
LETTER XXX.

The colonial laws established on the surrender of the Cape, in 1795—They sanction no partial division of property—The chief magistrate, or fiscal—His principal emolument—The court of justice—How composed and conducted—The burgher senate—The wyk-meester acts as constable—The landrest, or chief magistrate of a district—His assistants called the veldt cornets—A military post established, as a check upon the boors, &c.—The commissary, or ecclesiastical court—Hardships and inconveniences attending it—Its evil tendency.

ON the surrender of the Cape into the hands of the English, in September 1795, the then existing colonial laws were to remain in full force, and an exemption from all taxes was claimed and granted.

Here the rights of primogeniture, are not recognised; the younger son has an equal claim with the elder, and an impartial distribution of property takes place in the family; the laws of the clergy sanction

no partial division, and even should a daughter make choice of a husband, without the consent of her parents, they cannot withhold from her that portion which is her right, when a division of capital takes place, on the death of either parent. One might suppose that the young ladies, naturally of a warm temperament, might, in consequence, enjoy a greater latitude in making choice of a husband.

The chief magistrate at the Cape, is the fiscal: there is a stated salary attached to the office, but his principal emolument arises from fines, which being a power vested in him as discretionary, is so much the more dangerous to the colonists. During the Dutch administration, this appointment was commonly given to a person sent out from the mother country. The present fiscal is an African. The court of justice, being the supreme civil and criminal tribunal, is composed of the most respectable inhabitants. They do not prepare themselves by any regular judicial plan of study, in order to qualify themselves for the station; plain sound sense, correct judgment, and an intimate

intimate acquaintance with colonial forms and regulations, are sufficient qualifications. I wish I could applaud them for their discriminative justice, and impartial decisions, but I fear, my friend, that this court of *justice*, is too often the court of *bribery*—When any one supposes himself aggrieved, an appeal lies open to the governor of the colony.

To the burgher senate more properly belong the immediate concerns and welfare of the colony. Their meetings, when occasion requires it, are held in the stadt-house, and they have a president, whose office is elective. Every street has its respective *wyk-meester*, being a respectable householder, to act in cases of alarm as a constable, to maintain order, and prevent irregularities.

In the country, the chief magistrate is what they call the *landrest* of the district; he has commonly within his jurisdiction, a number of *veldt cornets*, who relieve him of a great deal of trouble, and perform all the drudgeries of office. The districts of Stellenbasch, Swellendam, and Graaf Ruyt,

net, have each their *landrests*. The last-mentioned district is upwards of five hundred miles from the Cape. A military post has been established in this distant part of the country, as a check upon the boors, and a security against the incursions of the neighbouring Caffres, and *Schelm Hottentots*.

The commissary, or ecclesiastical court at the Cape, deserves to be noticed, from its peculiar privileges and dispensations, and the hardships and inconveniences which the colonists must submit to, as a necessary consequence. This court possesses the exclusive privilege of granting licences to parties intending to marry, upon their paying the *douceur* of twenty-five rix-dollars. One day in the week is appointed for issuing the licence and receiving the fee, from such as intend repairing to the altar of Hymen. What constitutes the peculiar hardship of this exaction is, that, as they never allow these important matters to be managed by proxy, the parties themselves must appear *in propriis personis*, and sometimes travel many hundred miles for this purpose, and without conforming

conforming to this preliminary step, no clergyman in any of the more distant districts, dare celebrate the nuptials. When we cast our eyes on the map of this far-extended colony, and consider the distance between the capital and its utmost boundaries, the peculiar inconveniences and hardships attending a compliance with this colonial regulation, must be striking to any one. They are often obliged to submit to toilsome journies in their covered waggons, before they can be lawfully wedded to the object of their choice. It sometimes happens that the young boor, rather than perform these tedious journies, when his domestic affairs may incapacitate him from the undertaking, lives or cohabits with his fair mistress for a length of time, nor, till he finds a young family increasing around him, can he prevail upon himself to visit the ecclesiastical court. Indeed, it frequently happens, that the pregnancy of the lady determines his departure.

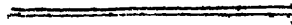
Whatever might have been the political views of the Dutch, in enjoining and enforcing this oppressive regulation, its injurious

rious consequences are obvious. A check to population—an encouragement to prostitution—and, finally, divesting the marriage ceremony of its sanctity and respect among the distant settlers.

It may, indeed, make them more dependent on the government at the Cape, and a more accurate and correct return of the interior may thereby be obtained with greater facility. But might not the same end be accomplished (not to use a harsher term) by a measure less impolitic and unjust?

You may find fault with the order, style, and subject of my "Gleanings," but I trust their brevity, and the pleasure I experience in pursuing the task you enjoin, will avert all criticism. In the mean time,

Adieu.



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LETTER XXXI.

Further particulars of the ladies of the colony—Their levity, familiarity, &c.—Education—Peculiarly fond of dancing—An elegant theatre erected—Indifference of Dutch husbands—Several of the Cape ladies acquainted with the English language—A circulating library lately set on foot.

I SHALL here attempt to present you with a more enlarged picture of the ladies of the colony. You are already made acquainted that in personal charms, and mere exterior accomplishments, they are allowed to excel; but we must now speak of that better part of them—the mind, natural dispositions, mode of education, and principal amusements.

The warmth and influence of a genial climate, contribute not a little to their gaiety and good-humour, which, in a higher latitude,

latitude, amidst the society of the more scrupulous, and morose female characters, would immediately be set down as the high road to ruin. Thus, they are naturally led to be more familiar in their intercourse with strangers, but we should not, on this account, give them less credit for correctness and propriety of conduct. What, indeed, must have a wonderful influence on their sentiments and manners, is, their being constantly attended by, and in habits of intimacy with the female slaves (as I observed in a former letter) who openly bestow favors on such as give themselves the trouble of seeking them. They will always find a convenient hour or season to give a wrong bias to their young mistresses' mind, at a period of life when impressions of that nature, conjoined with physical causes, are not unaccompanied with danger. Custom prescribes to them no regular plan of education. Brilliant and fashionable accomplishments are their only aim, while the more homely lessons of domestic œconomy, are mere secondary considerations. Accustomed to be surrounded

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rounded with female slaves from their infancy, they no sooner begin to move, than they find they are not allowed to assist themselves, but have attendants at their call, over whom they are soon taught, by the powerful examples they see around them, of exercising the imperious tones of command; this, by degrees, is confirmed by habit, and carried with them into active life, when they become mothers in their turn.

The young women are peculiarly fond of dancing, and display both elegance and grace, when assembled on such occasions. Previous to the arrival of the English among them, parties of this kind were more frequent; indeed, they seem to think that we have too little *penchant* for these amusements, and that we substitute the more noisy diversion of bets, horse-racing, &c. in its stead—perhaps there is some truth in the remark.

We have endeavoured to introduce among them, a taste for theatrical amusements. An elegant theatre has been built at a great expence,

pence, and such gentlemen of the garrison as are theatrically inclined, come forward to tread the Cape boards. Our neighbours, however, in New South Wales, are beforehand with us in theatricals; but they have always at their command, a company renowned for their versatile abilities, and adequate to all the shifting scenes of mimic life.

Should the Dutch be again put in possession of the Cape, they will probably convert the *Cape Drury* into *pakhuisen* for commercial purposes. We will pass over the little calumnies that are industriously spread abroad respecting the married ladies of the Cape. Jealousy is not the character of a Cape Dutchman. Some are, perhaps, as regardless of the honour of their family, as the smoke they whiff around from their tobacco-pipes; indeed, a pupil of Godwin's school, could not display, on these occasions, a more philosophic coolness and indifference.

A knowledge of the English language is not among the least acquirements of the

fair-sex at the Cape. Several of them speak it with fluency and correctness of pronunciation. The residence of the English among them, has not much inclined them to a fondness for reading ; this is, perhaps, the more fortunate for them. Had they the same partiality for the romantic tales that annually issue from our press, as the gay fashionables of this country, then might we justly apprehend, from the mode of their education, consequences far more subversive of purity of manners, and social happiness.

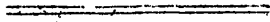
A society of Dutch gentlemen at the Cape, have lately set on foot a circulating library. It consists of a tolerable selection from the English, French, German, and Dutch writers. A great portion of that time which is wasted in indolence, and amid the fumes of tobacco, may henceforward be more profitably employed in improving the mind, and acquiring a more perfect knowledge of men and manners. And may we not, also, indulge the fond hope, that the native tribes, who inhabit the southern

ern continent of Africa, may soon experience those happy effects that result from this powerful engine of civilization?

“ ————— ’Tis a consummation

“ Devoutly to be wished.”

Yours, &c.



LETTER XXXII.

Fertility of the climate, and indolence of the inhabitants--
Slavery prejudicial to industry--The corn-farmers, the most
active at the Cape--A habit peculiar to the climate.

WE may, with some degree of confidence advance, that in no other part of the world, might the comforts and conveniences of life be more easily or cheaply attained, than in this part of Africa. Blessed with the finest climate, and a fertility of soil that hardly knows any bounds, it holds out an inviting hand to the exertions of the industrious. Although Nature has done a great deal, the inhabitants may be said to have done nothing, for the little exertion that is required to satisfy the wants of Nature, is left entirely to the slaves. It would be as easy to direct the streams of the most considerable
rivers

rivers of the country to a different channel, as to rouse the colonist from his uniform indolence of character. It may with justice be said, that the introduction of slaves into the colony, has entailed a series of ill upon it, which are now, perhaps, beyond the power of redress. How pleasing the picture to behold the free man cheerfully engaged in the labors of the field; every movement of his body indicates that to him it is a voluntary employment. Mark the slave—his motions are slow; he looks with a dejected countenance on the soil he is obliged to dig; he watches the eye of his master, and when left alone, thinks every moment that is unemployed, comparative happiness.

Among the different classes of men at the Cape, we must allow that the corn-farmer is more inclined to exertion, and less indolent in his habits, from the very nature of his employment. As soon as day-light appears, he starts from his bed, and has recourse to his pipe and *sapjé*; this being done, the slaves are set to work at their respective occupations, and the master ge-

nerally remains close with them. If the house is conveniently situated, he marches up and down before the door, and at the same time has a watchful eye over them while at work. A cup of coffee is the common morning beverage. In this manner he is for the most part employed till dinner-time, which is precisely at twelve o'clock. As it is the custom of the country to indulge Nature in a few hours repose after this meal, the house becomes as still and silent as at midnight, and woe betide the slaves if the clapping of the doors, or the barking of the dogs interrupt the family slumbers. If a stranger happens to be present, he is politely asked, if he is inclined to take a nap? The question seems to us so much out of season, that we generally answer in the negative. Sometimes, indeed, at the termination of a long morning's ride, exposed to the rays of a scorching sun, we feel somewhat inclined, after a hearty repast, to follow the fashion of the house in this particular. After a few hours repose we get up refreshed, and prosecute our journey in the cool of the evening. The influence of climate induces ha-

bits in which the inhabitants of cold countries find no propensity to indulge. Were we to calculate the time that they actually consume in sleep, perhaps we should find it less than that consumed by a similar class in our country. The lady of the family is alike partial to a nap, and, if we believe the whispers of scandal, it is then that *mynheer* becomes "high in blood," and madam "warm—tender—full of wishes."

Adieu.

LETTER XXXIII.

A visit to Hottentot Holland—Hospitably received at a farmer's—Customs of the inhabitants—Hottentot Holland Kloof—Description of the district—Houses, &c.—Opulence of the farmers—The vineyards—Wheat—Bread—Manner of threshing their corn.

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LET me fly from the slanders and little calumnies of Cape Town—extend my picture of the manners of the country, and endeavour to give you a faithful delineation of things as they are,—

“ Eye Nature's walks,—shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise.”

We left Cape Town at an early hour, and directed our course across that heavy, wearisome, sandy isthmus, which must be passed before we enter Hottentot Holland. Corn-fields and vineyards relieve the eye
from

from the dull, inanimate picture of sand and sterility.

Towards evening we arrived in the district of Hottentot Holland, and were hospitably received, and well treated at a farmer's house of the name of *Morkle*. We took up our lodging here for a few days, as we found that every thing around bespoke a hearty welcome. We here inquire for no tavern,—a decent looking house determines our choice, and the civilities of the family are the inducement of our stay. They are not all averse from accepting a small gratuity for these kindnesses, but not a few make a show of declining the acceptance of money, though, at the same time, they readily fall upon the means of getting rid of their affected delicacy on these occasions, by calling the children of the house, both white and black, to take what is offered by way of payment. No sooner has the stranger mounted his horse, than the present is quickly put into the family purse, and appropriated to domestic use. I have more than once experienced some little polite contentions of this kind in the course of our journey,

journey, and always gained my point in the manner above alluded to.

On the south-east side of our habitation an extended chain of elevated mountains of unequal height, stretch along to the north, naked and barren in the utmost latitude of the expression. Winding along, at no great distance, is the Hottentot Holland Kloof, —the pass, which, in a zig-zag direction, carries you across the mountains. In some parts the ascent is tolerably steep. The large bullock-waggons passing along here at once present a picture of danger and sublimity, while the beasts drag the half-suspended waggons across the mountains.

The district of Hottentot Holland is tolerably fertile, and in the higher parts of the valley you ride over a country highly picturesque and beautiful. It is intersected by two rivers, the *Eeste* and *Laurens*; now containing but very little water in their beds. No doubt in the winter months, when the rains pour down in torrents from the mountains, and carry their collected streams to these rivers, they may then assume a more considerable appearance. Instances
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have been known of the traveller being detained for several days on their banks during these inundations.

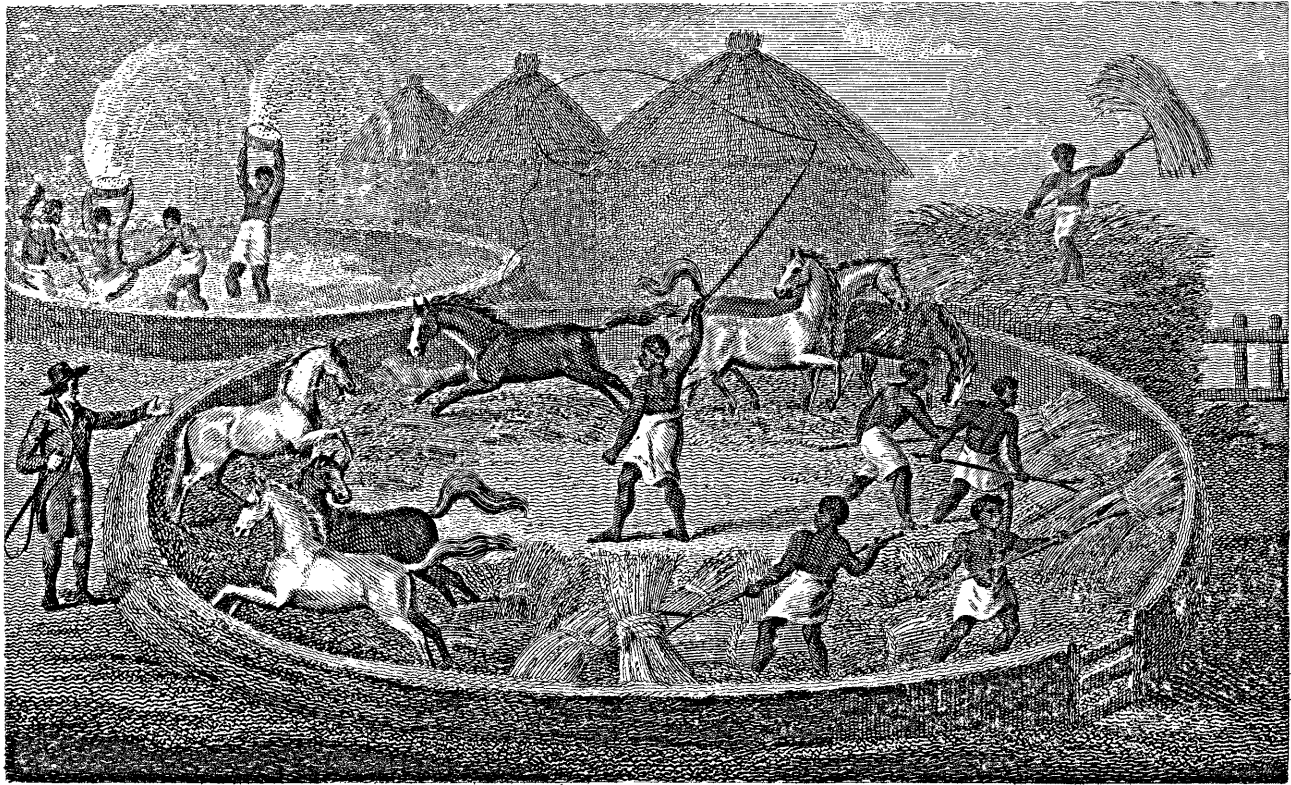
The houses are neat and clean, and in the enjoyment of plenty, they scruple not to invite those who pass the road to a share. The farmers are comfortably lodged, and the general appearance of their houses, with that of their manner of living, impresses rather the idea of the gentry of a country than that of boors. A few have got extensive corn-fields, and large vineyards. The general want of inclosures in this country, gives to the most fertile districts an unimproved and bare appearance. The corn-harvest has been this year uncommonly productive,—thus, to almost a famine succeeds plenty; but many are of opinion that the corn-farmer in Africa is no less skilled in hoarding and forestalling, (and its consequent practices,) than the most noted on your side of the Atlantic. From the increased demand of the produce of the colony since the arrival of the English, many of the farmers have risen from narrow circumstances to opulence, and the same may be said

said of the grazier. Nothing affords a more striking proof of the opulence of all ranks, when contrasted with former times, than the appearance of the female slaves running about the streets of Cape Town. Shoes and stockings were an article of luxury which no slave girl could formerly indulge in; but now they all boast of their fine silk stockings, and fashionable pointed shoes.

The produce of some of the vineyards of the part of the country I am now in, is from seventy to eighty leagers of wine. The wheat of the colony is excellent, of a reddish color, and a large full grain. There is almost in every house good bread to be met with;—they make use of dough which has been longer kept, and has acquired somewhat of a sourish taste, for leaven:—it is an excellent substitute for yeast.

The manner in which they perform the operation of threshing out their corn, may at first sight be condemned, but when we see how effectually it is completed, and the little that is lost in the process, we shall be apt to suspend so hasty a decision. The corn-ricks are generally built close by these circular

circular floors, which are surrounded by a fence of clay, perfectly hard, of about three feet in height. When the floor is swept clean, the sheafs are placed upon it, sometimes to the number of a thousand; then all the young horses of the farm are driven round this amphitheatre for a number of hours, till the whole is completely broken under their feet. A person stands with a long whip in the middle of the circle, to regulate their course, to quicken or moderate their pace as he finds it necessary, while a few more hands are employed in turning over the sheafs with forked sticks, so that the whole may have the benefit of an equal pressure. They separate the grain from the chaff by throwing it against the wind, which they continue to do till the lighter part is thus carried away by the force of the breeze. Perhaps a great deal of time and labor might be saved by using fanners, and the grain be more free from sand, of which the Cape flour has always a tolerable portion.—To shake off long established customs and habits in the manners or arts of life, is in all countries a business of time. We are slow



Engraved from Drawings made from Nature by the Author.

The Process of Threshing.

slow to adopt improvements, though convinced of the necessity of so doing. The serene, parching atmosphere of the Cape during the harvest months, hardens the grain to such a degree, that it does not require the operation of *kibu-drying* to fit it for the mill. OT

In the months of January and February, when they are most busily employed in threshing out their corn, and conveying it to market, they have no rains to dread;—the violence of the south-east winds may a little incommode them in their labors, but no where is this wind so tempestuous and disagreeable as in town. As the harvest approaches, and the crops invite the sickle, the weather becomes more dry and serene;—with you, my friend, it is quite the reverse, the moisture of the atmosphere increases with the yellow tinge of the fields; and the rains of August but too often overwhelm the husbandman in ruin. Want of rain is here the most general complaint; if the winter months sufficiently soak the ground, so as to fit it for the reception of the seed, and a few successive showers bring forward the

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the crop, the husbandman need be under no apprehension of the want of a fine season to gather in the fruits of his labor.

I find peculiar satisfaction in gleaning amid the rural walks of Southern Africa; but I confess I feel at present a diminution of my pleasure, when I reflect—when I see, that the colored group now before me are—slaves.

Adieu.



LETTER XXXIV.

Further particulars of Hottentot Holland—The manner of spending a day—Occupation of a master—Wife and husband—All is paper currency, instead of specie—Departure from Hottentot Holland—Arrival at Stellenbosch—A visit to Clapmutz, a corn-farm—Polite reception—Striking contrast of appearances and manners—Of the hay and soil—English mode of ploughing preferable to that of the Dutch—Invited to dinner by an old widow lady at an elegant villa—Particulars of her husband—Return to Stellenbosch.

THE pleasantness of the weather, and the attentions of the family, have induced us to prolong our stay in *Hottentot Holland*.—The white, fleecy clouds skim along the elevated chain of mountains before us, and portend an approaching south-easter. At the extremity of the sandy plain, on the right, the majestic Table Mountain stands insulated and alone, and catches the clouds that roll along from the southern ocean.

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Our house not being more than a few English miles from the sea, we enjoy the cool breeze, and are besides plentifully supplied with excellent fish for our table. We are hardly out of bed in the morning, when the breakfast is announced, and the table laid out with coffee, grapes, and peaches;—the good woman presses us to make a hearty meal, while she herself is occupied in knitting stockings by our side. We commonly amuse ourselves in the interval between this and twelve o'clock, with riding through the pleasant farms in our neighbourhood, and on our return find that dinner is served up,—the table literally groaning under a load of victuals; and a few glasses of country wine wash down our dinner. We then either retire to our rooms, or take a turn round the farm, the good people all this while enjoying their nap. A cup of tea is a common beverage with them in the afternoon; but few, or none of them, think it necessary to add sugar or milk to it. Towards evening the master of the family, and the elder boys, repair to the stable to look after the cattle, and tell over the horses and

oxen as they are then collected for the night. Supper is forthwith ready, and that being the meal which a Dutch boor seems to relish most, he falls to with a tolerably keen appetite. Less delicate stomachs might be apt to loath the sight of so much fat, but in the ideas of the family, the greater the quantity of greasy sauces, the greater is their perfection in the art of cookery.

Among the better sort of farmers you find a person dignified with the name of *Master*;—he is, in fact, the private tutor to the children, and instructs them to read and write; besides, he is the politician and oracle of the family. The woman of the house reserves to herself the more immediate management and economy of the family within doors, while to the husband belongs the superintendance of the more active labors of the field. The former is seldom without a large bunch of keys dangling by her side; thus, in complete armour, she goes about her domestic concerns,—receives and pays away money. You seldom meet with specie in the interior; all is paper currency, first brought into circulation to relieve a
temporary

temporary distress, but not likely to be discontinued. The English government have extended this visionary fabric of wealth, by the addition of fifty thousand rix-dollars.

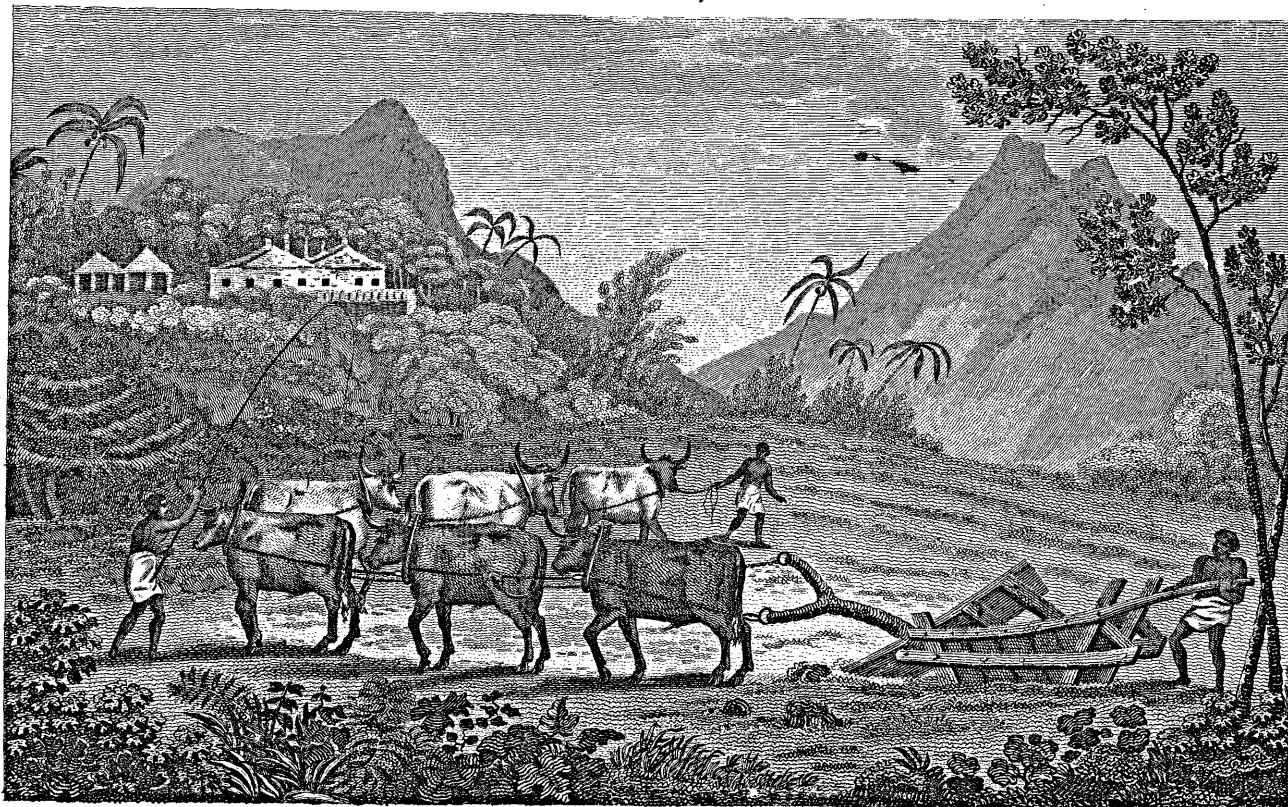
After spending here a few pleasant days, we took the road towards Stellenbosch. The general appearance of the country, as we went along, was bare and uncultivated. Beneath the rising hills we met with some neat country houses, and small vineyards adjoining. The running streams from the mountains supply them with water, and where this is to be had in plenty, an encouragement is held out to the labors of the industrious. On our arrival at Stellenbosch, the houses were crowded with parties of pleasure from the garrison at the Cape. Having nothing further to add to my former description of this place, I must beg leave to carry you a little further from the Cape. It is a trite, but yet a true remark, that the farther we remove from the capital, and its immediate vicinity, we are more hospitably and kindly welcomed by the inhabitants. Those nations which we are too apt to call *savage*, generally exhibit in

their character and conduct towards strangers more of this virtue, than what is experienced among those people whom we dignify with the title of civilized;—that is, in a state of society where the genuine feelings of our nature are kept under, shaped and fashioned according to the polite notions of genteel life.

We rode across the country to *Clapmutz*, situated on the sloping brow of a hill. This is a corn-farm in the hands of government. Mr. Ducket, an English farmer, resides here with his family;—he has been sent out from home to instruct the boors in the English method of farming. We were politely received; and the striking contrast of appearances and manners from the houses that we had just quitted, could not fail of making impressions favorable to our country. The Dutch see with surprize large *hay-ricks*, made from the wild grasses of the country. The hay being of an excellent quality, and finely flavoured from the diversity of flowers and sweet-scented herbs of which it is composed here, having always a warm and bright sun, it perhaps requires a much nicer attention

tion to the business of hay-making, to prevent its juices from being totally absorbed, than in more temperate climates. This must, therefore, in some measure regulate the process of cutting, spreading, and gathering it up into cocks. From the natural dryness of an African soil, it may be inferred that grass which requires a great deal of moisture, is much less adapted to it than that to which aridity is more congenial. Of the latter kind is the grass known by the name of Burnet, and experiments have frequently been made of its hardy nature. We saw a few of its plants here, which seemed to thrive, notwithstanding the dryness of the season. Green crops of almost every kind are totally neglected in this country, but time and example may effect wonders.

The neighbouring boors view with admiration and astonishment the neat manner in which the English ploughman turns up the hardest soil with only two horses in the yoke, while he, with his large, clumsy, awkward plough, does it in a bungling manner, and requires eight oxen to drive it along. From the continued action of a bright sun,



Engraved from Drawings made from Nature by the Author.

Buller.

Ploughing; with a View of the Governor's Villa near the Cape.

and parching south-east wind, during the summer months, the ground to be ploughed acquires a hard, concreted substance, and is bound together as firm, as if enchained by the hardest frost. The fall of the rains softens the whole, and this is what determines the ploughman to commence his operations. In April and May the rains are looked for, but in the more distant parts of the country they are much earlier. On every side of us, the strong stubble evinces the goodness of the crop, and the fertility of the soil.

Winding along the hill, we arrived at an elegant villa, surrounded with large trees, and vineyards displaying their luscious treasures to the traveller as he passes by. This was the hospitable mansion of an old widow lady of the name of *Melk*, who politely came to the door, and expressed a wish that we should stay for dinner. We were told that she is uncommonly rich. Her husband was a native of Prussia, and came early to the Cape. Being of an adventurous turn of mind, and a judicious calculator, he engaged in colonial speculations, which eventually
proved

proved successful; and at his death found himself possessed of a large capital, which our elderly widowed lady now enjoys, with her family, in this charming retreat.

In the evening we returned to Stellenbosch, where I shall leave you for the night, and remain,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

Another ride in a northerly direction—The Bang Hoek, a charming romantic spot—A delightful amphitheatre—Its extensive vineyard, &c.—Departure from it in the evening—Fransche Hoek—Derivation of its name—The village of Draagenstein—Arrival at Paarl, a scattered village—The inhabitants more industrious than elsewhere—Their houses—Hospitality and good-humor of the hostess—The country altogether a wine-district—Remarks thereon—Departure from the Paarl—Arrival at Wagen Maaker Vley—Derivation of its name—Its fertility—Hospitable entertainment for the night—Character of the host, who had been a brave soldier—His humanity to a black child—A visit to Ladikant, a romantic situation.

WITH the prospect of a warm day before us, we set out from Stellenbosch in the morning, and proceeded in a northerly direction.—As we ascended the hill, the diversified scenery on every side appeared highly beautiful;—towards the east the aspiring mountains rose in majestic grandeur, below the
village

village of Stellenbosch, studded with trees, and surrounded with gardens and vineyards; and from beneath the lonely valley peeped the lowly hut of some hospitable peasant.—In stretching along to the south, a glimpse of False Bay caught the eye. We continued our route in a zig-zag manner along the hill, and were unexpectedly delighted on entering a spot, perhaps the most romantic and charming that this country can boast of;—it is called the *Bang Hoek*.—As we continued ascending, we soon found ourselves in the midst of a delightful amphitheatre, bounded by stupendous mountains, rising almost perpendicular from the bottom, and presenting the sublime and solemn pourtraying of Nature to our admiring eyes. Those enchanting descriptions which are given us of the grand imagery of the scenes of Switzerland, (now, alas! pillaged, plundered, and completely revolutionized,) might even give place to this.—We stayed dinner with the owner of this beautiful retirement, and spent the greatest part of the day in going over the grounds. This vineyard is very extensive;—the whole valley is covered with
groves

groves of orange-trees, and the pigs were running about, feeding upon the peaches and plumb's as they fell from the trees. In favorable seasons, the fruits of the farm probably fetch twelve hundred rix-dollars, and to this we may add eighty or ninety leagers of wine. We observed a few wretched gooseberry bushes in his garden:—they do not thrive at the Cape; indeed, I am ignorant whether the experiment has been fairly tried. This place had something in itself so peculiarly attractive, that it was with regret we quitted it; and having thanked the good people of the farm for the civilities shewn us, we took our leave.—In the evening we rode along the slope of the hill on the west side of the valley, on a tolerable road,—the grandeur of the morning scene was heightened, and the shades of evening gave a parting coloring to the whole, soothing the mind to happy contentment and self-complacency.

On our right lay *Fransche Hoek*, (literally Englished, *The French Corner*,) which appellation it derived from affording an asylum to a few unfortunate exiles of that country,

at a period when the mad fury of zealots, and the indiscriminate persecutions of bigotry, had driven them far from home. At this distance of time, both their country and its language have been forgotten. In many parts of the country we met with settlers, whose name and lankness of figure proclaimed them of French descent; while the robust German, and corpulent Dutchman, have preserved their national characteristics in their posterity.

As we proceeded, the valley opened to our view, adorned with more numerous plantations. The village of *Draagenstein* we could hardly discern from amid the surrounding trees. Here some of the best wines of the country are produced, and in this district the labors of the farmer are wholly directed to the cultivation of the vine; for, having a ready market at hand, they soon empty their cellars. We hurried on to *Paarl*, and arrived there late in the evening. This is a scattered village, and extends along the foot of a rising ground. A number of poor tradesmen have resorted hither, where, from the profits of
their

their professions, and the advantage of a small spot of ground to furnish supplies to their family, they contrive to live very comfortably. A greater spirit of industry is seen among them, than I have yet discovered in the course of my journey. Their houses are both neat and comfortable, and peculiarly pleasing to him who feels a lively interest in the happiness of his fellow-creatures.

We remained at Paarl for a day, at the house of a good old widow lady, whose gaiety, hospitality, and good-humor, we ought always to remember. We had abundance of excellent fruits. The vintage was on the eve of commencing, which, in all countries, infuses a spirit of gaiety, and at the same time a more ready disposition to oblige. The country I am now in, is altogether a wine district. A great quantity of brandy is likewise distilled from the refuse and stalks of the grapes, and not unfrequently other fruits are added. The Cape brandy is a strong, bad spirit, without any flavour.

From the wine-merchant at the Cape, they were paid about forty rix-dollars for a leager

leager of wine;—previous to the arrival of the English, twenty-five dollars was the utmost a leager would fetch. From Paarl, we crossed the country to the north-east, and rode through a wild, uncultivated plain, the surface covered with long heath, which is the general covering to the parched tracts of Africa. About sun-set we arrived at the *Wagen Maaker Vley*, which, from the near resemblance of the Dutch word *vley* (a lake) to our English word *valley*, is generally Englished *Waggon Maker's Valley*. It has derived its name from the trees that formerly grew on the banks of the lake, fit for the purposes of waggon-building, but now it is difficult to find out either the one or the other; it has, however, a variety of trees of another kind. The most charming orange-ries, with their dark green foliage, and the vineyards winding along the bottom of the valley, contrasted with the surrounding bleak mountains, present a picture of fertility and barrenness highly picturesque. We were hospitably entertained for the night at the house of an old German of the name of *Veigh*. In the early part of his life he had
been

been a soldier, and in the seven years continental war, participated in the toils and glories of *Frederick the Great*. His manners and appearance bespoke the veteran soldier; and we generally attach an idea of something peculiarly interesting to the conversation of such a character. The name of Frederic imparted a sudden suffusion to his countenance, and he seemed to feel a renovation of his vigor while he acted over again the feats of his youth. The warmth and animation of our *Silesian* hero, gave a double relish to the good things that were brought us for supper. I assure my friend that I never before felt with greater energy and effect the speech of young Norval, in the tragedy of Douglas, in which he acknowledges that he was instructed in the art of war by a lonely hermit; my good old host immediately reminded me of this solitary man,—

“ For he had been a soldier in his youth,
And fought in many battles.”

He has, indeed, made choice of a most delightful retreat to spend the evenings of
his

his days;—the groves of orange-trees have been planted by his own hand; and the extensive vineyards that wind along the banks of the mountain stream, have enjoyed alike his fostering care. He is still indefatigable in his exertions, going about from sun-rise to sun-set in superintending the labors of his farm.—While at supper, the goodness of his heart was seen in the treatment of his slaves. A young child was brought in that had lately lost its mother; but the kind and endearing assiduities of the family soon made it forget the loss of its parent. As the poor little black creature was about to be sent away, both master and mistress blessed it with a parting kiss for the night.—You may think me too minute in my detail of circumstances as they occur; but the above you will pardon, from the more than ordinary impression it made upon my feelings.—A good bed having been provided, we bade the family good night.

The next morning we visited a most romantic plantation, situated at the head of the valley;—the road that led to it wined along the side of the mountain, and we were

suddenly gratified with the prospect of luxuriant orangeries and vineyards,—it is named *Ladikant*.—It frequently happens in travelling this country, that while seemingly around all is sand and heath, on getting to the top of the next eminence, the traveller is unexpectedly charmed with the sight of waving trees and luxuriant vegetation.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

Departure from Wagen Maaker Vley—An extensive valley—
 Hospitable fare at a poor peasant's—Cursory remarks—Pic-
 quet Berg—Vogel Vley ; derivation of the name of this lake—
 Rooi Sand Kloof—Lodge at a corn-farmer's ; his surly beha-
 viour—The journey resumed early the next morning—The dis-
 trict of the Twenty-four Rivers—Stop at a neat looking house
 ---Kindly entertained—Character of the host—Observations—
 The Twenty-four Rivers consist of a few insignificant streams.

AFTER leaving the Wagen Maaker Vley, we pursued our course to the north, and rode along the side of the mountain. An extensive valley opened to our view, variegated with corn-fields. The general appearance of the country is bare and uncultivated;—the soil naturally good clay, with a mixture of sand. Having suffered much from the rays of a scorching sun, we were glad towards noon to enter the hut of a poor peasant, who willingly offered us

what his house could afford. Our fare, indeed, was neither abundant nor luxurious, but, which made ample amends for both, was given with a cordiality that seemed to tell us we were welcome. It is this, my friend, that enhances the value of the gift, and gives a zest to the most meagre repast. Sheep's-tail was placed before us, instead of butter; the Africans in general relish this disgusting, greasy substance, but our more delicate palates would not allow us to partake of it. As this poor family, were we to judge from appearances, were struggling hard with the world, we took care to pay liberally for what was liberally given. The sight of a few rix-dollars can brighten up the countenance of a boor in his gloomiest moments.

The latter part of the day was delightfully serene. The soil, as we advanced, was seemingly better calculated for agricultural purposes. The mountains on our right increased in height, added to an awful sublimity that irresistibly attracted the wandering eye. Before us, at the utmost boundary of the plain, the towering *Picquet Berg* stood

stood detached and insulated;—there is a romantic wildness in all around:—the feelings strike in perfect unison to the bold coloring of the scene. Stupendous objects impart elevated sentiments, for we are made to feel a lively approximation to the author of our being; the sordid cares of life are dismissed for a while, and the whole heart expands in benevolence and love.

We arrived at *Vogel Vley*. This lake derives its name from the vast numbers of birds of the aquatic tribe that resort thither in the rainy season, and take flight thence when its waters are dried up. The pass of *Rooi Sand Kloof* was upon our right as we proceeded. It winds along the almost perpendicular sides of the ascending mountains, and the bullock-waggon is driven along here in the same manner as at Hottentot Holland. During the dry season, the *Rooi Sand Kloof* is preferred in travelling into the interior, from the greater certainty in finding springs of water on the journey through the Great Karroo, or desert. Previous to the arrival of the English at the Cape, a journey to the confines of the settle-

ment, or the *droosdy* of Graaff Reynet, was considered as a hazardous enterprize; and it is even acknowledged that the Cape residents were entirely ignorant of those less distant parts of the colony, which are now in a manner become familiar to every British officer. Five or six days are thought sufficient to perform a journey with relays of horses, to which the same number of months might formerly be deemed inadequate.

We made good our lodging at the house of a corn-farmer on the banks of the Vogel Vley. The master of the house was surly and inhospitable, and endeavoured to incommode us as much as possible, so as to get rid of us for the night; but as our horses were fatigued, and the night fast approaching, we thought it more prudent to remain where we were. Were we to reckon the number of his slaves, the extent of his farm, and the large corn-stacks in his farm-yard, we might set him down as a rich boor;—yet, from the absence of every thing comfortable in his house,—from his boisterous manners,—his unwillingness to please,—and finally

finally, from his rapacity in exacting the rix-dollars, I may set him down in my journal as a *poor man*. Early next morning we resumed our journey, and directed our course towards the district of the *Twenty-four Rivers*. Here is not so good corn-country as we passed along in the ride of yesterday, —no want of heath, and the soil more sandy. We still kept the chain of mountains to our right. About mid-day we entered the district of the *Twenty-four Rivers*. A neat-looking house, and every external mark of plenty, naturally induced us to halt. We soon alighted, and were met at the door by the master of the house, whose open, talkative disposition, gave hopes of better fare, and more hospitable treatment, than we had experienced the preceding night. We were not disappointed, but were received with a hearty welcome; and our table was liberally supplied with the good things of the farm. Our host seemed an enterprising, intelligent boor. He sows about fifty maids (bushels) of corn, and finds his account in making use of manure in his system of farming. In many parts of the country, where a rapid

succession of crops impoverishes the soil, and consequently makes it give but a poor return, a new piece of ground is immediately broken up, and the former cultivated spots allowed to rest till the lapse of a few years restores the principles of fertility. When the farmer is not limited as to his grounds, this is to them a less troublesome mode of procedure than having recourse to those arts of melioration, which in less extensive possessions they would necessarily be obliged to adopt. The new ground about to be brought into cultivation, generally undergoes a few months fallow, exposed to the arid south-east winds, and scorching summer sun, and remains in a hard, concreted state, till the return of the rainy season fits it for the reception of the seed.

We had here an opportunity of remarking a few instances of the industrious exertions of our host. He had, at his own expence, conveyed the water to his house and garden from a stream at the distance of more than three hours' walk. It was carried along the brow of a hill, in a neat, well-formed canal of about four feet broad. He could at will divert

divert the water thus conveyed to his vineyard and garden, and could likewise flood his pasture ground when it was requisite. Although no rains of any duration had fallen for a series of months past, yet he made no complaint of a scarcity. It was with much pleasure that we traced this canal almost to its source, as a pleasing picture of superior exertion seldom to be met with in this part of the world.

Next morning we rode over part of the district of *Twenty-four Rivers*. We were inclined to explore the streams that issued from the mountains to their source. From the name given to this part of the country, we are naturally led to expect the mighty waters of the Ganges or the Nile rolling beneath our feet; but I can assure you, my friend, that to discover but two or three of those rivers, requires some portion of patience, in riding over heaps of stone and brushwood; and after all this exertion, those *gigantic* rivers dwindle into a few insignificant streams. The larger branch of the *Twenty-four Rivers* issues from a large chasm in the mountain, and a little below it divides
into

into various lesser streams. It being now the driest season of the year, we could hardly discover above six small streams issuing from the larger; but no doubt when the torrents tumble from the neighbouring mountains during the wet season, that then the extensive tract before us may be diversified with an endless variety of streams;—but even then they are not to be confined with arithmetical precision to the number of *twenty-four*.

Adieu.

LETTER XXXVII.

The four passes for waggons across the chain of mountains from south to north—Departure from the Twenty-four Rivers—The Great Berg River—Arrive at the neat mansion of an elderly widow—Appearance of the country—Hospitality of the widow—Remarks on the corn-farms of the boors—Want of waggons to convey the produce to market—Departure from the mansion—The landlady's son offers to be a guide—Swartland—Arrive at Tea Fontyne—Hospitably received at the mansion of the Slabers.

THERE are only four passes for waggons across the chain of mountains from south to north, into the interior parts of the country, namely—the Hottentot Holland Kloof, Roi Sand Kloof, the Candow, and Pigueners Kloof; the two first are the most common passes. In the afternoon we left the district of the Twenty-four Rivers, and inclining more to the westward, crossed the Great Berg River,