

We must own, that it cannot but give pleasure to an Englishman, to see that the British government has done more than any other in Europe towards the amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate negroes. This is not, indeed, to be wondered at, since Britain enjoys the happiness of having at once a benevolent and enlightened parliament, a prudent administration, and a patriotic king, whose name will stand in the annals of Europe, distinguished by the glorious titles, of the supporter of freedom, and father of his people.

Nothing, indeed, augurs so favorably for the future abolition of the slave-trade, as the frequent deliberations which have taken place on that subject in the British parliament, for it is evident that every member of that august body would gladly have closed with the proposals of the advocates for the measure, if they had esteemed it safe and practicable. The philanthropy as well as prudence of those members who have opposed the measure is so well known, that no one can doubt but they would readily give their assent, if they could once see a proba-

bility of carrying it into effect, without prejudice or danger to the colonies; and indeed affairs of such weight and magnitude require a serious consideration, for evils so deeply rooted are always difficult to eradicate. Every thing, however, seems to announce that a time will come when the system of slavery may with safety be abolished; and there is no doubt but when circumstances appear unequivocally favorable, the British parliament will unanimously carry the abolition into effect; and the well known prudence of that august body, authorizes a confident assurance that it will be able to regulate affairs, so as effectually to provide both for the indemnification of the owners of slaves, and the safety of the colonies.

I have trespassed long upon the patience of my friend, but the importance and interesting nature of the subject will sufficiently apologize for the prolixity of my discussions. The whole matter is, indeed, so perfectly in unison with the finer feelings of human nature, that I am certain this part of my correspondence will meet with your entire approbation. When I consider my own
feelings

feelings in writing, I think I am no stranger to those which my friend experiences in reading; for, on this subject I am certain that our hearts beat in perfect harmony. Situated, indeed, as I am, in a country where the hideous spectacle of slavery is constantly exhibited, I could not avoid the disagreeable view of this degradation of the human species; and, indeed, how disgusting soever it may be, no subject is more entitled to the contemplation of the moral observer. It is not wholly in the circles of gaiety and fashion, that we can obtain a complete knowledge of men and manners; we must descend through all the different gradations from the highest to the lowest classes of society, in order to make accurate observations on the general state of humanity; and while we delight ourselves in viewing the palaces of the opulent, we must not disdain to enter the cottage of the peasant, or the hut of the slave, but extend our remarks to all the various situations and modifications of life.

The melancholy emotions excited in the breast of my friend, from so long continued
a view

a view of human calamities, will, however, be pleasingly dissipated by the different nature and tendency of my future communications. The languid interval which interrupted my active scene of life is at an end. I am going to make excursions to various parts of this colony, and shall have it in my power to amuse your moments of leisure, by exhibiting a series of observations on places and persons little known in your country. I shall delineate for your contemplation a picture of the manners of men, and modes of life among the farmers in the wilds of southern Africa; and the variety of natural scenery that I shall meet with in my rambles, will add some agreeable shades, and a diversity of coloring. In the course of two or three days I shall set out on my tour into the country. My first visit will be to Constantia, celebrated for its wines, and from thence to various other settlements of the interior; and I shall be careful to observe every thing that I may think worth communicating to my friend, whom, for the present, I must bid adieu.

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LETTER XXIV.

A visit to Constantia, celebrated for its rich wines—Politeness of the mistress of the mansion—The wine-cellar—The red Constantia wine esteemed the most—Great and Little Constantia—The wines of both much alike—A rich, sweet wine called Constantia produced from plantations in the neighbourhood—Soil and vineyards at Constantia—Description of the mansion, garden, &c.—How to determine here from what quarter the violent winds blow—Some radical defect in the preparation of the Cape wines—The simple process used in making them—Their inferiority, &c.

I HAVE not, as I promised you in my last, been unmindful of paying a visit to Constantia, so celebrated for its rich wines. In our way thither we passed several delightful plantations. On our arrival at the mansion, we were informed that the master was gone from home, but the lady made her appearance, and with much civility and politeness desired us to alight. We were immediately

immediately shewn into the great hall, which in all Dutch houses is appropriated for the reception of visitors, and the sitting-room of the family. Our errand being readily guessed, we were conducted to the wine-cellar, where the large brass-bound leagers, ranged on each side, bespoke the wealth of the proprietor. Among the few wine-presses to be met with among the colonists, we here observed one; and there was no want of the necessary vessels for containing the delicious fluid while in a state of fermentation. Our conductor presented us with a glass of their best wine, at the same time enumerating their different vintages. The red Constantia is esteemed the most; it may be reckoned a *bonne couche*, but its racy qualities prevent any one from indulging in it to excess. There are Great and Little Constantia; they belong to different proprietors. The wines of both are much alike, and sold at the same rate. Fifty Spanish dollars is what they now demand for a *half aum*, which runs about eight dozen quart bottles.

There

There are plantations in the neighbourhood that produce a rich, sweet wine, that, when exported to Europe, assumes the name of Constantia. The original plants, we are told, have been brought thither from Persia, but others assert from the banks of the Rhine. It is natural to suppose that many of the neighbouring planters would introduce into their grounds plants from this celebrated vineyard;—a few have succeeded tolerably well, but the greatest part have degenerated, or have been, at least, unsuccessful in producing a wine equal to that of the original. A great deal must, no doubt, depend upon the nature of the soil into which they are transplanted, as well as in the mode of managing the grapes. At Constantia the soil is excellent, and the vineyards slope gently down the brow of a hill, on an easterly exposure. The grapes are of a very superior quality; they are allowed to hang on the vines till they are perfectly ripe, which gives a richness and mellowness to their wines. From whatever cause the superiority of this wine arises, re-

mains a family secret, and is not likely to be soon divulged.

The mansion-house is surrounded with stately oaks, and the different vineyards inclosed with neat, trimmed hedges of the same. We visited the garden, which was well-stocked with all kinds of European fruit-trees, and neglected not to examine the vineyard. In the management of the latter there seems to be no material difference from the others in the colony. The vines are planted in rows of about three feet asunder. The luxuriant shoots stretch along the open space between, and they are at no pains in affording a support to the vine when bending under its rich burden; perhaps the violent south-east winds that blow during the grape season, may be stated as an objection to the plan of raising the vines from the ground, and erecting hedges of bamboos, around which the young shoots might entwine;—it would certainly be more favorable in keeping their roots free from weeds, and in promoting a free circulation of air.

In traversing this part of Africa, you have only to look to the woods that cover the sloping

sloping sides of the mountain, to determine from what quarter the most violent winds blow;—the strong south-east blasts incline them to the north-west.

In the preparation of the Cape wines there must be some radical defect, as none of them seems to be relished by an European palate;—being drunk in a new state, they are of a heating quality. The process that is observed in making their wines is simple in itself, and proclaims this happy art to be yet in its infancy at the Cape. When a proper quantity of grapes is collected into a large vat, without being stripped from the stalks, sound and unsound, ripe and unripe, are all thrown in together; a slave boy mounts the vessel, and with his bare feet treads among them till the whole is completely mashed and broken. The juice thus expressed is conveyed to the proper vessel ready to receive it; the vinous fermentation is quickly produced, and to its management while in this state, giving it less or more time to ferment, a great deal is said to depend as to the quality of the wine.

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It has been frequently asked,—why are not the Cape wines equal to those of the southern counties of Europe? Their grapes are allowed to be excellent; but we do not always find that the materials of industry are best wrought in those countries where they are produced. To whatever European power, in the event of peace, the Cape may be ceded, the melioration of their wines ought to claim its principal attention. In its present state it can never be an object of export; were it otherwise, India opens a vast field for its consumption. But it is time to drop the subject; to dwell longer on this intoxicating theme, my pen might betray both wantonness and levity. For the present, then, adieu.

LETTER XXV.

Manners of the planters in the vicinity of the Cape—Their assumed consequence and ostentation—Small cannon on their plantations to celebrate their births, marriages, &c—Corpulency of the Dutch at the Cape—Causes thereof—The women of an enormous size—Anecdote of a boor's unwieldy wife—The toil of reaching the summit of Table Mountain compensated by the delightful prospects it affords—Ice, an inch thick, upon the pools of water on the surface of it—Kolbin's monument sought in vain—Description of the mountain.

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IN the vicinity of the Cape the manners of the planters exhibit a different complexion from those in the more distant parts of the colony. The former are for the most part in easy and affluent circumstances, and, surrounded by their slaves, sway with sovereign authority. They assume an air of consequence in their intercourse with the more distant settlers, and affect an ostentatious

tious parade, which, though it may exact, cannot insure respect.

As a necessary appendage to their greatness, they are not without small cannon on their respective plantations, for celebrating the anniversary of the births and marriages of the family, or any other particular days of rejoicing.

The unwieldy size of the human body among the Dutch at the Cape has frequently been remarked, and they seem, indeed, not to have lost much, either in point of size or rotundity, by removing from the mother country. The heat of the climate, together with the natural indolence of all ranks, seems favorable to their growth; besides, we may bring into the account their propensity to animal food, which at all meals they devour, particularly the more distant boors, where the grazing of cattle is their principal occupation, and the cultivation of corn little attended to.

The common hour of dinner is between twelve and one o'clock; when this is finished, they indulge themselves in smoking their tobacco, and afterwards take a nap for an

hour or two. The supper is generally the heartiest meal, after which they resume their pipe, and then take their repose for the night. From these concomitant causes we need not be much surprised at the several instances of corpulence which are here to be met with,—a thousand *Sir John Falstaffs* may be seen in one day. I have also beheld female figures from the country enveloped in such a mass of flesh, as naturally excites astonishment;—nay, I have been credibly informed, that a boor's wife in the interior had attained to so enormous a size, that she literally could not move her body without assistance. A party of Caffres, during the late disturbances, having attacked the house she was in, a sense of danger impelled her to make an exertion to escape; but unfortunately the door being too small for her unwieldy body, she stuck fast in the attempt, and thus becoming an easy prey, was sacrificed to the fury of the assailants.

Perhaps my friend begins to be of opinion that I have been long enough occupied in gleaning in the immediate neighbourhood of Cape Town, that it is high time that I should

should direct my steps to some distance from this Cape after European manners and follies. For a while, then, allow me your company, while I endeavour to gain the ascent of the celebrated Table Mountain; and let us enjoy together the delightful prospect which is here offered to the lover of sublime and romantic scenery. No day could be more favorable for the attempt;—though about the beginning of July, when heavy rains might naturally be expected, yet the surrounding atmosphere was perfectly serene, and the unclouded top of the mountain seemed to flatter us with an extensive view of the country around. As we proceeded, the ascent became steeper, and the road more uneven. Masses of huge stones, which the descending torrents had swept along in their course, every now and then interrupted our progress. It is only by one particular path, on the side facing the town, that the traveller can proceed with safety. We passed through a cleft, or chasm in the rock, which narrowed as we ascended. The projecting, craggy sides of the overhanging precipice, conveyed to the mind

mingled impressions of terror and sublimity. A few halts were unavoidable; for the limbs soon became wearied from the continued scrambling over loose stones and brushwood. At the bottom of the mountain it was rather warm, but as we advanced the air became gradually chill, and before we reached the top, we might, from the coldness of the blast that issued from the chasm, have fancied ourselves transported to the regions of the north. We at length gained the summit, and were amply repaid for our toil by the prospect which it afforded. The town below us, with the neighbouring hills and gardens, looked like fairy land, and the diminutive appearance of the ships in the bay, favored the momentary illusion. When we looked to the north-east, we were indeed presented with a wintry scene,—mountains piled on mountains, receding from the fatigued eye, and much higher than that on which we then stood, bounded our horizon. Their aspiring tops were white with snow, and proclaimed the reign of winter in all its rigour.—A cold, piercing wind blew from the southern ocean, and obliged us to move
about

about briskly to keep ourselves warm. The pools of water on the surface of the mountain had ice upon them;—on one it was not less than an inch in thickness, and the icicles hung from the pendent rocks of an astonishing size for this part of Africa. Such being seldom seen in the neighbourhood of the Cape, we carried along with us a small quantity to town, as a proof of the cold we had experienced on the summit of the mountain. While traversing along, we looked around for Kolben's pretended monument, but were equally unsuccessful with Vaillant in regard to its discovery. Whether any thing of the kind had actually existed, admits of some doubt; but now, however, no vestiges of it remain: indeed, no monument erected by man could long withstand the furious whirlwinds of this stormy region. The surface of the mountain may be termed flat, though in many parts it is broken into inequalities, and intersected with pools of water, diversified in the season with long coarse grass, and a few arid plants. A flock of goats would not be at a loss for excellent pasture, among the crannies of the rocks,

could they be rendered secure from the attacks of the hyenas. The increasing coldness of the day prevented us from protracting our stay in those elevated regions. Amply gratified and delighted with the charming prospects we had enjoyed of the neighbouring country, we retraced our steps, and arrived safely at the bottom, not a little fatigued with our journey; so, with my friend's permission, I shall rest for a while, and resume my pen with greater pleasure.

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Yours, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

An early journey across the sandy plain on the road to Stellenbosch—Hospitably entertained at a neat-looking mansion—The little family attentions of the African boors—The farm, though small, exhibited many marks of industry—The climate more favorable to vegetation than the soil—Occupation of a little boy—A supply of water necessary in making choice of a spot for a plantation—Agriculture little understood at the Cape—Their implements of husbandry wretched—The journey resumed—Approach Stellenbosch—Arrival and entertainment there—Beauties of the place—Though fifteen miles from sea, excellent fish to be had—Customary mode of inquiring the distance of one place from another, and the answer—The manner in which a boor travels by himself on horseback—The comfort derived from the large spreading oaks—Hospitality of the farmers—The vineyards here extensive and profitable—Utility of a traveller understanding the language of the country he visits—Several families of German origin in all parts of the colony—Departure from Stellenbosch.

I MUST now solicit my friend's company a little further from Cape Town, as I wish to conduct him across the sandy plain on the road to *Stellenbosch*.

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The morning sun had not as yet darted his cheering rays on the path we were about to pursue. The face of nature was calm and serene, and hardly yet awake from her slumber, diffused a solemn silence on every side. We directed our course towards the extensive chain of mountains that stretch along from south to north, and terminate the prospect before us. We were here presented with a picture of awful sublimity and cheerless barrenness. As we proceeded, the path we had to follow was formed along undulating ridges of sand. The slow pace of our horses over this sandy tract, together with the sun's rays powerfully reflected from it, prevented our getting forward so speedily as we could have wished. We had not advanced above twelve miles, when, starting as it were suddenly from the plain, a neat looking mansion appeared in full view. Here we halted for the morning, and were hospitably entertained by the family with simple, but wholesome fare. In an instant the cloth was laid, and the table spread out with bread, butter, and eggs; and heaped plates of excellent grapes from their own

vineyard. Prepossessed in favor of the hospitality of the African boors, it was with no small degree of pleasure that I here began in my outset, to experience those little family attentions which insensibly win the heart of the traveller.

We accompanied our kind host in going over the cultivated parts of his farm, which, though not extensive, exhibited many pleasing marks of successful industry. He had but lately begun to bring it into a state of cultivation, and from the nature of the soil, (being in a manner wholly sand,) it seemed to hold out no great encouragement to the labors of the industrious peasant. It is astonishing in this country what the soils of a sandy nature will produce:—such is the influence of a genial climate, so peculiarly favorable to vegetation. He complained much of the drought of the season, and the parched state of his vineyard and the gardens sufficiently testified it.

I observed a little boy busily employed in the vineyard in cracking a long whip, so as to scare away the little birds that hovered around, and who committed depredations

on

on the vines. They were obliged to tie up their house-dogs, (of which, by the bye, no African house is without a tolerable collection) as they sometimes stole unperceived to the vineyard, and indulged themselves in plucking a few grapes from the vine.

In making choice of a spot for a plantation, the first thing to be attended to is a plentiful supply of water, not only for domestic purposes, but for occasionally watering their vineyard and garden. This may be one of the causes, why so many fertile spots are to be met with in this country in a state of nature, while other spots, in the vicinity of some running stream, though less fertile, will always determine the choice of the new settler.

Agriculture, as well as many other arts at the Cape, is but little understood. Their implements of husbandry are indeed wretched: you have only to examine their practice within thirty or forty miles of Cape Town, and then you may form an idea, by comparison, of what is to be expected in the more distant parts of the colony. What is under the immediate eye of government

ought naturally to engage its first care, and the more distant parts ought in good time to be remembered.

After parting with this hospitable family, we continued our course through a succession of sand-hills as before, not a little annoyed with the increasing heat of the day. The chain of mountains confronting us assumed an awful grandeur of appearance. Their bleak and craggy sides presented an uniform scene of dreariness to the wandering eye;—broken into huge masses of infinitely various forms, the tract of the headlong torrent, and all the bold imagery of nature in her sublimest coloring, excited correspondent sentiments in the beholder. We at length reached the top of a gently sloping hill, immediately below which extends a delightful valley, where, at the further end, is the village of *Stellenbosch*. As we proceeded, the tops of the houses peeped from beneath the waving trees. Descending from this height, we soon entered this charming district, diversified with corn-fields and vineyards. On the banks of the river there were a few neat looking houses, the adjoining

adjoining grounds well cultivated, and every one busily employed in preparing for the vintage now approaching.

On our arrival at Stellenbosch we were well entertained at Wolfrom's, a native of Hesse Cassel, who is not ignorant of the art of making his guests pay handsomely for what they receive. This house being crowded, during the summer season, with visitors from the Cape, may with propriety be called the fashionable resort for parties of pleasure. The whole company breakfast and dine together, and the landlord and landlady preside at table. Many repair thither, who are in a bad state of health, to avoid the heat, and violent south-east winds of Cape Town. Here may be procured the finest fruits in the colony; our table groaned under a load of excellent peaches, apricots, and grapes. In Stellenbosch and its environs, the lovers of calm retirement and philosophic ease find numberless charms:—for my part, I could be contented to pass the remainder of my days there, were it not for the *amor patriæ* which is natural to every breast. Whether it be rich or poor, fertile

or

or barren, still our own native spot fixes our affections, which are felt the stronger the further we are removed from it; added to the endearing ties of friendship contracted in early life, rivetted by time, and the pleasing retrospect of the pleasures they have afforded.

Though Stellenbosch is about fifteen English miles from the sea, we were well provided with excellent Roman fish for table, caught in Gordon's Bay, being an inlet on the south-east side of False Bay. I must observe, that when the traveller inquires the distance of one place from another in the course of his journey, the question is, "How many *hours* is it?" that is, in what time can it be performed at a quick or a moderate pace? The answer is regulated according to the period of time that they themselves are accustomed to travel it. When a boor travels by himself on horseback, he goes at the full gallop, never sparing the little hardy animal that carries him along. He arrives at his friend's house with his horse as wet with perspiration as if he had been plunged over head in water: he tumbles the saddle off,

off, and allows the almost exhausted animal to roll himself in the sand, without giving himself any further trouble about him.

During our stay at Stellenbosch, the heat of the weather prevented our going much abroad, but the large spreading oaks, (that form successive avenues along the streets,) afforded a cool shade from the sun, and an agreeable shelter from the south-east winds. It was with regret I observed, that a few of the finest and largest oaks had been lately cut down. We visited several of the wealthy farmers in the neighbourhood, and met with that hearty welcome and liberality which so peculiarly distinguish them at this moment. I am well aware of the different opinions entertained of this class of men; regardless of such, I give my gleanings from facts, and the testimony of my feelings.

The district of Stellenbosch is noted for its extensive and profitable vineyards. The Steen wine made here is of a superior quality. The different families we visited always presented us with a glass of their best wine: they indulge themselves in something of a stronger nature, and more suited to their
their

their palates;—this is what they call a *sopie*, to which, in the course of the day, they have frequently recourse.

A knowledge of the language of the country through which the traveller passes, is always found peculiarly useful. In enjoying this advantage, he associates with the different characters he chances to meet with in the course of his journey, with a degree of profit and pleasure to himself of which he would otherwise be deprived: by this means the latent character is sometimes brought to light, and numberless little anecdotes are learnt, relating to the condition, genius, pursuits, and employments of those with whom he converses.

During the persecuting spirit, and bigoted prejudices of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when many families were forced to fly their native country, and risk the danger of crossing extensive seas, we may readily suppose that the Cape would not be overlooked by those voluntary exiles in making choice of a settlement to which the comparative mildness of the Dutch government, in matters of conscience, might be a power-

ful recommendation. At this day a number of families of German origin are to be met with in all parts of the colony, whose forefathers were among the earliest settlers at the Cape.

It was with regret that I found the avocations of business required my immediate return to Cape Town; you must, therefore, excuse my not paying a visit to the Paarl, Draeigensteen, and other delightful retreats in our neighbourhood till another opportunity. I fondly hope, that ere long I shall again call upon my friend to take a further peep into the country,—till then, adieu.

LETTER XXVII.

The original inhabitants of the southern extremities of Africa
 —The present Hottentots have lost much of their original independent character—The Hordes no longer compose one distinct nation; they are scattered about, and more in a state of slavery than if actual slaves—Wanton cruelty of the Boors
 —Description of their persons, male and female—Their dress
 —Employment—A Hottentot encampment of men, women, and children—Their amusements at night—Garrulity of a Hottentot woman—Of the dissensions in the upper districts of Graaff Reynet—Heroism of Reinsberg.

ALLOW me to introduce to your notice the original inhabitants of the southern extremities of Africa. The character and manners of life of the Hottentot have already been so accurately described and investigated by travellers, that some apology seems necessary on my part, when I venture upon the subject. May I not be indulged in laying before you the little traits of character

I have learnt from personal observation, and the relations of those, whose opportunities and veracity are equally unquestionable?

There can be little doubt that the Hottentots of the present day have lost much of their original independent character, from their connexion and intercourse with Europeans. The powerful engines of brandy and tobacco, which most savages are fond of, being liberally distributed by the first European settlers, gave a fatal blow to their independence as a body, and eventually led to their complete subjugation. In the vicinity of the Cape you no longer meet with hordes, who formerly united together under the command of a chief, and were wont to acknowledge his authority, and follow his standard. They may be said no longer to compose one distinct nation;—they are to be found scattered over the face of the colony, acting in the capacity of drudges or menial servants to the boors;—more dependent, and more in a state of slavery than if actually *slaves*;—exposed to the insolence of power, the severities of oppression, and the caprices of a boorish disposition;—their
whole

whole race, in a paroxysm of rage, stigmatized with every epithet of reproach;—their feelings trampled under, and their services ill requited.

When they can no longer submit to their hard fortune, and attempt to escape from those multiplied injuries which have been heaped upon them, he who calls himself their lord and master snatches up his gun, and pursues the runaway. If overtaken in his flight, he can expect no mercy. The master pops his gun at him with the same indifference that he would at a hare or a partridge. The frequent instances of this kind that have occurred, set the matter beyond all doubt; and when the Hottentots become the subject of conversation, a strong spirit of inveteracy, and secret wishes for their extirpation may be discovered in the family against them. No wonder, then, that they should fly the haunts of savages, and endeavour to regain their liberty and peace.

The figure of the Hottentot is, upon the whole, not unhandsome; many of them are tall, with limbs well proportioned, seemingly calculated for activity, and capable of en-

during fatigue. When a Hottentot is in motion, he is altogether animation; his pace is so quick, that he seems rather to fly than to walk:—when he runs, his feet are thrown up behind him in such an astonishing manner, that they hardly touch the ground. How unlike himself a few hours before, when, crouching over the fire, or squatted at full length basking himself in the sun!

The eyes of the Hottentots are peculiarly lively and animated, and in many of the females whom I have seen, they bespeak a languishing softness, which, conjoined to a set of fine white teeth, render them sufficiently attractive. It is only in the more distant parts of the colony that they appear dressed in the primitive simplicity of their country with their sheep-skins. It sometimes happens that a few of them, thus dressed, attend the boor's waggon from the interior to Cape Town, to lead the oxen, or be otherwise subservient on the journey;—they are generally poor enslaved beings, carrying evident marks of wretchedness along with them. They frequently part with their sheep-skins in exchange for old
blankets,

blankets, or any other coarse wrappers that may cover their nakedness:—the female Hottentots in the neighbourhood of the Cape are generally clad in this manner.

Having lived for some time in the vicinity of a Hottentot encampment of men, women, and children, I had there an opportunity of observing their customs and manners, and of gleaning some little matter from my occasionally associating and conversing with them. Invited by the pleasantness of the weather, I have at times strolled into their camp, and passed a few hours in being a spectator of their night scenes of gaiety and mirth. When all nature is hushed in silence, it is then that the Hottentots betake themselves to the song and dance, and let me not be ashamed to acknowledge, that I have, perhaps, tasted more genuine pleasure amidst this harmless society, where the cheerful countenances of all around excited a correspondent cheerfulness to the spectator, than I could well experience in the splendid circles of the great. At a little distance the husband was broiling his steak over the fire, while his wife sat hard by, dandling a young
Q 4 chubby

chubby Hottentot on her knee, and humming a tune to keep it quiet;—others were busily employed in dancing to the music of the ramky, (as they call it,) and seemed highly delighted with their exertions. The most discordant music possesses a magic power in setting them all in motion. The young girls are equally sensible of its charms,—they have a tolerable ear, and when they sing evince much natural sweetness and harmony. They are at no loss in amusing themselves with our fashionable reels and strathspeys. There was one among them, with a child in her arms, more inclined to be talkative than the rest; by the bye, you must know that they all understood the corrupted Dutch that is spoken in the interior, and the little I was master of I did not fail to exercise in encouraging the garrulity of my fair Hottentot. She was employed at her toilet in bedaubing her cheeks with an oily composition of charcoal and sheeps-tail blended together, and appeared by her manner to think that this sooty coloring added to her charms. Does not the modern fine lady of our country, while thus plastering
her

her face with rouge, from the same principle of vanity, fancy herself irresistible? I was anxious to know the sentiments she entertained on the subject; besides heightening her charms, she said, she found it peculiarly useful as a preventive against the scorching rays of the sun. She spoke warmly of the cruel treatment that the boors of the interior had manifested towards some of her relations during the late disturbances, when the marked fidelity of many Hottentots was conspicuously displayed. If a wandering, unarmed Hottentot fell into their hands, instant death was the inevitable consequence.

The Hottentots in general seem to entertain a higher idea of the justice of the British character, than of that of the inhabitants of the Cape; they rejoiced when it was in the possession of the English, and were justly apprehensive, in the event of a vicissitude of fortune, that additional severities would be imposed upon them.

During the prevalence of dissention in the upper districts of Graaff Reynet, you are not to suppose that the whole body of
boors

boors were in opposition to the British government. A boor, named Reinsberg, deserves to be noted from the part he acted in the theatre of war. He was one of those daring adventurous spirits which great occasions only bring to light, and in a period of general consternation and alarm, give a preponderating influence to whatever party they espouse. By all he was looked upon as a staunch friend to the British interest, and from his connexion and dealings with the Caffre nation, had become an invaluable acquisition. I shall here mention a trait of his heroism and presence of mind, as related to me by a friend who had been on the spot. —At a time when a small detachment of British troops were in danger of being cut to pieces by a numerous body of Caffres who unexpectedly came upon them, Reinsberg was then in the neighbourhood, and had under his command about forty boors, who, upon discovering the Caffres, fled in confusion. In this critical moment Reinsberg followed them, and endeavoured to rally them to their post. Having succeeded in collecting them together, he thus forcibly

addressed his party;—"That while an Englishman remained, he would fight to the last drop of his blood; and that the first among them who should dare to fly, he would shoot dead on the spot." This laconic address had the desired effect, the English were supported, and the Caffres were forced to give way.—Adieu.

LETTER XXVIII.

About three hundred Hottentots regularly disciplined, and instructed in European tactics—Their abilities and allegiance in the service—The Hottentots' natural antipathy to the boors—Partiality to brandy and tobacco—The mode of insuring their fidelity and co-operation, as adopted by the Dutch—The Christian religion favorably received among them—Their docility, industry, &c.—Envy, &c. of the boors—The Hottentot dance—Illicit love, and its baneful effects—Indolence of the women—Characteristic mildness and innocence.

THE British government have hitherto retained in their service a body of about three hundred Hottentots, who have been regularly disciplined and instructed in European tactics. They have been collected together from all parts of the colony, and in the necessary duties and fatigues of the soldier, have been found highly useful. Upon the first alarm of the disturbances in the interior, they were immediately ordered to the scene

scene of action, under the command of English officers, being well calculated for a service of this nature, not only from their knowledge of the country, but their quickness in marching and supporting its necessary fatigues; though at times they had their friends and relations to contend with, as partizans of the opposite party, yet few or none of them ever betrayed their fidelity, or discovered a disposition to desert.

The Hottentot has a natural antipathy to the boor, and is not at all averse to be employed offensively against him. In an irregular halting warfare he excels, and can find covert and concealment in an apparently open country, where a British soldier would instantly be discovered. Though he is powerfully inclined to inactivity and repose, yet he can be easily roused to exertion. They, indeed, find it their interest to attach themselves to a government that acts towards them with mildness, and supplies them abundantly with the means of subsistence. From the pay that is allowed them they can enjoy their much esteemed luxuries of brandy and tobacco, and after the field-day,

or

or parade, they thus indulge themselves freely, without any regard of a supply for to-morrow. To ensure their fidelity and co-operation, the Hottentot chief, or captain, must be brought over to your cause, for still they entertain sentiments of respect for the head of their horde, though this respect is at present much abated. On the first establishment of the colony, the Dutch did not fail in adopting this political step, to ensure their allegiance, and soften their usurpation. When they had conciliated the friendship of the chief, they acknowledged his authority, and dubbed him a *capitein*. As an emblem of peace from his new master, he received a brass-headed cane, with the Dutch Company's arms engraved upon it—the price of his liberty and independence.

Religious sentiments, or superstitious prejudices, are equally strangers to the mind of the Hottentot. In a state of nature, he neither knows nor feels that there is a God. Though possessed of this apathy of character, yet the pure tenets of the Christian religion have been favorably received among them.

them. The missionaries have been tolerably successful, and formed establishments in different parts of the country. At Bariano-Kloaf, the children are not only taught to read, but the men are instructed in the more useful arts of civilized life; they manufacture knives with considerable ingenuity and address. Thus, the principles of industry are not neglected, together with their religious instruction; and while we teach them to be better, at the same time that we encrease their comforts—every honest heart must rejoice in such laudable endeavours.

The boors of the interior have uniformly acted in opposition to such establishment. They hold in the greatest detestation a poor Hottentot who is without the pale of the church, and pique themselves upon being Christians, yet they would not for the world give countenance to any institution that might tend to the conversion of those poor heathens. They are alarmed at the capacity which the Hottentot discovers for instruction, and fear that, in his progressive improvements, his labours might be more usefully

usefully directed to his own advantage, and a higher value put upon his services. It is ever their aim to retain their dominion over them—to sway them with their accustomed severity, and to thicken the clouds of ignorance around them. With the savage, as with the civilized part of mankind, we may discover an equal fondness for dancing.—When in the hey-day of youth, we are more naturally disposed to this expression of our good humour, and gaiety of spirits; but how often, my friend, among the polite circles of civilized society, do the gay and airy movements of the body, form a striking contrast to the temper of the mind. When the savage finds himself inclined to exert himself in this way, it is following the strong impulse of a sense of present happiness, and the motions of his body are in perfect unison with his feelings. When the Hottentots are disposed to dance, they are not nice in the choice of a spot to exhibit in. A small space is sufficient for this occasion, and they are in a manner confined to a particular spot. They hang down their heads, beating their feet to the music in regular time, while
the

the part behind naturally protrudes, and exhibits a somewhat ludicrous appendage.— Their figure in the dance, is what a *petit maître* would set down as the very antipodes of grace and elegance. As every virtue is mostly accompanied by its kindred vice, thus are the Hottentots by no means strangers to the latter. It is their connection with the European world that has initiated them in meanness, wretchedness, and vice. The dreadful scourge of unlawful love has found its way among them, and, in all probability, has by this time extended its ravages to the utmost confines of the colony. A female Hottentot, a victim to this loathsome disease, and the mean slave of drunkenness, is, indeed, a wretch hardly human, and presents to the reflecting mind, a pitiable picture of European intercourse!

It is a task not unattended with difficulty, to reconcile the female Hottentots to habits of industry. You may often see them formed in circular groups, basking in the sun, literally counting their fingers, as if only destined by Nature to eat and sleep, and while awake to remain in a state of apathy and

R listlessness

listlessness. It is only in the moon-light scenes of merriment and dancing, that they become animated, and seem to possess any energy of character. There is a characteristic mildness, innocence, and harmlessness of manner, in the general character of the Hottentots, that but ill accords with those ideas which we annex to a *savage race*.

Adieu.

LETTER XXIX.

A crowd of Malay slaves enjoying the pleasures of a cock-fight—Bets on the match—A new scene of gambling—Reflections on gaming—The slaves at the Cape addicted to this vice—They not only risk their property and clothes, but stake their very children—Often disturbed at their play by the officers of police—Cunning, &c. of several Malay residents in Cape Town, who have obtained their freedom—A Malay priest—The usual employments enjoined by way of penance for sins—The priest acts also as a physician—A Malay funeral—Cursorv remarks.

ANY thing novel—any thing out of the beaten track of incident, that I chance to meet with in the course of my perambulations, I find a re-enjoyment of my pleasures in detailing to my friend. There are a thousand little things that to me have their respective charms, but which are perhaps coldly observed, or totally over-looked by

others. There are many *ears* left behind by the sickle, which the master of the field heedlessly passes by—therefore, be it my province to glean them, and, by their increase, make them valuable.

The pleasantness of the weather invited me abroad, and I rambled insensibly till I at last found myself in the middle of a crowd of Malay slaves, who, having formed a circle, were enjoying the pleasures of a *cock-fight*, and, after the idle part of our countrymen, had bets depending on the match. The keen expression of their countenances, and the warm interest of the spectators, excited my curiosity. I mingled with the crowd, and could be at no loss to infer, from the nature of their amusement, the natural disposition of this class of slaves. The conflict was obstinate, and the strength and spirit of the poor animals were totally exhausted. They are commonly armed with artificial spurs, and are seldom separated till one of them receives the mortal blow. The crowd separated into several lesser circles, and a new scene of gambling commenced. The dice-box was forthwith
1 produced,

produced, and the young, middle-aged, and old, pressed close upon each other, and staked their several sums. It was no unamusing sight to observe the various change of features, as their good or bad fortune prevailed. While the eyes of the one glistened with the gains that lay before him, the other looked sullen and dissatisfied from the stakes that he had lost. The noise and warmth of my brown-complexioned gamblers, increasing apace, I was glad to make my escape, forcibly impressed with a conviction of the series of ills that a spirit of gambling must inevitably entail, not only on the gamester, but its destructive consequences to society at large.

Among this class of slaves at the Cape, a wild gambling spirit is universally predominant, and is carried to such excess, that not only do they cheerfully risk every farthing they possess, but the very cloaths upon their backs; nay, I have been told there have been instances of staking their very children, a fact so unnatural as hardly to be credited. The officers of police often disturb them in the keenness of their play; and,

when assembled for this purpose, they have their out-posts to watch their approach, that they may betake themselves in time to their heels.

A number of Malay families, who have obtained their freedom, reside in Cape Town. From fishing, and a low species of traffic, they gain their livelihood, and can successfully exert a spirit of cunning and industry.

On my way home, I met with a Malay priest, on whose face the wrinkles of age had long taken possession. He was employed in superintending a few of his tribe, who were busily engaged in carrying gravel in a basket, which they threw down upon the road, and thus helped to keep it in repair; I understood that such employment is enjoined them by way of penance for their sins. They seem to be the only class of slaves that interest themselves with the performance of religious duties. To their priests they pay great reverence and respect, are implicitly obedient to his commands, and from their contributions he subsists. While I remained with the good old father,
I had

I had an opportunity of seeing he was equally skilful in the art of curing the diseases of the body, as well as the soul. A young woman, neatly dressed, with her long hair closely plaited up behind, presented herself before him, and giving him to understand that she was indisposed, asked his advice. With the greatest composure he took a small box from his sack, and striking into its contents a few sparks from the steel, it immediately caught fire, and emitted a somewhat fragrant vapour, with which he bedewed the forehead and temples of the fair suppliant. It had an instantaneous effect, for she took her leave with a look of gratitude and apparent relief from her pain. Happy confidence! that can thus so easily beguile us into health of body and serenity of mind.

My steps were insensibly directed to the "*house appointed for all living.*" I could not help experiencing sensations of a pleasing nature, in viewing the neat manner in which they Malays dress up the graves of their deceased friends, which are surrounded with stone, and covered over with pebbles.

There is, indeed, a mournful, melancholy pleasure in decorating the repository of the dead. An egg was placed at the head of one of the tomb-stones, perhaps as an emblem of the purity of the soul. The burial of a Malay is conducted with respect and decorum. The body is ceremoniously carried to the grave, covered with a white shroud, and fancifully strewed with flowers. All the attendants are dressed in their best attire. The Mosambique and Madagascar slaves conduct these matters with indifference, and an entire neglect of all decency and form: they throw the corpse on a bier, and very unconcernedly commit it to the grave.

The temper of my mind concurring with the objects I contemplated, naturally inclined me to be serious. I proceeded along the sea side, and the regular undulating motion of the waves on the beach, heightened the mournful picture, which fancy was busily employed in delineating. How fleeting are sublunary enjoyments! I felt the last word still quivering on my lips, and a responsive sigh gave solemnity to my utterance.

terance. Mark, how proud does that billow rear its head in its approach to the shore—nay, prouder still is that which follows it! The opposing rock has laid low its white crest, and every succeeding one is doomed to the same fate! How many among mankind, have, like thee, been equally high in expectation, and elevated with hope, just at the very moment when some of those accidents that are thickly strewed in the path of life, were about to overwhelm them for ever! In a length of time, unconscious of danger, they rolled smoothly on like thee, O wave!—like thee have they met the opposing rock, and have sunk into inanity!

Adieu.
