of excellent grass. After making our breakfast from the ostrich-eggs, my men found employment enough in drying our clothes and baggage, which were thoroughly soaked with yesterday's rain. Philip entered upon his new office of "washer-woman," nor was Speelman, or Uncle Hans, or Old Cobus, at all surpassed by him in versatility of talents: and I believe that, had there been amongst them a missionary of a certain class, it would not have hurt his conscience to assert that we carried on "eighteen different trades."

We were visited by two natives, whose kraal, they said, was at some distance eastward; and who being out in search of wild roots, happened to observe our track, and had discovered us by following it. One of them wore on the side of his head, as an ornament, and tied close to the hair, a circular plate of shining brass three inches indiam eter. The other carried, what my Hottentots called a *graafstok* (a digging-stick), to which there was affixed a heavy stone to increase its force in pecking up bulbous roots. The stone, which was

* Such as the Karree-wood (*Rhus viminalis*), the Buffalo-thorn (*Zizyphus bubalinus*), the Willow (*Salix Gariiepina*) and the Karro-thorn (*Acacia Capensis*).

five inches in diameter, had been cut or ground, very regularly to a round form, and perforated with a hole large enough to receive the stick and a wedge by which it was fixed in its place. A figure of the "digging-stick" may be seen at the end of the chapter.

These two men, seeing that others of their countrymen were in our company, approached us without fear, and were in all respects friendly. We rejoiced at these symptoms of confidence, and I was mindful to profit by every opportunity of confirming them, that they might be induced to report favorably of us at their return to their homes. I gave them food, of which they seemed to be much in need; and gratified them not less by a present of a small quantity of *dakka*.

But I found it not so easy to gain the good-will of *the children*, as of their parents; for, wishing by caresses to please one of them, I offered it a biscuit, but looking for an instant in my face, it turned away in fright and cried most sadly; nor could the mother, who seemed much pleased by my taking notice of her child, overcome the poor little infant's terror at the sight of a white-man; a terror of which we may sometimes behold the counterpart with English children when they are caressed by a black. To me these infants were interesting, from their small and delicate make, and their innocent playfulness. Even their crying was not disgusting, because it had not the tone of petulance or vulgarity: but this may be easily accounted for; their tempers had certainly not been spoilt by over-indulgence.

In compassion to our oxen, horse, and sheep, we rested six hours at Freshwater Halt, that they might be sufficiently recruited by the wholesome water and pasture; as we knew not whether they would meet with the same good fortune at our next station.

In the afternoon we resumed our journey, still over *a plain* without either eminence or hollow, or any visible termination either on our left hand or before us. In this pathless expanse, we advanced as a ship on the ocean; and, to keep my party from wandering from the right course, I steered in a direct line, by selecting two bushes ahead of us, and keeping them both in one, till we

came up nearly to the first, and then in the same manner selecting another beyond the second : thus continuing, from point to point as we advanced, taking a fresh object farther onwards.

Our average *rate of travelling*, during the whole of this journey, was proved to be three miles and a half in the hour. Not venturing, from fear of accident, to take my sextant on this expedition to the Colony, I have had only the bearings and estimated distances to guide me in laying down this part of my track on *the map*. But having travelled twice over the same ground, and taken the bearings and distances, on my return as well as at this time ; and having, as fixed and determined points at each end, the Kloof Village in the Asbestos Mountains, and the village of Graaffreynet, I am inclined to think that the positions assigned to my stations are not far from the truth. And although I had not the advantage of ascertaining our rate of travelling, by the revolutions of the wheel of my waggon, as already explained * ; yet having assumed a certain proportional scale of hours, making occasional allowance for an accelerated or a retarded rate, I each evening carefully plotted on paper the route of the day ; and this proportional survey being finally laid down between the true latitudes of those two extreme points, it is evident that the situations of the intermediate places cannot be very erroneous.

The surface of this plain was composed of *good loamy soil*, generally covered with shrubs two feet high, but varied with frequent extensive patches of grass, and sometimes with bushes of *Lycium* which were of a greater height than any of the other shrubs. Plants of that singular genus *Stapelia* were here and there observed ; particularly one with large flowers of a blackish-red color, and another with yellow flowers growing in lateral umbels. *Hares* were seen during this day's ride ; and many *quakkas* were perceived grazing at a distance.

At sunset we ended the day's journey, and took up our station on the banks of the river, which we here found almost hidden by

* In the first volume, at pages 289 and 290.

grass of the most luxuriant color and growth, and which meandered through extensive meadows of excellent soil. This spot is marked by the name of *Grass Station*; and hence upwards, the pools of the river follow each other so closely that a few showers would soon render them confluent.

We did not discover any fish in these waters; but observed a very pretty and *new species of frog** of a green color, and marked by a longitudinal yellow stripe on its back, and by transverse stripes of brown on its hind legs. It was further distinguished by its silence, or at least by croaking very seldom. Whether this silence be only occasional, or a constant character throughout the year, I could, as a traveller, have no opportunity of ascertaining.

Immediately on our arrival we made a fire and discharged a musket as a guide and signal for Speelman and the others, who had kept at a distance from the main body in hopes of falling in with game; and who were then out of sight. In half an hour they came home: they laid the blame of their absence upon the *Bushman* who was with them; who, on the way, happening to observe a *lizard*, pursued it with great eagerness, and having caught it, begged them to halt while he made a fire. This was soon done, and almost as soon was the lizard roasted: then cutting open the body, which he knew contained a number of eggs, he greedily devoured them in a manner which shewed that they were considered a dainty morsel. *Speelman*, who, though a Hottentot, had a more delicate stomach than this man, declared that, as he stood looking on with astonishment and disgust, he could hardly restrain himself from vomiting: indeed the bare recital of the circumstance seemed to revive all the nausea which he had then felt.

But before we agree with Speelman, and pronounce this *Bushman* a monster, let us lay aside all the *prejudices* of education and

* *Rana fasciata*, B. Viridis. Parùm vociferans. Dorsum fasciâ longitudinale flavâ pictum. Femora transversè fusco-fasciata. Corpus parvum breve. Pedes vix palmati. —*Ranæ* (nec *Hylæ*, nec *Bufo*nis, nec *Pipæ*) est vera species, formâ pedum non obstante.

custom, and plead his cause. Or, if we cannot gain for him an acquittal of the crime of eating unclean food, let us at least examine whether his judges be not themselves equally guilty: unless we at once decide the question by admitting to its utmost extent, the maxim that, there should be no disputing about *tastes*.

To all animals, excepting man, Nature seems to have pointed out some particular class of *food* as their proper nourishment; and when, from any morbid or depraved inclination they acquire a habit of taking other substances, we may with justice accuse them of having an unnatural taste. But man is left omnivorous: a fact which his history, and daily observation, sufficiently prove; even without the testimony of our own *Materia culinaria*. Throughout the whole zoölogical system, there is scarcely a class from which, either in one or other country, he does not convert some or many of its species to the purpose of food, and which in all instances afford wholesome nourishment. But it is remarkable how little mankind are agreed in these matters, and how few substances are eaten universally, or how few there are which are not rejected by one nation, or another: and so patriotic in this respect, are the inhabitants of various, and even of polished, countries, that they, or at least, the illiberal part of them, entertain a species of contempt for those whose habits or necessities lead them to the use of aliments different from their own; and pity their want of judgment in not preferring those things which they themselves find most agreeable to their own palate. To enumerate instances in substantiation of these assertions, is unnecessary, because they are too numerous, and too well known: but the application of the mode of reasoning derivable from them, seems on the other hand, to be too little practised. To mitigate poor Speelman's abhorrence at the Bushman, I would have told him that there was a nation in Europe who sometimes ate frogs, and that many of my own countrymen were excessively fond of an animal like an enormous toad, and not only ate its eggs, but its whole body; and that some of the most luxurious and polished nations of the world ate lizards* also: but

* The *Iguana* of the West Indies and South America; where it is esteemed a great delicacy.

I feared he would then have thought a European worse than a Bushman.

Having hitherto been unable to procure any game, the diminution of my little flock of sheep became to my men as well as to myself a subject of some anxiety ; and the addition of a number of natives to our fire-side, increased our uneasiness. Yet resolved on omitting nothing which could gain and secure their good will, we always gave them a share of our provisions ; and when a sheep was killed, they seemed to expect all the entrails as their due. The pretty young *Bushwoman* was my men's favorite, and to her they often gave a larger portion ; but the act of receiving a pot of blood with smiles and evident pleasure, had so little of elegance in it that their master was not likely to be one of her admirers. In slaughtering cattle, both the Hottentots and Bushmen save the blood. This being set on the fire, and kept stirred, soon becomes nearly of the consistence of liver, and is then eaten as a dainty.

The Bushmen received a share of the fat with equal delight, and immediately began to melt it in a little *pot* of their own manufacture, and one which, apparently, was intended only for that use. It was indeed the rudest piece of workmanship imaginable, being simply a rough bit of stone, in which they had contrived to hollow out a small cavity : it, however, perfectly answered the purpose for which it was used. As we stood at their fire admiring rather the rudeness, than the ingenuity, of it, these poor beings with all their wretchedness even possessed vanity at their own works, and seemed to smile at our ignorance, and to view our surprise with feelings of conscious superiority. The figure of this pot may be seen at the end of the chapter ; where, opposite to it, on the right, is the representation of another, made of burnt clay, the workmanship of which, if not Bachapin, does them more credit, being moulded to that form by the hand only.

The great extent of the plain and evenness of its surface, admitted my viewing the constellations until they disappeared below the horizon. At this time the three well-known *stars* in the belt of Orion were just setting, and induced a train of reflections on the

important uses to which the heavenly bodies are applied in modern times, and on the essential service which they rendered in former ages to the traveller while crossing the trackless sands of Northern Africa. That a modern traveller, under circumstances similar to those in which I was at this time placed, might derive some advantages from them, it will be admitted; if it be supposed that necessity might require him to travel over a plain by night, without instruments, and at the same time to keep some account of the direction of his route. For by noting that setting star towards which he seems to be advancing, the bearing of his track may readily be calculated, or afterwards ascertained by a celestial globe, to a degree of exactness quite sufficient for such purpose. And this method will be found more accurate in proportion as the country is nearer to the equinoctial line; but perhaps not sufficiently correct, in those beyond the thirtieth or fortieth degree of latitude. Thus the setting of δ *Oriantis*, or the north-westernmost star of the belt of Orion, might point out to him the west more truly than the polar star does the north. But in aid of these advantages, a habit of judging of angular distances, would be required whenever the atmosphere should be too dense on the horizon, or whenever it became necessary to make use of a star not directly in his track. Even the length of time occupied in travelling, may be known nearly, if he note what star sets when he commences, and what other when he ends, his night's journey. It must be confessed that these methods can hold but a low rank in the science of practical geometry; but it is easy to imagine very probable circumstances in which they would be exceedingly valuable.

3rd. We were half-unwilling to quit these *delightful pastures*; and suffered our cattle to continue grazing the whole morning. In the mean time our fires had been observed from a great distance by a *kraal of natives* situated on a low hill nearly nine miles farther onwards, and in sight from our station. They came immediately to see who we were; and, after cautiously reconnoitring, and perceiving that we were accompanied by some natives who were personally known to them, they advanced towards us with friendly salutations, and without hesitation joined our party. There were about eight or ten of

them, the greater part being women. To all I gave a piece of tobacco, which was received with great joy. On this, the men forming one party and the women another, they proceeded instantly to light their pipes; and sat talking and smoking with the highest glee and enjoyment. But in spirits, the women excelled their companions, and chatted with each other in a style of volubility which I had not supposed the Bushman language, with all the impediments of its numerous claps, susceptible of. They invited us to hunt a rhinoceros which had lately been observed browsing in the vicinity of their kraal.

So much confidence and goodwill, shown us by a people whom the Klaarwater missionaries had represented as the most ferocious of savages, warmed my heart with equally kind feelings towards them, and dispelled from my own mind every sensation of fear, however firmly I had resolved that no favorable appearances should ever lull our vigilance to sleep, or tempt us to think that precaution might ever be dispensed with. But most of my own Hottentots betrayed their timidity; and both by their looks and conversation, declared their uneasiness at seeing so many visitors coming around them; although their number, including the women, amounted only to fourteen.

As soon as the heat of noon had passed, we left the verdant meadows of Grass Station, and rode the whole of this day in a south-easterly course over plains, in a right line towards *Water-point*, the eastern point of the *Hyena Mountains*, where we had been informed that we should find the kraal of our Bushman friend Kaabi. The natives give it a name importing "Water-point," on account of the river taking its course round it. At the western end of this range, two table-mountains form a remarkable feature.

When we had travelled nearly eight miles, we ascended a low hill on which we were glad at finding a small pool of water, and though it was quite muddy, halted that all the party might drink; for the weather had become so excessively hot, that it felt almost as though the sun were pouring down liquid fire upon us.

I had suffered myself to be guided over this hill by our last

visitors, because they were desirous of conducting me to their *kraal*, as a mark of friendship : which it certainly was, if we consider with what jealous care this nation always conceal from the colonists the place of their abode. They brought us to the summit of the ridge, where, situated between heaps or hillocks of large stones, and unsheltered by either tree or bush, we found half a dozen wretched weather-worn *huts*, having only one-third of the circumference enclosed, and utterly incapable of protecting their inhabitants from the inclemency of wind or rain. But at this *kraal* not one individual had been left at home ; want had driven every one abroad to dig up his daily food in the plain. Within these huts there was no property of any kind, except in one or two, a dirty furless skin, or the shell of an ostrich-egg. Never before had I beheld, or even imagined, so melancholy, so complete, a picture of *poverty*.

“ *Here ;*” said they, as they pointed to the huts, “ *this is our home.*” — And having paused a few moments, they seated their thin emaciated bodies on the ground, and looked up to me with such speaking expression of humility and want, that I felt a tear, which could not be suppressed, trickling down my cheek. Abstracted from every other thought, my whole mind was absorbed in the contemplation of what was before me. Well ! I involuntarily exclaimed to myself, and is *this* the home of human beings ! Have *I* been sleeping on the bed of ease, and pampered with a thousand useless luxuries, while my fellow-creatures have been wandering the burning plains from day to day, and have returned at last to their wretched huts to pass the painful night in hunger, and unsheltered from the storm ! Yes, unfavoured savages, unpitied and despised as ye are by the thoughtless and unfeeling, ye still are men, and feel the pains of want, the misery of care ; untutored as ye are, ye still are not too ignorant to know that injustice and oppression confirm no right, and that God has given liberty equally to all ; rude and uncivilized as ye are, ye still are not insensible to the dictate of conscience, that kindnesses should be remembered with a grateful heart. Unblest among the nations of the earth, ye seem but to share these plains with beasts of prey, and but to stand the next degree above them : yet do ye breathe the

breath of eternal life; some rays of reason faintly light your path; ye hold, in common with the head that wears the diadem, a lamp which death can not extinguish, a soul which, though it would, can never die. Your Creator and your Judge will pass unheeded all our arrogant pretensions, and will, without respect to persons or to nations, reward alone the good and virtuous, though His mercy may forgive the guilty.

These reflections moved rapidly through my mind. I lost no time, but desired my people to give these poor creatures some meat. The Hottentots represented to me the uncertainty of our own resources, and that our present stock of provisions was already so much reduced, that prudently nothing could be spared. But feelings of humanity and commiseration rendered it impossible for me to quit this spot without affording some relief to their necessities; and I ordered a large quantity to be cut off, and given to them. Their starving appearance pleaded so powerfully, and spoke the truth so plainly, that I could not but be convinced that these miserable destitute savages had seldom tasted animal food; and had often passed the day without having been able to procure any sustenance whatever.

I still in imagination see the *happy air* of these poor simple creatures, and the joy and thankfulness which lighted up their meagre countenances, when they received this supply. Their grateful voices, raised with one accord to express their feelings, still sound in my ear; and though their words were unintelligible, their looks bespoke their meaning and conveyed to the heart sensations the most delightful, and repaid a thousand times the trifling sacrifice we made.

I felt unwilling to quit this little community, and wished, by being present, to participate in the happiness which I had occasioned. The inhabitants had by this time all assembled, and I still lingered with them, standing by my horse and closely surrounded by the happy group, who pressed towards me to behold him whom they thought their benefactor. I felt ashamed at receiving so much thankfulness for doing so little; and had we remained much longer, I should not have been able to resist my desire of giving them all we had left. Their feast would not have been complete without the luxury of

smoking ; and I distributed to every one a portion of tobacco and hemp-leaves, that the measure of their day's happiness might be full. To this I added a promise of more, if they would meet me on my return from the Colony, where I expected to get a supply which would then enable me to give more liberally than at this time.

The women, though not more grateful than the men, expressed their feelings in a more animated manner, and seemed to view me, not as a stranger, but as one of their own kraal, as a member of their own family. *The children* too, seemed rather to believe it was some long-absent relation returned home again ; and, encouraged by the universal joy which they beheld in their parents, they wished to approach me and touch my horse. I took one from the arms of a woman who was standing nearest to me, and placed it on my saddle ; but the little thing, half-pleased and half-afraid, could only be kept in so strange a situation by the encouragements of its mother, who appeared delighted at my taking so much notice of her child. The longer I stopped amongst them, the more these people treated me like a friend whom they had known for a great length of time.

Amidst the crowd was *a young woman* of very engaging appearance, who attracted my notice by the solicitude she felt for *her child*. I perceived the cause of her care ; and inquired by signs, what had occasioned so large a wound upon the infant's leg. To this she instantly replied, also by signs, in a manner so intelligible, that the dullest apprehension could not have failed to understand that the child, while playing by the fire in the absence of its mother, had burnt itself. Not trusting to signs as a mode of conveying medical advice, I employed one of my Hottentots to interpret to her the manner in which she should treat the wound. As none but the simplest remedies would suit a people like this, I was careful to recommend only such as were within their reach ; and principally insisted on her washing off all the dirt and red ochre, which probably had been the chief cause of its remaining so long unhealed. She received my advice with the warmest *gratitude* ; and when I assured her that, by attending to my instructions, her child would soon be

enabled to walk again, I saw a tear of joy and thankfulness moistening her anxious eye.

While I was thus engaged, some of my men had been busily *trafficking* with the natives, and had been taking advantage of their simplicity, by purchasing their clothes from off their backs; and at so low a rate, that in this, my people showed themselves to have neither conscience nor feeling. So thoughtlessly fond of smoking, were these Bushmen, that one old man took off from his shoulders a beautiful leopard-skin, and bartered it to Hendrik for less than two ounces of tobacco; and Ruiter got from another poor creature's back, a fine skin of a lion's whelp for which the Bushman foolishly thought an ounce of Dakka-leaves to be an equivalent.

When I discovered these transactions, I felt highly irritated at the ungenerous advantage which had been taken of the folly of these savages, not because favourable bargains had been made, but because they were so very far below the current *rate of bartering* on this side of the Gariép, that they bordered closely upon fraudulence. I declared that such conduct displeased me, and that I would not countenance their unfairness; that I objected, not to their acquiring the skins at a cheap rate, but to their getting them for nothing. While I was relieving their poverty, *they* were stripping them naked and giving nothing substantial in return. I reprimanded Ruiter for his unconscionable dealings, and immediately gave the Bushman as much tobacco as I thought to be a fair payment.

Though all these remarks were made in the Dutch language, the kraal, who attended to every thing which I did, clearly comprehended the tenor of what was said, and well understood, though ignorant of our words, the reason of my giving him more tobacco. They watched this latter proceeding; and then, as if to testify applause, turned their countenances towards me, that I might behold their satisfaction.

As I rode away from their dwellings, which I have distinguished by the too-appropriate name of *Poverty Kraal*, a general salutation was given by the whole assembly; and in a tone so mild and expressive of so much *gratitude*, that a man must have no heart at

all, who could witness a scene like this, unmoved. I confess that to my ear the sound was grateful in the highest degree; and while I turned my head to view them for the last time, the pleasure which beamed in their happy countenances, communicated itself to my own feelings, in a manner the most affecting and indelible.

We continued our journey across the mountain, and descended to an extensive plain covered with *threethorn* shrubs, and abounding in pitfalls for catching wild animals. Eastward, a pointed and very distant mountain was seen, which probably was only rendered visible by the effect of a temporary and extraordinary refraction in the atmosphere. After travelling about eight miles over the plain, we again fell in with the river, and as the evening was fast approaching, we halted for the night at a spot on its banks, where we were surrounded by the most beautiful fields of grass.

4th. A number of very small finches, (*Loxia Astrild*) frequented the bushes at this place, and I took advantage of the circumstance, to distinguish it by the name of *Astrild Station*. This little bird is not peculiar to Southern Africa; it is very common at St. Helena, and is said to be equally so at Madeira and the Canary Islands, in the tropical countries of Africa, and in India. It is known to the Dutch colonists by the appellation of *Roode-bekje* (Red-beak).

From this station the bearing of the most western of the two table mountains forming part of the Hyena mountains, was S. 20 W., by the compass. Here were lying the *bones of a rhinoceros*, which, as our *Bushmen* informed me, had been shot by one of their countrymen, who by some means had come into possession of a gun, and had learnt the use of it; but who was himself afterwards shot by the Boors, for sheep-stealing.

At a few miles beyond *Astrild Station*, we passed through an opening formed by an insulated round hill on one side and by the end of a rocky ridge on the other, and entered upon a plain which had more the appearance of a verdant corn-field, than of a wild uncultivated country. The soil was clayey, and the *luxuriant herbage* sufficiently proved its fertility; while the river, well supplied with water

and traversing the plain in a widely meandering course, seemed to offer all that *agriculture* could require, and to tempt a more laborious race of men than its present inhabitants, to bring it under cultivation.

The river many times crossed our path, and quitted us only when we ascended to an elevated stony level. Here we saw, with much pleasure, several herds of *kannas* (or elands) and quakkas grazing at a distance and appearing not much to heed the presence of our party. We halted; and Philip, mounting the horse, immediately pursued them; but he could not overtake any till he had ridden above two miles, when he was so fortunate as to bring down a large *kanna*, which he had singled out and continued to follow, till he had fairly hunted it down.

The chase having led him in a northerly direction, we turned back as soon as the Bushmen brought us information of his success; and, falling in with the river at about half-way to where the animal lay, we again unpacked on its banks, about an hour before sunset, at a spot marked on the map by the name of *Hunter's Station*.

Philip, Speelman, and Hendrick, with pack-oxen, proceeded on to the eland, and were accompanied by Riizo, and Kaabi, and all the Bushmen of our party. But a heavy shower coming on before they had skinned and cut up the carcase, they were obliged to remain there till the next morning.

5th. At eight o'clock they came home; and the whole of the Hotentots found full employment all the forenoon, in cutting the meat into slices and laying them on the bushes to dry: in which operation we were fortunately favoured by a very hot and drying day.

We gave *Kaabi* and his companions so large a portion of our game, that finding it more than they were able to carry, he had been obliged to send off one of his people on the evening before to his kraal to fetch a pack ox. His messenger returned with the ox this afternoon, and was accompanied by eight others, some of whom were boys.

These occupations detained us till a late hour of the day; yet we determined on packing up and proceeding farther, as the Bushmen were anxious to reach their kraal, and had assured us that we might arrive there before dark. To prove to them our confidence,

we entrusted them with the office of driving forward our sheep and loaded oxen. And, indeed, our fellow-travellers, *Riizo* and *Kaabi*, evinced a truly honest and friendly inclination towards us; so that, without meaning to neglect that prudent circumspection so necessary to a European travelling in this country, I would as willingly have committed myself to them, as to my own countrymen. The former of these two, was naturally of a more reserved disposition, but was always ready to lend any of the Hottentots his assistance, whenever he thought he could be useful; and seemed as much at his ease with them, as with his own friends.

During this day's ride we passed many small *rocky hills* of a remarkable kind, presenting a character different from all which I had hitherto observed. They were generally quite bare, especially on the top, and were composed of huge rounded pieces of rock, most frequently about five feet in diameter, piled loosely upon each other, and apparently without any earth between them: as may be seen in the first plate. But their most *striking character* was the smooth shining blackness of their surface, not unlike that of iron polished with black-lead.* They were composed of 'primitive green-stone,' probably containing iron, from which they derive their lustre and color after long exposure to the atmosphere; but within, on being broken, they were found to possess their proper greenish or blueish hue. Rocks of this species occur very frequently in various parts of Southern Africa, but till now none had been seen with so glossy a surface. The rocks at Dwaal river †, and in that vicinity, were, excepting this particular, not very different from these, and both, when fitly poised, were capable of giving a sound like that of a large bell; and both, I believe, affect the magnetic needle. They must be considered as *boulder stones*, though found on the tops of the hills; but beyond this, conjecture can afford nothing

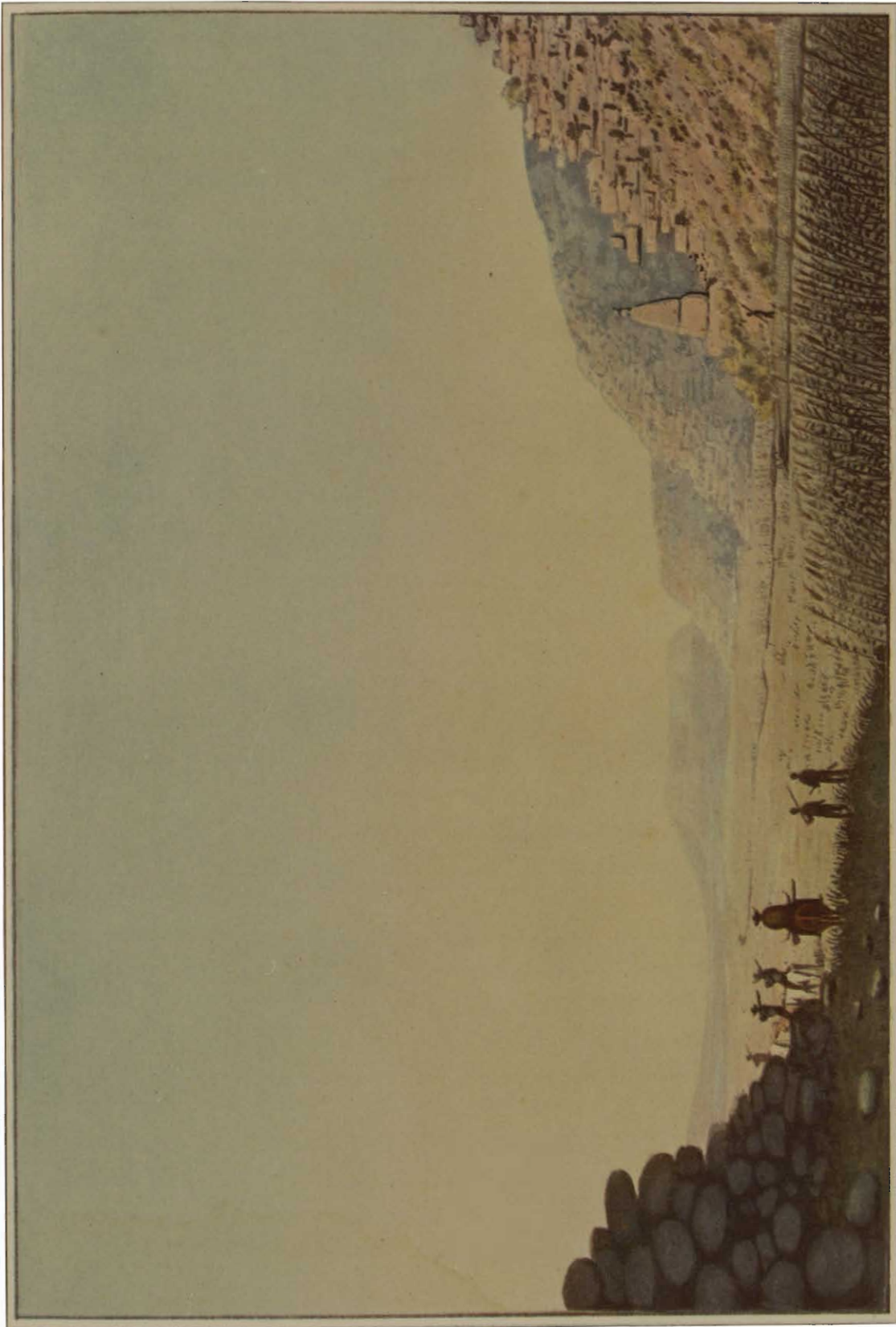
* At a subsequent period of these travels, *rocks* of the same nature and appearance were observed in abundance along the course of the *Nugariet* or Black River; and I am inclined to suppose that it was this circumstance which gave rise to the name which the stream bears among the natives.

† Described in the first volume, at page 277.

satisfactory, and the How and When will probably remain for ever unanswered. All the smaller hills which we passed, were covered with, or perhaps consisted entirely of, these stones, or gigantic pebbles as they may be called: yet the larger hills, or mountains, consisted of regular stratified rock; as may be perceived in the plate referred to.

We passed over a tract thickly covered with a variety of bushes, the height of which was generally about two feet, and intermingled with *mesembryanthena*. Such land is called *Karro ground* by the Cape farmers, who esteem it more wholesome, and better suited to the African sheep, than grass-land.

The *Hyena mountains* terminate on the east, in a number of low rocky hills; many of which are of the nature just described. Kaabi, who here assumed the office of guide, conducted us through a wide opening, or what the boors would name a *poort*, where we again found our *Friendly River*, (as I would in twofold gratitude have named it,) passing the same way, as if desirous of travelling with us. Its channel was narrow and deep, and almost hidden in fields of luxuriant grass. Its winding course along the valley, or rather, plain, was only to be distinguished by the verdant reeds. The hill upon our left was composed of those black shining ‘boulder-stones,’ above mentioned; and that upon our right was rendered still more remarkable by an object which, at first sight, excited my greatest surprise, as I viewed it, for a few moments, as a work of art; and was lost in wondering what nation, able to erect such a monument, had inhabited these, now wild and deserted, regions. But though an *Obelisk*, it was not the work of man: it was planted there by the hand of Nature. It stood at the foot of the hill, and appeared to be composed of sand stone. The mountain, of which it formed a part, exhibited regular strata; and the obelisk itself, besides its pedestal, was formed of four blocks, piled, as it seemed, one upon another; but most probably left in that form and position, by the mouldering away of the adjoining rocks. Yet such an explanation would require that this monument should be of harder stone than that which had surrounded it: a fact which would be still more extraordinary. Or,



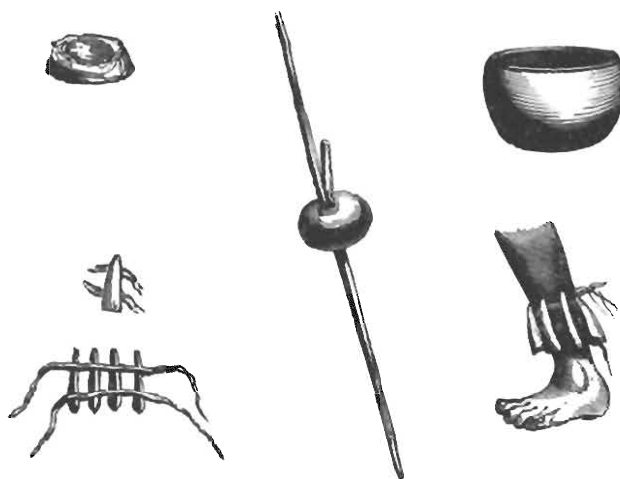
An engraving & coloured after the original Drawing made by W. J. Burdell Esq.

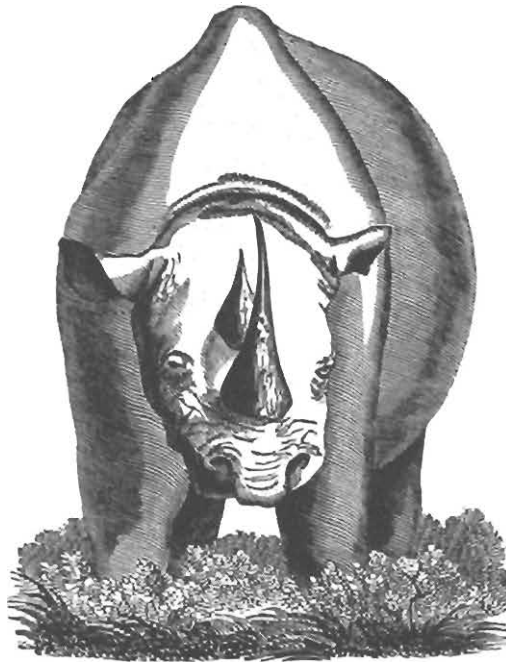
A natural Obelisk in the Country of the Bushmen.

Published by Longman, & Co. May 1. 1825

could it be possible that the savages had assisted Nature, and had taken the trouble of pulling down the adjoining stones, on finding them already cracked and loosened by the hand of time? As the setting sun warned us not to lose a moment, I could not examine it, excepting at too great a distance; but while the rest continued their route, I stopped my horse, and made a sketch of it. This scene is represented in *Plate 1.* and is marked on the map by the name of *Pyramid Pass*, (for the sake of euphony, instead of *Obelisk Pass*).

Soon after leaving this spot, we crossed a low neck between rocky hills, and came into a small plain covered with grass, and enclosed on every side by mountains. Through this pleasant dale our river continued near us; and, following it through an opening at the south-eastern corner of the plain, we there took up our station on its banks, at the foot of a hill on which stood the *kraal* of our friend *Kaabi* and of the Bushmen who had accompanied us from the *Gariiep*.





CHAPTER II.

TRANSACTIONS AT KAABI'S KRAAL.

IT being dark when we arrived at this station, I did not go to the kraal this evening, but Kaabi and our Bushman fellow-travellers passed the night at their own huts, where they entertained their friends with some account of us, and extolled the generosity of the white-man, so highly, that many of the inhabitants came down the hill, and sat round our fire till nearly ten o'clock. These strangers had been much prepossessed in our favor by what they had heard, and behaved with the greatest cordiality and good-will, but I was obliged to let them know that no tobacco was to be given away till the morning; when it was my intention to distribute some to every person in the kraal. With this promise, they were perfectly satisfied, and remained conversing with us, and occasionally obtaining the favor of a whiff out of the pipe of one or other of my Hottentots.

Having brought with us no *boiling-pot*, we requested them to

lend us one from the kraal ; and immediately they ran up to their hut and fetched one of their own manufacture, made in a neat manner, of hardened clay, and capable of holding about a gallon and a half. (The figure of this may be seen at the end of the preceding chapter.) This was filled with eland meat ; and our visitors, as might be expected, were careful not to be absent at supper time.

This spot is distinguished among the natives by the name of *Water-point*, implying, as before stated, that it is the point of the Hyena Mountains, close to which the river flows.

6th. My bed, if such it may be called, was made under a bush at the distance of a few yards from the spot where my men had their fire. I was awoke soon after sunrise, by the voices of a party of eight or ten of the natives who passed close at my feet and took their seat at the fire, without attempting to disturb me ; as they supposed me to be asleep. Others following them immediately, I arose ; and as soon as I had dressed myself, I went towards them : on which we exchanged the usual salutations.

For the space of half an hour, men, women, and children, of all ages, continued descending from the hill, and assembling at our station ; till at last we were completely surrounded by a numerous crowd. They were all unarmed ; a state in which hitherto I had not seen any of this nation ; having remarked that they constantly carried with them their hassagay and bows, and never, even when they put them out of their hand, layed them beyond their reach. I had, indeed, never till this moment, had an opportunity of beholding them in their own domestic circle, and at home at their ease.

I began now to appreciate my singular good fortune, that so many favorable circumstances had unexpectedly combined to give me an opportunity of studying and knowing the *real character* of this nation, such as seldom, if ever, has fallen to the lot of travellers in these regions ; and, I believe, never to those whose observations have been laid before the public. As a European, I was alone in the midst of their hordes, and trusting my life in their hands : I associated with them, and by conforming to their ways and customs, yielded apparent respect to their prejudices. It was this confidence, which so completely gained

their good-will; and which pleased them the more, as they had been unused to witness in the conduct of white-men, so unequivocal a mark of amicable intentions. They had never seen these dangerous strangers within the limits of their country, but in large and strong bodies, which, though they commanded their respect, always excited their fears and mistrust. They were satisfied that from me, they had nothing to fear; and it was the novelty of this circumstance which gave me, in their eyes, a character of peculiar interest; while the evident desire I showed, of obliging them as far as it was in my power, won their good opinion without any aid from the false oratory of mere verbal professions, and dispensed with the necessity of language to convince them of what was rendered much more intelligible by facts. It was by facts and conduct only, that I could hold communication with the tribe; for my ignorance of the language, as for the purpose of conversation without the intervention of an interpreter, rendered the power of pleasing words, unavailable in this case.

Kaabi their chief now made his appearance in a more distinguished manner, wearing a *white hat* which by some means he had obtained out of the Colony. Whether it was the vanity of giving himself a more important character in my sight, or the desire of paying a compliment by proving that he admired and valued the dress of white-men, which induced him to dress different from all the inhabitants of his village, I could not ascertain; but I am more disposed to regard the former, as his real motive.

For the purpose of giving an idea of the quantity of *tobacco* distributed on such occasions, and to show what these poor creatures considered as a handsome *present*, it is necessary here to explain the form into which the tobacco of the Cape colony is generally manufactured.

After the leaves of the plant are properly dried and divested of the stalk and midrib, they undergo the usual process of steeping, and are then twisted into long ropes of the customary thickness of about an inch, sometimes thicker, but oftener thinner. These ropes are coiled up in the form of *rolls* of various sizes, weighing from five to eight or ten pounds. Among the boors, these are sold by the pound: but

to the Hottentots, they are more commonly meted out by the span of about eight inches, the weight of which is usually between an ounce and a half and two ounces ; and bargains among the latter are most frequently made for a certain number of *spans of tobacco*. Yet it is not therefore to be supposed that many Hottentots are ignorant of the use of weights and money : it is the inconvenience and scarcity of these, which causes them to prefer, on ordinary occasions, the readier mode of measurement. I am particular in a description which would otherwise be trifling, because, as tobacco is one of the principle articles of *barter* with the nations of the Interior, it will be referred to as a "*money-table*" for the remainder of the journey ; and may furnish some hints, or useful information, to those who may hereafter be desirous of visiting the same countries.

The crowd, having gratified their curiosity by surveying me attentively for some time, gradually became more talkative and familiar ; and understanding that they were all to receive a present, the joy of these poor simple people was manifested in a manner as artless as that of children. Their liveliness increased as they observed me about to commence the promised distribution : but the women were much more noisy and uncontrollable than the men, and it was some time before their chieftain was able to still their joyous vociferation.

To *Kaabi* I gave three inches of tobacco ; to each man about one inch ; and to the women a little less. With this trifling quantity they were all completely happy ; because they were contented. The delight depicted in their countenances, was not less remarkable here than at Poverty Kraal, but it exhibited not that melancholy species of thankfulness, which was there so irresistibly affecting.

This ceremony occupied more than half an hour, on account of the difficulty of restraining their vivacity and persuading them to remain steadily in one place : for had they been permitted to change their station, I should have found it impossible to have gone through this business with regularity. Having previously estimated, and put into my pocket, the number of pieces which would be required, I took them out one by one, in order that no jealousy might be excited,