

# TEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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## CHAPTER I.

Journey through an Arid Country.—Preparation of Aloes.—  
An old Colonist.—On procuring Wealth.—Luxury of a  
Dutch Farmer.—Thrifty Character of the Dutch.—  
Curious Paintings.—Grazing District.—Scenery of Outeniqua Land.—Dangerous Mountain Passes.—Critical Situation.—Description of the Town of George.—Occupation of the Inhabitants.—Wild Animals.—Journey to the Eastward.—Waggon overturned.—The accident repaired.—Return to George.—Adultery and Murder.—Trial of the Criminal.—Manufacture of Hats.—Policy of Government.

ON the second day of our journey we passed through a very arid country for many miles. Part of our road lay across an extensive plain, the soil of which was very rich, but so exceedingly dry that it produced hardly any grass; but it was thickly covered with bushes and crowded with aloe plants. Here we found several wag-

gons, and whole families employed in extracting the juice of the aloe, which yields some profit to the farmers where the plants are abundant.

The manner of procuring this cheap drug is as follows :—Several holes are dug in the ground, over which skins are placed and pressed down in the middle to receive the juice as it runs out. A quantity of the thick fleshy leaves of the aloe are then cut in halves and placed one above another round the margin of the hole, and the heat of the sun soon makes the juice run out into the skin. It is then collected and emptied into a pot, where it is boiled for some time, and hardens into a cake when it is cool.

The price of aloes at Cape Town is now exceedingly low, from the great quantity prepared by the colonists; but it is still worth their while to employ their leisure time in preparing this drug, which would be otherwise quite unproductive.

After passing several farmhouses, we arrived towards evening at the “Vet rivier,” or Fat river, where we took up our quarters for the night at the house of a most respectable farmer, of the name of Du Prée; a man, though plain

in his manners, infinitely more civilized and refined than most of the other colonists.

A few hours before this, we passed the residence of his father, an old man upwards of ninety years of age, who had attained this advanced period of life without a day's illness, and seen all his sons settled round him in equally prosperous circumstances with himself. His helpmate was still alive to share his happiness, though nearly as aged as himself.

Our host had a splendid establishment, for this country ; having between twenty and thirty people, slaves and Hottentots, to feed daily, besides his own family. His farm-buildings were disposed in a large square, with an extensive dwelling-house on one side, a large stable on the other, and the third and fourth sides occupied by a mill, carpenter's and smith's workshops, waggon-houses, and offices. Jacobus Du Prée seemed to want nothing to complete his happiness ; for he was free from that restless love of excitement and ambition of making a show of his wealth and consequence which so often, in our own country, rob of their anticipated enjoyment those who

have been most successful in accumulating riches.

In a country like the Cape there are few opportunities, and still fewer inducements, to acquire great wealth,—for *great* wealth will not be so much coveted where there is no scope for ambition, and where a strong love of equality is so prevalent. Thus prosperity will be more generally diffused through the community; the poor will have greater facility in acquiring an independence; and those who have accumulated riches, by retaining the simplicity of their original habits, will be more capable of enjoying the gifts of fortune.

If we observe the opulent of our own country, we shall find that many of them are rather subjects for pity than for envy. To acquire wealth, they generally sacrifice the feelings and habits which would have enabled them to enjoy it; and when they have at length attained their heart's desire, they find themselves miserably bankrupt in everything on which true happiness depends.

A rich farmer at the Cape is only to be distinguished from his neighbours by the number

of his servants and his cattle, and in the prosperous circumstances of his children. Where plenty is so generally diffused, and where extravagance is despised, there can be little difference in the mode of living. The money which in England would be squandered in empty show and spurious hospitality, the Cape farmer expends in establishing his children in the world without regard to seniority; for, as yet, they are totally unacquainted with what we call the *rights* of primogeniture, and cannot see any merit in one son coming into the world before another.

The only luxury which distinguishes the rich farmer in this part of the colony is the possession of a horse-waggon, or a number of valuable horses. When they amass money by their industry, it is generally carefully hoarded up in a large chest, where it rarely sees the light, except on occasions of great need, and as a last resource.

The Dutch are slow workers, sure gainers, and fast holders;—a character which is well adapted to the circumstances of this colony, where time, at least in its present state, can

hardly be said to be money. Extravagance can never be a virtue; and it is only in a country whose institutions or the character of whose inhabitants have a tendency to produce an injurious accumulation of property in particular families, that this vice can be in any way beneficial to the community.

We were much amused with a series of paintings that ornamented the walls of our host's great hall, which might be about sixty feet in length. These curious pictures, which were executed in oil-colours, represented a Dutch courtship in all its different stages.

As these paintings are no caricatures, and evidently designed to represent the confiding simplicity of honourable love, the hero was represented in the garb of a clergyman. The sacred person of the worthy man was exhibited in a variety of situations indicative of the passion he feels for the fair object of his affections, who does not seem half pleased with his attentions. Our worthy host seemed not a little proud of his pictures.

After leaving the Vet river, we passed through a good grazing district, having, however, the

same arid character as that which we had already seen after quitting the base of the mountains near Groot Vaders Bosch.

As we proceeded to the eastward, the country began to assume a new character, becoming gradually moister and more verdant, until we came to that delightful and well-watered portion of the district of George called Outeniqua Land. I have already observed that the rains are more abundant where the mountains approach the sea-coast; and this circumstance sufficiently accounts for the number of fine rivulets which water the country near the town of George.

The scenery of Outeniqua Land combines more of the beautiful and romantic than perhaps any other part of the colony. The mountains are exceedingly steep and lofty, and are often clothed almost to the very summits with the most beautiful woods, which, in several places, extend to a considerable distance into the plains below.

In the course of our journey, we passed two of the most dangerous ravines I have ever met with in any part of the colony. The first of

these dreadful mountain-passes is called the "Kayman's Gat," or Crocodile's Hole, from a small species of that animal which formerly frequented the mouth of the river which runs at the bottom.

Language can hardly convey an adequate idea of this wild and savage scene to one who has never beheld anything of the same description. Let the reader suppose himself compelled by necessity to convey a waggon across a tremendous gully formed by two high hills, or rather steep mountains, by a narrow and craggy road cut out of the face of the precipitous bank, and hollowed out by the rains into deep ruts, which were sufficient to overturn any English vehicle.

This road was carried along the very brink of the precipice, without the slightest defence to prevent the waggons from being hurled by any false movement of the oxen into the water beneath. So steep was this rugged descent, that it was with the greatest difficulty we could prevent the waggon from sliding down, though the two hind-wheels were chained. At one place, we had to turn round an angle of the



rock; and here, as it happened, a smooth rock extended across the road, sloping to the very edge of the precipice.

Just as we came to this critical point, the hind-wheels, losing their hold on the slippery rock, came within a few inches of the dreadful gulf; and nothing but the presence of mind and courage of our driver saved the waggon and oxen from being dashed to pieces or precipitated into the water.

Leaping from his seat on the waggon-box, the driver got between the hind oxen and the edge of the rock, and walked along with them, directing the ox next him with the handle of his whip until the vehicle was out of danger. Waggoners have often been precipitated over the rock at this dangerous angle, carrying most of the oxen along with them.

A person unaccustomed to the mountain-roads and to the waggons of the country would be at a loss to conceive how any wheel-carriage could overcome so many difficulties and apparently inevitable perils.

The other ravine is called the "Trakant'kaw" in the language of the Hottentots, which they

told us signified “ the place of carrying honey.” The Trakant’kaw is less dangerous than the Kayman’s Gat, but it is equally steep on both sides, and the labour of ascending the opposite bank is excessive: our poor oxen nearly sank under the effort. Both these ravines are romantic and beautiful in the extreme.

The town of George is finely situated in a plain at the base of the mountains, which are in this place wooded to the very summits. It consists of a single street, the houses in which are principally constructed of turf plastered over with a mixture of clay and cowdung, and whitewashed. The soil in the neighbourhood of the village is so sandy, that it is not easy to procure bricks fit for building.

This beautiful portion of the country is by no means equal in fertility to most parts of the colony. All kinds of grain are much inferior in quality; and the cattle and sheep are so lean, that there is great difficulty in procuring any fit for slaughter. The butchers and farmers are supplied with fat cattle, principally from the Lange Kloof, a fine grazing country lying behind the mountains near the town.

Such absence of fertility is, however, in some measure, compensated for by the abundance of water, and the facility of cultivation from the lightness of the soil. It is also a fine country for gardening and the cultivation of fruit. The inhabitants of this part of the district of George are generally poor, subsisting principally by felling timber, and sawing it up into beams and planks for house-building. This timber is either sold to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, or carried to Mossel Bay or the Knysna, where it is shipped for Cape Town.

Most of the Dutch farmers in the neighbourhood are obliged to work occasionally in the forest with their people, as their places, from the inferiority of the pasturage, are insufficient to provide them with a comfortable subsistence. The forests also afford employment to a number of Hottentots, who are more industrious and receive higher wages than in the neighbouring districts of Swellendam and Uitenhage.

The Dutch colonists here, from their more laborious habits and the greater difficulty of procuring a subsistence, are stronger in body and

possess more energy of character than the inhabitants of other parts of the colony.

A few elephants are still found in the extensive forest near George ; but they are not often seen. There are also a few buffaloes ; and wild pigs are numerous in the woods. We saw a few herds of rhee-bocks in different places ; and there are several other antelopes, which are common to most parts of the colony.

After spending a few days at the town of George, we proceeded about half a day's journey in our waggon to the eastward, where my brother wished to purchase a farm near the forest, on which he proposed to employ several of his people, who had not yet paid him, in sawing timber.

He soon found a place to his taste. It was situated on an elevated plain along the margin of the woods at the base of the mountains. It abounded in water ; but the soil was extremely poor, and the pasture, though verdant, coarse and sour. Here we loaded our waggon with plank, and were on our way back to George, when, in descending a steep ravine, the wheels got into a deep rut, and it was overturned.

The tent which was necessary to shelter us on our journey from the sun and rain, was crushed to pieces, and several parts of the waggon itself were broken; so that we were compelled to remain the whole night in our present uncomfortable situation. The worst of it was, that, expecting to be in George betimes, we had brought no provisions along with us.

To make the best of our mishap, however, we despatched one of our Hottentots to the town of George for a carpenter to bind up the wounds of our luckless vehicle, to enable us to pursue our journey on the morrow. This done, we made a fire and sat down round it with excellent appetites, but with the most rueful countenances imaginable.

The Hottentots sighed and lighted their pipes, and my brother grumbled and swore. The countenances of the unwilling fasters had such an irresistibly ludicrous expression, that I could not help laughing; which augmented my brother's displeasure tenfold. At last, to the relief of all parties, we fell asleep, and forgot our misfortune and our hunger.

Early next morning, our Hottentot returned

with a carpenter and some provisions. The carpenter, after expressing a sort of smiling concern at our accident, which afforded him a job, proceeded without delay to patch up our waggon *pro tempore*, to enable us to pursue our journey. We got to George without any other accident, where we remained for a few days at the house of a friend, while my brother was completing the purchase of the place we had gone to see.

Here we had another instance of the laxity of morals and savage unfeeling conduct which I have already noticed as characteristic of the Dutch colonists *in general*. A near relation of the person from whom my brother purchased the farm, whose name was Zaayman, had for a long time been engaged in an intrigue with the wife of his neighbour Barnard.

Not content with the injury she had already done to her husband, Mrs. Barnard instigated her paramour to murder him. Zaayman wrote the unfortunate man a letter, asking him to meet him at a particular place, at a considerable distance from any house. He then took his gun and concealed himself near the road

where Barnard must pass, and, taking a deliberate aim, shot him through the body, when, springing from his concealment, he finished his murderous work with the butt-end of his gun.

“This last proceeding,” some of the Dutch coolly observed, “was very unreasonable, as Barnard had constantly made a practice of going out of the way whenever Zaayman thought proper to visit his wife.”

Zaayman was at this time at Cape Town to stand his trial for the murder; and, it will hardly be credited, the wicked woman who instigated him to commit the deed was visiting her friends in George, while we were there, as if nothing had happened, although the whole circumstances of the case were perfectly known to everybody in the place.

The result of this trial was somewhat singular. Zaayman was found guilty, and condemned to death by the Dutch court of justice, which was then in existence; but he was pardoned by the acting governor, from his feeling some doubts as to the sufficiency of the evidence.

I very well recollect hearing a Dutch farmer, in the district of Swellendam, counting on his fingers the different sums of money which Zaayman's father had given as bribes to different members of the court to save his son's life; and he thought it very shameful that he was not acquitted by the court after so much money had been sacrificed for him.

As we were returning to Groot Vaders Bosch, we called at the house of a Dutch farmer, who, in addition to his other avocations, employed several slaves in the manufacture of coarse white woollen hats, which are generally worn by the Dutch throughout the colony. These hats are almost the only articles of dress manufactured in the colony; but there can be no doubt that some other coarse and strong articles might also be produced from the inferior wools of the native sheep, which would find a ready sale among the savage tribes of the interior, who would give ivory and skins in exchange for them.

The first manufactures deserving of encouragement in this colony should be such as would consume its coarse and inferior mate-



rials, which have little or no value in the colony or in other countries, and thus afford employment to a great number of the white inhabitants who have no profitable occupation for themselves or slaves through a considerable part of the year.

The best policy Government can pursue in these cases is to remove obstructions, and to leave the capital and industry of the inhabitants to take their natural course; for individuals are always the best judges of what may be most conducive to their interest.

## CHAPTER II.

Arrival at the Cape of one of the Author's Brothers. — British Settlers in the Colony. — Sir Rufane S. Donkin, Acting-governor. — Reduction of the Royal African Corps — Grants to the Officers. — Capabilities of the Country. — Lands granted to the Author and his Brothers. — Formation of the Settlement of Fredericksburg. — Journey to George. — Dutch Hospitality. — Jacobus Meyer. — System of the Dutch Farmers. — Thrift of the Women. — Toilsome Ascent of Attaquas Kloof. — Grand Conflagration. — Inquisitive Spirit of the Cape Boors exemplified.

IN a few months after our return from our excursion, we were joined by a second brother of ours, a lieutenant in the navy, who touched at the Cape on his way to India, where he hoped to find employment in the merchant-service; but, meeting at Cape Town with some naval friends who had been disappointed in the same object, he determined on remaining in South Africa.

This was the year (1820) in which the British

settlers arrived in the colony ; and, as my brothers were anxious to witness the proceedings of our countrymen, and to judge of the capabilities of the district selected for their location, they set out in a bullock-waggon for the frontier, accompanied by an English merchant who had recently arrived in the country.

The acting-governor, Sir Rufane S. Donkin, was at that time at Grahamstown, where he formed the plan of establishing a kind of semi-military settlement in a tract of country which had recently been ceded by the Kaffres to the colony, lying between the Great Fish and Kieskamma rivers.

The Royal African Corps was then under orders for reduction, and the men were to be drafted into other regiments. This corps was entirely composed of deserters and other military criminals, who had been allowed the option of entering this transported regiment to avoid the more severe punishment awarded by the sentence of a court-martial ; and a great part of the soldiers were glad to avail themselves of his Excellency's offer of establishing them as settlers in the ceded territory.

Sir Rufane Donkin proposed granting to each of the officers of the regiment who would become a settler five hundred acres of ground, on condition of his employing a certain number of the privates as servants for three years; after which period, if they had conducted themselves to the satisfaction of their masters, they should get their discharge from the service, and be entitled to a free grant of a hundred acres each within the limits of the new settlement.

Enticing as these offers were to the privates, who saw no other chance of getting their freedom, Sir Rufane had great difficulty in bringing the officers to relish his plan. They complained, that while the sons of the Dutch farmers obtained grants of from four thousand to six thousand acres, without trouble, in long-settled tracts, they, who would be constantly exposed to the attacks and depredations of the Kaffres, should only be allowed five hundred. And, what pleased them still less, Sir Rufane proposed appointing Captain ——, who was very unpopular, to be their civil magistrate.

In this state of the matter, my brothers came

to see the country intended for the new colony ; and the officers invited the elder one to become their magistrate, and to treat with the acting-governor about the terms of settlement. Sir Rufane willingly assented to this arrangement ; and my brother succeeded in persuading him to increase the extent of the officers' grants to four thousand acres each.

It was evident that his Excellency had formed an erroneous estimate of the capabilities of the country in question for supporting a dense population, which would no doubt be exceedingly desirable as a protection to the rest of the colony against the frequent incursions of the Kaffres.

The adjoining parts of Kaffreland being thickly inhabited when compared with any part of the colony, people were naturally led into the belief that a similar country was capable of affording support to an equally dense population of civilized men. But it should be remembered, that as Europeans have more wants than barbarians, they require also greater means to supply them.

It is true, indeed, that civilization increases the productiveness of a country ; but, when a

population exclusively agricultural is suddenly created in a new and unoccupied territory, it is essential to their well-being that they should possess some means of disposing of the surplus produce which their art and industry have created, to purchase the clothing and other articles of necessity or luxury which habit has rendered necessary to their comfort.

The Kaffre who habits himself in the skins of his cattle, and who from custom is contented with the bare necessaries of life, does not require these facilities in an equal degree, and can therefore feel comfortable under circumstances of privation which would be intolerable to civilized men.

The country in question was too far removed from any market for its agricultural produce ; and the roads, being intersected by deep and rocky ravines, were hardly passable with loaded waggons. It is therefore obvious, on the slightest reflection, that the ceded territory could be available for the purposes of colonization merely as a grazing country ; and, unless the new settlers could resign their acquired habits, and relapse into barbarism, they would, under

these circumstances, be unable to find an adequate subsistence, without possessing a greater extent of pasturage than would be sufficient for the limited wants of the Kaffres, or any other barbarous and pastoral people.

Having settled the preliminary matters, the officers of the Royal African Corps entered into a regular agreement with the acting-governor in the month of June 1821, containing many stipulations on both sides which were considered necessary to the success of the new settlement according to their respective views.

My two brothers and myself were admitted to hold lands on similar terms with the other officers, which enabled us to employ a greater number of the privates as servants; this of course added strength and security to the settlement. Sir Rufane, for further protection to us and the English settlers behind us in the district of Albany, established a military post close to the village which we founded, and which his Excellency named Fredericksburg, after his Royal Highness the Duke of York. Further to facilitate our first exertions, the military servants whom we employed were allowed to

draw rations for nine months from the date of our being located at the village.

As soon as all the arrangements had been concluded for the formation of the settlement of Fredericksburg, my brothers wrote to acquaint me with what had been done ; and, delighted with the prospect of establishing myself in a situation of so much importance to ourselves, and to the security of our countrymen, who looked up to us as their protectors, I lost no time in preparing to join them at the infant colony.

I immediately hired two Hottentots, and set out on my journey in a waggon of my brother's, which, besides a load of thirty bushels of wheat for our immediate use, carried all my luggage and the cooking utensils necessary on the road. I had a small stock of thirty cows and calves, which I had purchased in the district of Swellendam : these I left behind to accompany my brother's cattle, when he could remove his property to the frontier. I had also a pair of riding-horses, which I fastened behind the waggon.

The first part of my journey lay in the route



to George, which I have already described. I stayed a night with our friend Jacobus Du Prée, who treated me with his usual kindness and hospitality. I was much amused here with an instance of that attention to trifling gains for which the Cape-Dutch are noted.

As Mynheer Du Prée had a vineyard, my Hottentots petitioned with great earnestness that I would treat them to a bottle of wine. Being afraid of giving offence to my kind host by asking him to sell me so small a quantity, I sent one of them with the money to make his purchase in the best manner he could. To my astonishment, our host asked me in a rather displeased tone of voice why I had not told him myself, as he did not like to sell wine to a Hottentot without the master's knowledge. I said that I felt a delicacy in asking a man in his circumstances to sell me so trifling an article; at which he laughed heartily, telling me he would never quarrel with anybody for buying his goods.

Many people in England would consider this an act of meanness; but, when we take our host's liberality to his guests into account, we can

only attribute it to a difference in national manners: for fair gain can never be mean or dishonourable in its nature, if not connected with pride and ostentation.

In travelling from Swellendam to the frontier districts of the colony, it is necessary to cross the grand chain of mountains which runs for several hundred miles parallel to the sea-coast, in order to avoid the almost impassable roads and forests beyond George. The only two passes in the district of Swellendam are the Platt Kloof and Attaquas Kloof. We chose the last-mentioned as the least fatiguing to our oxen.

The evening after leaving the Vet river, we arrived at the residence of Jacobus Meyer, a respectable farmer, who lived at the entrance of this wild mountain-pass. There was nothing remarkable in the country over which we passed on our way to this place. Mr. Meyer's house, which was large and comfortable compared to those of many other farmers, was beautifully situated in a verdant meadow at the base of the mountains.

I sat down to supper with the landlord, his wife, and sixteen persons, consisting of sons and

daughters, son's wives and daughter's husbands, all grown men and women. Mr. Meyer complained to me of the number of mouths he had to feed daily ; and told me that his family formerly consisted of sixteen children by one wife, but that eight of the number were dead.

All the lands in this part of the country being already occupied, two or three of his married sons were preparing to start for the frontier to look out for establishments for themselves. It is usual with the Dutch farmers in this part of the colony to bring up some of their sons as smiths or carpenters, the two trades most wanted in an infant colony. But, as the working-class consist principally of slaves and Hottentots, pride generally hinders them from following these trades as a distinct occupation.

The farmers are the nobility in this colony ; and, as long as their children can find a piece of ground to cultivate on their father's estate, they cannot bear the idea of quitting their imaginary rank and losing caste. This is a serious evil, resulting from the possession of slaves, and which it will take many years to remove. Thus nearly all the young Dutchmen are at the same time

farmers and artisans, each occupation clashing with the other. They make excellent strong waggons, having a perfect knowledge of the best materials the woods afford; but they are exceedingly slow workers, as they take special care not to fatigue or overheat themselves, and never allow labour to stand in the way of any of their amusements.

When the young men have at length completed a waggon or two, they load them with wine, brandy, vinegar, and fresh and dried fruits, and set out on a journey of some hundred miles towards the more recent settlements on the frontier and interior of the colony, where they retail the different articles to the farmers for money or cattle, and afterwards sell their waggons and return home on horseback. After two or three of these journeys, they generally fix upon some vacant tract of land in the interior, and on obtaining a grant of it from Government, remove with their families and cattle to take possession of it.

I slept in my waggon, and proposed starting early on the ensuing day, to allow my oxen sufficient time to overcome the difficulties of the

Kloof, which were of no ordinary description. In the morning, however, I found that one of my yokes was cracked in the middle, and that two of my oxen suffered from a swelling in the feet, which I had not before perceived. I was therefore obliged to exchange them for two others of Mr. Meyer's; and he also sold me another yoke for ten rix dollars.

It is the common custom of the Dutch to take every advantage of travellers, and particularly of the English, when they get them in their power; but Mr. Meyer was an exception to the general rule, in this instance, and dealt with me on fair terms.

Mrs. Meyer took great umbrage at her husband's honesty to a "mere stranger and an Englishman," and complained bitterly of it to one of her sons in my hearing, not suspecting, from my apparent ignorance of the language, that I perfectly understood her.

"There's your father, as usual, selling his goods for nothing to the Englishman," said this amiable dame, "when he knows well that he might get his own price from him."

I have invariably found the Dutch women at

the Cape much more avaricious and more prejudiced against strangers than the men. This appears to me to be quite the opposite of the character of English females, who are usually generous and fond of strangers to a fault.

The pass called Attaquas Kloof is one of the wildest and most romantic in the colony. We first ascended a very steep and rocky road, which carried us over the top of a high grassy hill, from whence we had a fine view of the windings of the rude waggon-track,—for road it could hardly be called. It sometimes seemed to ascend the perpendicular face of a mountain; then it would take a sudden turn and wind round it, when the intervening heights would conceal it from the view. Again, it would appear at a great distance climbing a long ridge among rocks and brushwood, or skirting the base of the vast mountains which rose in majestic grandeur on either side of the deep glen, through which a little rivulet was seeking its way among the fragments of rock and stones which had fallen from the heights above.

I shall not attempt to describe the toil we

experienced in this day's journey, before we emerged on the opposite side of the mountains. What materially added to the grandeur of the scene was, that some one had set fire to the dry grass and bushes. The conflagration spread rapidly up the steep sides of the ravine in long lines of flame to the summit of the mountains, leaving all black and dreary behind it. At one place, we were obliged to drive the waggon through the burning grass, and were sometimes almost stifled with clouds of smoke.

On the approach of night, we had overcome the principal difficulties of our dangerous and toilsome route, when I could contemplate with unmixed pleasure the sublimity of the scene, now increased tenfold by the surrounding darkness lending additional brilliancy to the flames, which still raged far and wide with unabated fury among the crackling brushwood, scaring the affrighted antelopes from their quiet haunts.

We rested for the night at the house of a farmer, who had built a house and planted a vineyard and fruit-trees in a little valley at the opposite side of the Kloof, where he had led out a little stream of water to irrigate the soil,

which was here more parched and arid than in the country I had left behind me.

The owner of this farm was a very different kind of man from my last entertainer. He was disposed to be kind and civil; but his manner was so uncouth and rough, that it nearly neutralized the effect of his intentions. According to the usual custom of the Cape boors, he began to put to me a string of questions, which I endeavoured to parry by asking as many in return.

“ The first query was, “ Where do you live?” Then, putting the cart before the horse, he asked me how many children I had. Being a single man, I told him, of course, that I had none.

“ Are you not married yet, then?”—“ No: there is time enough for that.”

“ Time enough for that ! What! do you live all alone, like an old elephant-bull in the bush ?”

I now took advantage of the short pause occasioned by my persecutor's surprise that a man come to years of discretion should be without a wife, to turn the battery on my interrogator, and commenced asking him a number of equally impertinent questions to nearly



the same effect, which he answered with great composure and satisfaction.

“How old are you?” was the first question I put to him.—“Twice as old as you, and more :—I am now forty-five.”

“How many children have you?”—“More than you will ever have: I have had twelve children.”

“What is the matter with your head?” I now asked him, perceiving that it was wrapped up in a piece of dirty flannel pinned under the chin.—“Ach! mynheer, I am sorely troubled with the zinkins,” (a kind of rheumatism common in the colony,) answered my *now* defendant: “perhaps you may know of something that will cure me? I have worn this steel ring for the last six months to cure it; but I cannot find out which finger I should put it on;—I have tried all the fingers of my right hand, but it will not do.”

“Why don’t you apply to a doctor?” I asked him.—“Ach! mynheer, why should I apply to an English doctor? he would only make me pay plenty of money and do me no good. There was a knowing Malay slave here some

time ago who did me some good with a charm he gave me, which I still wear on the top of my head." He then carefully removed the flannel from his head, and showed me a piece of paper inscribed with strange characters, probably a sentence from the Koran.

"Did he give you nothing else at the same time?" I inquired.—"Yes, he gave me this powder to rub on my jaws and the inside of my mouth; but it was the *charm* that did me good."

"I strongly suspect, my good friend, that if anything did you good, it must have been the powder."—"Nay, mynheer, that could not be; for an English doctor or anybody might have given me a powder, but it would not have helped me. Nay, mynheer, it was the charm."

"Then it must have been the charm," I answered: and so this interesting subject was dropped.

## CHAPTER III.

The Lange Kloof, or Long Valley—Its Fertility.—Appearance of the Country.—Van Staden's River.—Arid Lands.—Excessive Heat.—Situation of the Village of Uitenhage.—The Sunday River.—Elephants and Buffaloes—Anecdote of the former.—Singular Excavations.—Anecdote of the Buffalo.—Troops of Spring-bocks.—Ant-hills.—Hottentot Mode of cooking Game.—Use of the Plant called Calamus Aromaticus.—View of Grahamstown.—Some Account of the Place— Its Population.—Houses built by the Officers.—Remarks on the Situation of the Town.

I HAD now entered the Lange Kloof, or Long Valley, as it is called, which extends for more than a hundred miles between two parallel ranges of mountains, or rather mountains on one side and high grassy hills on the other. The back of that extensive chain of lofty mountains which lies behind and to the northward of Outeniqua Land and the village of George, forms the southern boundary of the Lange

Kloof; but, from the great elevation of the valley, the mountains lose much of their height and grandeur, and are besides nearly destitute of wood on the northern side.

The Lange Kloof is celebrated for its fertility, from the number of springs found everywhere to irrigate the otherwise dry soil. In itself, however, the soil does not appear to be particularly rich, being a greyish clay lying on a substratum of clay-slate, and so shallow that the orange and other fruit-trees never attain the height and luxuriance of the trees in other parts of the colony.

I was much disappointed in the appearance of this tract of country, which, notwithstanding the number of farmhouses and well-watered gardens, was rather bleak and forbidding, from the total absence of wood, and the uniformity in the shapes of the mountains. Throughout its whole extent the valley is so similar in its general character, that it hardly merits a particular description. Most of the farmers along the road were men of very considerable property, consisting of slaves and cattle; and their houses and outbuildings were large and extensive.

The eastern extremity of the Lange Kloof opens into the valley of the Kromme river; and here the scenery again becomes interesting and romantic. We were now descending rapidly with the course of the river, which winds its way between two lofty chains of mountains. The road was in many places conducted along the steep face of the northern range, from whence we enjoyed many delightfully picturesque views of the serpentine course of the stream beneath us, and of the farmhouses and orchards which here and there ornamented its banks. The pasturage along the banks of the Kromme river is everywhere of that coarse description which is distinguished by the term "sour" by the colonists.

As we approached the Chamtoos river, the country became more level, and was everywhere thickly clothed with low trees or bushes ten or twelve feet high, of a sombre green colour; but the pasturage, wherever an opening occurred, was tender and *sweet*, which showed that the soil was naturally fruitful. This description of country, which was new to me, had an unpleasing and gloomy aspect, from the

unbroken uniformity in the height and hue of the trees; so that at a distance it seemed to be covered with heath or young fir plantations.

We travelled several hours through this inhospitable tract, without seeing a house or any opening to relieve the wearied eye, excepting where the bush had been cleared away in making the road. At length, when we came within a few miles of Van Staden's River, we emerged from the savage waste. The country suddenly assumed a more smiling appearance, and the hills and valleys were covered with rich pasturage of a more verdant green than any I had yet met with in the colony.

This was the season for burning the grass, which becomes too rank and coarse for the cattle when allowed to grow too long. Having occasion to purchase a sheep, I applied to a farmer whose habitation stood near the gorge of a deep and woody valley environed on all sides by lofty and inaccessible rocks. Shrugging his shoulders, with the tears in his eyes, the farmer told me that in burning his grass some time ago, supposing that his sheep were elsewhere, they had all been scorched to death

in the deep ravine, from which they could not make their escape.

After crossing the river, we ascended the hills on the opposite side, and passed through a beautiful little forest of fine timber-trees, the branches of which were richly festooned with the bearded lichen, which gave them a hoary and venerable appearance. The high grounds above the river were covered with verdant pasturage; and this beautiful description of country, interspersed with wood and bush, extended as far as the eye could reach towards the sea-coast, which we could perceive in the distance.

My Hottentots told me that the woods swarmed with elephants and buffaloes. We soon, however, re-entered a tract of country similar to that which I have already described on the banks of the Chamtoos river, covered thickly with the same kind of dwarf-trees and brushwood. This is an invariable characteristic of the rivers in this part of the colony.

It is a curious circumstance, that the most arid land is generally found in the extensive plains on either side of the larger rivers. Small as these rivers, as they are called, generally are,

the deep and wide valleys through which they run constitute the most striking features of the landscape.

We were sometimes several hours in descending from the heights which environ these level valleys; and yet, when we at last arrived on the banks of the river, as we expected it would prove, we only found a trifling rivulet scarcely strong enough to turn a mill. The excessive heat of the sun, in such situations, burns up the grass, and leaves only sufficient moisture to nourish the hardy stunted brushwood, whose roots can penetrate the indurated clay, where more delicate plants would soon perish if not constantly supplied with rain.

In these situations, after plentiful showers, the ground, wherever an open space occurs between the bushes, is covered over with sweet and tender grass of the softest green; but the succeeding droughts, aided by the intense heat of the sun, leave all bare and dreary again, when the cattle and sheep are forced to seek a subsistence by browsing on the leaves of the shrubs.

Uitenhage, the district town which we were



now approaching, is situated in a country of this description, along the banks of the Zwartkops river, one of the largest streams in this part of the colony. To supply this village with water, a strong spring, taking its rise in the high mountains behind it, has been conducted along the main street from a distance of nine miles in a deep ditch, from which every one of the cross streets is furnished with an ample allowance of the fertilizing element; and it is delightful to perceive its magic effect on a soil naturally productive.

The ground on which Uitenhage stands has been almost entirely cleared from the low bushes and brushwood; and the lively verdure of the gardens and orange-trees is finely contrasted with the dreary and sombre hue of the surrounding country, and the magnificent range of mountains which forms the background of the picture.

The soil near Uitenhage is so rich that it has been known to yield from eighty to ninety returns of wheat; but, from the exhausting effect of artificial irrigation, it requires to be constantly manured.

After quitting this beautiful and well-watered village, we travelled for many miles over gentle undulations of ground, everywhere thickly covered with bushes, among which great numbers of buffaloes are shot by the Dutch and Hottentots; and we met a hunting-party carrying the flesh of one of these animals cut in long strips. We passed the 'Kuga river, still buried in this almost interminable forest; ascended a steep ridge on the opposite side, and crossed an extensive elevated plain clear of bushes and covered with coarse long grass.

The valleys on the banks of the rivers are generally composed of deep clay, intermixed with rounded stones and gravel; which circumstance, together with the equality of their surface, shows that they have formerly been covered by the sea, or that the rivers have, at some former period, frequently overflowed their banks. In taking a general view of this country we are irresistibly led to conclude, from its structure, that the sea has receded from the land, or that the latter has been raised by some power above its former level at no very remote period. Several salt lakes are found at the height of two or

even three hundred feet above the level of the sea; and most of the springs near the beds of the streams are more or less brackish.

From the flatness and equality in the height of the high ridges between the rivers, it would appear that the general face of the country has at one time been an elevated plain, and that the deep and broad valleys and ravines which now intersect it have been produced by much larger rivers than we find at the present day.

The elevated plain, or rather flat-topped hill, over which we were now travelling, like most of the high grounds in this part of the colony, was covered with coarse soft limestone, which rested on a deep stratum of sandstone; and the soil was a sandy clay and generally very shallow, so that here and there the rocks appeared above the surface. Wherever limestone abounds near the surface of the ground, we always found that the grass grew more luxuriantly, and that it preserved its verdure longer than in other situations during the droughts to which the whole colony is subject. In the middle of this ridge, which cannot be less than three hundred feet above the sea, great quan-

tities of oyster-shells are dug out to burn into lime.

The next stream we came to was the Sunday river. We were a whole day in descending and ascending its opposite banks. The country was very similar to what I have already described along the Zwart Kops and Kuga rivers; bleak, bushy, and arid.

There are great numbers of elephants and buffaloes in the bushes along the course of the Sunday river. They are often very dangerous and troublesome to the farmers in this quarter. During the day they generally retire to the deep ravines in the sides of the valley; but in the night-time they are all in motion, wandering over the whole country, and frequently running unawares upon the waggons on the great road. They are generally scared away by shouting, and cracking the long whip used by the drivers.

In travelling this road some years afterwards, I was informed by a farmer that an elephant the previous night had caught a shackled horse belonging to him, and, after running his tusks through the animal's body, threw him with his

trunk into the branches of a large thorn-tree. On another occasion, one of these dangerous animals attacked a sledge loaded with wheat, and, after scaring away the people who accompanied it, returned and broke it to pieces, besides killing two of the oxen on the spot. They are now, however, less numerous in this part of the country, and the inhabitants can travel during the night with less danger.

On the eastern bank of the river we had to climb a very high and steep hill, and emerged from the bushes on the end of a long sharp grassy ridge, along which we travelled for some miles, with a deep bushy ravine on either hand. The appearance of the country was totally altered. It consisted of high grassy hills of the most irregular forms, divided by deep valleys sprinkled with clumps of bush and tall mimosa thorns in all directions.

I observed several round natural basins containing rain-water, and resembling artificial ponds. These singular excavations were generally on the top of sharp ridges, and appeared to be formed by the earth sinking in beneath them. The Dutch, who are by no means un-

observant of such particulars, assign another cause for the formation of these basins. Buffaloes are particularly fond of tearing up the ground with their horns, and the hollows thus formed become receptacles for rain-water, which is again dried up by the heat of the sun, and the loosened particles of earth and sand are blown away by the winds. The hollows thus enlarged, when they are again filled with water, become the favourite resort of elephants, wild pigs, and other animals of similar habits; and thus, by a repetition of the process, it is not difficult to conceive that in time they may attain their present dimensions.

However this may be, the farmers are often glad to avail themselves of these periodical pools to water their cattle, for springs are very scarce in this part of the country. The more the pools are frequented, the better they retain the water, as the constant trampling of the cattle gives consistency to the soil and prevents filtration. By means of these occasional supplies of rain-water, the farmers who have other places possessing constant springs, are enabled to keep a greater number of cattle, by removing

to them for a month or two when their grass becomes scanty.

After winding along a succession of sharp irregular ridges well covered with grass, we entered a long valley with low hills on either side, called Quaggas Flakte. Here we saw great numbers of spring-bocks in troops of fifty or a hundred together. These antelopes are much tamer than the other species, and many of the farmers in this neighbourhood subsist in a great measure on their flesh, which is well-flavoured, though rather dry.

There are great numbers of large ant-hills along the sloping sides of the valley, which afford the hunters an opportunity to get within shot of their game. Whenever we rested our oxen in the course of our journey, I despatched one of my Hottentots with his gun in search of game, while I proceeded in another direction for the same purpose. By this means, we had generally an antelope of some kind to vary our diet.

The Hottentots have a curious mode of cooking this kind of game, which I found exceedingly palatable. After stewing the meat in a

very small quantity of water, they took it out of the pot and stamped it between two stones until it was reduced to the consistence of pap, when they mixed it up with a considerable quantity of sheep's fat, and then stewed it for a short time longer. This is an excellent way of preparing dry flesh of any kind.

On one occasion, after I had taken out my share of this mess, the Hottentots added a large quantity of fat to it to please their own palates; and one of them ate so heartily of the greasy mixture, that he became seriously unwell, but recovered by chewing some dry roots of the sweet-scented flag, or *Calamus aromaticus*. This plant is very much used by the Dutch for stomach complaints, and they generally cultivate some of it in wet places in their gardens.

The character of the country along the Bosjesman's river, which we next crossed, is so similar to that of the other rivers I had lately passed, that it requires no description. Notwithstanding its long course, it frequently stands in brackish pools during dry seasons.

All these rivers are subject to sudden rises,



in consequence of heavy rains in the interior, when they sometimes overflow their banks, covering the level plains in the vicinity. The country to the eastward of the Bosjesman's river gradually assumes a more mountainous character, and the soil becomes poorer and more sandy. The limestone disappears entirely, and the sandstone shows itself from time to time through its thin and meagre covering. To the left of the road, the soil deepens, but becomes more arid.

In descending a hill, we came suddenly in view of Grahamstown, which is situated in a kind of basin, with high rocky and barren hills on one side, and rounded conical hills on the other, divided by long sloping valleys sprinkled with mimosas and clumps of low brushwood. The grass was verdant on all sides; but the number of broad waggon-roads ascending the heights in all directions had a most unsightly appearance.

The town is built on an eminence in the centre of the valley, and, from the inequality of the ground, has less of that formal regularity in its appearance which we observe in the