

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES

IN

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

PART. I.

**EXCURSION TO THE EASTERN FRONTIER OF THE
COLONY, AND TO THE COUNTRY OF THE
BECHUANAS.**

VOL. I.

B

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

Travelling Accoutrements.—Village of George.—Auteniqua-land.—Picturesque Scenery.—Woodcutters.—An Ornithologist.—The Knysna.—Passage across the Centerberg.—The Lange-Kloof.—Kromme River.—Port Elizabeth.

ON the 20th of April, 1823, I left Cape Town, on an excursion towards the Eastern and North-eastern boundaries of the Colony. My objects were partly of a commercial, partly of an exploratory nature. I wished to ascertain by personal inspection the resources of those remote

districts, with the view of opening, if practicable, new and more profitable channels of mercantile enterprise. I was also desirous of penetrating, should circumstances admit of it, into the countries beyond the North-eastern frontier; and, without losing sight of my primary object, thereby gratifying the ardent desire I had long entertained of exploring unknown regions; and of contributing, however humbly, to the enlargement of geographical science, and to a more exact acquaintance with the character and circumstances of the native tribes of Southern Africa. Such were my objects; which I request the reader to keep in view, in order that he may not be disappointed by the absence of scientific investigation in regard to various departments of natural history, which neither my previous acquirements, nor my mode of travelling, admitted of my entering upon.

From Cape Town to Elbes-Kraal in the district of Swellendam, a distance of about 250 miles, I travelled with Mr. Theunissen, a substantial African landholder, in his horse-waggon. And as this tract of country and mode of travelling have

been so frequently described by others, I shall not occupy the reader's time by any particular account of this part of my journey. Whatever I observed worthy of notice in it will be condensed with other materials into a subsequent section of this work.

On the 26th we reached Elbes-Kraal, which is a farm belonging to Mr. Theunissen. I spent there a couple of days in preparing for my solitary journey to the interior. Some other travellers have minutely detailed the expensive and cumbersome apparatus which they considered it necessary to carry along with them for comfort, security, and scientific research in the desert regions of South Africa. I shall follow their example, by giving a list of my accoutrements; which, compared with those of my celebrated precursors, Vaillant, Sparrman, Burchell, and others, will at least afford an amusing contrast.

1. A strong saddle and bridle, with holsters, occupied by two brandy bottles in lieu of pistols.

2. A double-barrelled gun, with a supply of powder and ball; flints, bullet-mould, and other shooting gear.

6 ACCOUTREMENTS FOR THE JOURNEY.

3. A small portmanteau to fix behind my saddle, containing three changes of linen, small shaving apparatus, &c.

4. In the eight pockets of my shooting jacket were stowed the following articles :—

A map of South Africa ; ditto of Albany ; a compass, thermometer, and burning-glass ; four memorandum-books and a dozen black-lead pencils ; three pocket knives, tinder-box, roll of twine, &c., a small bottle of Eau de Cologne, and a few other medicines ; and four pocket volumes of English poetry for occasional recreation. These, with a few other necessaries, occupied the numerous pockets of my coat, and increased its weight to about twenty-five lbs., a burden which, in hot weather, I found sufficiently cumbersome to carry constantly upon me, but which I could yet neither dispense with, nor otherwise dispose of.

My other accoutrements were a seal-skin cap for wearing in cold weather, and a broad-brimmed straw hat for lightness and shade under the burning sun. The latter, when off duty,

was tied on my back: the former was readily slipped into one of my side-pockets.

I had also a warm Flushing great-coat for wrapping myself in at night, and which I designed to be carried by the Hottentot guides who must necessarily accompany me from place to place, with the horses I expected to hire or purchase on my route.

Lastly, I had taken care to provide myself with proper letters of introduction to the magistrates of the different districts through which I had to pass, in order to procure from them official orders to the inhabitants to supply me with horses and guides for hire, when I should require them.

Thus provided and accoutred, I left the residence of my hospitable acquaintance, on the 28th of April. I was ferried across the Gauritz river in a crazy flat-bottomed boat, and spent the night at Vogel-Valei, another farm belonging to Mr. Theunissen.

April 29.—I proceeded with two hired horses and a Hottentot guide, and forded, not without

difficulty, the Small and Great Brak Rivers, and other mountain-streams on my road. These rivers, or rather torrents, are frequently very suddenly swollen by the mountain rains. A few days before, a boor, attempting to cross one of them with his waggon, narrowly escaped, with the loss of eight oxen. In the evening I arrived at George, and met with a hospitable welcome from the Landdrost Mr. Van der Riet.

30.—Spent this day at George, and transacted some business. I found here also Captain Harding, the Deputy Landdrost of Cradock, to whom I had letters of introduction, and received from him a cordial invitation to visit his residence in the upper country.

May 1.—This morning, long before daybreak, I started for the Knysna, with fresh horses and a guide. For some hours I travelled through a dark and dismal ravine in which flows the Zwart River, and at daybreak found myself near a place called Pampoens-kraal, being the identical spot where the celebrated Vaillant pitched his tent, and penned his romantic descriptions of this part of the Colony; and achieved (if we

may credit his account) such mighty feats in elephant-hunting, as no other Nimrod before or since has equalled. Very few elephants are now to be found in the neighbouring forests, though buffaloes still abound.

The scenery around this spot is certainly picturesque and imposing in a high degree. The lofty, rugged mountains on the left, crested with clouds, and clothed along their skirts with majestic forests,—those woods irregular, dark, hoary with moss, and ancient-looking almost as the rocks which frown above them, or the eternal ocean itself which murmurs at their feet,—form altogether a scene of grandeur which fills the imagination with magnificent and romantic images; accompanied however with ideas of wildness, vastness, and solitary seclusion, almost oppressive to the heart.

This is the country formerly called Auteniqualand, so much celebrated by travellers for its fine scenery and inexhaustible forests. Those forests supply not only Cape Town, but also a great part of the inland districts, with timber for building and other purposes. It is exported to Cape

Town by sea from Plettenberg's Bay and the Knysna, and carried by land even to the Drostdy of Beaufort, and the other unwooded districts across the great Karroo.

Passing the ancient camp of Vaillant, we arrived at the brink of a tremendous ravine called the Kayman's-gat, (Crocodile's hole.) This name it has probably received from being frequented by the leguan, a species of amphibious lizard, growing to the length sometimes of six feet, but quite innoxious. No species of the crocodile has ever, I believe, been discovered in any part of the Colony. Through the bottom of this ravine flows a small black stream, inconsiderable in itself, but, when stemmed back by the tide, difficult and often dangerous to cross. At this time the tide was ébbing, and we crossed it without obstruction. For waggons it must be at all times an arduous and perilous pass. The banks on either side descend with an abruptness almost perpendicular for fully 300 feet: and altogether, with its grim precipitous environs shaded with gloomy woods, and its black Stygian waters

winding deep below, it seemed to me one of the most frightful-looking spots I ever beheld.

About seven o'clock we stopped at a small hut occupied by a woodcutter and his family. His wife, who had been brought to bed the preceding day of her seventh child, lay in one end of the cabin, divided from the outer part only by a rush mat suspended from a beam. Here I could only procure a little milk, and even that, seeing their destitute condition, I received with reluctance, and not without due remuneration. These woodcutters are the poorest class of white people in the Colony; earning a livelihood with severe labour, by conveying timber to the Knysna or to Cape Town, in waggons; an occupation which, they complain, affords them but a meagre subsistence.

Soon after passing the woodman's cabin, I crossed another frightful ravine nearly equal to the Kayman's-gat, called *Traka-da-Touw*, signifying, according to the interpretation of my guide, "Maiden's ford," in the language of the Hottentots.

My ride continued picturesque ; the sea occasionally bursting on my view, while the smoke curled gracefully from the huts of the woodcutters dispersed over the forest. The country towards the Knysna being intersected by innumerable deep ravines, the passage of waggons is rendered difficult and often hazardous. Owing to the back water, from the sea, I was forced to keep near the mountains, where my guide, taking the nearest route, led me through many intricate paths made by the elephant and buffalo. In the midst of one of the most precipitous ravines called the *Homtanu*, we were overtaken by rain, which descended in torrents, drenching us in a few minutes to the skin, and rendering the steep clayey paths so slippery, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could extricate ourselves. Looking about for shelter, we at length discovered a neat little house, where we fortunately found accommodation, the day being by this time far spent. My host was a Mr. Tunbridge, a collector of specimens of Natural History. He had come out in the suite of Lord Caledon, and, on the conclusion of his lordship's

administration, had located himself here. His chief occupation was the stuffing of birds for sale, especially that very beautiful and much-prized species called the Golden Cuckoo, which abounds in these forests.* This worthy man and his wife treated me with much hospitality, and I spent a pleasant evening with them, conversing about the productions of the neighbouring country.

Next morning, having had my clothes dried, and partaken of a cup of coffee, I set out for the residence of Mr. Rex, at the Knysna. The morning was fine and bright, and as I passed through the beautiful copses, I was delighted with the warbling of some bird much superior in song to any I had hitherto heard in Africa, where the birds are generally much more remarkable for the brilliancy of their plumage than the melody of their notes. I was amused too by observing the

* The great black eagle of the Cape is occasionally found in the neighbouring mountains ; but specimens of it are very rare and difficult to be obtained. The accompanying wood-engraving is accurately drawn from one recently shot on Table Mountain, which measured six feet five inches from the tip of one wing to that of the other.

monkeys, hundreds of which were extending themselves on the boughs of the trees with their breasts exposed to the morning sun. All nature seemed revived; the grass was covered with pearly drops, and over the forest on the skirts of the mountains hung several columns of vapour beautified by gleams of golden light. Thus pleasantly contemplating these refreshing scenes of unsophisticated Nature, I was brought to the margin of the Knysna river; or rather I may call it an arm of the sea. We found it broad and deep; but as the tide was fast ebbing, I waited half an hour, and then ventured in, having first secured my clothes, &c. upon my shoulders. We found it about four feet deep, and got through without much difficulty. It is, however, a dangerous ford for travellers not previously acquainted with it; for, in attempting to go right across, one falls immediately into some perilous holes and quicksands; whereas it is requisite to proceed straight forward only a certain distance, and then to turn down the middle of the stream for about fifty yards, before one steers to the opposite bank.

At nine o'clock I reached the house of Mr. Rex, from whom I met with a very cordial reception, and was prevailed on by his hospitable intreaties to defer the prosecution of my journey till next morning.

Mr. Rex is a gentleman of excellent education and elegant manners, who has been settled in the Colony upwards of twenty-six years. On his first arrival he occupied a high situation under the Colonial Government; but having soon afterwards received an extensive grant of land at this place, he retired hither, and has since augmented his estate by considerable purchases.

The fine harbour of the Knysna has been repeatedly described by former travellers. It is calculated that fifty large ships might lie at anchor in it secure from all winds; but the entrance is narrow, and rather dangerous. Sir Jahleel Brenton, late Naval Commissioner at the Cape, proposed to the Board at home to build a frigate here. They directed him first to construct a vessel of 200 tons. This was commenced, and would soon have been finished; when unfortunately a fire broke out, which

destroyed all that had been accomplished, and ship-building has not been since resumed.

3.—Left Mr. Rex's comfortable mansion after breakfast, and proceeded to the place of Van Huissteen, Veld-Cornet, near Plettenberg's Bay. About an hour's ride from the Knysna, we passed through a narrow defile, remarkable for being the scene where the Caffers, about twenty years ago, had killed three Boors and three of their slaves, as they were travelling with their wives to the Bay. The women were carried off and detained for seven days in the neighbouring mountains, but were treated with civility and dismissed uninjured. On reaching Van Huissteen's, I found that the day was too far spent to enable me to cross the great ridge of mountains into the Lange-Kloof, by the route that I proposed to take. The Paarden-Kop path I had travelled on a former occasion, and now wished, for the sake of novelty, to follow one of which I had heard, farther to the eastward. But as the distance was fully thirteen hours, and the way was wild and difficult, and without a place of shelter of any description, I considered

it better to defer proceeding till next day. At dinner we were joined by six boors who had been hunting in the neighbourhood, and who prolonged their boisterous merriment and barbarous freaks to a late hour.

4.—Tired of my gross and turbulent companions, I preferred proceeding, although it was Sunday, to spending another day with them. Accordingly, I set out an hour before daylight with two guides and five horses. One man, however, whom I had taken with spare horses, merely to ease those on which my guide and I were to cross the mountains, was sent back on our reaching the Keurboom River, about three hours on our way. At this place we entered the great forest, which skirts the mountains, as already described. And here we encountered a scene of difficulties which I had neither anticipated nor been provided for. No one, it seems, had travelled this path for several years, and in the meanwhile some tremendous storm had choked it up by throwing immense trees across the passage; obstructing our progress in such a manner that sometimes we were forced to drag

our horses under the impending trunks and shattered limbs of the fallen trees; at others, to force a passage through the tangled and almost impenetrable underwood. These fatiguing exertions continued for about three miles, during which my holsters and portmanteau were more than once torn from my saddle, and my clothes almost rent from my back. By infinite toil and perseverance, however, we at length got clear of the jungle; and after a more gradual ascent of about two hours farther, we reached the lofty summit of the Center-berg, where a scene of grandeur burst upon the view, which amply compensated for all our toils. It almost seemed as if we were looking down upon the world. Plettenberg's Bay and the Knysna lay at our feet, with the ocean closing the view in that direction; while, on the other side, a mass of wild mountain scenery extended itself in chaotic confusion, as far as the eye could penetrate.

From this ridge we immediately began to descend through a sweet and solitary valley, surrounded by rugged peaks. In this glen we rested, and refreshed ourselves at noon in a spot

covered with flowers and verdure. Here the temperature was very warm,—78° in the shade by my travelling thermometer, and upwards of 100° in the sun. While we tarried here, a thunder-storm collected on the peaks around us, and soon burst in terrible peals among the rocks; but the rain passed off in another direction without drenching us.

On recommencing our journey, we passed through an intricate and fatiguing range of mountains, glens, forest-kloofs, and thorny jungles; and occasionally, as we traversed some of the valleys, the grass and heaths were so high, that I could only distinguish the head of my guide as he rode before me. About four o'clock the Hottentot told me, that the hill in front was the last that we had to surmount. Of all that we had encountered this proved to be the most precipitous, and ere we gained its summit, both ourselves and our horses were nearly exhausted. As we ascended, a most striking change was experienced in the temperature. In the valley we had found it sultry and suffocating; but on the mountain ridge the thermo-

meter had again fallen to 50°, while, at the same time, we were enveloped in cold misty vapours, hurried over the summits by a furious wind. After a short descent, however, we escaped from the stormy clouds, and I saw the Lange-Kloof below us just as the sun sunk under the horizon. Another hour brought us to Stephanus Ferreira's (Klippen-Drift), where I took up my quarters for the night, after one of the most fatiguing days I had ever spent; the greater part of the journey being through rocks and forests, frequently on foot, and without the sight of a living man, or a human residence of any description, to relieve the solitary landscape.

Having now got again into the beaten track, I pursued my journey to Algoa Bay, without meeting with any occurrence worthy of notice. The monotonous scenery of the Lange-Kloof, and the manners of its inhabitants, have been frequently described, nor did I perceive that any thing new or important remained untold respecting either. The mouth of the Kromme River is, however, interesting both to the merchant and mineralogist, and I have since regretted that circumstances prevented me from then visiting it. A

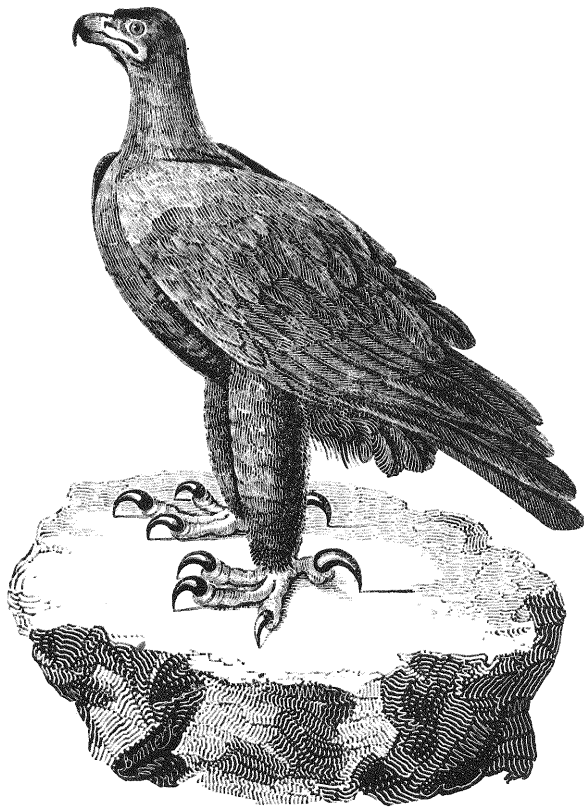
vein of coal has recently been discovered there, and the mouth of the river is said to be accessible to small craft. These advantages, if they can be made available, may hereafter render this little river, and the neglected bay into which it falls, of some importance to the Colony.

7.—Reached Port Elizabeth late this evening, and found lodgings at one of the two inns now established there. The other was crowded with the officers of a Dutch man-of-war, (the *Zeepaard*,) which a few days before had run ashore in a fog on Cape Recife, and was totally wrecked. The crew were saved not without difficulty, eight men having been drowned, and about twenty much hurt by being dashed by the surf upon the rocks.

Another shipwreck had taken place in Algoa Bay a short time before this. The *Heworth*, an English brig with Government stores and flour for the Settlers, went ashore close to the landing-place, and was lost. The flour had luckily been disembarked before this occurred; but being the first vessel from England direct to this port, the wreck in the Bay is considered peculiarly unfortunate.

The village of Port Elizabeth is built along the beach, close below the old blockhouse erected to protect the landing-place, and named Fort Frederick. In 1820, when the Settlers arrived, this place, exclusive of the Fort, contained only three small thatched houses, erected for the Government officers, and a few wretched huts inhabited by Hottentots and free blacks. Since that period it has, in consequence of the great increase of the coasting-trade, risen rapidly to importance. Though very irregularly built, the village now contains two respectable inns, and many neat and substantial private houses and stores; and the number of inhabitants is estimated at about 500 of all conditions, the majority of whom are English.*

* In January 1826, Port Elizabeth was still increasing, though not so rapidly as during the first three years after the arrival of the settlers. A clergyman of the Church of England had been stationed there, and an English Church was in progress. A place of worship, which is also to be used for holding a Sunday school for the Hottentots and other coloured inhabitants, was erecting by subscription, under the superintendence of the Bethelsdorp Missionaries. And while this sheet is passing through the press, I observe with satisfaction that the privileges of a regular port have also been conferred on this place.



THE BLACK EAGLE OF THE CAPE.

CHAPTER II.

Bethelsdorp.—Uitenhage.—Quagga-Flat—Fatal adventure the Boor Marè.—Theopolis.—Beautiful Country.—Kowie Mouth.—Thornhill Location.—Excursion to the Mouth of the Great Fish River.—Village of Bathurst,

MAY 8.—I left Algoa Bay in the afternoon, and in little more than an hour reached the Hottentot village of Bethelsdorp, about nine miles distant. Though my stay was too short to enable me to examine the place with any minuteness, yet I was agreeably surprised by the striking improvement that had taken place in its external appearance since my former visit about three years before. The arrival of the settlers, I found, had been of very considerable advantage to the Hottentots of this institution, by the increase of the frontier trade furnishing them with profitable employment, especially in the conveyance

of goods between the Bay and Graham's Town. From forty to fifty waggons belonging to the people of Bethelsdorp were now almost constantly on the road, employed in this carrying trade, and in the transport of Government stores to the different military posts on the frontier. I arrived the same evening at Uitenhage, the *Drostdy* or district town.

9.—Spent this day at Uitenhage, where I had some acquaintances among the English store-keepers. This village, situated about eighteen miles from Port Elizabeth, possesses several advantages rather uncommon in South Africa, which may one day perhaps render it a place of importance. It is more abundantly supplied with fresh water, and with facilities for irrigation, than any other town in the Colony. The soil around it is fruitful, and the climate mild and salubrious. The boisterous south-east winds, and the oppressive summer heats, so much felt at Cape Town, are here scarcely known. Provisions of all sorts are cheap and plentiful, and the production of them may be increased to an extent almost indefinite. It is too far from the sea indeed to be-

come a port, yet by means of steam-boats the mouth of its river (the Zwartkops) may be rendered accessible to within three or four miles of the town; and in this way vessels in Algoa Bay may deliver their cargoes more easily and safely perhaps, than by means of the surf-boats at Port Elizabeth. In no respect, except in proximity to the beach, can Port Elizabeth pretend to rival Uitenhage,—situated as is the former in a bleak and barren desert, where the most common vegetables are reared with difficulty, where fresh water is scarce, and irrigation impracticable.

Nevertheless, Uitenhage, with all its natural advantages, and its convenient position for becoming the emporium of the eastern districts, has not increased of late in any degree commensurate with its apparent capabilities, or in comparison with some other places on the frontier. The rapid growth of Graham's Town and Port Elizabeth have even been injurious to its prosperity, by abstracting from it labour and capital. But this falling back may be attributed, I think, to temporary causes; and with the gradual increase of capital and general prosperity, Uitenhage can

scarcely fail to re-establish its real claims, and to become eventually (if I may venture to prophesy) the most populous and important town in the eastern part of the Colony.

10.—Proceeded on my journey about an hour before daybreak. The country bushy and uninteresting, until we reached the Addo-heights beyond the Sunday River, the peculiar features of which have already been too frequently described now to detain me. In the afternoon I stopped at the Boor Marè's on Quagga-Flat, not being able to procure fresh horses till next morning.

Before dark three boors, who were travelling like myself, dropped in one after the other *sans ceremonie* to take up their lodgings for the night. It is the custom of the country; and no one, however uncivil in other respects, will refuse the wayfaring man, though entirely a stranger, the hospitality he may himself have occasion to require in his turn. In this country, therefore, the expenses of travelling to the inhabitants are small, but of hospitality to such as reside near the great roads sometimes considerable.

In the course of conversation our hostess, the *Juffrouw Marè*, gave an account of the recent death of one of her relations in the following manner. On the 1st of January a party of friends and neighbours had met together to celebrate New-year's-day; and, having got heated with liquor, began each boastingly to relate the feats of hardihood they had performed. Marè, who had been a great hunter of elephants (having killed in his day above forty of those gigantic animals), laid a wager that he would go into the forest, and pluck three hairs out of an elephant's tail. This feat he actually performed, and returned safely with the trophy to his comrades. But not satisfied with this daring specimen of his audacity, he laid another bet that he would return, and shoot the same animal on the instant. He went accordingly with his mighty *roer*,—but never returned. He approached too incautiously, and his first shot not proving effective, the enraged animal rushed upon him before he could reload or make his escape, and having first thrust its tremendous tusks through his body, trampled him to a cake.

Our supper at this place consisted of boiled pumpkins and stewed meat. The pumpkin is the only vegetable I had seen on the tables of the boors as I came along, although potatoes and most other esculent vegetables common in Europe may be cultivated with success and facility through all the districts contiguous to the coast. But, contented with abundance of animal food, they seem but little solicitous for any farther luxury or comfort, which costs trouble in the acquisition.

11.—Crossed the Bushman's River, which, on account of continued drought, had not been running for two years, and consisted merely of a chain of pools. At 8 o'clock reached Mr. Daniel's at Sweet-Milk Fountain. Here I stopped to breakfast, and was much delighted to see the very great improvements that had been effected since my visit in January 1821. Mr. Daniel is a lieutenant in the navy, and one of the British emigrants of 1820. He, and his brother, who lives near him, are generally allowed to be among the most enterprising and industrious of the settlers. A great extent of arable land had

been brought under cultivation, and divided into neat fenced enclosures; and their wheat crops were already about a foot high, while the African boors in the vicinity had only commenced sowing.

Proceeded on to Assagai-Bush, where, since the arrival of the settlers, a sort of inn has been established. Here I left the Graham's Town road, and turned off towards the coast, it being my intention in the first place to visit the mouth of the Kowie River. On my way I called at Captain Butler's, an Irish settler, abounding in hospitality, but at that time, poor fellow! but ill supplied with the means of exercising this liberal disposition, so general among his countrymen. We dined upon a little dry cheese and butter-milk; but it was his best, and given with cordiality. A short time before, his only daughter, a child about three years old, had died of the bite of a serpent, which she had trod upon while playing in the garden. Poor Mrs. Butler appeared very disconsolate, and her mind in a morbid, disordered state, in consequence of this distressing event. Venomous snakes abound in every part of the Colony, and it is wonderful

that fatal accidents are not more frequent. Since leaving Cape Town, I had heard of the death of two women on my route, by these reptiles.

After leaving Captain Butler's, a plain of about twenty miles extent lay before me, over which we galloped at a good round pace, and soon reached the small river Karrega, near which were the locations of several settlers; and the pretty village of Salem, inhabited entirely by Methodists, lay a little to the right. I did not stop at any of these locations, but observed as I rode along a good deal of land cultivated and enclosed, and numerous herds of cattle.

About an hour's ride from the Karrega, I arrived at Lombard's Post, a farm belonging to Colonel Fraser, commandant of the Cape Corps, to whom I had a letter of introduction. This officer has been long stationed on the frontier, and is universally beloved by all classes of the inhabitants; and even the Caffers, against whom he has served in many a harassing campaign, respect his name, on account of the exemplary humanity and good faith he has displayed in all his dealings with them. Unhappily his health,

which had long been in a declining state, has obliged him to retire from active duty, and leave the defence of the frontier in other hands.

After partaking of a second dinner with Colonel Fraser, and his brother and surgeon, who resided with him, I proceeded forward to Theopolis, a missionary institution belonging to the London Society, near the mouth of the little river Kasouga. This place had been repeatedly attacked by the Caffers during the late war, but had been successfully defended by the vigilance and intrepidity of its Hottentot inhabitants; who, for the security of their numerous cattle, (the principal object of Caffer cupidity,) had industriously fenced the common kraal of their village with a very strong and lofty palisade. The stakes of this fence, consisting chiefly of Caffer-boom (*Erythrina Caffra*) which grows abundantly in the neighbourhood, had in numerous instances struck root, and thrown out flourishing branches, which gave the palisade an uncommon and agreeable effect. The missionaries were now occupied in removing the establishment to a more favourable site, about half a mile down the river. The

new village is to be laid out in regular streets, and the houses of the Hottentots to be substantially built of stone or brick, in place of their old, irregular, and uncomfortable wattled cabins. The new parsonage and school-room had been already erected. Here I spent the night, and received very hospitable entertainment from Mr. Barker, the missionary.

12. — Proceeded onwards towards the Kowie mouth, which is only about twelve miles from Theopolis. Passed the location of the late General Campbell, (one of the heads of the settlers,) which is now occupied by his widow, an elegant and accomplished lady. The natural features of the country are here exceedingly beautiful, and Mrs. Campbell's neatly ornamented cottage, though constructed only of wattle and plaster, had a most pleasing and picturesque appearance, surrounded by luxuriant woods and copses of evergreens, in the disposal of which the wanton hand of Nature seemed to have rivalled the most tasteful efforts of art.

As I travelled along through this rich and smiling scene, now enlivened by the dwellings and im-

provements of civilized man, and saw the flocks of sheep pasturing on the soft green hills, while the foaming surge broke along the beach on my right hand, I could not help recalling to mind the fate of the Grosvenor's shipwrecked crew, who traversed this beautiful country in other times and far different circumstances. It was not far from this very spot that the poor boy, Law, after surmounting incredible hardships, lay down to sleep upon a rock, and was found dead in the morning. At that time the boundary of the Colony extended only to Algoa Bay, and the wretched wanderers had still innumerable toils and perils to endure before they could reach the residence of Christians,—and but few survived indeed to reach them. A skeleton, which was lately found by my friend Mr. Thornhill, in one of the sand-banks, a few miles farther to the eastward, in a sitting posture, may not improbably be the remains of one of those unfortunate wanderers; for many instances are related, in the journal of the survivors, of individuals exhausted with hunger and fatigue, sitting down to rise no more; and a corpse left in such a situation would be covered

up by the drifting of the sand in a few hours, if the wind happened to blow strong from the south-east.

This coast has been rendered but too remarkable by many other disastrous shipwrecks. Many years ago the *Doddington*, Indiaman, a fine large vessel, having struck upon a rock near Algoa Bay, was totally wrecked, and all on board perished. In February 1796, a vessel from India, under Genoese colours, was wrecked between the Bushman and Sunday Rivers. The boors flocked from all sides to plunder; and one person, who alone attempted to assist the unfortunate crew, was, on this account, as it is said, murdered by his barbarous countrymen. Very different was the conduct of the Caffer 'savages,' when the American ship *Hercules* was stranded in 1797, between the Fish River and the Keiskamma. *They* treated the crew with the utmost kindness and hospitality, and conducted them safely into the Colony.

After a very pleasant ride I reached the mouth of the Kowie River. Here I found the tide running out with great rapidity, and as the stream

can only be safely forded at low water, I was obliged to wait some time. At length, two soldiers, employed on the opposite side, pushed off for me with a small boat; and having discharged my guide with the horses, and taken my saddle and other accoutrements into the boat, I crossed over, and proceeded on foot to the residence of my friend Mr. Thornhill, which is about a mile from the landing-place.

The location of Mr. Thornhill, which lies in the angle formed by the left bank of the river Kowie with the sea, is one of the most beautiful spots in all Albany, with lawns and copsewoods, laid out by the hand of Nature, that far surpass many a nobleman's park in England. In fixing his dwelling, the proprietor, and his son-in-law, Lieut. Gilfillan, have not failed to avail themselves of the most favourable situations. The cottage of the latter especially, which, with its little garden, crowns the summit of a small green mount, commands a prospect scarcely, I think, to be rivalled in Africa for rich and romantic scenery: while the village of Bathurst, in the back-ground, about eight miles distant, gives

animation to a landscape, which, at the time I visited it, appeared to an European eye somewhat too lonely amidst all its loveliness.*

. But the probability of the Kowie mouth becoming available as a harbour for small vessels, is a matter of far higher importance to the prospects of Mr. Thornhill's family, than the fine scenery on their grounds: and on this subject, interesting not alone to them, but to the great majority of the Albany settlers, I heard much conversation, without, however, being able then to form any very decided opinion myself. At that time, the hopes of the Albany settlers were high, and their prospects on this point very flattering; a small vessel called the *Good Intent*, of twenty tons, having made several successful trips from Cape Town to the Kowie, and landed her cargo in good order.

13.—This morning I set out, accompanied by Lieut. Gilfillan and Mr. J. Thornhill, to visit the

* The accompanying plate gives a sufficiently accurate view of this rustic dwelling and part of the adjoining scenery; but it is on too confined a scale to afford an adequate idea of the magnificent landscape which is commanded from Mr. Gilfillan's little mount.



G. Thompson. Esq. del.

THORNHILL, NEAR PORT FRANCES.

London, Pub^d by H. Colburn, Jan^y 1827.

mouth of the Great Fish River, about eighteen miles distant. On our way we passed through several locations of settlers, with the appearance of which I was much pleased. The hedges and ditches, and wattled fences, presented home-looking pictures of neatness and industry, very different from the rude and slovenly premises of the back-country boors.

A small river, called the Kleine-Montjes (Little Mouths), crossed the line of our route; but its outlet to the sea being entirely filled up with drift sand, we passed it perfectly dry. This bar is at present elevated very much above high-water mark, and gives to the mouth of the river the appearance of a small lake. The scenery at this spot is very beautiful. A range of sand-hills, in many places overgrown with tall brushwood, extends along the whole of the Albany coast. These hills have been evidently formed by the drifting of the sand from the beach at low water, by the strong south-east winds, though at first sight their great elevation and apparent antiquity render this supposition scarcely credible.

As we rode along, Mr. Gilfillan amused us

with a story of two settlers, a man and his wife, who, when recently passing through this part of the country, were terribly frightened by a troop of elephants. Seeing those enormous animals suddenly emerge from an adjoining copsewood, they fled in the utmost alarm, and to aid their speed, popped their infant child, which they were carrying, into an ant-eater's hole. The elephants, however, fortunately took a different direction, and the selfish parents recovered their poor child uninjured from its dismal bed.

We reached the mouth of the Great Fish River about noon, and, it being then low water, we had a fine opportunity for inspecting it. The bar, on which the surf breaks with great violence, will, I much fear, for ever prevent vessels from entering; but could this obstacle be by any means permanently removed, it would form a most excellent harbour. Within the bar, the mouth of the river opens out into a magnificent sheet of water, extending eight or ten miles into the country; and which is wide and deep enough to afford safe anchorage for a large fleet. We could perceive no vestiges of the Portuguese fort

said to have been erected here in former times. Other travellers, who possessed no means of crossing the river, may possibly have been deceived by some rocks on the left bank, which at a distance certainly have a striking resemblance to the ruins of a fort.

On our return we called at Captain Crause's residence, a few miles from the mouth of the Fish River; and, varying our route, we also visited a number of other locations on our way home. Altogether, the country I had passed through since leaving Theopolis, was the most beautiful and pleasing I have seen in Africa.

On reaching Mr. Thornhill's, we learned that the little schooner, *Good Intent*, was arrived off the mouth of the river, and that the harbour-boat had taken a pilot on board, but in returning had been upset by the surf on the bar, and the boatmen had with difficulty saved their lives by swimming. As I had intended to have gone out in the pilot-boat to meet this vessel, and examine the bar more narrowly, I could not but congratulate myself on my accidental absence; for had I not been at the Fish River, I should

in all probability have been upset in this boat, and, being no swimmer, most likely drowned.

I spent the two following days with Mr. Thornhill's family, conversing of former days which we had spent together in Cumberland, and listening with interest to the detail of their past adventures and future plans in South Africa. Whatever regrets might be blended with the retrospect of the past, I found them on the whole satisfied with their situation and prospects—and *that*, in the comparative estimate of human circumstances, is all that in general can be reasonably hoped for.

16.—Took leave of my kind friends, except the elder Mr. Thornhill, who accompanied me to Graham's Town. At noon we reached Bathurst, a village founded by Sir Rufane Donkin, the late acting governor, and designed by him to be the seat of magistracy for the English settlers. For this its situation, near the centre of the locations, rendered it much preferable to Graham's Town. Its vicinity also to the Kowie mouth and to the moist sea air, which renders irrigation unnecessary, and many other local advantages which it possesses above Graham's Town, as well as the general concurrence of the settlers in its favour,

appear fully to justify the selection of this spot. Graham's Town has, however, been ultimately re-established by Government, as the Drostdy town of Albany. Had Lord Charles Somerset been accurately informed, or fully aware from personal inspection of the comparative advantages of the two villages, I think he would scarcely have directed the removal of the Drostdy; particularly as many individuals had been induced to expend considerable sums of money in building houses and establishing themselves at Bathurst, upon the presumption that the village would enjoy, in addition to its other advantages, the benefits naturally resulting from being the seat of the local magistracy; a Drostdy-house having been already built at a considerable expense, and other indications shown of the intentions of Government on the subject. Among this part of the community, therefore, I found, as might naturally be expected, many persons loud in their complaints against his Lordship, and not slow in ascribing the ruin of their prospects to this sudden and unlooked-for change. Whether in a newly-settled country, contiguous to such troublesome neighbours as the Caffers, it may not have

been expedient to place the military and civil powers upon the same spot; and whether, in such a case, Graham's Town is not better situated for a military station, is a matter upon which I do not pretend to decide; but it may, in some measure, perhaps, account for the change.

Leaving this deserted Drostdy, we soon reached the residence of a settler, commonly known by the name of "Philosopher Bennet," and celebrated for his indefatigable industry. In spite of the blight in the corn, this eccentric but enterprising old gentleman appeared to be sanguine of the ultimate success of all the settlers whose exertions deserved it. He had himself shown a most laudable example, and his exertions had not been unrewarded, for he had a profusion of vegetables of almost every sort fit for the table, and had planted a vineyard which looked thriving and beautiful.

Having procured fresh horses here, we continued our journey, passing many locations on our way, and arrived at Graham's Town about 10 p. m. The distance from the Kowie to this town is about forty miles.

The route I had followed from the Bushman's River to the Kowie mouth, and from thence to the Fish River, and again by Bathurst to Graham's Town, enabled me to survey, though somewhat cursorily, a large proportion of the locations of the settlers. But as their distresses were much aggravated after the period of my visit, by the effects of a dreadful deluge of rain, which destroyed many of their dwellings, gardens, and corn-fields;* and as the capabilities of that part of the country, and the prospects of the emigrants, have been since more clearly developed, I consider it better to reserve my observations on this interesting subject for a subsequent chapter; when, without anticipating the thread of my narrative, I may bring down their history to a much more recent period.

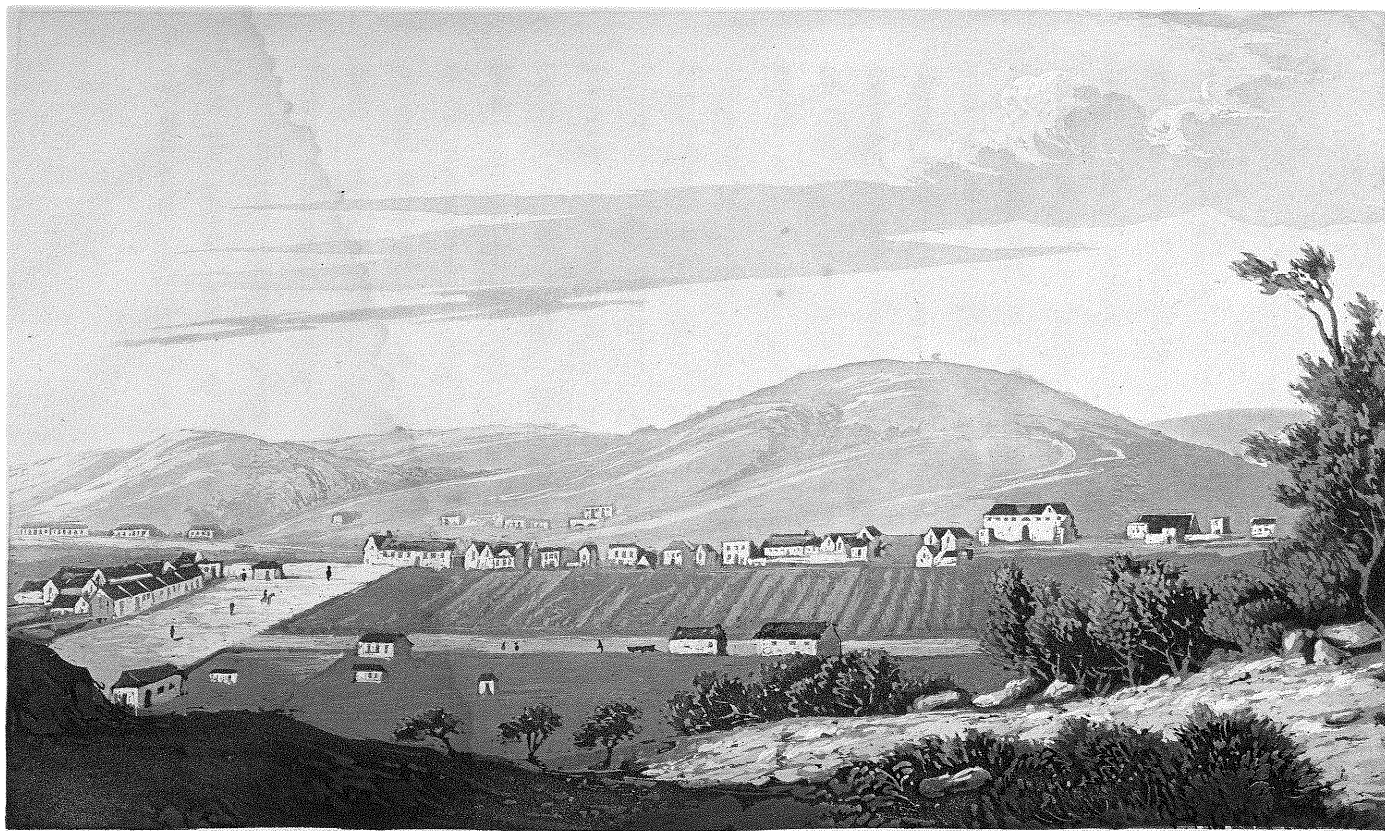
* The calamitous effects of this hurricane are vividly described in a letter by Mr. Philipps, in Mr. Pringle's tract on the "State of Albany" (1824); where, among numerous other disasters, it is stated that "poor Bennet had lost his labour for three years; and that not a vestige of his beautiful garden and vineyard remained."—I am happy to add, however, that the indefatigable "philosopher" has subsequently re-planted them with success in a safer situation.

CHAPTER III.

Graham's Town.—Journey up the Fish River.—Hottentot Herdsman.—Somerset Farm.—Zwagershoek.—Cradock.—Thriving Condition of the Graziers.

MAY 17.—Spent this day in Graham's Town, where I transacted some commercial business, and called on the landdrost, Mr. Rivers, and several of the principal inhabitants. I found this town much increased in size and population since I was here in January, 1821. At that time it contained only about eighty houses; now there were upwards of 300.* A drostdy-house of large dimensions was erecting; extensive bar-

* In January 1826, the population of Graham's Town amounted to about 2,500 souls, the great majority of whom were English.



G. Thompson Esq. del.

GRAHAMS TOWN.

London, Pub^d by H. Colburn, Jan^r 1827.

racks, and a large *tronk* (or prison) were also in progress, and the foundation of a church was laid. These public buildings, together with a number of private houses constantly erecting, furnish employment to a great number of mechanics and labourers at high wages;—but whether this demand for workmen may be permanent seems extremely problematical. The present prosperity of Graham's Town seems to rest almost exclusively upon its being the seat of magistracy, and the head-quarters of the military stationed for the defence of the frontier.

18.—I had intended to have prosecuted my journey this morning at an early hour, but on calling for the horses I had engaged, found they had been put in the *schut-kraal* or pound. This is an inconvenience very much and justly complained of at Graham's Town, and arises chiefly from a considerable portion of the public grounds formerly belonging to the town having been inconsiderately granted to private individuals, so that the instant cattle or horses are turned out on the common, they are sure, if not carefully

tended, to trespass on some of the adjacent ill-fenced fields, and are hurried off to the *schutkraal* till the damage is adjusted.

At length, after waiting several hours, we got the horses relieved from durance, and I started about ten o'clock, directing now my course northward towards the source of the Fish River. In about an hour after leaving Graham's Town, the green pastures of Albany disappear, and the road as it approaches the banks of the Fish River, winds through the black and monotonous jungle, unfit for the residence of men or for the pasture of cattle, but affording food and shelter to several varieties of the smaller antelopes, and to troops of wolves and wild dogs, which often prove very destructive to the flocks of the neighbouring colonists.

The dreary and desolate aspect of the country up the Fish River, from Graham's Town to Roode-Wall, has been frequently noticed by former travellers, and seems indeed to be scarcely susceptible in any respect of improvement. The farms, "few and far between," are mere *vee-*

plaatzen, or cattle places, without in general the comfort of a garden, or the means of cultivating a single blade of corn.

The bed of the Fish River is too deep to admit of irrigating the banks by leading out the water; and without irrigation, the soil, though rich in quality, is far too arid, and the rains too precarious to enable the farmers to rear either corn or vegetables. They are not, therefore, to be blamed on this account, like their countrymen along the coast, where the soil is much more loose and cool, and the atmospherical moisture more regular and abundant. Nevertheless, the dry and rugged pastures of the Fish River are very favourable for cattle and sheep; and the inhabitants, if relieved from the annoyance and damage to which they are continually exposed, from the unsettled state of the frontier and the consequent predatory incursions of the Caffers, would apparently be well content to endure the privations to which they are subjected by the peculiarities of their soil and climate.

About four P. M. I arrived at Mynheer Espagh's,

a Veld-Cornet,* and one of the most extensive graziers of the district. Here I was obliged to wait till next morning to obtain a relay of fresh horses, and I amused myself by observing the boor folding his herds and flocks, attended by his wife, children, slaves, and Hottentots. The appearance was patriarchal and picturesque, and recalled to my mind the ancient poet's description :—

“ On came the comely sheep,
From feed returning to their pens and folds,
And those the kine in multitudes succeed ;
One on the other rising to the eye,
As watery clouds which in the heavens are seen,
Driven by the south or Thracian Boreas ;
And numberless along the sky they glide ;
Nor cease ; so many doth the powerful blast
Speed forward ; and so many, fleece on fleece,
Successive rise reflecting varied light.

* The *Veld-Cornet* is a sort of petty magistrate, empowered to settle little disputes within a circuit of fifteen or twenty farms, to punish slaves and Hottentots, to call out the burghers, over whom he presides in the public service, and act as their officer on *Commandoes* ; to supply Government with relays of horses and oxen when wanted, &c. &c. For this service he receives no salary (except upon the Caïffer frontier), but is exempted from all direct taxes.

So still the herds of kine successive drew
 A far-extended line ; and filled the plain
 And all the pathways with the coming troop."

Throughout the whole of the Colony it is highly necessary to secure the herds and flocks at night, in folds or kraals fenced round generally with a strong hedge of *mimosa* or other thorny bushes. Here this precaution is doubly necessary, both on account of the roaming Caffers, and the great numbers and ferocity of the beasts of prey. A few days before, a lion had killed two horses near the house, and had bit the head completely off one of them. Espagh had lost fourteen horses, besides other cattle, within the last two years, by the lions, which are numerous and daring in this vicinity.

I slept this night in the outer apartment (*voorkamer*) or sitting-room of the house, which was without a door ; and was much annoyed by a number of large dogs running out and in continually all night, and making a dreadful clamour.

19.—Proceeded this morning about an hour before daylight with two fresh horses and a guide. The waggon-road which goes up the right bank