

summer season. I determined to fix my abode here for the future, as, in the event of the natural pond failing, I had little doubt of procuring a sufficient supply of water by digging in the sand along the beach.

CHAPTER XI.

Beautiful Scenery.—Situation of the Author's dwelling.—High Range of Hills.—The Kaffre-tree.—Accumulation of Sand.—Change in the Face of the Country.—Limestone Crusts.—Curious Phenomenon.—Narrow Escape from an Elephant.—Proposal for the grazing of Cattle.—A Mason and Carpenter engaged.—The Author erects a more substantial Habitation.—Deserted by his Servants.—His solitary Life.—His Occupations.—Excursions into the Woods.—Herd of Buffaloes.—An Adventure with a tumorous Companion.—Laughable Incident.

THE scenery at my new place was exceedingly beautiful, and much more varied than that of the spot I had left, as it commanded an extensive prospect along the coast from Cape Padron, near which it is situated, to Cape Recriefe, the western extremity of Algoa bay. The Groote Valley is about six miles in length, extending in a narrow strip between the thickly wooded hills and the low bushes along the beach.

The situation I selected for my hut was on

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the top of a steep grassy hill which overlooked the sea, above which it was elevated nearly four hundred feet. About a mile inland from my house, which was in the middle of the place, there was a deep hollow surrounded by high wooded hills, with long ravines descending into it from all sides. The large natural pond from which the place derived its name, and two smaller ones, are situated in this hollow, and were supplied with rain-water from the hills.

To the westward of my hut there was a long narrow plain nearly on a level with the sea, from which it was separated by a chain of low sandhills covered with small trees and bushes; and behind this plain rose a parallel ridge of high grassy hills, with a belt of wood covering the steep side fronting the sea.

Farther inland rose a still higher range of rounded steep hills, covered by the margin of the extensive forest to which I have already alluded, and intersected by long ravines in all directions. The steep woody face of the range of hills next to the sea was broken by deep gullies worn out by the torrents which de-

scend from the higher hills during heavy rains. These gullies are almost precipitous in the sides, which are often two or three hundred feet in height, and present the most romantic scenery. Nothing can exceed the richness of the soil and luxuriance of the herbage on this place, even to the summit of the highest hills wherever they are clear of wood.

The trees here, as in other parts of the colony, are almost all evergreens; and during several months, when the Kaffre-trees are covered with their large red blossoms, they impart a rich purple tinge to the forests. The Kaffre-tree has been described by Bruce, who has given a most accurate drawing of the flower and the pod: the latter contains several red beans, which, he says, are used in the eastern countries, by the name of "carats," for weighing gold. It obtains its colonial name of the Kaffre-tree from being found chiefly in Kaffre-land and the neighbouring parts of the colony. When the blossoms of this beautiful tree first make their appearance, the Kaffres begin to sow their grain; and a surer criterion for judging of the proper season could not be found.

The whole range of high irregular hills, and the extensive forest which covers them, and which stretch along the coast from the neighbourhood of the Bosjesmans' river to near the Sunday river, evidently owe their origin to the calcareous sand which, in the course of ages, has been thrown up by the sea and blown inland by the prevailing winds.

The original face of the country on which these hills rest is somewhat level, and the strata are composed of hard grey sandstone, which again makes its appearance on the beach in several places, where strong springs of water escape to the sea.

At first sight, it appears almost inconceivable that hills of the height of seven or eight hundred feet could be formed by the accumulation of sand blown together; but, when I had an opportunity of observing the gradual process by which it is effected along the beach, and the materials of which the sides of the gullies, which have been washed out by the torrents, are composed, I could no longer feel any doubts as to the fact.

I have already mentioned that a furious surf

breaks perpetually on the beach along the coast. This surf is continually grinding the sea shells and sand into the smallest particles, which are readily carried inland by the prevailing southerly and south-easterly winds, and thrown up in parallel ranges of sandhills, which are continually increasing in height. For some time these sandhills attain but a moderate elevation; but gradually the action of the rain and air seems to decompose the calcareous particles a little below the surface, where the sand has been rendered more compact by the weight of the superincumbent matter: and thus several thin crusts of soft limestone are created, which in time give consistency to the mass, and create a nucleus for a further augmentation and a repetition of the process.

While these operations are going forward, a variety of creeping plants and shrubs take root in the loose sand on the surface, and, binding it together, form by their decay a more productive soil, where other shrubs and trees can find support, and which in their turn give place to new species. In the mean time, as the trees and shrubs intercept the sand blown up from

the beach, the process of accumulation goes on at a more rapid rate than at first, until the hills have attained their present elevation. As these successive chains of sandhills are thrown up by the surf and the winds, the sea of course gradually recedes behind the barriers it has raised for itself; and there can be no doubt that the land along the whole of the southern coast of South Africa is gradually gaining on the ocean.

Judging from the present appearance of the mouths of the rivers and smaller streams along the coast, it is highly probable that they have all been deep inlets of the sea at some former period. The larger streams, into which the tide still flows for several miles, appear to be gradually becoming shallower at their mouths by the operation of the causes alluded to. In the mouths of some of the smaller streams, such as the Kowie and Karuka rivers in Albany, where the sea at high-water covers several hundred acres, small islets of sand and high sandhills are forming, which in all probability will increase in size until the salt-water is entirely excluded, and the rivers form large fresh water lakes within the sandhills, or find their

way to the ocean by filtration through the sand.

Many small streams along the coast appear to have undergone this change and now lose themselves in deep-seated and level valleys between high hills, which have formerly been open to the sea, but are at present raised considerably above its level and blocked up by sandhills.

In examining the sides of the gullies where the ground had been excavated to a great depth, I observed a number of thin crusts of limestone running nearly parallel with each other and with the external surface of the hills. Between these crusts, which were seldom above a foot in thickness, there were deep beds of compact sand, containing, as well as the limestone crusts, great numbers of large snail-shells, but no sea-shells of any kind in an entire state.

The highest crust in the series was about three feet below the surface of the ground; and the soil above it was a mixture of calcareous sand, snail-shells in an entire state, fragments of sea-shells which looked as if they had been burnt, and a rich black vegetable

mould. It is probable that the sea-shells had been brought there by the Hottentots and Kafres, who formerly inhabited this country in great numbers.

In digging a ditch round my corn-land, I found pieces of burnt wood and charcoal, and the bones of buffaloes and common cattle, lying immediately upon the limestone crust.

These bones were but little decayed, and had not been petrified by the calcareous matter around them; whereas the sandhills near the sea abounded with vegetable matter and bones in a petrified state. It is therefore evident that the first-mentioned bones had not lain for any great length of time in their present situation, and consequently that the soil above them is but of recent formation.

Assuming, therefore, that the average depth of the vegetable soil is about two feet, and that the soil is annually increased about the fourth part of an inch by the decay of the grass, a hundred years would be more than sufficient to convert the bare sands into a rich soil covered with luxuriant herbage.

The most remarkable circumstance in this

part of the coast is the large proportion of pulverised sea-shells intermixed with the silicious sand. It is therefore probable that there are very extensive reefs of rocks under the sea near Cape Padron to furnish these immense quantities of shells. This great predominance of calcareous matter sufficiently accounts for the extraordinary fertility and verdure of this part of the colony.

While I am upon this subject, I cannot help mentioning a curious phenomenon that occurred while I was engaged in digging for water near my house. Observing a small hollow which often contained water, I set my people to work with their spades in hopes of finding a permanent spring. After digging to the depth of four feet, we came to a limestone crust similar to what I have already described. With great difficulty we broke a small hole through it, and I began to bore with an auger I had fixed on the end of a long stick. When I had reached the depth of fifteen feet another crust interrupted my farther progress, and I was obliged to desist till I could procure a more efficient instrument.

In closing up the mouth of the hole, I heard a loud hissing noise, and on examining it, I felt the air rushing out with great force through a small opening I had left. I was at first exceedingly surprised at the circumstance; but on returning to inspect it after sunset, I found that the air was rushing *into* the hole with equal strength. I now guessed at the cause of the phenomenon. During the heat of the day, the air being more rarified above than below the limestone crust in the well, the colder air, contained in the sandy and porous stratum below, naturally rushed out to fill the vacuum: at night, on the contrary, the air being colder and more condensed above than below the crust, rushed downwards through the opening.

I sometimes amused myself in trying to invent an instrument to measure the velocity of the wind as it rushed through the aperture either way, which would have answered the purpose of a thermometer. I was, however, disappointed in finding a spring in this place; but in the hollow near the pond where I watered my cattle, I had previously found a small

spring, by digging seven or eight feet, which afforded an ample supply for domestic purposes.

I had constructed a temporary hut close to this spring, where I remained until I had fixed on a site for my permanent residence. My Hottentot inhabited another within twenty yards of a still slighter description, and my cattle lay around us at night. Being within three hundred yards of the edge of the forest, we were often disturbed by the elephants. One night I had just fallen asleep, when I was awakened by a loud shriek from one of these troublesome neighbours, and on jumping out of bed, I saw a large elephant standing near my cattle, which seemed to be in the greatest alarm, snuffing and poking out their noses towards the intruder.

I called to my Hottentot to fire off his gun to scare him away, as the creature did not seem aware that his old haunts were occupied by human beings. On hearing my voice, our visiter retired slowly to the woods, where, contrary to my wish, the Hottentot followed him. The moon was shining brightly, and he did not like

to fire his gun for nothing. Before he entered the margin of the forest, I entreated him to return; but he was too intent on his game to listen to my cautions.

He had hardly disappeared among the trees, when I heard a sudden crash and a tremendous scream; and the next moment Ruitter came running at full speed towards my hut, crying out "O God! O God!" closely followed by the elephant, which seemed bent on his destruction. Instantly seizing my gun, I ran to his assistance. I got within eighty yards of the animal, and fired. Just at this moment, one of our dogs, which had followed the Hottentot, crossed between him and his pursuer; and whether my shot had any effect in scaring the elephant I cannot say, but he instantly wheeled round and pursued the dog towards the forest.

A few seconds would have decided the Hottentot's fate; for the elephant was within fifteen paces of him when I fired. "O God!" Ruitter exclaimed, as he sank exhausted on the ground near me, "I was almost caught!—if it had not been for mynheer's shot and that good

dog, I should have been trampled to pieces by this time. I have seen plenty of elephants before now, but this is the cunningest rascal I ever had to do with. He did not even give me time to fire my gun, for he stood dead still under the shadow of a large Kaffre-tree—then, whur-r-r-r!”—imitating the elephant’s cry—“the old rascal was after me. O God! O God! mynheer, I shall never go after an elephant in the night again! I’m fairly done up—I could not have run twenty paces farther if the devil had been after me!”

I was anxious to erect a substantial house; but my means were too limited to enable me to effect my object without involving myself to a degree that would have lessened my feeling of independence, which I valued much more than any comfort. Learning, however, that a merchant at Uitenhage was salting beef for exportation to the Mauritius, I offered to graze his cattle at a low rate on my place, which was admirably adapted for the purpose; and, as a farther inducement to accept my proposal, I agreed to purchase whatever European articles I might require for my new house

from his store. He, of course, was glad to make a bargain with me on these terms, which would save him about half of what he usually paid to other farmers for grazing his cattle; and he immediately sent me five hundred head. An English farmer would smile when I tell him that I only received fourpence-halfpenny a head per month; but it answered my purpose to take them at that rate, to enable me to build my house.

This necessary point being settled, my next object was to procure a mason and a carpenter, which was no easy matter, as people of this description find ample employment at the different towns, where they have an opportunity of spending their earnings in drinking, to which most of the working class are much addicted.

For my mason I was obliged to travel about a hundred miles. He was one of the Scotchmen whom my eldest brother brought out to the colony in 1817. I procured a carpenter at Grahamstown, who was also one of my brother's people. I had at this time only one Hottentot in my service; and I was obliged to

make two or three journeys to the missionary station at Theopolis, in Albany, which was about forty miles from the "Groote Valley," before I could procure a couple of Hottentots to assist the mason. At length the latter personage made his appearance, and we immediately commenced our operations.

The place affording no good brick earth, I determined to build my dwelling of limestone, which was the only kind found on it. The only spot where we could find this stone of sufficient thickness and hardness, was in the side of a steep hill, about a mile from the house, from whence we had to carry it in a waggon. For all these purposes I had not a sufficient number of hands, and I was therefore obliged to work hard myself. I chose the operation of quarrying, and rolling the stones down the hill to the waggon, as the employment I was best fitted for, though by far the most laborious; and, with a very little assistance, I managed to keep the mason supplied with the necessary materials for building.

At length, we got the walls up to their full height; and when the carpenter had con-

structed the roof, I went with my people to cut rushes at our other place, to cover it in. My mason, who could turn his hand to anything, undertook to thatch my habitation, in which I assisted him.

Before the work was completed, the time of their engagement having expired, the two Hottents I had hired left me. I had now only one Hottentot servant remaining to assist the mason in building the partitions and plastering the inside of the house, and who had also to milk the cows morning and evening.

As soon as my house was finished, the mason and carpenter went to Grahamstown, and I was trying to make myself as comfortable in my new habitation as circumstances would allow, till I could procure more labourers. My remaining Hottentot's term of service having also expired, he was seized with a longing to visit some of his friends, and no wages would induce him to remain longer with me.

I was thus left alone on my new place, and in my new house, to lead a kind of Robinson-Crusoe life, with the pleasure of herding a troop of six hundred head of cattle, for five

hundred of which I was responsible to the owner. I had also to provide firewood, and water to cook my victuals; and I could not leave the place to look out for other servants for fear of any accident happening to the cattle in my absence. I had never been in this situation before, and at first I felt very uncomfortable at the prospect before me. I determined, however, to try what I could do for myself. I had, fortunately, a considerable quantity of salt beef and plenty of coarse flour.

The first thing I did was to catch my horse, which I tethered close to the house, to have him at hand to bring my cattle home in the evening to the "kraal," where they were secure from the hyenas, and other wild animals. I next turned all the calves loose, with their mothers, except one, which belonged to one of the tamest of the cows, which I designed to milk. I then went to the edge of the forest and carried home a large bundle of fire-wood on my back. This I found the most disagreeable part of my labour; but a few days' practice rendered it easy. After these preliminary operations, I set to work and cooked as much

beef, and made as many cakes, as would last me for two or three days, and then taking a book, I sat down and amused myself till the evening, when I brought my cattle home, and milked my cow.

My only companion in my solitude was a large tom cat, for my dogs had followed my Hottentot when he left me. This cat soon learned to know the cow that supplied him with milk, and when I was bringing the cattle home in the evening, after coming to meet me a few hundred yards from the house, he would follow close at her heels till I tied her up for the night, and he received his own share from the milkpail.

Sometimes I took my gun after breakfast, and wandered through the forest in search of buffaloes and bush-bucks, to vary my diet a little. In a few days I became not only quite reconciled to my situation, but even began to enjoy it. My only fear was, that some of the straggling Kaffres, who frequented the woods for the purpose of snaring bush-bucks, might be tempted to set fire to my house in my absence.

As for society, I was not in a much worse condition than before, and I never wanted for amusement between my books and shooting. I had always been an enthusiastic admirer of Nature, and I delighted to follow her through her wildest haunts. I wandered through the forest with my gun, hardly knowing which way I was going; sometimes emerging from them in some verdant savanna, surrounded by high-wooded hills, and often surprised a bush-buck, slaking his thirst in one of the natural ponds, which are frequently met with in the hollows.

The very danger attending my peregrinations had from habit become a source of pleasing excitement. Occasionally I came suddenly upon a troop of elephants, browsing on the slender twigs of the trees, or quietly fanning themselves with their huge ears in the heat of the day, when the breaking of a large branch would awaken me from my reveries, and I would turn off in another direction. If I happened to be to windward of them, they generally smelt me and made off, making the hills

and valleys resound with the breaking of the branches in their way.

One day I went into the forest on horse-back, with an axe in my hand, to mark out the course of a road I intended to cut through it to a farm on the other side, at the distance of six miles. I entered a broad elephants' path, at the bottom of a long ravine, which I ascended, to the top of a long irregular ridge, where I found another large path leading in the direction I wished to make the waggon-road. I had not proceeded far along the ridge when I heard a crackling among the bushes on all sides of me. I knew that the noise proceeded from a large herd of buffaloes, and that the elephants could not be far off, for these animals generally follow each other's motions.

The next moment, at a turning in the path, I met a huge male buffalo face to face, within twelve paces of me. He poked out his nose, and then put down his head, as if he meant to run at me with his horns. I was passing under a small tree at the time, and I instantly caught at one of the nearest branches with my hands, and pulling myself up from the saddle, was

soon out of danger. The animal raised his head and observed me for a moment; then flinging himself round, he darted into the thickest of the forest. I gave a loud shout, and instantly the whole troop were in motion all round me, their heavy treads making a noise like distant thunder, till they were out of hearing.

When I descended from my roost, I found my horse in the same place, running down with perspiration and trembling in every limb. It is remarkable that horses which have never seen an elephant or buffalo are instinctively alarmed on smelling them at a distance.

I never went half a mile without starting some of the wood-antelopes, or bush-bucks, as they are commonly called; but unless I fired instantly on seeing them, they soon escaped among the underwood.

Before my mason left me, he had rather a narrow escape from a couple of elephants, which I forgot to relate in its proper place. This man was so excessively timid, and had heard such dismal accounts of the danger from elephants and buffaloes at my place, that I had

the greatest difficulty to persuade him to accompany me through the woods, with which it was surrounded on all sides.

Like most nervous people, he was at the same time exceedingly anxious to conceal his fears, and I was often much diverted with his contending emotions. His stock of tobacco having been expended, he one Sunday begged me, as a particular favour, to accompany him to our other place to get a supply of wild tobacco, a considerable quantity of which was still growing at an old Kaffre kraal there. Thinking that there was little chance of meeting any elephants in the day-time along the waggon-road I had cut through the forest, I did not take my gun, which was an incumbrance on horseback.

While we were riding through the open country, my companion kept alongside of me, telling me that he was not the least afraid of the elephants. But, as we approached the edge of the forest, he became very silent, and gradually fell in the rear, and when I looked round to encourage him to proceed at a quicker pace, he would answer me with a faltering voice, "I'm no a bit feared noo; they'll no

catch *me* in a hurry," giving a kick at the same time to his old horse, which he well knew was not in the habit of taking a *gentle* hint. Then he would try to whistle some lively Scotch tune, with affected unconcern, until he heard the rustling of a bush-buck, bounding through the underwood, when he would immediately turn pale as a sheet, and call out to me with a low tremulous voice,—“Lord save us! what’s that, sir? Is that no an elephant? D’ ye hear that crank afore us? I’ll no gang ony farther. Come, sir, we’ll gang back, it’s no cannie gaain through the bush without a gun;—’gin I had a gun I wadna care for them.”

After a great deal of persuasion I at last got him to proceed, on my assurance that I would give him timely notice should there be any real danger. As soon as we quitted the wood, he instantly recovered his self-possession, and told me that he would not mind going by himself in future. He had packed up a large bundle of tobacco-leaves in his handkerchief, and we were returning home through the forest, when, on entering an open savanna, we saw a herd of between three and four hundred buffaloes

grazing along the edge of the woods, on the side of a grassy hill at some distance.

I asked my companion to stop a moment to observe their motions; but he instantly urged his old horse into something like a gallop, exclaiming, "Ye'll no get *me* to gang and look at them, ae sight's enough for *me*." When I overtook him he had reached a deep woody ravine, which divided the savanna from the "Groate Valley." Though he could see the grass on the other side of the ravine at only eight hundred yards' distance, he was afraid to cross it alone for fear of falling in with more buffaloes; for the dread of these animals was now uppermost in his mind.

Going thirty or forty yards before him, I had descended nearly to the bottom of the ravine, when my attention was attracted by some white objects, which were slowly proceeding from under the dark shade of the trees, and the next moment two large elephants, whose tusks I had first seen, advanced into the middle of the road hardly thirty paces from me. I turned my horse round as quietly as I could, and retreated up the path by which I had de-

scended, telling my companion in a slow voice of his danger, as I passed him.

On looking back, I perceived that he had succeeded in turning his horse's head half round, and was rising up and down in his saddle, and flogging him with all his might; but the obstinate brute would not move a step from the spot, for he was not aware of his own or his master's perilous situation.

At last he threw himself from his immoveable steed, but in his extreme trepidation he got his foot entangled in a leathern thong, which supplied the place of a stirrup, and he lay on his back tugging and kicking to extricate the imprisoned limb, still unconsciously grasping the bundle of tobacco-leaves in his left hand. I am ashamed to say, I could hardly help laughing at the terror painted on the pallid countenance of the poor mason, contrasted with the obstinate and phlegmatic indifference of the old horse, which still remained without motion, with his head turned towards his prostrate rider.

In the mean time, the wind being in our favour, the two elephants fortunately did not

observe us, and, crossing the road, entered the woods on the opposite side. After several unsuccessful efforts, the mason disentangled his leg, and came running up the road to the spot where I was standing, without venturing to look behind him. He dropped his bundle on the way to amuse the elephants, as he afterwards told me, to gain time to make his escape.

When he reached the edge of the wood, he sat down on the ground quite exhausted with his exertions. But now a fresh difficulty occurred, for he swore that nothing would induce him to trust himself in the woods again, and we had no means of leaving the savanna without passing through some part of the forest, which surrounded it. I asked him if he meant to build a house for himself, and to spend his days where he was. This question brought him to his senses, and he saw that he had only a choice of evils, but I could not get him to pass the scene of his late danger until I had ridden twice through the ravine, to show him that there was no further cause of alarm.

CHAPTER XII.

Mode of destroying Hyenas. — A Month of Solitude. — Time for Reflection. — Offer of Assistance. — The Author receives a Partner in his Farm. — Failure of the Wheat Crops. — Particulars respecting Mr. S——. — Excursion into the Kaffre Country. — Scenery of the Fish River. — Daring Hunters. — Arrival at Fort Willshire. — Fairs with the Kaffres. — Restriction on Spirituous Liquors. — Trade with the Kaffres. — Graceful Appearance of the Men. — Equalization of Property. — Practice of Polygamy. — Religious Notions. — Simple form of Government. — Influence of the Chiefs. — Established Usages. — Belief in Witchcraft. — Rain-Makers. — Domestic Habits. — Taste for Music. — Journey to Lovedale. — Costume of the Kaffres. — Assagays, or Javelins. — Symmetry of the Kaffres. — Mode of Life. — Arrival at a Kraal.

To make the most of my time during my solitary life at “Groote Valley,” I often employed myself in destroying hyenas by smoking them to death in their holes. When I observed any fresh tracks leading into their subterraneous retreats, I immediately collected a

quantity of dry wood from the forest, and, piling it up in the mouth of the hole, set fire to it. After it had burned for some time, I stopped up the entrance with earth, to retain the smoke and heat.

In this manner, I amused myself in my loneliness for about a month; and when I look back after several years have passed, I am far from thinking that this month was the least happy period of my life. Though occasional solitude is attended with excellent effects on the mind, in leading men to reflect on what they have seen and heard during their previous intercourse with the world, yet when it is prolonged for any considerable time, the mind gradually sinks into inactivity, for want of materials to keep it employed. These materials can only be supplied by books, or still more, by an interchange of thought with others, which, like the kaleidoscope, at every turning produces endless combinations of ideas, which may be further augmented in number and variety by reflection.

But men who live perpetually in a crowd have little time for reflection: on the other

hand, the solitary man has too much ; but he has no materials except those supplied by his own mind. If a hermit is less exposed to vice than the rest of mankind, who live in a constant intercourse with their fellow-creatures, he has at the same time less scope for the exercise of his virtues.

It would therefore appear that an intermediate state between these two extremes is the one best calculated for supplying the materials and the leisure requisite for reflection, and also for eliciting the moral virtues, whereon the greatest happiness of which man is capable of enjoying can alone be founded.

Such reflections as these often passed through my mind during my solitude, and though my situation was attended with its peculiar advantages and enjoyments, I felt also that these must soon find their limits, and that I could not exist for any length of time without society and useful occupation. I could not leave my habitation to procure servants, lest I should lose any of the cattle entrusted to my charge ; and I also well knew that the Dutch farmers near me, from their jealousy of the English,

would have been the last to afford me any assistance.

At length, some Scotchmen employed in sawing timber, at nine miles distance, who had always been ready to serve me, hearing that my people had departed, kindly offered to take care of my house and cattle, until I could hire other servants. I determined, however, to secure myself from being left without assistance for the future.

There was a half-pay officer, who formerly resided about twenty-five miles from my place, and who had often come to see me at the Groote Valley. He had lately been obliged to sell his farm, and was now living at the town of Uitenhage, where he had great difficulty in supporting his large family in a respectable manner. I immediately rode to see him, and offered him a half-share in the profits of my farm if he would come and live with me. He gladly accepted my proposal, and soon joined me at the Groote Valley, with his family and two hired Hottentots.

From this time, I was much more comfortable. Mrs. S—, who was an excellent wo-

man, managed our household concerns with great economy and prudence, and S—— and I took our turns at ploughing, and in superintending the other farming operations.

We enclosed several acres of ground near the house with a ditch and bank, and sowed it with wheat and Indian corn. We also cultivated plenty of French-beans, potatoes, pumpkins, and other vegetables. As soon as we had sufficient leisure, we built an additional wing to the house, and S. and I felled the necessary timber in the forest, and sawed it up ourselves into beams and planks. We, in short, worked hard and lived comfortably; but, from the badness of our wheat crops, on account of the continuance of the disease called the “rust,” we earned little excepting by the increase of our cattle, and the butter we sold at Uitenhage. Had we possessed sufficient capital to stock the farm with our own cattle, we should have done much better.

Poor S. had been exceedingly unfortunate. He was formerly a midshipman in the royal navy, and had been appointed to the command of an armed colonial vessel, which was

employed by the Governor of Senegal in preventing the slave-trade on the west coast of Africa. S. had fought three or four desperate actions with the slave-ships, and taken a great number of vessels, and his share of the prize-money would have amounted to several thousand pounds.

However, it seemed that the governor had been acting without the authority of the British Government, and many of the ships were not condemned when they arrived in England. Thus poor S. had received little or nothing for all his hard fighting and zeal in his employment; but, as some small compensation, the governor had procured him a commission in the Royal African Corps, with which regiment he came to the Cape.

One great advantage I enjoyed by my present arrangement was, that I could go from home with the confidence that everything was going on well in my absence. This more than compensated me for the small sacrifice I had made, and I had the satisfaction of being able to serve my friend's interest at the same time.

I had long been desirous of taking a trip into Kaffreland, and at length an opportunity occurred of gratifying my curiosity. The clergyman and the schoolmaster of Uitenhage, who were both Scotchmen, were also desirous of visiting the Kaffres and the Missionary establishments in their country, and I gladly agreed to accompany them.

We started from Groote Valley on horseback, and after riding six miles through the forest by following the elephant-paths, we reached the open district on the other side, and continued our journey to Grahamstown, by Jager's Drift on the Bosjesman's river.

After remaining in Grahamstown for a day or two to see our friends, we set off early in the morning to "Hermann's kraal," on the Fish river, where we lunched with Lieutenant S—, who commanded the military post stationed there. We crossed the Fish river just in time, for we had hardly reached the other side when it swelled to such a degree, in consequence of the rains in the interior, that it became impassable for several days. This rise in the stream took place so suddenly that we could see the

flood descending, heaped up, as it were, some feet above the general level of the water, and we were obliged to make the best of our way across.

Nothing can be wilder and more romantic than the scenery along the Fish river near Hermann's kraal. The steep rocky faces of the hills are everywhere covered with low wood and bushes, and here and there might be seen a lofty euphorbium shooting up its tall white trunk and green angular branches. We ascended from the deep bed of the river by a long ridge with a precipice on one side of it, the base of which was washed by the Fish river.

We saw a few elephants in a distant ravine. Their numbers, however, are now much reduced, from their being so much disturbed and hunted by the Hottentots and English sportsmen. Mr. Cowper Rose, of the Royal Engineers, has recently described several of the feats he saw some of the English hunters perform in this neighbourhood. Two of these daring men, who had become almost insensible to fear by long practice, had some time before paid me

a visit at my former place at Hoy, where they shot several elephants, but had some very narrow escapes in consequence of their being unaccustomed to high woods, where they could not see the animals till they were close upon them. A few days after they left me, one of these people was killed by an elephant while hunting among the jungle on the banks of the Sunday river.

The sun had nearly sunk behind the hills when we reached the high grounds beyond the Fish river, and we had to ride several miles in the dark before we came to Fort Willshire, where we proposed to remain for the night. Here we were kindly entertained by Captain F—— of the 55th regiment, with whom I had formerly served in Holland in 1814, but had never met since that time.

Fort Willshire stands on the banks of the Kuskamma, where this river, which is one of the largest in the colony, spreads itself into a kind of lake, in consequence of its being obstructed in its course by rocks a little lower down. The opposite side of the stream, which is inhabited by the Kaffres, is bounded by

steep high banks, covered with wood nearly to the top.

The next day being one of the two days in the week appointed by the governor for holding fairs with the Kaffres, as soon as it was daylight we saw great numbers of these people collecting in swarthy groups before the fort, carrying dried bullocks' hides, elephants' tusks, "assagays," or light javelins, baskets, mats, &c. to exchange with the English traders for glass and metal beads, thick brass wire, which the Kaffres wear round their arms and wrists for bracelets,—tinder-boxes, knives and other articles.

To prevent the demoralizing and destructive effects which are the usual results of intemperate habits gaining ground among savages, no intoxicating liquors are allowed to be sold to these people, who, being less industrious and less provident than civilized men, are generally supposed to be more prone to fall into this degrading vice. However laudable the motive may be for this restriction, I cannot help entertaining great doubts as to the

correctness of the reasoning on which it is founded.

If savages are more improvident and less capable of self-restraint than civilized men, they, at the same time, from their want of industry, have not the means of indulging habitually in excesses of this kind. Even admitting that these restrictions are beneficial in principle, it is almost impossible to enforce them. The only effectual mode by which the natural propensity of savages to indulge in intoxicating liquors can be combated, is by increasing *their other wants*, by the introduction among them of cheap and useful articles of clothing, ornament, or innocent luxury. When these wants, which will at first be considered by them as mere luxuries, are fully established, their means of indulging in pernicious and intoxicating drinks will be proportionally limited.

Many well-meaning people are exceedingly shocked at the idea of our traders being allowed to supply the Kaffres with glass beads, and other things of mere ornament, in exchange for articles which possess intrinsic value and

utility. They forget that a taste for ornaments is the first incentive to rouse savage nations from their habitual indolence.

The Kaffres, in their present state, have all that they consider necessary to their comfort ; and were it not for this love of ornament, which is deeply implanted in the minds of the whole human race, they would have no motive whatever to increase their industry. As these beads or other ornaments become common, they decrease in value, and others of a different colour or shape are sought after.

In the mean time, though these articles lose their first value among the tribes near the frontiers of the colony, they are still eagerly sought after by the more remote tribes, with whom they are exchanged for cattle, skins, ivory, and other useful commodities. Thus trifling and useless ornaments and baubles gradually become the current money among the different savage races of the interior, promote the mutual exchange of their commodities, and sow the first germs of civilization among them.

We were much struck with the easy and noble carriage of the Kaffre men. In general

their only clothing was a softened bullock's hide, cut in an oval shape, and wrapped loosely round their shoulders. The Kaffres are elegantly formed, and are so exceedingly graceful in their general demeanour that they appear to be a nation of gentlemen. In their manners they are respectful without servility, and possess a native delicacy, which prevents them from giving offence by word or action. There is no perceptible difference to be observed in their manners from the chief to the poorest of the tribe. Property, in fact, is much more equally distributed among the Kaffres than in civilized societies.

Thus jealousy, envy, and hatred, which destroy harmony between the different members of European communities, are in a great measure prevented. This constitutes the happiness of the infant state of society ; and, if we may judge by the free and cheerful manners which characterize the Kaffres, we may conclude that they are a happy people. The Kaffre women are inferior in appearance to the men. This is occasioned by their being obliged to work for their husbands, who only

assist them in enclosing their patches of Indian corn and millet, and in milking the cows. All the labour of digging the ground, constructing huts, and a variety of other employments, falls to the share of the females.

Polygamy is common among the Kaffres, but it is confined to the more wealthy—that is, to those who possess the greatest number of cattle. Their wives are always purchased from their parents, and those who have cattle to spare often exchange them for one or more wives, according to their circumstances.

By all I have been able to learn, the practice of polygamy does not appear to be an original custom of the Kaffres, but to have been occasioned by their destructive wars with the neighbouring tribes, when great numbers of the males on both sides being killed, there remained an undue proportion of women, who would have perished from want if they had not been distributed among the men of the conquering tribe. These women are, in fact, rather the servants than the wives of the men. They are generally treated kindly by their husbands,

and appear to be happy and contented with their lot.

The Kaffres believe in a Supreme Being, but their notions of a future state are vague and undecided. They generally swear by the spirit of their father, or by their chief. They sometimes pray also when they are sick. They always circumcise the boys when they are twelve or fourteen years of age ; but they have no idea of the object of the practice, or whence they derived it.

Like the Jews and Mahometans, they have a decided aversion to the flesh of swine, and can never be persuaded to partake of it. They are also said to have a dislike to all kinds of fish, except shell-fish. This accounts for their having no boats or canoes ; no nets, or other fishing tackle, which they do not want skill to construct.

The form of government which prevails among them is simple, and well adapted to their habits. Their chiefs are hereditary, but are not absolute. No important measure is ever undertaken without the advice and consent of their counsellors. These counsellors are

all inferior or subordinate chieftains, who command the different subdivisions of the tribe, and are usually denominated "Humraden" by the Dutch.

The whole population in the Kaffre country are divided into "kraals," or hamlets, containing from ten to twenty families, each occupying separate huts. There is always a petty chieftain, or counsellor, stationed at these kraals, who exercises a kind of patriarchal authority over the people, settles their disputes, and occasionally assists at the grand assemblies, or *parliaments* of the tribe. The chief, by a kind of legal fiction, if I may use the expression, is supposed to be the original possessor of all the lands and cattle within his territories. This pretended right, for it is seldom if ever acted upon, and several of the usages among the Kaffres seem to prove that they are descended from a more cultivated race, where civil government has made greater progress.

The Kaffres have no fixed right of property in the lands they occupy, except to the patches they have enclosed for cultivation, all the rest being held in common by the different families

of which the kraal or hamlet consists, and used as grazing grounds for their cattle. They have not yet arrived at that stage of improvement when the lands are appropriated, and descend from father to son in particular families. This will naturally follow the increase of population, when the people can no longer procure a sufficient subsistence from the produce of their flocks.

In the mean time the chiefs, to be beforehand with their subjects, are anxious to establish a right of property in the soil while it is not likely to be disputed. As I have already stated in a former chapter, I believe that an increase in the power of the chiefs, even amounting to a degree of arbitrary authority, is the first step towards the civilization of a barbarous people. The Kaffres are rapidly approaching to this state. The power of their chiefs is nearly absolute in some cases with respect to individuals, but very small in matters which equally concern the whole tribe.

Though they have no written laws, they have certain long established principles and usages which have almost equal authority among them,

any infraction of which on the part of the chiefs would be strenuously opposed by their subjects at large. Thus, when the avarice or tyranny of the chief leads him to form any scheme of oppression against an individual, he is obliged to avail himself of the prejudices or superstitions of the rest of the people to effect his object. The Kaffre chiefs are only to be distinguished from the poorest of their subjects by the number of their cattle. No individual is allowed to kill any of his cattle without the permission of the chief, who invariably claims a part of the carcass as his just right.

The Kaffres are great believers in witchcraft, and when any one is seized with a malady which will not yield to the remedies prescribed by their female doctors, it is usually attributed to the malice of some neighbour. This horrible superstition is artfully encouraged by the chief, who is always the gainer by the conviction of the offender, in which case, the latter is generally put to death, and his or her cattle confiscated and divided into two equal shares, — one half being assigned to the suffering party, and the other half seized by the chief.

Some of the chiefs, to increase their authority, pretend to have the power of bringing rain to moisten the ground in seasons of long continued drought. If their predictions happen to be fulfilled, their character is established, and they are distinguished by the title of "rain-makers;"—but if they fail, the blame is thrown on the wickedness of the people.

The Kaffres are a very superior race of barbarians—I cannot call them savages—in point of intellect; and the softness and copiousness of their language indicate a considerable degree of cultivation and reflection. I have been informed by the missionaries that they have no less than five or six names for the Supreme Being. Their reasoning faculties are powerful and active, and unlike the Hottentots, whose weakness of judgment and supine credulity incline them to believe everything, the Kaffre will credit nothing that he is not fairly reasoned into.

The Kaffres are frugal and even avaricious in their habits, and are extremely unwilling to part with their cattle. Though they think it no great crime to steal from the colonists, they

have a strong principle of honour and fidelity when trusted. Their hospitality and kindness to strangers are unbounded. In their domestic habits both sexes are exceedingly chaste and modest, and infidelity on the part of a wife is often punished with death to the offending party. The women, as with the Hottentots and other African tribes, always eat their meals apart from the men.

The Kaffres, notwithstanding the softness and beauty of their language, have not that natural genius for music for which the Hottentots are remarkable; and their native melodies are consequently deficient in variety, and are extremely monotonous, being merely repetitions of three or four notes. They have, however, a number of songs in their language, which, from the translations I have heard of them, exhibit feeling and poetical genius. In their deliberations in the councils of their tribe, they are strict observers of propriety and decorum, and often show great natural eloquence and acuteness in their reasonings.

Our time not permitting us to remain to witness the Kaffre fair, after breakfast we conti-

nued our journey to the Scotch missionary station called Lovedale, in Kaffreland. My friend Captain F. kindly procured us a native guide, and accompanied us to a ford on the ' Keiskamma, a few miles above the fort.

As soon as we entered the Kaffre territory, a new and enlivening scene awaited us. Every Kaffre we met on our way came up to us in the most frank and easy manner and shook us cordially by the hand ; yet without the slightest appearance of vulgar confidence, or forwardness. They evidently showed by their demeanour, which was at once graceful and modest, that they considered us their superiors, but that they felt, at the same time, they were freemen and were entitled to address us on terms of equality.

Few of the men we saw in the fields had any covering whatever, excepting a little leathern bag, from which a long thong depended half way down the thigh, ornamented with brass beads. This little bag, with its singular decorations, is assumed by the young men on arriving at adolescence, and may be considered as a kind of *toga virilis*. Their necks, wrists,

and ankles were ornamented with bright brass rings, which had a fine effect contrasted with their black skins. Many of them also wore a band of leather round their temples, vandyked with beads in a very tasteful manner like a crown. They all carried several "assagays," or light javelins in their hands. These elegant missiles are about five feet in length, and the iron heads are very neatly finished, when we consider that their only tools are stones of different shapes for hammers, and a flat stone for an anvil.

Several of the Kaffres, I observed, were perfect models of symmetry. Their legs, in particular, were beautifully turned, being muscular without angularity, and there is a peculiar ease and dignity in the formation and carriage of the head and neck. The body is also finely shaped, but somewhat slight in proportion to the legs. They have little of the negro in their features, except the complexion, which is not quite so swarthy. Their arms are more remarkable for elegance than muscularity; and they are decidedly inferior, in point of strength, to those of Europeans in general. The strength

of a Kaffre lies in his legs, and though these people are not particularly remarkable for speed, they are capable of enduring very long journeys with little fatigue.

As we approached any of the "kraals," the head man, or petty chieftain, always came to meet us, accompanied by one of his attendants carrying an earthen pot full of thick milk to regale us. The Kaffres seldom use sweet milk, but pour it into leathern bags, where it becomes very thick and sour, and in this state it is found to be more healthy and refreshing in warm weather. The earthen pots are formed of the fine clay taken from ant-hills, and hardened in the fire. The Kaffres also make baskets of a kind of rush. These baskets are so close in their texture that they are often used for holding water and milk.

Millet, Indian corn, beans, pumpkins, and thick milk, form the principal subsistence of the Kaffres; for they are too economical to kill any of their cattle except in cases of necessity, or on occasions of rejoicing, such as marriages, or when the youths are first admitted into the society of the men.