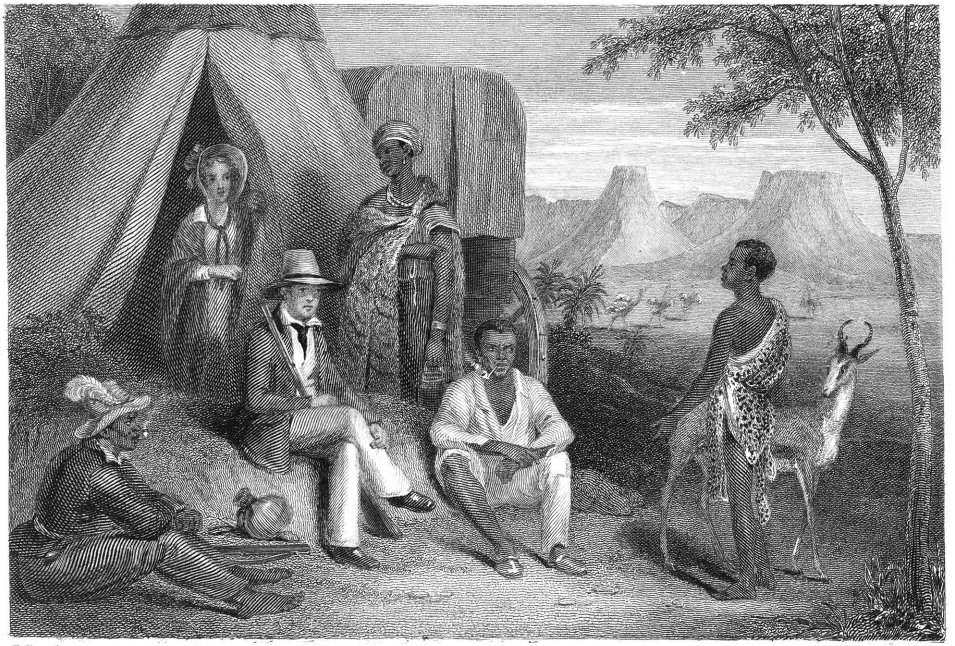


Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026



C. Landseer. J. Stewart.

THE BECHUANA BOY.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# AFRICAN SKETCHES

BY

THOMAS PRINGLE.




*The Emigrant's Cabin.*

LONDON: EDWARD MOXON: DOVER STREET.

1834.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# AFRICAN SKETCHES.

BY

THOMAS PRINGLE.

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXXXIV.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.
(LATE T. DAVISON.)

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# PREFACE.

THERE are two or three points on which it may be proper to say a few words, by way of preface to the present Volume.

It presents, in the first place, an unusual combination of Verse and Prose—not blended, but bound together, like the Siamese Twins, by a ligature which perhaps may appear equally unnecessary and unnatural. Yet in the present case, as in that of the singular human anomaly referred to, the junction, though originating in accident, will be found, on closer examination, to be of a nature so intimate, that it could scarcely be dissevered without endangering the *vitality* of the separate parts.

To the Verse greater prominence has been given than was perhaps altogether desirable, by its being placed first in order, an arrangement arising from



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

accident rather than design, but which the Reader may easily rectify by perusing the prose Narrative first. By this means he will have the advantage of obtaining such a familiar knowledge of the country, its scenery, inhabitants, and political condition, as will render the local allusions in the Poems perfectly intelligible without continual reference to the explanatory Notes.

With respect to the Narrative, it may possibly be inquired, why, if considered worth the publishing at all, it was not published immediately on the Author's return from the Cape of Good Hope. To this he can only reply, that such was then, in fact, his intention ; but having become unexpectedly engaged in the prosecution of a great moral and political question, as Secretary to the Society for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, he was led to postpone, though he never entirely abandoned, his purpose of relating what he had seen, felt, and suffered, during a residence of six years in South Africa. The grand and engrossing object to which for the last seven years his hand and heart have been, however feebly and unworthily, devoted, (in conjunction with persons of whose infinitely more eminent services it is unnecessary for him to speak,) having at length, through the blessing of Divine Providence, been attained, the author now offers this little Volume as

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the first fruits of his relaxation. It will, he humbly trusts, be found in no respect incongruous with his recent labours, and, so far as it relates to the condition and improvement of the long-oppressed Natives of Southern Africa, even strictly subsidiary to the same Cause. The interesting results dependent upon the wise and equitable settlement of our relations with the Native Tribes, have led him to devote an extent of space to the discussion of that topic which has enlarged the size of the book considerably beyond his calculations, and consequently added to its cost: but the peculiar importance, at the present juncture, of the subject referred to, will, he hopes, furnish an adequate apology.

It is only requisite further to notice that a considerable portion of the Poems, and a few also of the Prose Sketches comprised in the present work, have appeared in print before; partly in a small volume entitled 'Ephemerides,' which the Author published in 1828, and partly in various Periodical Works to which he has been an occasional contributor.

*London, May* 12, 1834.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# CONTENTS.

## PART I.

### POEMS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA.


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| The Bechuana Boy | 1 |
| Afar in the Desert | 9 |
| Song of the Wild Bushman | 14 |
| The Coranna | 16 |
| The Kosa | 18 |
| Evening Rambles | 21 |
| The Lion Hunt | 28 |
| The Lion and Giraffe | 32 |
| The Emigrant's Cabin | 35 |
| An Emigrant's Song | 50 |
| Makanna's Gathering | 52 |
| The Incantation | 55 |
| The Caffer Commando | 58 |
| A Noon-day Dream | 60 |
| The Exile's Lament | 66 |
| The Brown Hunter's Song | 68 |
| The Captive of Camalu | 70 |


Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

PAGE

THE DESOLATE VALLEY . . . . . 75
THE GHONA WIDOW'S LULLABY . . . . . 79
THE ROCK OF RECONCILEMENT . . . . . 83
THE FORESTER OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND . . 85
THE SLAVE DEALER . . . . . 91
THE TORNADO . . . . . 94
PARAPHRASE OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM . . 97

## SONNETS.

I. THE HOTTENTOT . . . . . 101
II. THE CAFFER. . . . . 102
III. THE BUSHMAN . . . . . 103
IV. SLAVERY . . . . . 104
V. FRANSCHEHOEK . . . . . 105
VI. GENADENDAL . . . . . 106
VII. ENON . . . . . 107
VIII. THE GOOD MISSIONARY . . . . . 108
IX. TO THE REV. DR. PHILIP . . . . . 109
X. A COMMON CHARACTER . . . . . 110
XI. THE NAMELESS STREAM . . . . . 111
XII. MY COUNTRY . . . . . 112
XIII. THE CAPE OF STORMS . . . . . 113
XIV. TO OPPRESSION . . . . . 114

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# CONTENTS.

## PART II.

## NARRATIVE OF A RESIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

### CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Government Scheme of Emigration to South Africa in 1819—Arrival of the Author with a Party of Settlers in Simon's Bay—Visit to Cape Town—Author's Views in emigrating—Voyage round the Coast to Algoa Bay—Disembarkation of Emigrants—Settler's Camp—Excursion to Bethelsdorp—Caffer Captive—Hottentot Congregation—Sanguine Expectations of the Emigrants—Remarkable Fate of two Religious Polemics—Interview with the Acting Governor—Destination of the Scotch Party—Foundation of the town of Port Elizabeth. . . . . 117—139

### CHAPTER II.

Journey into the Interior—Mode of Travelling—Remarkable Salt Lake—Nocturnal Encampment in a Forest of Jungle—Route to Roodewal, a military post on the Great Fish River—Hospitable Attentions of the Officers—Visit from Mr. Hart—Journey up the River of Baboons—Groot Willem—Terrible Roads—Picturesque Scenery—Arrival at the Location allotted to the Party. . . . . 140—152

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER III.

PAGE

Survey of the Location—Name of Glen-Lynden given to it—Visit from the Deputy Landdrost of the District—A Sabbath in the Wilderness—Nocturnal Alarms from Lions—Extract from the Author's Diary—Guard of Hottentots—Temporary Huts and Furniture—Purchase of Live Stock—Clearing of Ground—Planting of Gardens and Orchards—Author's Various Occupations—Medical Practice—Instruction of the Natives—Intercourse with the Dutch-African Colonists. . . . . 153—170

## CHAPTER IV.

The Location not adapted for extensive Cultivation—Application to Government for an enlargement of Territory—Excursion through the adjacent Country—The Tarka—Residence and domestic Economy of a frontier Stock-farmer—Village of Cradock—Deputy Landdrost—Zwagershoek—Ravages of Hyænas—Rural Hospitality—Somerset—Mr. Hart—Extracts from Diary—Crops destroyed by Rust or Mildew. . . . . 171—188

## CHAPTER V.

Insurrection of Frontier Boors in 1815—Case of the Hottentot Booy—Oppression of the Native Race—Conduct and Fate of Frederick Bezuidenhout—Views of the Insurgents—Failure of their Schemes—Their Surrender—Pursuit of the Fugitives—Desperate Resistance of the Bezuidenhouts—Trial and Punishment of the Prisoners. . . 189—199

## CHAPTER VI.

Disheartening Occurrences at the beginning of 1821—Excursion with Mr. Hart—Flocks of Springboks—Desolate Plains—Zureberg Mountains—Magnificent Scenery—Haunts of the Elephant—Valley of the White River—Moravian Settlement of Enon—Anecdotes of the Caffer Wars—African Forests—Elephant Sagacity—Return across the Mountains—Account of the Slaughter of the elder Stockenstrom on the Zureberg by the Caffers . . . . . 200—228

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER VII.

PAGE

Interview with the Acting Governor at Somerset—Further Enlargement of the Location—Excursion to Albany—Appearance of the Country near the Coast—Situation of the Albany Settlers in July, 1821—Predatory Bushmen—Mulatto Hottentots settled at Glen-Lynden—Their Character—Subdivision of the Location—Author's Residence at Eildon—Description of an Emigrant's Cabin—Privations—The Ceded Territory—The Winterberg—Scenery of the Koonap River and its Branches—Excursion with a Party of Officers—A Herd of Elephants—Remarkable Escape of Lieutenant Moodie. . . . . 229—254

## CHAPTER VIII.

Wars with the Wild Beasts; Lion-hunting.—Notices and Anecdotes of other Animals: Leopards; Hyænas; the Hippopotamus and Rhinoceros; the Buffalo; the Gnu; the Quagga; the Ursine Baboon, &c.—The Secretary-bird—Hanging Nests of the Weaver-bird—Serpents; Antidotes against the effects of their Poison—The Guana, and other Reptiles—Insects—Exuberance of Animal Life . 225—288

## CHAPTER IX.

State of Glen-Lynden Settlement in July, 1822—Road-making—Military Guard withdrawn—Arrival of Relatives from Scotland—Departure of the Author for Cape Town; his Views there—Graaff-Reinét—The Sneeuwberg—Household of an affluent Grazier—Hospitality of the Inhabitants—The Great Karroo—Habits of the Ostrich—Gaol at Beaufort, and its Inmates—Journey along the Ghamka River—Transition from Sterility to exuberant Vegetation—Hex River—Arrival at Cape Town . . . . 289—309

## CHAPTER X.

Residence in Cape Town—Favourable Prospects—Professions and Character of the Government—Permission to publish a Journal refused—Commissioners of Inquiry—Mr. Fairbairn

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

PAGE

—Establishment of a private Academy—A Magazine and Newspaper commenced—Jealousy of the Government—The Cape 'Reign of Terror'—Suppression of the Newspaper—Discontinuance of the South-African Journal—Persecution of the Editors—Suppression of the Literary Society—Conduct of the Government Press—Deplorable State of Society—Ruin of the Author's Prospects . . . . . 310—338

CHAPTER XI.

Excursion to the Interior—Accident near Genadendal—Return to Cape Town—State of Affairs—Second Journey to the Eastern Frontier—State of the Settlers in Albany; their Calamities and Privations; their Treatment by the Government; Subscription for their Relief; their Progressive Advance, and present Prosperous Condition. . 339—352

CHAPTER XII.

Return to Glen-Lynden—Swarms of Locusts—Excursion to Graaff-Reinét, and Conference there—Colonial Slavery—Bechuana Refugees—The Ficani Marauders—Banditti of the Neutral Ground—Notices of the Bushmen, and of the barbarous Policy pursued towards them in Past and Present Times. . . . . 353—373

CHAPTER XIII.

The Hottentots—Progress of Colonial Encroachments—Reduction of the Aboriginal Race to Servitude—Their Condition at the close of last Century—Their Wars with the Boors—Oppressions and Cruelties—Colonial Redress—Case of Stuurman—Condition of the Hottentots during the Author's Residence in the Colony—Exertions of Mr. Buxton and of Dr. Philip for their Relief—Emancipating Ordinance of 1828—Colonial Clamours—Account of the Settlement at Kat River. . . . . 374—411

CHAPTER XIV.

The Caffers: Their Name, Appearance, Mode of Life, &c.—Their First Intercourse with the Colonists—Conflicts with

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

PAGE

them in Bruintjes-hoogtè and the Zureveld—Settlement of the Eastern Boundary in 1798—Caffer War of 1811—Invasion of Cafferland in 1818—The Prophet Makanna—Attack on Graham's Town—Speech of Makanna's Pagati, and Fate of that Chief—Lord Charles Somerset's Frontier Policy, and Distribution of the Ceded Territory—The Commando System—Slaughter of Caffer Envoys in 1824, and of the Chief Seko and his Followers in 1830—Recent State of Affairs on the Northern and Eastern Frontiers—Treatment of the Chief Makomo—Change of System proposed . . . . . 412—479

CHAPTER XV.

Topics omitted—Progress of Christian Missions in South Africa—The Rev. Dr. Philip—Deplorable State of the Country beyond the Northern Frontier—Character and Influence of the Periodical Press—Mr. Fairbairn's Services in the Colony—Caffer Commando in December, 1825—Anecdote of a Caffer Warrior—Conclusion of the Author's Personal Narrative, and his Return to England—Progress and Present State of the Glen-Lynden Settlement. . 481—498

NOTES TO THE POEMS - . . . . . 501—528

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# AFRICAN SKETCHES.

## PART I.

## POEMS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SOUTH-AFRICA.

Rude Rymes, the which a rustic Muse did weave
In salvadge soyl, far from Parnasso Mount,
And roughly wrought in an vnlearned loome.

SPENSER.

Avia Pieridum peragro, loca nullius ante
Trita solo: juvat integros accedere fontes,
Atque haurire; juvatque novos decerpere flores.

LUCRET.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

TO

# SIR WALTER SCOTT.

---

FROM DESERTS WILD AND MANY A PATHLESS WOOD
OF SAVAGE CLIMES WHERE I HAVE WANDERED LONG,
WHOSE HILLS AND STREAMS ARE YET UNGRACED BY SONG,
I BRING, ILLUSTRIOUS FRIEND, THIS GARLAND RUDE:
THE OFFERING, THOUGH UNCOUTH, IN KINDLY MOOD
THOU WILT REGARD, IF HAPLY THERE SHOULD BE,
'MONG MEANER THINGS, THE FLOWER SIMPLICITY,
FRESH FROM COY NATURE'S VIRGIN SOLITUDE.
ACCEPT THIS FRAIL MEMORIAL, HONOURED SCOTT,
OF FAVOURED INTERCOURSE IN FORMER DAY—
OF WORDS OF KINDNESS I HAVE NE'ER FORGOT—
OF ACTS OF FRIENDSHIP I CAN NE'ER REPAY:
FOR I HAVE FOUND (AND WHEREFORE SAY IT NOT?)
THE MINSTREL'S HEART AS NOBLE AS HIS LAY.

*January*, 1828.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE BECHUANA BOY.

I SAT at noontide in my tent,
And looked across the Desert dun,
Beneath the cloudless firmament
Far gleaming in the sun,
When from the bosom of the waste
A swarthy Stripling came in haste,
With foot unshod and naked limb;
And a tame springbok followed him.

With open aspect, frank yet bland,
And with a modest mien he stood,
Caressing with a gentle hand
That beast of gentle brood;
Then, meekly gazing in my face,
Said in the language of his race,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

With smiling look yet pensive tone,
" Stranger—I'm in the world alone !" [1]

" Poor boy !" I said, " thy native home
Lies far beyond the Stormberg blue:
Why hast thou left it, boy ! to roam
This desolate Karroo ?" [2]
His face grew sadder while I spoke ;
The smile forsook it ; and he broke
Short silence with a sob-like sigh,
And told his hapless history.

" I have no home !" replied the boy:
" The Bergenaars [3]—by night they came.
And raised their wolfish howl of joy,
While o'er our huts the flame
Resistless rushed ; and aye their yell
Pealed louder as our warriors fell
In helpless heaps beneath their shot:
—One living man they left us not !

" The slaughter o'er, they gave the slain
To feast the foul-beaked birds of prey ;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And, with our herds, across the plain
They hurried us away—
The widowed mothers and their brood.
Oft, in despair, for drink and food
We vainly cried: they heeded not,
But with sharp lash the captive smote.

" Three days we tracked that dreary wild,
Where thirst and anguish pressed us sore;
And many a mother and her child
Lay down to rise no more.
Behind us, on the desert brown,
We saw the vultures swooping down;
And heard, as the grim night was falling,
The wolf to his gorged comrade calling.

" At length was heard a river sounding
'Midst that dry and dismal land,
And, like a troop of wild deer bounding,
We hurried to its strand—
Among the maddened cattle rushing;
The crowd behind still forward pushing,
Till in the flood our limbs were drenched,
And the fierce rage of thirst was quenched.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Hoarse-roaring, dark, the broad Gareep[4]
In turbid streams was sweeping fast,
Huge sea-cows[5] in its eddies deep
Loud snorting as we passed;
But that relentless robber clan
Right through those waters wild and wan
Drove on like sheep our wearied band:
—Some never reached the farther strand.

"All shivering from the foaming flood,
We stood upon the stranger's ground,
When, with proud looks and gestures rude,
The White Men gathered round:
And there, like cattle from the fold,
By Christians we were bought and sold,
'Midst laughter loud and looks of scorn—
And roughly from each other torn.

"My Mother's scream, so long and shrill,
My little Sister's wailing cry,
(In dreams I often hear them still!)
Rose wildly to the sky.
A tiger's heart came to me then,
And fiercely on those ruthless men

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I sprang.—Alas! dashed on the sand,
Bleeding, they bound me foot and hand.

" Away—away on prancing steeds
The stout man-stealers blithely go,
Through long low valleys fringed with reeds,
O'er mountains capped with snow,
Each with his captive, far and fast;
Until yon rock-bound ridge we passed,
And distant stripes of cultured soil
Bespoke the land of tears and toil.

" And tears and toil have been my lot
Since I the White Man's thrall became,
And sorer griefs I wish forgot—
Harsh blows, and scorn, and shame!
Oh, Englishman! thou ne'er canst know
The injured bondman's bitter woe,
When round his breast, like scorpions, cling
Black thoughts that madden while they sting!

" Yet this hard fate I might have borne,
And taught in time my soul to bend,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Had my sad yearning heart forlorn
But found a single friend:
My race extinct or far removed,
The Boor's rough brood I could have loved;
But each to whom my bosom turned
Even like a hound the black boy spurned.

"While, friendless thus, my master's flocks
I tended on the upland waste,
It chanced this fawn leapt from the rocks,
By wolfish wild-dogs chased:[6]
I rescued it, though wounded sore
And dabbled in its mother's gore;
And nursed it in a cavern wild,
Until it loved me like a child.

"Gently I nursed it; for I thought
(Its hapless fate so like to mine)
By good UTÍKO[7] it was brought
To bid me not repine,—
Since in this world of wrong and ill
One creature lived that loved me still,
Although its dark and dazzling eye
Beamed not with human sympathy.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

" Thus lived I, a lone orphan lad,
My task the proud Boor's flocks to tend;
And this poor fawn was all I had
To love, or call my friend;
When suddenly, with haughty look
And taunting words, that tyrant took
My playmate for his pampered boy,
Who envied me my only joy.

" High swelled my heart!—But when the star
Of midnight gleamed, I softly led
My bounding favourite forth, and far
Into the Desert fled.
And here, from human kind exiled,
Three moons on roots and berries wild
I've fared; and braved the beasts of prey,
To 'scape from spoilers worse than they.

" But yester morn a Bushman brought
The tidings that thy tents were near;
And now with hasty foot I've sought
Thy presence, void of fear;
Because they say, O English Chief,
Thou scornest not the Captive's grief:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Then let me serve thee, as thine own—
For I am in the world alone!"

Such was Marossi's touching tale.
Our breasts they were not made of stone:
His words, his winning looks prevail—
We took him for 'our own.'
And One, with woman's gentle art,
Unlocked the fountains of his heart;
And love gushed forth—till he became
Her Child in every thing but name.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## AFAR IN THE DESERT.

AFAR in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
When the sorrows of life the soul o'ercast,
And, sick of the Present, I cling to the Past;
When the eye is suffused with regretful tears,
From the fond recollections of former years;
And shadows of things that have long since fled
Flit over the brain, like the ghosts of the dead:
Bright visions of glory—that vanished too soon;
Day-dreams—that departed ere manhood's noon;
Attachments—by fate or by falsehood reft;
Companions of early days—lost or left;
And my Native Land—whose magical name
Thrills to the heart like electric flame;
The home of my childhood; the haunts of my prime;
All the passions and scenes of that rapturous time

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

When the feelings were young and the world was new,
Like the fresh bowers of Eden unfolding to view;
All—all now forsaken—forgotten—foregone!
And I—a lone exile remembered of none—
My high aims abandoned,—my good acts undone,—
Aweary of all that is under the sun,—
With that sadness of heart which no stranger may scan,
I fly to the Desert afar from man!

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,
With its scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife—
The proud man's frown, and the base man's fear,—
The scorner's laugh, and the sufferer's tear,—
And malice, and meanness, and falsehood, and folly,
Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy;
When my bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,
And my soul is sick with the bondman's sigh—
Oh! then there is freedom, and joy, and pride,
Afar in the Desert alone to ride!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,
And to bound away with the eagle's speed,
With the death-fraught firelock in my hand—
The only law of the Desert Land!

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
Away—away from the dwellings of men,
By the wild deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen;
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hartèbeest graze, [8]
And the kùdù and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild-vine; [9]
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood,
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
In the fen where the wild-ass is drinking his fill.

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
O'er the brown Karroo, where the bleating cry
Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And the timorous quagga's [10] shrill whistling neigh
Is heard by the fountain at twilight grey;
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
With wild hoof scouring the desolate plain;
And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste
Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste,
Hying away to the home of her rest,
Where she and her mate have scooped their nest,
Far hid from the pitiless plunderer's view
In the pathless depths of the parched Karroo. [11]

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
Away—away—in the Wilderness vast, [12]
Where the White Man's foot hath never passed,
And the quivered Coránna or Bechuán
Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan:
A region of emptiness, howling and drear,
Which Man hath abandoned from famine and fear;
Which the snake and the lizard inhabit alone,
With the twilight bat from the yawning stone;
Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub takes root,
Save poisonous thorns that pierce the foot;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And the bitter-melon,[13] for food and drink,
Is the pilgrim's fare by the salt lake's brink:[14]
A region of drought, where no river glides,
Nor rippling brook with osiered sides;
Where sedgy pool, nor bubbling fount,
Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount,
Appears, to refresh the aching eye:
But the barren earth, and the burning sky,
And the blank horizon, round and round,
Spread—void of living sight or sound.

And here, while the night-winds round me sigh,
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
As I sit apart by the desert stone,
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
'A still small voice' comes through the wild
(Like a Father consoling his fretful Child),
Which banishes bitterness, wrath, and fear,—
Saying—MAN IS DISTANT, BUT GOD IS NEAR!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## SONG OF THE WILD BUSHMAN.

LET the proud White Man boast his flocks,
And fields of foodful grain;
My home is mid the mountain rocks,
The Desert my domain.[15]
I plant no herbs nor pleasant fruits,
I toil not for my cheer;
The Desert yields me juicy roots,
And herds of bounding deer.

The countless springboks are my flock,
Spread o'er the unbounded plain;[16]
The buffalo bendeth to my yoke,
The wild-horse to my rein:[17]
My yoke is the quivering assagai,
My rein the tough bow-string;
My bridle curb is a slender barb—
Yet it quells the forest-king.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The crested adder honoureth me,
And yields at my command
His poison-bag, like the honey-bee,
When I seize him on the sand.
Yea, even the wasting locusts'-swarm,
Which mighty nations dread,
To me nor terror brings nor harm—
For I make of them my bread. [18]

Thus I am lord of the Desert Land,
And I will not leave my bounds,
To crouch beneath the Christian's hand,
And kennel with his hounds:
To be a hound, and watch the flocks,
For the cruel White Man's gain—
No! the brown Serpent of the Rocks
His den doth yet retain;
And none who there his sting provokes,
Shall find its poison vain!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE CORANNA.

FAST by his wild resounding River
The listless Córan lingers ever ;
Still drives his heifers forth to feed,
Soothed by the gorrah's humming reed ;
A rover still unchecked will range,
As humour calls, or seasons change ;
His tent of mats and leathern gear
All packed upon the patient steer.
'Mid all his wanderings hating toil,
He never tills the stubborn soil ;
But on the milky dams relies,
And what spontaneous earth supplies.
Or, should long-parching droughts prevail,
And milk, and bulbs, and locusts fail,
He lays him down to sleep away
In languid trance the weary day ;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Oft as he feels gaunt hunger's stound,*
Still tightening famine's girdle [21] round;
Lulled by the sound of the Gareep,
Beneath the willows murmuring deep:
Till thunder-clouds, surcharged with rain,
Pour verdure o'er the panting plain;
And call the famished Dreamer from his trance,
To feast on milk and game, and wake the moon-
light dance.

* *Stound*—a sharp pang, a shooting pain.
SPENSER,—BURNS.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE KOSA.

THE free-born Kosa [22] still doth hold
The fields his fathers held of old;
With club and spear, in jocund ranks,
Still hunts the elk by Chumi's banks:
By Keisi's meads his herds are lowing;
On Debè's slopes his gardens glowing,
Where laughing maids at sunset roam,
To bear the juicy melons home:
And striplings from Kalumna's wood
Bring wild grapes and the pigeon's brood,
With fragrant hoard of honey-bee
Rifled from the hollow tree: [23]
And herdsmen shout from rock to rock;
And through the glen the hamlets smoke;
And children gambol round the kraal,
To greet their sires at evening-fall:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And matrons sweep the cabin floor,
And spread the mat beside the door,
And with dry fagots wake the flame
To dress the wearied huntsman's game.

Bright gleams the fire: its ruddy blaze
On many a dusky visage plays.
On forkèd twigs the game is drest;
The neighbours share the simple feast:
The honey-mead, the millet-ale,[24]
Flow round—and flow the jest and tale;
Wild legends of the ancient day,
Of hunting feat, of warlike fray;
And now come smiles, and now come sighs,
As mirth and grief alternate rise.
Or should a sterner strain awake,
Like sudden flame in summer-brake,
Bursts fiercely forth in battle song
The tale of Amakósa's wrong;
Throbs every warrior bosom high,
With lightning flashes every eye,
And, in wild cadence, rings the sound
Of barbèd javelins clashing round.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

But lo, like a broad shield on high,
The moon gleams in the midnight sky.
'Tis time to part: the watch-dog's bay
Beside the folds has died away.
'Tis time to rest: the mat is spread,
The hardy hunter's simple bed:
His wife her dreaming infant hushes
On the low cabin's couch of rushes;
Softly he draws its door of hide,
And, stretched by his Gulúwi's side, [25]
Sleeps soundly till the peep of dawn
Wakes on the hills the dappled fawn;
Then forth again he gaily bounds,
With club and spear and questing hounds.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## EVENING RAMBLES.

THE sultry summer-noon is past;
And mellow Evening comes at last,
With a low and languid breeze
Fanning the mimosa trees,
That cluster o'er the yellow vale,
And oft perfume the panting gale
With fragrance faint: it seems to tell
Of primrose-tufts in Scottish dell,
Peeping forth in tender spring
When the blithe lark begins to sing.

But soon, amidst our Lybian vale,
Such soothing recollections fail;
Soon we raise the eye to range
O'er prospects wild, grotesque, and strange;
Sterile mountains, rough and steep,
That bound abrupt the valley deep,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Heaving to the clear blue sky
Their ribs of granite, bare and dry
And ridges, by the torrents worn,
Thinly streaked with scraggy thorn,
Which fringes Nature's savage dress,
Yet scarce relieves her nakedness.

But where the Vale winds deep below,
The landscape hath a warmer glow:
There the spekboom [26] spreads its bowers
Of light-green leaves and lilac flowers;
And the aloe rears her crimson crest,
Like stately queen for gala drest;
And the bright-blossomed bean-tree [27] shakes
Its coral tufts above the brakes,
Brilliant as the glancing plumes
Of sugar-birds [28] among its blooms,
With the deep-green verdure blending
In the stream of light descending.

And now, along the grassy meads,
Where the skipping reebok [29] feeds,
Let me through the mazes rove
Of the light acacia grove;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Now while yet the honey-bee
Hums around the blossomed tree;
And the turtles softly chide,
Wooingly, on every side;
And the clucking pheasant calls
To his mate at intervals;
And the duiker [30] at my tread
Sudden lifts his startled head,
Then dives affrighted in the brake,
Like wild-duck in the reedy lake.

My wonted seat receives me now—
This cliff with myrtle-tufted brow,
Towering high o'er grove and stream,
As if to greet the parting gleam.
With shattered rocks besprinkled o'er,
Behind ascends the mountain hoar,
Whose crest o'erhangs the Bushman's Cave, [31]
(His fortress once, and now his grave,)
Where the grim satyr-faced baboon [32]
Sits gibbering to the rising moon,
Or chides with hoarse and angry cry
The herdsman as he wanders by.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Spread out below in sun and shade,
The shaggy Glen lies full displayed—
Its sheltered nooks, its sylvan bowers,
Its meadows flushed with purple flowers;
And through it like a dragon spread,
I trace the river's tortuous bed.
Lo there the Chaldee-willow weeps,
Drooping o'er the headlong steeps,
Where the torrent in his wrath
Hath rifted him a rugged path,
Like fissure cleft by earthquake's shock,
Through mead and jungle, mound and rock.
But the swoln water's wasteful sway,
Like tyrant's rage, hath passed away,
And left the ravage of its course
Memorial of its frantic force.
—Now o'er its shrunk and slimy bed
Rank weeds and withered wrack are spread,
With the faint rill just oozing through,
And vanishing again from view;
Save where the guana's[33] glassy pool
Holds to some cliff its mirror cool,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Girt by the palmite's leafy screen, [34]
Or graceful rock-ash, tall and green,
Whose slender sprays above the flood
Suspend the loxia's callow brood
In cradle-nests, [35] with porch below,
Secure from winged or creeping foe—
Weasel or hawk or writhing snake;
Light swinging, as the breezes wake,
Like the ripe fruit we love to see
Upon the rich pomegranate-tree.

But lo, the sun's descending car
Sinks o'er Mount-Dunion's peaks afar;
And now along the dusky vale
The homeward herds and flocks I hail,
Returning from their pastures dry
Amid the stony uplands high.
First, the brown Herder with his flock
Comes winding round my hermit-rock:
His mien and gait and vesture tell,
No shepherd he from Scottish fell;
For crook the guardian gun he bears,
For plaid the sheep-skin mantle wears;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Sauntering languidly along;
Nor flute has he, nor merry song,
Nor book, nor tale, nor rustic lay,
To cheer him through his listless day.
His look is dull, his soul is dark;
He feels not hope's electric spark;
But, born the White Man's servile thrall,
Knows that he cannot lower fall. [36]

Next the stout Neat-herd passes by,
With bolder step and blither eye;
Humming low his tuneless song,
Or whistling to the hornèd throng.
From the destroying foeman fled,
He serves the Colonist for bread:
Yet this poor heathen Bechuan
Bears on his brow the port of man;
A naked, homeless exile he—
But not debased by Slavery. [37]

Now, wizard-like, slow Twilight sails
With soundless wing adown the vales,
Waving with his shadowy rod
The owl and bat to come abroad,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

With things that hate the garish sun,
To frolic now when day is done.
Now along the meadows damp
The enamoured fire-fly lights his lamp;
Link-boy he of woodland green
To light fair Avon's Elfin Queen;
Here, I ween, more wont to shine
To light the thievish porcupine,
Plundering my melon-bed,—
Or villain lynx, whose stealthy tread
Rouses not the wakeful hound
As he creeps the folds around.

But lo! the night-bird's boding scream
Breaks abrupt my twilight dream;
And warns me it is time to haste
My homeward walk across the waste,
Lest my rash tread provoke the wrath
Of adder coiled upon the path, [38]
Or tempt the lion from the wood,
That soon will prowl athirst for blood.
—Thus, murmuring my thoughtful strain,
I seek our wattled cot again.

*Glen-Lynden*, 1822.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE LION HUNT.

MOUNT—mount for the hunting—with musket and
spear!
Call our friends to the field—for the Lion is near!
Call Arend and Ekhard and Groepe to the spoor;[39]
Call Muller and Coetzer and Lucas Van Vuur.[40]

Ride up Eildon-Cleugh, and blow loudly the bugle:
Call Slinger and Allie and Dikkop and Dugal;[41]
And George with the elephant-gun on his shoulder—
In a perilous pinch none is better or bolder.

In the gorge of the glen lie the bones of my steed,
And the hoofs of a heifer of fatherland's breed:
But mount, my brave boys! if our rifles prove true,
We'll soon make the spoiler his ravages rue.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Ho! the Hottentot lads have discovered the track—
To his den in the desert we'll follow him back;
But tighten your girths, and look well to your flints,
For heavy and fresh are the villain's foot-prints.

Through the rough rocky kloof into grey Huntly-Glen,
Past the wild-olive clump where the wolf has his den,
By the black-eagle's rock at the foot of the fell,
We have tracked him at length to the buffalo's well.

Now mark yonder brake where the blood-hounds are howling;
And hark that hoarse sound—like the deep thunder growling;
'Tis his lair—'tis his voice!—from your saddles alight;
He's at bay in the brushwood preparing for fight.

Leave the horses behind—and be still every man:
Let the Mullers and Rennies advance in the van:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Keep fast in your ranks;—by the yell of yon hound,
The savage, I guess, will be out—with a bound.

He comes! the tall jungle before him loud crashing,
His mane bristled fiercely, his fiery eyes flashing;
With a roar of disdain, he leaps forth in his wrath,
To challenge the foe that dare 'leaguer his path.

He couches—ay now we'll see mischief, I dread:
Quick—level your rifles—and aim at his head:
Thrust forward the spears, and unsheath every knife—
St. George! he's upon us!—Now, fire, lads, for life!

He's wounded—but yet he'll draw blood ere he falls—
Ha! under his paw see Bezuidenhout sprawls—
Now Diederik! Christian! right in the brain
Plant each man his bullet—Hurra! he is slain!

Bezuidenhout—up man!—'tis only a scratch—
(You were always a scamp, and have met with your
match!)
What a glorious lion!—what sinews—what claws—
And seven-feet-ten from the rump to the jaws!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

His hide, with the paws and the bones of his skull,
With the spoils of the leopard and buffalo bull,
We'll send to Sir Walter.[42]—Now, boys, let us dine,
And talk of our deeds o'er a flask of old wine.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE LION AND GIRAFFE.

WOULDST thou view the Lion's den?
Search afar from haunts of men—
Where the reed-encircled rill
Oozes from the rocky hill,
By its verdure far descried
'Mid the desert brown and wide.

Close beside the sedgy brim
Couchant lurks the Lion grim;
Watching till the close of day
Brings the death-devoted prey.
Heedless, at the ambushed brink
The tall Giraffe [43] stoops down to drink:
Upon him straight the savage springs
With cruel joy. The desert rings

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

With clanging sound of desperate strife—
The prey is strong and he strives for life.
Plunging oft with frantic bound,
To shake the tyrant to the ground,
He shrieks—he rushes through the waste,
With glaring eye and headlong haste:
In vain!—the spoiler on his prize
Rides proudly—tearing as he flies.

For life—the victim's utmost speed
Is mustered in this hour of need:
For life—for life—his giant might
He strains, and pours his soul in flight;
And, mad with terror, thirst, and pain,
Spurns with wild hoof the thundering plain.

'Tis vain; the thirsty sands are drinking
His streaming blood—his strength is sinking;
The victor's fangs are in his veins—
His flanks are streaked with sanguine stains—
His panting breast in foam and gore
Is bathed—he reels—his race is o'er:
He falls—and, with convulsive throe,
Resigns his throat to the ravening foe!



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

—And lo! ere quivering life has fled,
The vultures, wheeling overhead,
Swoop down, to watch, in gaunt array,
Till the gorged tyrant quits his prey.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE EMIGRANT'S CABIN.

AN EPISTLE IN RHYME.

WHERE the young river, from its wild ravine,
Winds pleasantly through Eildon's pastures green,[45]—
With fair acacias waving on its banks,
And willows bending o'er in graceful ranks,
And the steep mountain rising close behind,
To shield us from the Snowberg's[46] wintry wind,—
Appears my rustic cabin, thatched with reeds,
Upon a knoll amid the grassy meads;
And, close beside it, looking o'er the lea,
Our summer-seat beneath an umbra-tree.[47]

This morning, musing in that favourite seat,
My hound, old Yarrow, dreaming at my feet,
I pictured you, sage Fairbairn[48], at my side,
By some good Genie wafted cross the tide;



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And, after cordial greetings, thus went on
In Fancy's Dream our colloquy, dear John.

*P.*—Enter, my friend, our beehive-cottage door:
No carpet hides the humble earthen floor,
But it is hard as brick, clean-swept, and cool.
You must be wearied? Take that jointed stool;
Or on this couch of leopard-skin recline;
You'll find it soft—the workmanship is mine.

*F.*—Why, Pringle, yes—your cabin's snug enough,
Though oddly shaped. But as for household stuff,
I only see some rough-hewn sticks and spars;
A wicker cupboard, filled with flasks and jars;
A pile of books, on rustic frame-work placed;
Hides of ferocious beasts that roam the waste;
Whose kindred prowl, perchance, around this spot—
The only neighbours, I suspect, you've got!
Your furniture, rude from the forest cut,
However, is in keeping with the hut.
This couch feels pleasant: is 't with grass you stuff it?
So far I should not care with you to rough it.
But—pardon me for seeming somewhat rude—
In this wild place how manage ye for food?

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

*P.*—You'll find, at least, my friend, we do not starve:
There's always mutton, if nought else, to carve;
And even of luxuries we have our share.
But here comes dinner (the best bill of fare),
Drest by that 'Nut-Brown Maiden,' Vytjè Vaal.[49]
[*To the Hottentot Girl.*] Meid, roep de Juffrouwen naar 't middagmaal:
[*To F.*] Which means—'The ladies in to dinner call.'

[*Enter Mrs. P. and her Sister, who welcome their Guest to Africa. The party take their seats round the table, and conversation proceeds.*]

*P.*—First, here's our broad-tailed mutton[50], small and fine,
The dish on which nine days in ten we dine;
Next, roasted springbok, spiced and larded well;
A haunch of hartèbeest from Hyndhope Fell;
A paauw,[51] which beats your Norfolk turkey hollow;
Korhaan, and Guinea-fowl, and pheasant follow;[52]
Kid carbonadjes, à-la-Hottentot,
Broiled on a forkèd twig; and, peppered hot
With Chili pods, a dish called Caffer-stew;
Smoked ham of porcupine, and tongue of gnu.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

This fine white household bread (of M——t's baking)
Comes from an oven too of my own making,
Scooped from an ant-hill. Did I ask before
If you would taste this brawn of forest-boar?

Our fruits, I must confess, make no great show:
Trees, grafts, and layers must have time to grow. [53]
But there's green roasted maize, and pumpkin pie,
And wild asparagus. Or will you try
A slice of water-melon?—fine for drouth,
Like sugared ices melting in the mouth.
Here too are wild-grapes from our forest-vine,
Not void of flavour, though unfit for wine.
And here comes dried fruit I had quite forgot,
(From fair Glen-Avon, M——t, is it not?)
Figs, almonds, raisins, peaches. Witbooy Swart
Brought this huge sackful from kind Mrs. Hart—
Enough to load a Covent-Garden cart.

But come, let's crown the banquet with some wine.
What will you drink? Champagne? Port? Claret?
Stein?
Well—not to tease you with a thirsty jest,
Lo, there our *only* vintage stands confest,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

In that half-aum upon the spigot-rack.
And, certes, though it keeps the old *Kaap smaak* [51],
The wine is light and racy; so we learn,
In laughing mood, to call it Cape Sauterne.
—Let's pledge this cup 'to all our friends,' Fairbairn!

*F.*—Well, I admit, my friend, your dinner's good.
Springbok and porcupine are dainty food;
That lordly paauw was roasted to a turn;
And, in your country fruits and Cape Sauterne,
The wildish flavour's really—not unpleasant;
And I may say the same of gnu and pheasant.
—But—Mrs. Pringle... shall I have the pleasure...?
Miss Brown,.... some wine?——(These quaighs *
are quite a treasure.)
—What! leave us now? I've much to ask of *you*....
But, since you *will* go—for an hour adieu.

[*Exeunt Ladies.*]

But, Pringle—'à nos moutons revenons'—
*Cui bono* 's still the burthen of my song—

---

* Quaigh (*Scotch*), a small drinking cup, usually of wood or horn.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Cut off, with these good ladies, from society,
Of savage life you soon must feel satiety:
The MIND requires fit exercise and food,
Not to be found 'mid Afric's deserts rude.
And what avail the spoils of wood and field,
The fruits or wines your fertile valleys yield,
Without that higher zest to crown the whole—
'The feast of Reason and the flow of Soul?'
—Food, shelter, fire, suffice for savage men;
But can the comforts of your wattled den,
Your sylvan fare and rustic tasks suffice
For one who once seemed finer joys to prize?
—When, erst, like Virgil's swains, we used to sing
Of streams and groves, and 'all that sort of thing,'*
The spot we meant for our 'Poetic Den'
Was always within reach of Books and Men;
By classic Esk, for instance, or Tweed-side,
With gifted friends within an easy ride;
Besides our college chum, the Parish Priest;
And the said *den* with six good rooms at least.—
*Here!*—save for Her who shares and soothes your lot,
You might as well squat in a Caffer's cot!

---

* Hic gelidi fontes: hic mollia prata, Licori.
Hic nemus: hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Come now, be candid: tell me, my dear friend,
Of your aspiring aims is *this* the end?
Was it for Nature's wants, fire, shelter, food,
You sought this dreary, soulless solitude?
Broke off your ties with men of cultured mind,
Your native land, your early friends resigned?
As if, believing with insane Rousseau
Refinement the chief cause of human woe,
You meant to realise that raver's plan,
And be a philosophic *Bosjesman!*—
Be frank; confess the fact you cannot hide—
You sought this den from disappointed pride.

*P.*—You 've missed the mark, Fairbairn: my breast
is clear.
Nor wild Romance nor Pride allured me here:
Duty and Destiny with equal voice
Constrained my steps: I had no other choice.

The hermit 'lodge in some vast wilderness,'
Which sometimes poets sigh for, I confess,
Were but a sorry lot. In real life
One needs a friend—the best of friends, a wife;
But with a home thus cheered, however rude,
There 's nought so very dull in solitude,—

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Even though that home should happen to be found,
Like mine, in Africa's remotest bound.
—I have my farm and garden, tools and pen;
My schemes for civilising savage men;
Our Sunday service, till the sabbath-bell
Shall wake its welcome chime in Lynden dell;
Some duty or amusement, grave or light,
To fill the active day from morn to night:
And thus two years so lightsomely have flown
That still we wonder when the week is gone.
—We have at times our troubles, it is true,
Passing vexations, and privations too;
But were it not for woman's tender frame,
These are annoyances I scarce would name;
For though perchance they plague us while they last,
They only serve for jests when they are past.

And then your notion that we 're *quite* exiled
From social life amid these mountains wild,
Accords not with the fact—as you will see
On glancing o'er this district map with me.

—First, you observe, our own Glen-Lynden clan
(To whom I'm linked like a true Scottish man)

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Are all around us. Past that dark ravine,—
Where on the left gigantic crags are seen,
And the steep Tarka mountains, stern and bare,
Close round the upland cleughs of lone Glen-Yair,—
Our Lothian Friends with their good Mother dwell,
Beside yon *Kranz* [55] whose pictured records tell
Of Bushmen's huntings in the days of old,
Ere here Bezuidenhout had fixed his fold.
—Then up the widening vale extend your view,
Beyond the clump that skirts the Lion's Cleugh,
Past our old camp, the willow-trees among,
Where first these mountains heard our sabbath song;
And mark the Settlers' homes, as they appear
With cultured fields and orchard-gardens near,
And cattle-kraals, associate or single,
From fair Craig-Rennie up to Clifton-Pringle.

Then there is Captain Harding at Three-Fountains [56],
Near Cradock—forty miles across the mountains:
I like his shrewd remarks on things and men,
And canter o'er to dinner now and then.
—There's Landdrost Stockenstrom at Graaff-Reinét,
A man, I'm sure, you would not soon forget [57],

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Who, though in this wild country born and bred,
Is able in affairs, in books well read,
And—what's more meritorious in the case—
A zealous friend to Afric's swarthy race.
We visit there; but, travelling in ox-wagon,
(And not, like *you*, drawn by a fiery dragon)
We take a month—eight days to go and come—
And spend three weeks or so with Stockenstrom.
—At Somerset, again, Hart, Devenish, Stretch, [58]
And ladies—whose kind acts 'twere long to sketch;
The officers at Káha and Roodewál,
Bird, Sanders, Morgan, Rogers, Petingal; [59]
All hold with us right friendly intercourse—
The nearest thirty miles—five hours with horse.
—Sometimes a pleasant guest, from parts remote,
Cheers for a passing night our rustic cot;
As, lately, the gay-humoured Captain Fox,
With whom I roamed 'mid Koonap's woods and rocks,
From Winterberg to Gola's savage grot,
Talking of Rogers, Campbell, Coleridge, Scott,
Of Fox and Mackintosh, Brougham, Canning, Grey;
And lighter themes and laughter cheered the way—
While the wild-elephants in groups stood still,
And wondered at us on their woody hill [60].

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

—Here too, sometimes, in more religious mood,
We welcome Smith or Brownlee, grave and good,
Or fervid Read [61],—to Natives, kneeling round,
Proclaiming the GREAT WORD of glorious sound:
Or, on some Christian mission bravely bent,
Comes Philip [62] with his apostolic tent;
Ingenious Wright [63], or steadfast Rutherfoord;[64]
With whose enlightened hopes our hearts accord.

And thus, you see, even in my desert-den,
I still hold intercourse with thinking men;
And find fit subjects to engage me too—
For in this wilderness there's work to do;
Some purpose to accomplish for the band
Who left with me their much-loved Father-Land;
Something for the sad Natives of the soil,
By stern oppression doomed to scorn and toil;
Something for Africa to do or say—
If but one mite of Europe's debt to pay—
If but one bitter tear to wipe away.
Yes! here is work, my Friend, if I may ask
Of Heaven to share in such a hallowed task!

But these are topics for more serious talk,
So we'll reserve them for an evening walk.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Fill now a parting glass of generous wine—
The *doch-an-dorris* cup—for '*Auld Lang Syne*;'
For my good M——t summons us to tea,
In her green drawing-room—beneath the tree;—
And lo! Miss Brown has a whole *cairn* of stones
To pose us with—plants, shells, and fossil bones.

[*Outside the Hut.*]

*F.*—'Tis almost sun-set. What a splendid sky!
And hark—the homeward cow-boy's echoing cry
Descending from the mountains. This fair clime
And scene recal the patriarchal time,
When Hebrew herdsmen fed their teeming flocks
By Arnon's meads and Kirjath-Arba's rocks;
And bashful maidens, as the twilight fell,
Bore home their brimming pitchers from the well.—
—But who are *these* upon the river's brink?

*P.*—Ha! armèd Caffers with the shepherd Flink
In earnest talk? * Ay, now I mark their mien;
It is Powána from Zwart-Kei, I ween,

* See VIGNETTE.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The Amatémbu Chief[65]. He comes to pay
A friendly visit, promised many a day;
To view our settlement in Lynden Glen,
And smoke the Pipe of Peace with Scottish men.
And his gay consort, Moya, too attends,
To see 'the World' and 'Amanglézi friends,'[66]
Her fond heart fluttering high with anxious schemes
To gain the enchanting beads that haunt her dreams!

*F.*—Yet let us not these simple folk despise;
Just such *our* sires appeared in Cæsar's eyes:
And, in the course of Heaven's evolving plan,
BY TRUTH MADE FREE, the long-scorned African,
His Maker's image radiant in his face,
Among earth's noblest sons shall find his place.

*P.*—[*To Flink, the old Hottentot Shepherd, who comes forward.*]

Well, Flink, what says the Chief?

*Flink.* Powána wagh'
Tot dat de Baas hem binnenshuis zal vraagh'.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

*P.*—[*To F.*] In boorish Dutch which means,
'Powâna waits
Till Master bid him welcome to our gates.'
[*To Flink.*]—We haste to greet him. Let rush mats be spread
On th' cabin-floor. Prepare the Stranger's bed
In the spare hut,—fresh-strewed with fragrant hay.
Let a fat sheep be slaughtered. And, I pray,
Good Flink, for the attendants all provide;
These men dealt well with us at Zwart-Kei side:
Besides, you know, 'tis the Great Guide's command
Kindly to treat the Stranger in our Land.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

## L'ENVOI.

Fairbairn, adieu! I close my idle strain,
And doff wild Fancy's Wishing Cap again,
Whose witchery, o'er ocean's wide expanse,
Triumphant over adverse Circumstance,
From Tyne's far banks has conjured you away,
To spend with me this summer holiday;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Half-realising, as I weave these rhymes,
Our kind companionship in other times,
When, round by Arthur's Seat and Blackford Hill,
Fair Hawthornden and homely Hyvotmill,[67]
(With a dear Friend, too early from us torn!)
We roamed untired to eve from early morn.

Those vernal days are gone: and stormy gales
Since then on Life's rough Sea have tossed our sails
Far diverse,—led by Fortune's changeful Star,
From quietude and competence afar.
Yet, Comrade dear! while memory shall last,
Let our *leal* hearts, aye faithful to the Past,
In frequent interchange of written thought,
Which half the ills of absence sets at nought,
Keep bright the links of Friendship's golden chain,
By living o'er departed days again;
Or meet in Fancy's bower, for ever green,
Though 'half the convex globe intrudes between.'

*Glen-Lynden*, 1822.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## AN EMIGRANT'S SONG.

Oh, Maid of the Tweed, wilt thou travel with me,
To the wilds of South-Africa, far o'er the sea,
Where the blue mountains tow'r in the beautiful clime,
Hung round with huge forests all hoary with time?
I'll build thee a cabin beside the clear fount,
Where it leaps into light from the heart of the mount,
Ere yet its fresh footsteps have found the fair meads
Where among the tall lilies the antelope feeds.

Our home, like a bee-hive, shall stand by the wood
Where the lory and turtle-dove nurse their young brood,
And the golden-plumed paroquet waves his bright wings
From the bough where the green-monkey gambols and swings:[68]

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

With the high rocks behind us, the valley before,
The hills on each side with our flocks speckled o'er,
And the far-sweeping river oft glancing between,
With the heifers reclined on its margins of green.

There, rich in the wealth which a bountiful soil
Pours forth to repay the glad husbandman's toil;
Content with the Present, at peace with the Past,
No cloud on the Future our joys to o'ercast;
Like our brave Scottish sires in the blithe Olden Day,
The heart we'll keep young though the temples wax grey;
While love's Olive Plants round our table shall rise—
Engrafted with Hopes that bear fruit in the Skies.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## MAKANNA'S GATHERING.

WAKE! Amakósa, wake!
And arm yourselves for war.
As coming winds the forest shake,
I hear a sound from far:
It is not thunder in the sky,
Nor lion's roar upon the hill,
But the voice of HIM who sits on high,
And bids me speak his will![69]

He bids me call you forth,
Bold sons of Káhabee,[70]
To sweep the White Men from the earth,
And drive them to the sea:
The sea, which heaved them up at first,
For Amakósa's curse and bane,
Howls for the progeny she nurst,
To swallow them again.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Hark! 'tis UHLANGA's voice[71]
From Debè's mountain caves!
He calls you now to make your choice—
To conquer or be slaves:
To meet proud Amanglézi's guns,
And fight like warriors nobly born:
Or, like Umlâo's feeble sons,[72]
Become the freeman's scorn.

Then come, ye Chieftains bold,
With war-plumes waving high;
Come, every warrior young and old,
With club and assagai.
Remember how the spoiler's host
Did through our land like locusts range!
Your herds, your wives, your comrades lost—
Remember—and revenge!

Fling your broad shields away—
Bootless against such foes;
But hand to hand we'll fight to-day,
And with their bayonets close.
Grasp each man short his stabbing spear—
And, when to battle's edge we come,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Rush on their ranks in full career,
And to their hearts strike home!

Wake! Amakósa, wake!
And muster for the war:
The wizard-wolves[73] from Keisi's brake,
The vultures from afar,
Are gathering at UHLANGA'S call,
And follow fast our westward way—
For well they know, ere evening-fall,
They shall have glorious prey!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE INCANTATION.

HALF-WAY up Indóda[74] climbing,
Hangs the wizard-forest old,
From whose shade is heard the chiming
Of a streamlet clear and cold:
With a mournful sound it gushes
From its cavern in the steep;
Then at once its wailing hushes
In a lakelet dark and deep.

Standing by the dark blue water,
Robed in panther's speckled hide,
Who is she? Jalúhsa's[75] daughter,
Bold Makanna's widowed bride.
Stern she stands, her left hand clasping
By the arm her wondering child:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

He, her shaggy mantle grasping,
Gazes up with aspect wild.

Thrice in the soft fount of nursing
With sharp steel she pierced a vein,—
Thrice the White Oppressor cursing,
While the blood gushed forth amain,—
Wide upon the dark-blue water,
Sprinkling thrice the crimson tide,—
Spoke Jalúhsa's high-souled daughter,
Bold Makanna's widowed bride.

" Thus into the Demon's River
Blood instead of milk I fling:
Hear, UHLANGA—great Life-Giver!
Hear, TOGÚH—Avenging King![76]
Thus the Mother's feelings tender
In my breast I stifle now:
Thus I summon you to render
Vengeance for the Widow's vow!

" Who shall be the Chief's Avenger?
Who the Champion of the Land?
Boy! the pale Son of the Stranger
Is devoted to *thy* hand.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

HE who wields the bolt of thunder
Witnesses thy Mother's vow!
HE who rends the rocks asunder
To the task shall train thee now!

"When thy arm grows strong for battle,
Thou shalt sound Makanna's cry,
Till ten thousand shields shall rattle
To war-club and assagai:
Then, when like hail-storm in harvest
On the foe sweeps thy career,
Shall UHLANGA whom thou servest,
Make them stubble to thy spear!"

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE CAFFER COMMANDO.

HARK!—heard ye the signals of triumph afar?
'Tis our Caffer Commando [77] returning from war:
The voice of their laughter comes loud on the wind,
Nor heed they the curses that follow behind.
For who cares for him, the poor Kosa, that wails
Where the smoke rises dim from yon desolate vales—
That wails for his little ones killed in the fray,
And his herds by the Colonist carried away?
Or who cares for him that once pastured this spot,
Where his tribe is extinct and their story forgot? [78]
As many another, ere twenty years pass,
Will only be known by their bones in the grass!
And the sons of the Keisi, the Kei, the Gareep,
With the Gunja and Ghona [79] in silence shall sleep:
For England hath spoke in her tyrannous mood,
And the edict is writing in African blood!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Dark Katta[80] is howling: the eager jackall,
As the lengthening shadows more drearily fall,
Shrieks forth his hymn to the hornèd moon;
And the lord of the desert will follow him soon:
And the tiger-wolf[81] laughs in his bone-strewed brake,
As he calls on his mate and her cubs to awake;
And the panther and leopard come leaping along;
All hymning to Hecate a festival song:
For the tumult is over, the slaughter hath ceased—
And the vulture hath bidden them all to the feast!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## A NOON-DAY DREAM.

'Twas noontide; and breathless beneath the hot ray
The far-winding vales of the wilderness lay:
By the Koonap's lone brink, with the cool shadow o'er me,
I slept—and a Dream spread its visions before me.

Methought, among scenes which I loved when a boy
I was walking again with fresh feelings of joy;
For my soul, like the landscape, seemed softened and changed
To what it was once—when in childhood I ranged
Through Cheviot's valleys, to pluck the bright flowers,
Or chase with young rapture the birds through the bowers.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

—On my dreaming ear waters were murmuring still,
But the wild foreign river had shrunk to a rill;
And Káha's dark mountains had melted away;
And the brown thorny desert, where antelopes stray,
Had become a sweet Glen, where the young lambs were racing,
And yellow-haired children the butterflies chasing;
And the meadows were gemmed with the primrose and gowan,
And the ferny braes fringed with the hazel and rowan;
The foxglove looked out from the osiers dank,
And the wild-thyme and violet breathed from the bank.
—And green fairy nooks 'mid the landscape were seen,
Half hid by the grey rocks that high o'er them lean,
Where the light birch, above, its loose tresses was waving;
And the willow, below, in the blue stream was laving
Its silvery garlands of soft downy buds;
And the throstle sang blithe to his mate in the woods;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And the brood of the wild-duck plashed over the pool,
New-fledged from their nest among well-cresses cool.
—And trouts from the limpid stream lightly were springing,
And larks in the fleckered sky cheerily singing;
And down in the copsewood the cushat was cooing;
And o'er the brown moorland the huntsman hallooing;
The grey-plaided shepherd piped high on the fell;
And the milk-maiden sang as she sat by the well:
With the lowing of herds from the broom-blossomed lea;
The cuckoo's soft note from the old beechen-tree;
The waving of woods in the health-breathing gale;
The dash of the mill-wheel afar down the dale.
—All these were around me:—and with them there came
Sweet voices that called me aloud by my name,—
And looks of affection from innocent eyes,—
And light-hearted laughter,—and shrill joyous cries:
And I saw the mild features of all that were there,
Unaltered by years, and unclouded by care!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Then it seemed as that Scene slowly melted away,
Like the bright cloud of morn in a midsummer's day;
And I lost the blithe sounds of the Pastoral Glen,
'Mid the rattle of wheels and loud murmurs of men.
—I stood on a mount, and saw, towering around,
A City with ramparts and palaces crowned;
Where poets and sages were passing along,
And statesmen and heroes—a glorious throng!
I heard from on high the loud heralds proclaim
With silver-toned voice each illustrious name;
I marked from afar their mild dignified mien,
And their aspect, benevolent, simple, serene;
And lingered, in heart-greeting silence to gaze
On the faces of some I had loved in their lays.
—But suddenly out-burst a boisterous crowd
Of maskers and rhapsodists, railing aloud,
And scattering brands in their frantic mirth,
As if lewd love of mischief had called them forth:
And the burthen and boast of their scurrilous song
Was to scoff at the Right and applaud the Wrong.
—I looked on the scene till my heart grew sad—
Then turned me away from the uproar mad!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The visionary Pageant again seemed to change,
And a land lay before me of aspect strange—
Where the tumult of voices disturbed me no more,
But I heard the hoarse surf dashing wild on the shore,
As bewildered I stood. Yet I was not alone;
For still amid crowds my dream passed on:
Mid crowds—but silent, and sad as death;
For it seemed as if each man held his breath,
And cowered with his body, in abject fear,
Like a caitiff beneath the proud conqueror's spear.
—Then I turned, and lifted my wondering eye,
And beheld a grim Spectre enthroned on high,
And his name it was written—TYRANNY!
—I gazed, and beheld how his scourge-bearing hand
Was high outstretched o'er the shuddering land;
And his eyes, that like those of the basilisk shone,
Blasted whatever they glared upon.
—Yet crowds of votaries, kneeling around,
Were worshipping him with a whispering sound;
And, ever and anon, his priests on high
Hymned forth his praises to the sky.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

—Full many a race lay mingled there:
Swart Afric's tribes with their woolly hair,
The enslaved Madagass, the dejected Malay,
And degenerate Belgian baser than they,
Prone and promiscuous round him lay.
As I drew more near 'mid the suppliant train,
My heart swelled high with grief and pain,
Proud England's children there to view,
Commingled with that crouching crew;
And I marvelled much that no manly hand
Was raisedto redeem the desolate land;
For I saw that the Monster's enchanted mould,
Though braced with iron and bound with gold,
Was formed but of vile and crumbling dust,
Unfit to withstand the Avenger's thrust.
—While thus I was musing, a crashing stroke,
As when the red lightning shivers the rock,
Fell! ..... And I started and awoke!

Awaking, I heard but the wild river sounding;
I gazed, but saw only the klip-springer[82] bounding,
And the eagle of Winterberg, high o'er the woods,
Sailing supreme 'mid his solitudes.

*River Koonap*, 1825.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE EXILE'S LAMENT.

A SONG.

AIR—"*The Banks o' Cayle.*"

BY the lone Mankazána's[83] margin grey
A Scottish Maiden sung;
And mournfully poured her melting lay
In Teviot's Border tongue:

*O, bonny grows the broom on Blaiklaw knowes,*
*And the birk in Clifton dale;*
*And green are the hills o' the milk-white ewes,*
*By the briary banks o' Cayle.*

Here bright are the skies—and these valleys of bloom
May enchant the traveller's eye;
But all seems drest in death-like gloom
To the exile—who comes to die!

*O, bonny grows the broom, &c.*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Far round and round spreads the howling waste,
Where the wild beast roams at will;
And yawning cleughs, by woods embraced,
Where the savage lurks to kill!

*O, bonny grows the broom, &c.*

Full oft over Cheviot's uplands green
My dreaming fancy strays;
But I wake to weep 'mid the desolate scene
That scowls on my aching gaze!

*O, bonny grows the broom, &c.*

Oh, light, light is poverty's lowliest state,
On Scotland's peaceful strand,
Compared with the heart-sick exile's fate,
In this wild and weary land!

*O, bonny grows the broom, &c.*



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE BROWN HUNTER'S SONG.

UNDER the Dídima [84] lies a green dell,
Where fresh from the forest the blue waters swell;
And fast by that brook stands a yellow-wood tree,
Which shelters the spot that is dearest to me.

Down by the streamlet my heifers are grazing;
In the pool of the guanas the herd-boy is gazing;
Under the shade my Amána is singing—
The shade of the tree where her cradle is swinging.

When I come from the upland as daylight is fading,
Though spent with the chase, and the game for my
lading,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

My nerves are new-strung, and my fond heart is swelling,
As I gaze from the cliff on our wood-circled dwelling.

Down the steep mountain, and through the brown forest,
I haste like a hart when his thirst is the sorest;
I bound o'er the swift brook that skirts the savannah,
And clasp my first-born in the arms of Amána.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE CAPTIVE OF CAMALÚ.

O CAMALÚ—green Camalú! [85]
'Twas there I fed my father's flock,
Beside the mount where cedars threw
At dawn their shadows from the rock;
There tended I my father's flock
Along the grassy-margined rills,
Or chased the bounding bontèbok [86]
With hound and spear among the hills.

Green Camalú! methinks I view
The lilies in thy meadows growing;
I see thy waters bright and blue
Beneath the pale-leaved willows flowing;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I hear, along the valleys lowing,
The heifers wending to the fold,
And jocund herd-boys loudly blowing
The horn—to mimic hunters bold.

Methinks I see the umkóba-tree [87]
That shades the village-chieftain's cot;
The evening smoke curls lovingly
Above that calm and pleasant spot.
My father?—Ha!—I had forgot—
The old man rests in slumber deep:
My mother?—Ay! she answers not—
Her heart is hushed in dreamless sleep.

My brothers too —green Camalú,
Repose they by thy quiet tide?
Ay! there they sleep—where White Men slew
And left them—lying side by side.
No pity had those men of pride,
They fired the huts above the dying!—
—White bones bestrew that valley wide—
I wish that mine were with them lying!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I envy you by Camalú,
Ye wild harts on the woody hills;
Though tigers there their prey pursue,
And vultures slake in blood their bills.
The heart may strive with Nature's ills,
To Nature's common doom resigned:
Death the frail body only kills—
But Thraldom brutifies the mind.

Oh, wretched fate!—heart-desolate,
A captive in the spoiler's hand,
To serve the tyrant whom I hate—
To crouch beneath his proud command—
Upon my flesh to bear his brand—
His blows, his bitter scorn to bide!—
Would God, I in my native land
Had with my slaughtered brothers died!

Ye mountains blue of Camalú,
Where once I fed my father's flock,
Though desolation dwells with you,
And Amakósa's heart is broke,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Yet, spite of chains these limbs that mock,
My homeless heart to you doth fly,—
As flies the wild-dove to the rock,
To hide its wounded breast—and die!

Yet, ere my spirit wings its flight
Unto Death's silent shadowy clime,
UTÍKO! Lord of life and light,
Who, high above the clouds of Time,
Calm sittest where yon hosts sublime
Of stars wheel round thy bright abode,
Oh, let my cry unto Thee climb,
Of every race the Father-God!

I ask not Judgments from thy hand—
Destroying hail, or parching drought,
Or locust-swarms to waste the land,
Or pestilence, by famine brought;
I say the prayer Jankanna[88] taught,
Who wept for Amakósa's wrongs—
'Thy Kingdom come—thy Will be wrought—
For unto Thee all Power belongs.'

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Thy Kingdom come! Let Light and Grace
Throughout all lands in triumph go;
Till pride and strife to love give place,
And blood and tears forget to flow;
Till Europe mourn for Afric's woe,
And o'er the Deep her arms extend
To lift her where she lieth low—
And prove indeed her Christian Friend!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE DESOLATE VALLEY.

FAR up among the forest-belted mountains,
Where Winterberg [89], stern giant old and grey,
Looks down the subject dells, whose gleaming fountains
To wizard Kat [90] their virgin tribute pay,
A valley opens to the noontide ray,
With green savannahs shelving to the brim
Of the swift River, sweeping on his way
To where Umtóka [91] hies to meet with him,
Like a blue serpent gliding through the acacias dim.

Round this secluded region circling rise
A billowy waste of mountains, wild and wide;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Upon whose grassy slopes the pilgrim spies
The gnu and quagga, by the greenwood side,
Tossing their shaggy manes in tameless pride;
Or troop of elands near some sedgy fount;
Or kùdù fawns,[92] that from the thicket glide
To seek their dam upon the misty mount;
With harts, gazelles, and roes,[93] more than the eye may count.

And as we journeyed up the pathless glen,
Flanked by romantic hills on either hand,
The boschbok [94] oft would bound away—and then
Beside the willows, backward gazing, stand.
And where old forests darken all the land
From rocky Katberg [95] to the river's brink,
The buffalo would start upon the strand,
Where, 'mid palmetto flags, he stooped to drink,
And, crashing through the brakes, to the deep jungle shrink.

Then, couched at night in hunter's wattled shieling,
How wildly beautiful it was to hear
The elephant his shrill *réveillé* pealing, [96]
Like some far signal-trumpet on the ear!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

While the broad midnight moon was shining clear,
How fearful to look forth upon the woods,
And see those stately forest-kings appear,
Emerging from their shadowy solitudes—
As if that trump had woke Earth's old gigantic broods!

Such the majestic, melancholy scene
Which 'midst that mountain-wilderness we found;
With scarce a trace to tell where man had been,
Save the old Caffer cabins crumbling round.
Yet this lone glen (Sicána's ancient ground,) [97]
To Nature's savage tribes abandoned long,
Had heard, erewhile, the Gospel's joyful sound,
And low of herds mixed with the Sabbath song.
But all is silent now. The Oppressor's hand was strong.

Now the blithe loxia hangs her pensile nest
From the wild-olive, bending o'er the rock,
Beneath whose shadow, in grave mantle drest,
The Christian Pastor taught his swarthy flock.
A roofless ruin, scathed by flame and smoke,
Tells where the decent Mission-chapel stood;
While the baboon with jabbering cry doth mock

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The pilgrim, pausing in his pensive mood
To ask—'Why is it thus? Shall EVIL baffle GOOD?'

Yes—for a season Satan may prevail,
And hold, as if secure, his dark domain;
The prayers of righteous men may seem to fail,
And Heaven's Glad Tidings be proclaimed in vain.
But wait in faith; ere long shall spring again
The seed that seemed to perish in the ground;
And, fertilised by Zion's latter rain,
The long-parched land shall laugh, with harvests crowned,
And through those silent wastes Jehovah's praise resound.

Look round that Vale: behold the unburied bones
Of Ghona's children withering in the blast:
The sobbing wind, that through the forest moans,
Whispers—'The spirit hath for ever passed!'
Thus, in the Vale of Desolation vast,
In moral death dark Afric's myriads lie;
But the Appointed Day shall dawn at last,
When, breathed on by a Spirit from on High,
The dry bones shall awake, and shout—'Our God is nigh!'

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE GHONA WIDOW'S LULLABY.

Utíko umkúla gozizulína;
Yebínza inquínquis Nosilimélè.
Umzi wakonána subiziélè,
Umkokélî úa sikokéli tina;
Uénza infáma zenza ga bómi.

SICANA'S HYMN. 97

---

THE storm hath ceased: yet still I hear,
The distant thunder sounding,
And from the mountains, far and near,
The headlong torrents bounding.
The jackal shrieks upon the rocks;
The tiger-wolf is howling;
The panther round the folded flocks
With stifled *gurr* is prowling.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

But lay thee down in peace, my child;
God watcheth o'er us midst the wild.

I fear the Bushman is abroad—
He loves the midnight thunder;[98]
The sheeted lightning shows the road,
That leads his feet to plunder:
I'd rather meet the hooded-snake
Than hear his rattling quiver,
When, like an adder, through the brake,
He glides along the river.
But, darling, hush thy heart to sleep—
The LORD our Shepherd watch doth keep.

The Kosa from Luhéri[99] high,
Looks down upon our dwelling;
And shakes the vengeful assagai,—
Unto his clansman telling
How he, for *us*, by grievous wrong,
Hath lost these fertile valleys;
And boasts that now his hand is strong
To pay the debt of malice.[100]
But sleep, my child; a Mightier Arm
Shall shield thee (helpless one!) from harm.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The moon is up; a fleecy cloud
O'er heaven's blue deeps is sailing;
The stream, that lately raved so loud,
Makes now a gentle wailing.
From yonder crags, lit by the moon,
I hear a wild voice crying:
—'Tis but the harmless bear-baboon,
Unto his mates replying.
Hush—hush thy dreams, my moaning dove,
And slumber in the arms of love!

The wolf, scared by the watch-dog's bay,
Is to the woods returning;
By his rock-fortress, far away,
The Bushman's fire is burning.
And hark! Sicána's midnight hymn,
Along the valley swelling,
Calls us to stretch the wearied limb,
While kinsmen guard our dwelling:
Though vainly watchmen wake from sleep,
'Unless the LORD the city keep.'

At dawn, we'll seek, with songs of praise,
Our food on the savannah,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

As Israel sought, in ancient days,
The heaven-descended manna;
With gladness from the fertile land
The veld-kost[101] we will gather,
A harvest planted by the hand
Of the Almighty Father—
From thraldom who redeems our race,
To plant them in their ancient place.[102]

Then, let us calmly rest, my child;
Jehovah's arm is round us,
The God, the Father reconciled,
In heathen gloom who found us;
Who to this heart, by sorrow broke,
His wondrous WORD revealing,
Led me, a lost sheep, to the flock,
And to the Fount of Healing.
Oh may the Saviour-Shepherd lead
My darling where his lambs do feed!

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE ROCK OF RECONCILEMENT.

A RUGGED mountain, round whose summit proud
The eagle sailed, or heaved the thunder cloud,
Poured from its cloven breast a gurgling brook,
Which down the grassy glades its journey took;
Oft bending round to lave, with rambling tide,
The groves of evergreens on either side.
Fast by this stream, where yet its course was young,
And, stooping from the heights, the forest flung
A grateful shadow o'er the narrow dell,
Appeared the Missionary's hermit cell.
Woven of wattled boughs, and thatched with leaves,
The sweet wild jasmine clustering to its eaves,
It stood, with its small casement gleaming through
Between two ancient cedars. Round it grew
Clumps of acacias and young orange bowers,
Pomegranate hedges, gay with scarlet flowers,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And pale-stemmed fig-trees with their fruit yet green,
And apple blossoms waving light between.
All musical it seemed with humming bees;
And bright-plumed sugar-birds among the trees
Fluttered like living blossoms.

In the shade
Of a grey rock, that midst the leafy glade
Stood like a giant sentinel, we found
The habitant of this fair spot of ground—
A plain tall Scottish man, of thoughtful mien;
Grave, but not gloomy. By his side was seen
An ancient Chief of Amakósa's race,
With javelin armed for conflict or the chace.
And, seated at their feet upon the sod,
A Youth was reading from the Word of God,
Of Him who came for sinful men to die,
Of every race and tongue beneath the sky.

Unnoticed, towards them we softly stept.
Our Friend was rapt in prayer; the Warrior wept,
Leaning upon his hand; the Youth read on.
And then we hailed the group: the Chieftain's Son,
Training to be his country's Christian guide—
And Brownlee and old Tshátshu side by side.[103]

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE
# FORESTER OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

A SOUTH-AFRICAN BORDER-BALLAD.

We met in the midst of the Neutral Ground,[104]
'Mong the hills where the buffalo's haunts are found;
And we joined in the chase of the noble game,
Nor asked each other of nation or name.

The buffalo bull wheeled suddenly round,
When first from my rifle he felt a wound;
And, before I could gain the Umtóka's bank,
His horns were tearing my courser's flank.[105]

That instant a ball whizzed past my ear,
Which smote the beast in his fierce career;
And the turf was drenched with his purple gore,
As he fell at my feet with a bellowing roar.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The Stranger came galloping up to my side,
And greeted me with a bold huntsman's pride:
Full blithely we feasted beneath a tree;—
Then out spoke the Forester, Arend Plessie.

" Stranger! we now are true comrades sworn;
Come pledge me thy hand while we quaff the horn;
Thou 'rt an Englishman good, and thy heart is free,
And 'tis therefore I'll tell my story to thee.

" A Heemraad of Camdebóo[106] was my Sire;
He had flocks and herds to his heart's desire,
And bondmen and maidens to run at his call,
And seven stout sons to be heirs of all.

" When we had grown up to man's estate,
Our Father bade each of us choose a mate,
Of Fatherland blood, from the *black* taint free,[107]
As became a Dutch burgher's proud degree.

" My Brothers they rode to the Bovenland,[108]
And each came with a fair bride back in his hand;
But *I* brought the handsomest bride of them all—
Brown Dinah, the bondmaid who sat in our hall.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

" My Father's displeasure was stern and still;
My Brothers' flamed forth like a fire on the hill;
And they said that my spirit was mean and base,
To lower myself to the servile race.

" I bade them rejoice in their herds and flocks,
And their pale faced spouses with flaxen locks;
While I claimed for my share, as the youngest son,
Brown Dinah alone with my horse and gun.

" My Father looked black as a thunder-cloud,
My Brothers reviled me and railed aloud,
And their young wives laughed with disdainful pride,
While Dinah in terror clung close to my side.

" Her ebon eyelashes were moistened with tears,
As she shrunk abashed from their venomous jeers;
But I bade her look up like a Burgher's wife—
Next day to be *mine*, if God granted life.

" At dawn brother Roelof came galloping home
From the pastures — his courser all covered with foam;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

" ' Tis the Bushmen ! ' he shouted; ' haste, friends, to the spoor !
Bold Arend ! come help with your long-barrelled roer.'[109]

" Far o'er Bruintjes-hoogte[110] we followed—in vain:
At length surly Roelof cried, ' Slacken your rein;
We have quite lost the track.'—Hans replied with a smile.
—Then my dark-boding spirit suspected their guile.

" I flew to our Father's. Brown Dinah was sold !
And they laughed at my rage as they counted the gold.
But I leaped on my horse, with my gun in my hand,
And sought my lost love in the far Bovenland.

" I found her; I bore her from Gauritz [111] fair glen,
Through lone Zitzikamma,[112] by forest and fen.
To these mountains at last like wild-pigeons we flew,
Far, far from the cold hearts of proud Camdebóo.

" I 've reared our rude shieling by Gola's green wood,
Where the chase of the deer yields me pastime and food:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

With my Dinah and children I dwell here alone,
Without other comrades—and wishing for none.

"I fear not the Bushman from Winterberg's fell,
Not dread I the Caffer from Kat-River's dell;
By justice and kindness I've conquered them both,
And the Sons of the Desert have pledged me their troth.

"I fear not the leopard that lurks in the wood,
The lion I dread not, though raging for blood;
My hand it is steady—my aim it is sure—
And the boldest must bend to my long-barrelled roer.

"The elephant's buff-coat my bullet can pierce;
And the giant rhinoceros, headlong and fierce,
Gnu, eland and buffalo furnish my board,
When I feast my allies like an African lord.

"And thus from my kindred and colour exiled,
I live like old Ismael, Lord of the Wild—
And follow the chase with my hounds and my gun;
Nor ever repent the bold course I have run.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

"But sometimes there sinks on my spirit a dread
Of what may befal when the turf's on my head;
I fear for poor Dinah—for brown Rodomond
And dimple-faced Karel, the sons of the *bond*.[113]

"Then tell me, dear Stranger, from England the free,
What good tidings bring'st thou for Arend Plessie?
Shall the Edict of Mercy be sent forth at last,
To break the harsh fetters of Colour and Caste?"

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE SLAVE DEALER.

FROM ocean's wave a Wanderer came,
With visage tanned and dun:
His Mother, when he told his name,
Scarce knew her long-lost son;
So altered was his face and frame
By the ill course he had run.

There was hot fever in his blood,
And dark thoughts in his brain;
And oh! to turn his heart to good
That Mother strove in vain,
For fierce and fearful was his mood,
Racked by remorse and pain.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And if, at times, a gleam more mild
Would o'er his features stray,
When knelt the Widow near her Child,
And he tried with her to pray,
It lasted not—for visions wild
Still scared good thoughts away.

" There's blood upon my hands !" he said,
" Which water cannot wash ;
It was not shed where warriors bled—
It dropped from the gory lash,
As I whirled it o'er and o'er my head,
And with each stroke left a gash.

" With every stroke I left a gash,
While Negro blood sprang high ;
And now all ocean cannot wash
My soul from murder's dye ;
Nor e'en thy prayer, dear Mother, quash
That Woman's wild death-cry !

" Her cry is ever in my ear,
And it will not let me pray ;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Her look I see—her voice I hear—
As when in death she lay,
And said, 'With me thou must appear
On God's great Judgment-day!'"

"Now, Christ from frenzy keep my son!"
The woeful Widow cried;
"Such murder foul thou ne'er hast done—
Some fiend thy soul belied!"—
"—Nay, Mother! the Avenging One
Was witness when she died!

"The writhing wretch with furious heel
I crushed—no mortal nigh;
But that same hour her dread appeal
Was registered on high;
And now with God I have to deal,
And dare not meet His eye!"[114]

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## THE TORNADO.

Dost thou love to list the rushing
Of the Tempest in its might?
Dost thou joy to see the gushing
Of the Torrent at its height?
Hasten forth while lurid gloaming
Waneth into wilder night,
O'er the troubled ocean, foaming
With a strange phosphoric light.

Lo, the sea-fowl, loudly screaming,
Seeks the shelter of the land;
And a signal light is gleaming
Where yon Vessel nears the strand:
Just at sun-set she was lying
All-becalmed upon the main;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Now, with sails in tatters flying,
She to sea-ward beats—in vain!

Hark! the long-unopened fountains
Of the clouds have burst at last;
And the echoes of the mountains
Lift their wailing voices fast:
Now a thousand rills are pouring
Their far-sounding waterfalls;
And the wrathful stream is roaring
High above its rocky walls.

Now the forest-trees are shaking,
Like bulrushes in the gale;
And the folded flocks are quaking
'Neath the pelting of the hail.
From the jungle-cumbered river
Comes a growl along the ground;
And the cattle start and shiver,
For they know full well the sound.

'Tis the lion, gaunt with hunger,
Glaring down the darkening glen;
But a fiercer Power and stronger
Drives him back into his den:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

For the fiend TORNADO rideth
Forth with FEAR, his maniac bride,
Who by shipwrecked shores abideth,
With the she-wolf by her side.

Heard ye not the Demon flapping
His exulting wings aloud?
And his Mate her mad hands clapping
From yon scowling thunder-cloud?
By the fire-flaucht's gleamy flashing
The doomed Vessel ye may spy,
With the billows o'er her dashing—
Hark (Oh God!) that fearful cry!

Twice two hundred human voices
In that shriek came on the blast!
Ha! the Tempest-Fiend rejoices—
For all earthly aid is past!
White as smoke the surge is showering
O'er the cliffs that sea-ward frown,
While the greedy gulf, devouring
Like a dragon, sucks them down!

*Zitzikamma*, 1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## PARAPHRASE OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

THE Lord himself my steps doth guide ;
I feel no want, I fear no foe :
Along the verdant valley's side,
Where cool the quiet waters flow,
Like as his flock a shepherd feedeth,
My soul in love Jehovah leadeth.

And when amid the stumbling mountains
Through frowardness I blindly stray,
Or wander near forbidden fountains
Where the Destroyer lurks for prey,
My wayward feet again he guideth
To paths where holy Peace resideth.

Though that dread Pass before me lies,
(First opened up by Sin and Wrath)
Where Death's black shadow shrouds the skies,
And sheds its horrors o'er the path,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Yet even there I'll fear no ill,
For my Redeemer guards me still.

Even He who walked by Abraham's side
My steps doth tend through weal and woe;
With rod and staff to guard and guide,
And comfort me where'er I go;
And He his ransomed flock that keepeth,
Our Shepherd, slumbereth not nor sleepeth.

For me a banquet he doth spread
Of high desires and hallowed joys;
With blessings he anoints my head,
And fills a cup that never cloys;
And nothing more my soul doth lack,
Save gratitude to render back.

Oh! still may Goodness, Mercy, Truth,
Attend my steps from stage to stage,
As they have followed me from youth
Through life's long weary pilgrimage;
Till He who Israel led of old,
Shall guide me to his heavenly fold.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# SONNETS.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I.

## THE HOTTENTOT.

MILD, melancholy, and sedate, he stands,
Tending another's flock upon the fields,
His fathers' once, where now the White Man builds
His home, and issues forth his proud commands.
His dark eye flashes not; his listless hands
Lean on the shepherd's staff; no more he wields
The Libyan bow—but to th' oppressor yields
Submissively his freedom and his lands.
Has he no courage? Once he had—but, lo!
Harsh Servitude hath worn him to the bone.
No enterprise? Alas! the brand, the blow,
Have humbled him to dust—even *hope* is gone!
"He's a base-hearted hound—not worth his food"—
His Master cries—"he has no *gratitude!*" [115]

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

II.

## THE CAFFER.

Lo! where he crouches by the cleugh's dark side,
Eyeing the farmer's lowing herds afar;
Impatient watching till the Evening Star
Lead forth the Twilight dim, that he may glide
Like panther to the prey. With freeborn pride
He scorns the herdsman, nor regards the scar
Of recent wound—but burnishes for war
His assagai and targe of buffalo-hide.
He is a Robber?—True; it is a strife
Between the black-skinned bandit and the white.
A Savage?—Yes; though loth to aim at life,
Evil for evil fierce he doth requite.
A Heathen?—Teach him, then, thy better creed,
Christian! if thou deserv'st that name indeed.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

III.

## THE BUSHMAN.

THE Bushman sleeps within his black-browed den,
In the lone wilderness. Around him lie
His wife and little ones unfearingly—
For they are far away from 'Christian-Men.'
No herds, loud lowing, call him down the glen:
He fears no foe but famine; and may try
To wear away the hot noon slumberingly;
Then rise to search for roots—and dance again.
But he shall dance no more! His secret lair,
Surrounded, echoes to the thundering gun,
And the wild shriek of anguish and despair!
He dies—yet, ere life's ebbing sands are run,
Leaves to his sons a curse, should they be friends
With the proud 'Christian-Men'—for they are fiends![116]

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

IV.

## SLAVERY.

Oh Slavery! thou art a bitter draught!
And twice accursèd is thy poisoned bowl,
Which taints with leprosy the White Man's soul,
Not less than his by whom its dregs are quaffed.
The Slave sinks down, o'ercome by cruel craft,
Like beast of burthen on the earth to roll.
The Master, though in luxury's lap he loll,
Feels the foul venom, like a rankling shaft,
Strike through his reins. As if a demon laughed,
He, laughing, treads his victim in the dust—
The victim of his avarice, rage, or lust.
But the poor Captive's moan the whirlwinds waft
To Heaven—not unavenged: the Oppressor quakes
With secret dread, and shares the hell he makes!

1823

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## V.

## FRANSCHEHOEK.[117]

To this far nook the Christian Exiles fled,
Each fettering tie of earthly texture breaking;
Wealth, country, kindred, cheerfully forsaking,
For that good cause in which their fathers bled.
By Faith supported and by Freedom led,
A fruitful field amidst the desert making,
They dwelt secure when kings and priests were quaking,
And taught the waste to yield them wine and bread.
And is their worth forgot? their spirit gone?
Now, in the breach of wickedness forthbreaking,
At the lone watchman's warning call awaking,
To lift the faithful standard is there none?
Yes—still 'mong the dry bones there is a shaking,
And a faint glimmering still where former lustre shone.

1824.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

VI.

## GENADENDAL.

In distant Europe oft I've longed to see
This quiet Vale of Grace; to list the sound
Of lulling brooks and moaning turtles round
The apostle Schmidt's old consecrated tree;
To hear the hymns of solemn melody
Rising from the sequestered burial ground;
To see the heathen taught, the lost sheep found,
The blind restored, the long-oppressed set free.
All this I've witnessed now—and pleasantly
Its memory shall in my heart remain;
But yet more close familiar ties there be
That bind me to this spot with grateful chain—
For it hath been a Sabbath Home to me,
Through lingering months of solitude and pain. [118]

*November*, 1824.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

VII.

## ENON. [119]

By Heaven directed, by the World reviled,
Amidst the Wilderness they sought a home,
Where beasts of prey and men of murder roam,
And untamed Nature holds her revels wild.
There, on their pious toils their Master smiled,
And prospered them, beyond the thoughts of men,
Till in the satyr's haunt and dragon's den
A garden bloomed, and savage hordes grew mild.
—So, in the guilty heart when Heavenly Grace
Enters, it ceaseth not till it uproot
All Evil Passions from each hidden cell;
Planting again an Eden in their place,
Which yields to men and angels pleasant fruit;
And God himself delighteth there to dwell.

*April*, 1821.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

VIII.

## THE GOOD MISSIONARY

He left his Christian friends and native strand,
By pity for benighted men constrained:
His heart was fraught with charity unfeigned;
His life was strict, his manners meek and bland.
Long dwelt he lonely in a heathen land,
In want and weariness—yet ne'er complained;
But laboured that the lost sheep might be gained,
Nor seeking recompense from human hand.
The credit of the arduous works he wrought
Was reaped by other men who came behind:
The world gave him no honour—none he sought,
But cherished Christ's example in his mind.
To one great aim his heart and hopes were given—
To serve his God and gather souls to Heaven.

*Cafferland*, 1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

IX.

## TO THE REV. DR. PHILIP.

THY heavenly MASTER'S voice with reverent awe
Thou heard'st, as thus to thy stirred heart it spoke:
'Go forth and gather yon poor scattered Flock
Within the free pale of the Gospel Law.
The trembling lamb pluck from the tiger's paw,
Nor fear his cruel fangs; for by the stroke
Of thy frail staff his cheek-bone shall be broke,
And many saved from the Devourer's jaw.'
Such the high task: and manfully and well
Thou for that peeled and scattered Flock hast striven;
And henceforth they in quietude shall dwell,
(Their ruthless spoilers fettered, or forth-driven,)
With nought to scare them, save the baffled yell
Of hungry wolves from whom the prey was riven.[120]

1828.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

X.

## A COMMON CHARACTER.

NOT altogether wicked—but so weak,
That greater villains made of him their tool;
Not void of talent—yet so much a fool
As honour by dishonest means to seek:
Proud to the humble, to the haughty meek;
In flattery servile, insolent in rule;
Keen for his own—for others' interest cool;
Hate in his heart, and smiles upon his cheek.
This man, with abject meanness joined to pride,
Was yet a pleasant fellow in his day;
For all unseemly traits he well could hide,
Whene'er he mingled with the great and gay.
—But he is buried now—and, when he died,
No one seemed sorry that he was away!

*Cape Town*, 1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

XI.

## THE NAMELESS STREAM.

I FOUND a Nameless Stream among the hills, [121]
And traced its course through many a changeful scene;
Now gliding free through grassy uplands green,
And stately forests, fed by limpid rills;
Now dashing through dark grottos, where distils
The poison dew; then issuing all serene
'Mong flowery meads, where snow-white lilies screen
The wild-swan's whiter breast. At length it fills
Its deepening channels; flowing calmly on
To join the Ocean on his billowy beach.
—But that bright bourne its current ne'er shall reach:
It meets the thirsty Desert——and is gone
To waste oblivion! Let its story teach
The fate of one—who sinks, like it, unknown.

*Glen-Lynden*, 1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

XII.

## MY COUNTRY.

My Country! when I think of all I've lost,
In leaving thee to seek a foreign home,
I find more cause the farther that I roam
To mourn the hour I left thy favoured coast;
For each high privilege which is the boast
And birth-right of thy sons, by patriots gained,
Dishonoured dies where Right and Truth are chained,
And caitiffs rule—by sordid lusts engrossed.
I *may*, perhaps, (each generous purpose crossed,)
Forget the higher aims for which I've strained,
Calmly resign the hopes I prized the most,
And learn cold cautions I have long disdained;
But my heart must be calmer—colder yet—
Ere thee, my Native Land! I can forget.

1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

XIII.

## THE CAPE OF STORMS.

O CAPE of Storms! although thy front be dark,
And bleak thy naked cliffs and cheerless vales,
And perilous thy fierce and faithless gales
To staunchest mariner and stoutest bark;
And though along thy coasts with grief I mark
The servile and the slave, and him who wails
An exile's lot—and blush to hear thy tales
Of sin and sorrow and oppression stark:—
Yet, spite of physical and moral ill,
And after all I've seen and suffered here,
There are strong links that bind me to thee still,
And render even thy rocks and deserts dear;
Here dwell kind hearts which time nor place can chill—
Loved Kindred and congenial Friends sincere.

1825.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

XIV.

## TO OPPRESSION.

OPPRESSION! I have seen thee, face to face,
And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow:
But thy soul-withering glance I fear not now;
For dread to prouder feelings doth give place
Of deep abhorrence. Scorning the disgrace
Of slavish knees that near thy footstool bow,
I also kneel—but with far other Vow
Do hail thee and thy herd of hirelings base.
I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,
Still to oppose and thwart with heart and hand
Thy brutalizing sway—till Afric's chains
Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land,—
Trampling Oppression and his iron rod.
—Such is the Vow I take—So help me God!

1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# AFRICAN SKETCHES.

PART II.

## NARRATIVE OF A RESIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Ipse, ignotus, egens, Libyæ deserta peragro....
— Non nos aut ferro Libycos populare penates
Venimus, aut raptas ad litora vertere prædas.

VIRG. ÆNEID.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

TO

# ROBERT PRINGLE,

GLEN-LYNDEN, SOUTH-AFRICA.

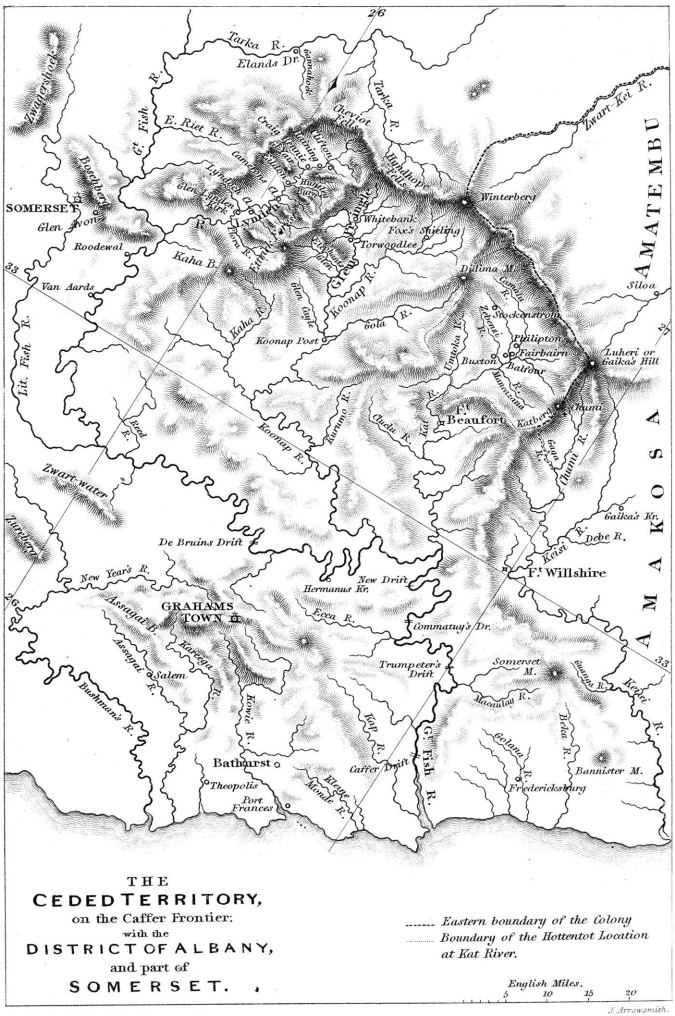
---

MY FATHER! I TO THEE INSCRIBE THIS PAGE;
AND SEND IT FREIGHTED, LIKE A COURIER-DOVE,
WITH MANY A PRAYER OF REVERENTIAL LOVE,
TO GREET THEE IN THY DISTANT HERMITAGE.
IF SUCH SLIGHT THEMES MAY FOR AN HOUR ENGAGE
THY THOUGHTS, INTENT ON BETTER THINGS ABOVE,
THIS TALE OF TRIALS PAST PERCHANCE MAY PROVE
A RECREATION TO THINE HONOURED AGE.

SPRUNG FROM A STALWART LINE OF SCOTTISH SIRES,
BE THOU THE PATRIARCH, ON AFRIC'S STRAND,
OF A YOUNG RACE, WHO WITH THEIR FATHERS' FIRES
SHALL WARM THE HEART OF THEIR ADOPTED LAND;
WHO, FIRM YET GENTLE, GENEROUS, SINCERE,
SHALL FEAR THEIR GOD, AND KNOW NO OTHER FEAR.

*January* 5, 1834.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026




London, E. MOXON, Dover Str.t 1834.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# NARRATIVE

OF A

# RESIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

## CHAPTER I.

*Government Scheme of Emigration to South Africa in* 1819—*Arrival of the Author with a Party of Settlers in Simon's Bay—Visit to Cape Town—Author's Views in emigrating —Voyage round the Coast to Algoa Bay—Disembarkation of Emigrants—Settlers' Camp—Excursion to Bethelsdorp —Caffer Captive—Hottentot Congregation—Sanguine Expectations of the Emigrants—Remarkable Fate of two religious Polemics—Interview with the Acting Governor— Destination of the Scotch Party—Foundation of the Town of Port Elizabeth.*

On the 30th of April, 1820, I arrived in Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope, in the brig Brilliant, accompanied by a party of Scottish emigrants, of whom I was, *pro tempore*, the head or leader. We formed part of a body of about five thousand British settlers, who, in pursuance of a plan to colonise the unoccupied territory near the frontier of Caffer-land, had entered into engagements to proceed thither under the patronage of Government; £50,000 having been

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

voted by Parliament to defray the expense of our conveyance to the new settlement. The first of the Government transports, with its complement of emigrants, sailed from the Downs on the 10th of December, 1819; and the others, to the number of about twenty sail, followed as fast as they could get the people and stores embarked. Several of these vessels had reached the Cape before us, and had proceeded to Algoa Bay. Seven sail, besides the Brilliant, anchored in Simon's Bay on the 30th of April and the 1st of May, some of which had left England nearly a month before us. We had sailed from Gravesend on the 15th of February, and had had, on the whole, a pleasant and prosperous voyage. But there being two other parties of emigrants besides ourselves on board the vessel (a brig of 330 tons), amounting to a hundred and fifty-seven souls, with their goods and furniture, we were necessarily a good deal crowded; and during the latter part of the voyage all of us longed for port, with an intense eagerness which only those who have been in similar circumstances can perfectly understand.

The evening had closed in before we reached the anchorage in Simon's Bay, so that our anxiety to survey the features of the country had been but imperfectly gratified. So eager was this desire, that some of my young friends did not sleep that night; and the following morning at daybreak I found all our party assembled on the poop, gazing on the bleak hills and sterile sands that surround False Bay, with very grave faces. "Hegh, sirs!" said one of them, "but this is an ill-favoured and outlandish-looking country. I wad fain hope, that thae hieland hills and muirs are no a fair sample o' our African location?"—"Quite as fair a sample," I replied, "as Culloden Muir is of the Carse of Gowrie. But these rugged hills are not the sort of soil you will have to cultivate. Keep up your hearts, my friends, till you see the green savannahs of Albany."

While our vessel lay here at anchor for a few days, to take in a supply of fresh provisions before proceeding round

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to Algoa Bay, I paid a visit to the capital of the colony, which is situate on the western side of the isthmus, about twenty-five miles from the small port of Simon's Town. Cape Town, with its fine bay, and the magnificent mountain scenery which half environs it, are so well known from the descriptions of numerous travellers, that I shall content myself with remarking, that it is a regularly built and handsome looking town, containing about 20,000 inhabitants, of whom 6,000 are slaves, and probably about half that number free coloured persons. The whites are a mixed population of Dutch and English. Table Mountain, a stupendous mass of rock, rises almost immediately behind to the perpendicular height of 3,582 feet; its two wings, the Lion's Rump and Devil's Hill, embracing the town and part of the bay in a sort of crescent.

The day after my arrival in Cape Town, I had an interview with Colonel Bird, the chief secretary of Government, respecting the settlement of my party, and also on the subject of my own personal views in the colony.

It may be proper here to notice, that I had two special objects in view in emigrating to the Cape. One of these was to collect again into one social circle, and establish in rural independence, my father's family, which untoward circumstances had broken up and begun to scatter over the world. To accomplish this, emigration to a new colony was indispensable. My father had been a Roxburghshire farmer of the most respectable class; and all his sons (five in number) had been bred to the same profession, except myself. The change of times, however, and the loss of capital, had completely overclouded their prospects in our native country; and, therefore, when the Government scheme of colonising the unoccupied territory at the Cape was promulgated, I called their attention to that colony, and offered to accompany them, should they determine to proceed thither as settlers. After maturely weighing the advantages of the Cape, as compared with other British colonies, they made their election, and empowered me to apply on

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their behalf to the Colonial Department*. As it was required by the Government plan that every party should comprise at least ten adult males, one family, related to my wife, and two or three other respectable individuals, were associated with us. And thus our little band of twenty-four souls was made up; consisting of twelve men (including three farm servants), six women and six children.

My personal views were different from those of my relatives. I had received a collegiate education; and had been employed for about a dozen years in the service of his Majesty's Commissioners on the Ancient Records of the Kingdom, in the office of my esteemed friend Mr. Thomson, Deputy Clerk-Register of Scotland. I had also been recently engaged to a certain extent in literary concerns; having been one of the original projectors and editors of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (then a *liberal*, though not a *party* journal), and afterwards of Constable's Magazine. My connection with these journals, however, had rather been prejudicial than otherwise to my views in life, and had given me, moreover, a decided aversion to literature, (or, at least, to Periodical Literature,) as a profession. Under these circumstances, I determined to embark my own fortunes with those of my relatives, in the Government scheme of South-African colonisation. But as neither my pecuniary circumstances nor my previous habits rendered it advisable for me to locate myself as an agricultural settler, I trusted to obtain, through the recommendation of powerful friends, some moderate appointment, suitable to my qualifications, in the civil service of the colony, and probably in the newly settled district.

Having explained these views to my respected friend, Sir Walter Scott, in the autumn of 1819, that illustrious and benevolent man entered into them with his

* One of my brothers had previously emigrated to the United States and settled there. Another brother did not get his affairs arranged in time to accompany the party; but followed us out in 1822.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

characteristic cordiality and promptitude. He immediately wrote to some of his ministerial friends in London, in behalf of myself and my party of emigrants, and obtained our ready admission among those selected by Government for the new settlement from the vast multitude of applicants*. He also exerted himself with the utmost zeal to obtain an appointment for myself in the colony; and when I came up to London in November, 1819, to make arrangements for our embarkation, he furnished me with strong letters of recommendation to persons of influence, whose intervention in my behalf he hoped to render effectual†. These exertions procured me a letter of

* I was informed, by a gentleman in a high official situation, and who had the very best access to correct information, that the number of persons in whose behalf application was made to the Colonial Department on this occasion, with a view to their emigrating to South Africa, exceeded 80,000 souls.

† It is due to the memory of a man whose recent loss is still felt as a great public bereavement, to show how warmly he aided my views on this occasion, although my political predilections were altogether different from his own, and though our acquaintanceship was but recent, and solely of a literary character. In a letter to me, respecting the application for a grant of land to our party, dated September 4, 1819, he says, "I have by this post forwarded the memorial to Mr. Croker of the Admiralty, with whom I am intimate, requesting him to put it in the proper train without delay. I think I can rely on his intercession with Lord Bathurst and Mr. Goulburn, neither of whom I myself know, and that you will be put on as good if not a better footing than any who go out to the Cape."

Again, on the 10th of December, 1819, in reply to a letter of mine, acquainting him with the doubts and difficulties which clouded my prospects of a colonial appointment, he writes in the following terms:—

"I have not yet been able to get my letters from General Dundas, and I fear they will not be of the consequence I would wish, as many of his friends have died or left the Cape. But, when I come to London, which will be in January early, I will take care to get from Lord Sidmouth better recommendations than I could do, in the present hurry of public affairs, by writing. So that you may make yourself assured that you will get a packet from me very shortly after your arrival at the Cape, if not before, acquainting you with what I can do in your behalf. Long experience has taught me how difficult it is to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

recommendation from Mr. Goulburn, then Colonial Secretary, to the Governor of the colony, Lord Charles Somerset; with an assurance that his Excellency, to whose disposal all appointments, except a very few of the highest grade, were intrusted, would be prepared to give the most favourable attention to my wishes. It appeared to me necessary for the elucidation of the following narrative to state briefly these preliminary circumstances—though at the risk, I fear, of appearing somewhat egotistical.

Having learned, on my arrival at the Cape, that Lord Charles Somerset had sailed for England a few weeks previously, on leave of absence, I now placed in the hands of the Secretary to the colonial government Mr. Goulburn's letter to his Excellency. Colonel Bird expressed his regret that the letter, being marked 'private,' could not be opened, either by himself, or by the acting governor, Sir Rufane Donkin; but said that he would transmit it by the earliest conveyance to Lord Charles Somerset in England, where my interests would be best recommended to his attention; and that meanwhile I would find an opportunity of stating my views to Sir Rufane Donkin when I reached the eastern frontier.

I spent about a week in Cape Town on this occasion; during which time I formed an acquaintance with two or three persons of worth and talent. Among these were the Rev. Dr. Philip, superintendent of the missions of the London Missionary Society (to whom I carried letters of introduction from Scotland), and Mr. H. E. Rutherfoord, an English merchant of that order of character which is now (unfortunately for us as a nation) becoming, I fear, far more rare than it was in former days. I met also, almost

procure what is desired from persons high in office, otherwise than by personal solicitation; but Lord Sidmouth is an exceeding good man, and I doubt not to interest him in your behalf when I have an opportunity of seeing him."

Sir Walter did not come up to London till after I had sailed; but that he faithfully kept his promise to me, I received the most satisfactory evidence. The result of the applications made by him and by other friends in my behalf will appear in the sequel.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

by accident, with my maternal relative, Mr. T. Haitlie, a native of Tweedside, who, after roaming over many lands, had at last settled himself in the vicinity of Cape Town as an African agriculturist. On finding that our family, and my brothers his early playmates, were at Simon's Bay, he galloped off instantly to visit them, leaving me a horse to follow at my leisure; and, before we sailed, besides giving us much useful information on the subject of *locating* ourselves in the wilderness, the kind-hearted fellow had our cabin crammed with a load of Cape refreshments and country stores.

We sailed out of Simon's Bay on the 10th of May, with a brisk gale from the N.W., which carried us round Cape L'Aguilhas, at the rate of nearly ten knots an hour. On the 12th, at day-break, however, we found ourselves almost becalmed, nearly opposite the entrance to the Knysna, a fine lagoon, or salt water lake, which forms a beautiful and spacious haven (though unfortunately rather of difficult access), winding up, as we were informed by our captain, who had twice entered it with the Brilliant, into the very bosom of the magnificent forests which cover this part of the coast. During this and the two following days, having scarcely any wind, and the little we had being adverse, we kept tacking off and on within a few miles of the shore. This gave us an excellent opportunity of surveying the coast scenery of Auteniqualand and Zitzikamma, which is of a very striking character. The land rises abruptly from the shore in massive mountain ridges, clothed with forests of large timber, and swelling in the back ground into lofty serrated peaks of naked rock. As we passed headland after headland, the sylvan recesses of the bays and mountains opened successively to our gaze, like a magnificent panorama, continually unfolding new features, or exhibiting new combinations of scenery, in which the soft and the stupendous, the monotonous and the picturesque, were strangely blended. The aspect of the whole was impressive, but sombre; beautiful, but somewhat savage. There was the grandeur and the grace of nature, majestic and un-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tamed; and there was likewise that air of *lonesomeness* and dreary *wildness*, which a country unmarked by the traces of human industry or of human residence seldom fails to exhibit to the view of civilised man. Seated on the poop of the vessel, I gazed alternately on that solitary shore, and on the bands of emigrants who now crowded the deck or leaned along the gangway; some silently musing, like myself, on the scene before us; others conversing in separate groups, and pointing with eager gestures to the country they had come so far to inhabit. Sick of the wearisome monotony of a long sea voyage (for only a few had been permitted by the Cape authorities to land at Simon's Bay), all were highly exhilarated by the prospect of speedily disembarking; but the sublimely stern aspect of the country, so different from the rich tameness of ordinary English scenery, seemed to strike many of the *Southron* with a degree of awe approaching to consternation. The Scotch, on the contrary, as the stirring recollections of their native land were vividly called up by the rugged peaks and shaggy declivities of this wild coast, were strongly affected, like all true mountaineers on such occasions. Some were excited to extravagant spirits; others silently shed tears.

Coasting on in this manner, we at length doubled Cape Receef (renowned for its shipwrecks) on the 15th, and late in the afternoon came to an anchor in Algoa Bay, in the midst of a little fleet of vessels, which had just landed, or were engaged in landing, their respective bands of settlers. The Menai sloop of war and the Weymouth storeship were moored beside the transports; and their crews, together with a party of military on shore, were employed in assisting the debarkation.

It was an animated and interesting scene. Around us in the west corner of the spacious bay, were anchored ten or twelve large vessels, which had recently arrived with emigrants, of whom a great proportion were still on board. Directly in front, on a rising ground a few hundred yards from the beach, stood the little fortified barrack or blockhouse, called Fort Frederick, occupied by a

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

division of the 72nd regiment, with the tents and pavilions of the officers pitched on the heights around it. At the foot of those heights, nearer the beach, stood three thatched cottages, and one or two wooden houses brought out from England, which now formed the offices of the commissaries and other civil functionaries appointed to transact the business of the emigration, and to provide the settlers with provisions and other stores, and with carriages for their conveyance up the country. Interspersed among these offices, and among the pavilions of the government functionaries and naval officers employed on shore, were scattered large depôts of agricultural implements, carpenters' and blacksmiths' tools, and iron ware of all descriptions, sent out by the home government to be furnished to the settlers at prime cost. About two furlongs to the eastward, on a level spot between the sand hills on the beach and the stony heights beyond, lay the camp of the emigrants. Nearly a thousand souls, on an average, were at present lodged there in military tents; but parties were daily moving off in long trains of bullock wagons, to proceed to their appointed places of location in the interior, while their place was immediately occupied by fresh bands, hourly disembarking from the vessels in the bay. A suitable back ground to this animated picture, as viewed by us from the anchorage, was supplied by the heights over the Zwartkops River, covered with a dense jungle, and by the picturesque peaks of the Winterhoek and the dark masses of the Zureberg ridge far to the northward, distinctly outlined in the clear blue sky.

The whole scene was such as could not fail to impress deeply the most unconcerned spectator. To us—who had embarked all our worldly property and earthly prospects, our own future fortunes and the fate of our posterity, in this enterprise—it was interesting and exciting to an intense degree.

It being too late to get ashore that evening, we continued gazing on this scene till long after sunset,—till twilight had

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

darkened into night, and the constellations of the southern hemisphere, revolving in cloudless brilliancy above, reminded us that nearly half the globe's expanse intervened between us and our native land—the homes of our youth, and the friends we had parted from for ever; and that here, in this farthest nook of Southern Africa, we were now about to receive the portion of our inheritance, and to draw an irrevocable lot for ourselves and for our children's children. Solemn reflections will press themselves at such a time on the most thoughtless; and this night, as we swung at anchor in Algoa Bay, so long the bourne of all our wishes, many a wakeful brain among us was doubtless expatiating, each according to the prevailing current of thought, in serious meditation on the future or the past. A long sea voyage, and, far more, one with such an object as we had before us, totally disconnecting us for a time from the bustling world behind and before, and from the great political and social interests of humanity, appears, as it were, like a pause or interlude between the acts of the busy drama of human life, and deepens the interest both of the past and the future, by affording a convenient space for reflection. This quiet interval was about to close with us; and we now waited with anxiety for the curtain to draw up, and unfold, in all the distinctness of reality, the scenes of novelty and adventure to which we had so long looked forward.

Early next morning, in order to make arrangements for the disembarkation of our party, I went ashore with Lieutenant Pritchard, the government agent who had accompanied us from London. There is no landing-place at this bay, except on the open beach; and when the wind blows strong from the south-east, there is a tremendous surf, which totally precludes all communication between the shore and the vessels at anchor, and even renders the roadstead extremely hazardous. At this time, however, the weather was favourable, and we dashed boldly through the breakers in the captain's gig.

The disembarkation of the emigrants from the other

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

transports was proceeding with alacrity. Party after party were conveyed safely and rapidly through the breakers by the surf boats (managed by seamen from the sloop of war), and then borne ashore 'high and dry' on the shoulders of fatigue parties of the military. The beach was all alive with bustle and confusion, and the boisterous hilarity of people who felt their feet on firm ground for the first time after a wearisome voyage. Bands of men and women were walking up and down, conversing and laughing; their children gamboling around them, and raising ever and anon their shrill voices in exclamations of pleasure and surprise, as some novel object excited their attention. Other groups were watching their luggage, as it was carried from the boats and piled in heaps upon the sand; or were helping to load the wagons appointed to convey it to the settlers' camp. Bargemen and soldiers were shouting to each other across the surf. Tall Dutch-African boors, with broad-brimmed white hats, and huge tobacco pipes in their mouths, were bawling in Colonial-Dutch. Whips were smacking, bullocks bellowing, wagons creaking; and the half-naked Hottentots, who led the long teams of draught oxen, were running, and hallooing, and waving their long lank swarthy arms in front of their horned followers, like so many mad dervishes.

Leaving the landing-place, we passed some sand-hills covered with beautiful shrubs, such as are found among the rare exotics of our European greenhouses; and aloes and other strange plants were scattered about, and trodden underfoot as carelessly as thistles and burdock in an English barn-yard. As we proceeded, I observed the large depôts of stores and implements provided for the emigrants,—some of them but imperfectly protected from the weather by coverings of canvass or tarpaulins, and fenced in from intruders by *chevaux de frise* of ploughs and harrows, ramparts of packing cases and grindstones, and bastions of frying pans and camp kettles. They were secure enough from depredation under the protection of sentinels; but I regretted to perceive that quantities of the smaller articles of

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

iron ware were going rapidly to destruction, for want of sufficient shelter from the moist sea air.

After some little search we found the deputy quarter-master-general, to whom the chief management of the disembarkation had been intrusted; and I readily obtained his consent to have my party instantly landed. While orders were despatched to the surf-boats to expedite their disembarkation, I proceeded to the commissariat department to commission tents, provisions, and other things necessary for their proper accommodation. These stores were furnished to us upon the credit of a sum of £150, which had, agreeably to the general regulations, been deposited on behalf of the party in the hands of the home government.

I then returned to the beach to receive my friends, and to guide them to the spot selected, with the consent of the commandant, for our little encampment, apart from the populous and somewhat noisy parallelogram of Settlers' Town. The whole party, I found, had just arrived outside the breakers in the ship's barge, and were then stepping into the surf-boats. Approaching the Highland soldiers who were employed in pulling these boats with ropes through the surf, I spoke to them in broad Scotch, and entreated them to be careful of their country folks, especially the women and children. It was delightful to witness the hearty outburst of nationality and kindly feeling among these poor fellows when I thus addressed them. "Scotch folk! are they?" said a weather-beaten stalwart corporal, with a strong northern brogue—"never fear, sir, but we sal be carefu' o' *them!*" and dashing through the water as he spoke, he and his comrades hauled the boats rapidly yet cautiously through the breakers; and then surrounding the party, and shaking them cordially by the hands, they carried them, old and young, ashore on their shoulders, without allowing one of them to wet the sole of his shoe in the spray. Being Highlanders, these men had no connection with our native districts; but the name of 'Auld Scotland' was a sufficient pass-word to their national sympathies.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

In the midst of our colloquy with the soldiers, an officer came hastily down to the beach, and informed me, with many apologies and expressions of regret, that an unlucky mistake had been made in authorising the disembarkation of our party that day, as it was found that a party from another vessel had a prior claim to be provided for; and, in order to avoid disputes and any appearance of partiality, it was earnestly requested that we would consent to return on board for a few days longer, and resign the tents and other accommodations to the rival claimants. This was an unpleasant predicament; but as it would have been ungracious to have refused compliance with a request which seemed in itself reasonable, my friends submitted with as much cheerfulness as could be expected from persons heartily sick of a sea-life, and only a minute before almost wild with joy to find themselves once more on dry land. The whole party, therefore, with the exception of another gentleman and myself, were immediately re-embarked, under the care, and accompanied by the friendly condolements, of their Highland countrymen.

I then strolled along the beach to survey more closely the camp of the settlers, which had looked so picturesque from the sea. On my way I passed two or three pavilion-tents pitched apart among the evergreen bushes which were scattered between the sand-hills and the heights behind. These were the encampments of some of the higher class of settlers, and evinced the taste of the occupants by the pleasant situations in which they were placed, and by the neatness and order of every thing about them. Ladies and gentlemen, elegantly dressed, were seated in some of them with books in their hands; others were rambling among the shrubbery and over the little eminences, looking down upon the bustling beach and bay. One or two handsome carriages were standing in the open air, exhibiting some tokens of aristocratic rank or pretension in the proprietors. It was obvious that several of these families had been accustomed to enjoy the luxurious accommodations of refined society in England. How far,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

they had acted wisely in embarking their property and the happiness of their families in an enterprise like the present, and in leading their respective bands of adventurers to colonise the wilds of Southern Africa, were questions yet to be determined. Foreseeing, as I did in some degree, (although certainly by no means to the full extent,) the difficulties and privations inevitable in such circumstances, I could not view this class of emigrants, with their elegant arrangements and appliances, without some melancholy misgivings as to their future fate; for they appeared utterly unfitted by former habits, especially the females, for *roughing it* (to use the expressive phraseology of the camp) through the first trying period of the settlement.

A little way beyond, I entered the Settlers' Camp. It consisted of several hundred tents, pitched in regular rows or streets, and occupied by the middling and lower classes of emigrants. These consisted of various descriptions of people; and the air, aspect, and array of their persons and temporary residences, were equally various. There were respectable tradesmen and jolly farmers, with every appearance of substance and snug English comfort about them. There were watermen, fishermen, and sailors, from the Thames and English sea-ports, with the reckless and weather-beaten look usual in persons of their perilous and precarious professions. There were numerous groups of pale-visaged artisans and operative manufacturers, from London and other large towns; of whom doubtless a certain proportion were persons of highly reputable character and steady habits; but a far larger portion were squalid in their aspect, slovenly in their attire and domestic arrangements, and discontented and uncourteous in their demeanour. Lastly, there were parties of pauper agricultural labourers, sent out by the aid of their respective parishes, healthier perhaps than the class just mentioned, but not apparently happier in mind, nor less generally demoralised by the untoward influence of their former social condition. On the whole, they formed a motley and unprepossessing collection of people. Guessing vaguely from my observa-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tions on this occasion and on subsequent rambles through their locations, I should say that probably about a third part were persons of real respectability of character, and possessed of some worldly substance; but that the remaining two-thirds were for the most part composed of individuals of a very unpromising description—persons who had hung loose upon society—low in morals or desperate in circumstances. Enterprise many of these doubtlessly possessed in an eminent degree; but too many appeared to be idle, insolent, and drunken, and mutinously disposed towards their masters and superiors. And with such qualities, it was not possible to augur very favourably of their future conduct and destiny, or of the welfare of those who had collected them in England, and whose success in occupying the country depended entirely on their steady industry.

Having cursorily surveyed all that seemed worthy of immediate attention at the Bay, I procured a horse, and set out on an excursion to Bethelsdorp, the well known Hottentot village, about nine miles from the coast. A Hottentot boy, whose only dress consisted of a pair of leather trousers and a loose mantle of sheep-skin with the wool upon it, acted as my guide, and trotted along at a goodly pace by the side of my pony.

The country in the vicinity of Algoa Bay, though far superior to the environs of Simon's Town, has not, on the whole, a very inviting aspect. Extensive undulating plains, scantily covered with herbage, stretch into the interior, unenlivened (at least such was then the case, after passing the little hamlet of Cradockstown,) with a single farm-house, or any manifestation of being occupied by human inhabitants, except such as was afforded by a few herds of cattle and straggling flocks of sheep, tended by Hottentot herdsmen. These downs were bounded on the west by a range of low sterile-looking hills, and on the east by the banks of the Zwartkops River, covered with jungle. The lofty and picturesque mountains, however, already mentioned, which bound the view to the northward, somewhat relieved the otherwise monotonous landscape; and,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

as I proceeded, the strange aspect of one or two small lakes of salt, and the exotic appearance of many of the plants, agreeably occupied my attention. On approaching Bethelsdorp, the downs were in many places embellished with patches of natural shrubbery, consisting chiefly of various species of evergreens. Among the shrubs, I noticed two elegant species of *protea*, and a variety of other plants equally rare in Europe. The aloe, in several varieties, and in great profusion, embellished even the most sterile tracts of the wilderness.

I came in sight of the village just as the sun was setting. The shadows of the barren hills which rise above it to the westward were falling quietly over the plain. The smoke of the fires just lighted to cook the evening meal of the home-coming herdsmen, was curling calmly in the serene evening air. The bleating of flocks returning to the fold, the lowing of the kine to meet their young, and other pleasant rural sounds, recalling to my recollection all the pastoral associations of a Scottish glen, gave a very agreeable effect to my first view of this missionary village. When I entered the place, however, all associations connected with the rural scenery of Europe were at once dispelled. The groups of woolly-haired, swarthy-complexioned natives, many of them still dressed in the old sheep-skin mantle or *caross*; the swarms of naked or half-naked children; the wigwam hovels of mud or reeds; the queer-shaped, low, thatched church, erected by old Vanderkemp; the long-legged, large-horned cattle; the broad-tailed African sheep, with hair instead of wool; the strange words of the evening salutation (*goeden avond*—'good evening'), courteously given, as I passed, by old and young; the uncouth clucking sounds of the Hottentot language, spoken by some of them to each other; these, and a hundred other traits of wild and foreign character, made me feel that I was indeed far from the glens of Cheviot, or the pastoral groups of a Scottish hamlet—that I was at length in the Land of the Hottentot.

The missionary, who had been informed of my approach, now came forth from his decent brick-built dwelling, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

welcomed me in. I had a letter of introduction to him, which, though it was not requisite to ensure me a hospitable reception, did not fail, of course, to increase his cordiality and frankness of communication.

While tea was preparing, and before the twilight had yet closed in, my host was called out to speak to another stranger. This was a Caffer woman, accompanied by a little girl of eight or ten years of age, and having an infant strapped on her back, above her mantle of tanned bullock's hide. She had come from the *drostdy*, or district town, of Uitenhage, under the custody of a black constable, who stated that she was one of a number of Caffer females who had been made prisoners by order of the Commandant on the frontier, for crossing the line of prescribed demarkation without permission; and that they were now to be given out in servitude among the white inhabitants of this district. The woman before us, he added, was to be forwarded by the missionary, under the charge of one of his people, to the residence of a certain colonist, about twenty miles to the westward. Such were the orders of the *landdrost*, or district magistrate.

While the constable was delivering his message, the Caffer woman looked at him and at us with keen and intelligent glances; and though she very imperfectly understoood his language, she appeared fully to comprehend its import. When he had finished, she stepped forward, drew up her figure to its full height, extended her right arm, and commenced a speech in her native tongue—the Amakosa dialect. Though I did not understand a single word she uttered, I have seldom been more struck with surprise and admiration. The language, to which she appeared to give full and forcible intonation, was highly musical and sonorous; her gestures were natural, graceful, and impressive, and her dark eyes and handsome bronze countenance were full of eloquent expression. Sometimes she pointed back towards her own country, and then to her children. Sometimes she raised her tones aloud, and shook her clenched hand, as if she denounced our injustice, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

threatened us with the vengeance of her tribe. Then again she would melt into tears, as if imploring clemency, and mourning for her helpless little ones. Some of the villagers who had gathered round, being whole or half Caffers, understood her speech, and interpreted it in Dutch to the missionary; but he could do nothing to alter her destination, and could only return kind words to console her. For my own part I was not a little struck by the scene, and could not help beginning to suspect that my European countrymen, who thus made captives of harmless women and children, were in reality greater barbarians than the savage natives of Caffraria.

After our interview with the Caffer woman, I attended the evening service of the missionary, in the rustic chapel of Bethelsdorp. The place was occupied by a very considerable number of the inhabitants of the village, a large proportion being females. The demeanour of the audience was attentive and devout, and their singing of the missionary hymns was singularly pleasing and harmonious. The effect of the music was no doubt greatly heightened by the reflections which the sight of this African congregation naturally suggested. I saw before me the remnant of an aboriginal race, to whom this remote region, now occupied by white colonists, had at no distant period belonged. As I sat and listened to the soft and touching melody of the female voices, or gazed on the earnest, upturned, swarthy countenances of the aged men, who had probably spent their early days in the wild freedom of nomadic life, and worn out their middle life in the service of the colonists, it was pleasing to think that *here*, and in a few other institutions such as this, the Christian humanity of Europe had done something to alleviate European oppression, by opening asylums where, at least, *a few* of the race were enabled to escape from personal thraldom, and to emerge from heathen darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel.

In subsequent conversations with the missionary, Mr. Barker, who evinced great candour and openness, and in the course of a careful inspection of the village on the fol-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

lowing day, I discovered that almost insurmountable disadvantages existed in the situation of the place; which was not chosen, as has sometimes been erroneously supposed, by old Dr. Vanderkemp, but forced upon his acceptance by the Colonial Government of the day. In the civil condition of the people also, and even in the system of management, there were, at the period of my first visit, impediments to be overcome, and defects to be remedied of no slight description. For the present, however, I shall content myself with observing that, even at this period, whatever there might be visible at Bethelsdorp of African wildness and want of the accessories of civilisation, there was little that could with propriety be called *savage*. There was, even amongst the rudest of the people, an aspect of civility and decent respect, of quietude and sober-mindedness, which evinced that they were habitually under the control of far other principles than those which regulate the movements of mere savage men. They appeared to be a respectable and religious native peasantry; as yet, indeed, but partially reclaimed from some of the indolent habits of nomadic life, but obviously *progressing*, and, in many instances, already farther advanced intellectually than externally.

Next day I returned to Algoa Bay, and rejoined my friends on board the Brilliant. Here, from a variety of tantalising circumstances, not worth recounting to the reader, though they tried our patience to the uttermost at the time, we were detained, swinging at anchor, till the 25th, when at length our party were enabled finally to disembark. We pitched our little camp, consisting of seven or eight tents, on a verdant spot surrounded by evergreen bushes, about half way between Settlers' Town and the Government offices; and having brought all our property from on board, including a suitable assortment of Scotch ploughs, cart-wheels, and other implements of husbandry, iron-ware, tools, fire-arms, cooking utensils, and similar essentials, we made our arrangements to wait the arrival of the Acting Governor.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Meanwhile, on purpose to occupy the time as pleasantly and profitably as circumstances would permit, I made an excursion to the district town of Uitenhage, about sixteen miles from the port, and to one or two other places in the vicinity; but the details of these little journeys, though I thought them at the time sufficiently interesting to be recorded in my MS. journal, may be here omitted.

While we remained encamped at Algoa Bay, I became acquainted with some of the heads of emigrant parties, by meeting them at the tables of the naval and military officers, to which we were hospitably invited; and I soon found that several even of the most intelligent men, were carried away by anticipations of the capabilities of the country scarcely less extravagant than the expectations of some of our female friends, who fancied they would find oranges and apricots growing wild among the thorny jungles of the Zwartkops. But perhaps a portion of this sanguine spirit, however liable to disappointment, is requisite, after all, to tear men from the ties of kindred and country, and from old habits more hard to break in many cases than even those ties; and to bear them forward with courageous hearts, to encounter the toils and perils and privations of a new settlement, in a strange and distant clime. There is a certain charm in adventurous enterprise that few are so apathetical as to be utter strangers to, but which to bold and buoyant spirits is altogether irresistible, and which never fails to array in the most fascinating colours whatever is connected with the undertaking they happen to have embarked in.

A rather remarkable occurrence, which happened during our sojourn here, suggested some reflections of another cast. Of the two parties of emigrants who had sailed with us from England in the Brilliant, by far the most numerous was composed entirely of English methodists and dissenters, who had associated themselves, like the early American colonists, on principles of religious as well as civil communion. Unhappily, however, their opinions on this important topic proved any thing but harmonious. During the voyage,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

having little else to occupy their attention, they engaged keenly in polemical discussions; and under the guidance of two local preachers,—a tall grave Wesleyan coachmaker, and a little dogmatic Anabaptist surgeon,—they soon split in two discordant factions of Arminians and high Calvinists. Heated by incessant controversy for three months, many of them, who had been wont formerly to associate on friendly terms, ceased to regard each other with sentiments of Christian forbearance; and the two rival leaders, after many obstinate disputations, which became more intricate and intemperate every time they were renewed, had at length finally parted in flaming wrath, and for several weeks past had paced the quarter-deck together without speaking, or exchanging salutations. After our arrival at Algoa Bay, these two men were both seized, though not simultaneously, with fatal distempers. The Wesleyan died on board, without even having an opportunity of setting his foot on that land which he had longed so ardently to reach. His body was brought ashore and interred in the soldiers' desolate burial ground near the beach; his former antagonist assisting with tearful eyes at the funeral. A few days afterwards the Anabaptist also was taken ill. I saw him in his tent, on the sick bed from which he never again rose. He told me, with suppressed emotion, that he knew he was dying, and was quite resigned to die; but expressed anxiety for his destitute family—and appeared as if there were something else pressing on his mind which he wished to unburthen. We were interrupted, however, and I saw him no more. I supposed it might be some feeling of regret, in relation to the unhappy disputes of which I had been a witness. Both, however, I have every reason to believe, died forgiving each other their trespasses, as they hoped to be forgiven: and with a well-grounded hope (for, in spite of their intolerance, I believe they were both persons of genuine piety,) of receiving a more blessed inheritance than the earthly one from which Providence had so suddenly debarred them. Being the only individuals who died at Algoa Bay, out of more than one hundred and fifty con-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

veyed hither by the Brilliant, the event seemed to be viewed by their surviving associates as a solemn rebuke for the indulgence of that human pride and wrath 'which worketh not the righteousness of God.' At all events, the moral lesson was a striking one, and it apparently produced a deep effect on the hot controversialists of both parties. They subsequently founded together a village in Albany, called Salem, and lived together, so far as I could learn, in Christian forbearance and good fellowship with each other. As a pleasing conclusion to the little story, I may mention, that about five years afterwards, the eldest son of the Calvinist and the daughter of the Wesleyan, who were mere children at the death of their parents, became husband and wife.

On the 6th of June, the acting governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, arrived at Algoa Bay on his return from Albany, whither he had gone to make arrangements for locating the settlers already arrived there, and for the reception of those proceeding thither. I had an interview with him on the following morning. He informed me that it was proposed by Government to locate the whole of the Scotch emigrants in the mountainous country watered by some of the eastern branches of the Great Fish River, and lying adjacent to the Caffer frontier. The upper part of the valley formed by the Bavian's River had been surveyed for the reception of my party; while the unoccupied territory to the eastward was destined for five hundred Highlanders, who were expected out under a Captain Grant, and for a smaller party from the west of Scotland, who were understood to be also on their voyage out. A district town, to be called New Edinburgh, he added, was intended to be founded in a convenient situation, where a resident magistrate and a clergyman of the Scottish church would be placed for the civil and religious benefit of the settlers. The Highlanders, moreover, were to be formed into a body of local militia, for the defence of that part of the frontier. Such was the plan proposed by the colonial authorities. It was now for me, he said, to decide whether I would accede on behalf of my party to that plan, or avail myself of the option allowed by the original scheme

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of the home government, to select a location among the English emigrants in some other part of the disposable territory nearer the coast. Having communicated this proposal to the several heads of families of our party, I was empowered, after a brief consultation, to inform the acting governor that we preferred the mountain settlement adjoining the proposed location of our countrymen: and thus the destination of the party was fixed.

Mr. William Elliott, a gentleman who had joined us in London, on finding we were destined to a location farther in the interior than suited his views, now left us to return to Cape Town. He was a well educated and well principled young man. He afterwards became a missionary under the auspices of the London Society; and is now very beneficially engaged in the instruction of the black population at the Paarl, in the district of Stellenbosch.

On the 6th of June, we assisted at laying the foundation of the first house of a new town at Algoa Bay, designated by Sir Rufane 'Port Elizabeth,' after the name of his deceased lady, to whose memory, also, he afterwards erected an obelisk on one of the adjoining heights. In the course of fourteen years this place has grown up to be the second town in the colony, both for population and for commerce; and it is still rapidly increasing. Captain Moresby, of the navy, was the proprietor of the house then founded with much ceremony, and of which our party assisted to dig the foundation. The only other house then commenced, excepting the temporary offices and cabins already mentioned, was one erecting by a Malay named Fortuin, now, I understand, one of the wealthiest and most respectable inhabitants of the place.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER II.

*Journey into the Interior—Mode of travelling—Remarkable Salt Lake—Nocturnal Encampment in a Forest of Jungle—Route to Roodewal, a military Post on the Great Fish River—Hospitable Attentions of the Officers—Visit from Mr. Hart—Journey up the River of Baboons—Groot Willem—Terrible Roads—Picturesque Scenery—Arrival at the Location allotted to the Party.*

ANOTHER week elapsed, after our destination had been fixed, before the commissariat could furnish wagons to convey us and our 'stuff' to our location among the mountains. These carriages were the common country wagons used by the Dutch-African colonists. They were called out by a Government order in a certain quota from each field-cornetcy, or local sub-division, of the eastern districts; and were to be paid for at a stipulated rate, out of the money deposited by each party of emigrants in the hands of Government. The distance from Algoa Bay to Bavian's River, whither we were bound, was estimated to be about 170 miles, by the route which it was necessary for us to follow; and as there was no place by the way where provisions could be procured (excepting sheep), until we reached the military post of Roodewal, we stored our carriages with an adequate supply of all necessaries for the journey.

We struck our tents on the 13th of June, which is about the middle of winter in the southern hemisphere. The weather was serene and pleasant, though chill at night—somewhat like fine September weather in England. Our travelling train consisted of seven wagons; all, except one which was driven by a slave, being conducted by the owners or their sons, Dutch-African farmers. These vehicles were admirably adapted for the nature of the country, which is rugged and mountainous and generally destitute of any

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

other roads than the rude tracks originally struck across the wilderness by the first European adventurers; and which are repaired by throwing merely earth and faggots into the gulleys and beds of torrents, which, during heavy rains, sometimes render them impassable. Each wagon is provided with a raised canvas tilt to protect the traveller from sun and rain; and is drawn by a team of ten or twelve oxen, fastened with wooden yokes to a strong central trace (*trek-tow*), formed of twisted thongs of bullock's or buffalo's hide. The driver sits in front to guide and stimulate the oxen, armed with a whip of enormous length; while a young Hottentot, running before, leads the team by a thong attached to the horns of the foremost pair of bullocks.

Having forded the Zwartkops River, we unyoked, and dined on its farther bank amidst a clump of mimosa trees. In the afternoon, on resuming our journey, I induced the drivers, by a little present of tobacco, to deviate a few miles from our direct route, in order to visit a remarkable salt lake, which I knew from Mr. Barrow's account to be in the vicinity. After travelling about a couple of hours through a dense jungle, or forest of shrubbery, we reached its southern bank about sunset.

This lake, which lies in the midst of an extensive plain, elevated considerably above the level of the sea, is of an oval form, about three miles in circumference, and has on one side a sloping margin of green turf; in other parts, banks of greater elevation and abruptness are covered with continuous thickets of arboreous and succulent plants. At the time of our visit the whole of the lake round the margin, and a considerable portion of its entire surface, was covered with a thick rind of salt sprinkled over with small snow-white crystals, giving the whole basin the aspect of a pond partially frozen and powdered over with hoar frost or flakes of snow. This wintry appearance of the lake formed a singular contrast with the exuberant vegetation which embowered its margins, where woods of beautiful evergreens and elegant acacias were intermingled with flower-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ing shrubs and succulent plants of lofty size and strange exotic aspect,—such as the *Portulacaria afra* (favourite food of the elephant), the tree *crassula*, the scarlet *cotelydon*, with several species of the *aloe*, some of them of large size, and in summer crested with superb tiaras of blood-red blossoms; and, high over all, gigantic groves of *euphorbia*, extending their leafless arms above the far-spread forest of shrubbery. The effect of the whole, flushed with a rosy tinge by the setting sun, was singularly striking and beautiful. I did not attempt to examine the saline incrustation which is said to extend over the whole bottom of the lake; but I tasted the water, and found it as salt as brine. Of the various theories suggested by naturalists to account for the formation of this singular Salt Pan (as it is called by the colonists), that which ascribes its origin to saline springs in the bottom appears the most probable.

Having obtained from this natural reservoir a sufficient quantity of excellent culinary salt to supply our party for a twelvemonth, we continued our journey through the wilderness of jungle, until the twilight closed in upon us; when, selecting an open space among the bushes, we unyoked, or, according to the colonial phrase, *outspanned* the teams.

Our encampment this night was to our yet unexperienced eyes rather a singular scene. Some families pitched their tents, and spread their mattresses on the dry ground; others, more vividly impressed with the terror of snakes, scorpions, tarantulas, and other noxious creatures of the African clime, of which they had heard or read, resolved to sleep as they had travelled—above their baggage in the wagons. Meanwhile our native attendants adopted due precautions to avert surprise from the more formidable denizens of the forest. Elephants and lions had formerly been numerous in this part of the country, and were still occasionally, though more rarely, met with. Two or three large fires were therefore kindled to scare away such visitants; and the oxen, for greater security, were fastened by their horns to the wheels of the wagons. The boors

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

unslung their huge guns (or *roers*, as they called them) from the tilts of the wagons, and placed them against a magnificent evergreen bush, in whose shelter, with a fire at their feet, they had fixed their place of repose. Here, untying each his leathern scrip, they produced their provisions for supper, consisting chiefly of dried bullock's flesh, which they seasoned with a moderate *sopie*, or dram, of colonial *brandewyn*, from a huge horn slung by each man in his wagon beside his powder-flask. The slave man and Hottentots, congregated apart round one of the watch-fires, made their frugal meal, without the brandy, but with much more merriment than their phlegmatic masters. In the meanwhile our frying-pans and tea-kettles were actively employed; and by a seasonable liberality in the beverage 'which cheers but not inebriates,' we ingratiated ourselves not a little with both classes of our escort, especially with the coloured caste, who prized 'tea water' as a rare and precious luxury.

It was not a little amusing after supper (as I sat in the front of my wagon jotting down in my note book the day's memoranda) to contemplate the characteristic groups which our rustic camp exhibited. The Dutch-African boors, most of them men of almost gigantic size, sat apart in their bushy *bield*, in aristocratic exclusiveness, smoking their huge pipes with self-satisfied complacency. Some of the graver emigrants were seated on the trunk of a decayed tree, conversing in broad Scotch on subjects connected with our settlement, and on the comparative merits of long and short-horned cattle (the horns of the native oxen, by the way, are enormous): and the livelier young men and servant lads were standing round the Hottentots, observing their merry pranks, or practising with them a lesson of mutual tuition in their respective dialects; while the awkward essays at pronunciation on either side supplied a fund of ceaseless entertainment. Conversation appeared to go on with alacrity, though neither party understood scarcely a syllable of the other's language; while a sly rogue of a Bushman sat behind, all the while, mimick-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ing, to the very life, each of us in succession. These groups, with all their variety of mien and attitude, character and complexion,—now dimly discovered, now distinctly lighted up by the fitful blaze of the watch-fires; the exotic aspect of the clumps of aloes and euphorbias, peeping out amidst the surrounding jungle, in the wan light of the rising moon, seeming to the excited fancy like bands of Caffer warriors crested with plumes and bristling with assagais; together with the uncouth clucking gibberish of the Hottentots and Bushmen (for there were two or three of the latter tribe among our wagon leaders), and their loud bursts of wild and *eldrich* laughter; had altogether a very strange and striking effect, and made some of us feel far more impressively than we had yet felt, that we were now indeed pilgrims in the wilds of savage Africa.

By degrees, the motley groups became hushed, under the influence of slumber. The settlers retired to their tents or their wagons; the boors, sticking their pipes in the bands of their broad-brimmed hats, wrapt themselves in their great coats, and, fearless of snake or scorpion, stretched their limbs on the bare ground; while the Hottentots, drawing themselves each under his sheep-skin *caross*, lay coiled up, with their feet to the fire and their faces to the ground, like so many hedgehogs. Over the wide expanse of wilderness, now reposing under the midnight moon, profound silence reigned,—unbroken save by the deep breathing of the oxen round the wagons, and, at times, by the far-off melancholy howl of a hyæna, the first voice of a beast of prey we had heard since our landing. With the nightly serenade of the jackal and hyæna we soon became familiar; nor did any more formidable visitants disturb us during our journey.

Having thus detailed our mode of travelling and bivouacking in the wilds, I shall pass rapidly over the ground which we traversed during the ensuing eight days, and which has been repeatedly described by travellers. Suffice it to say that we crossed successively the Kuga, the Sunday, the Bushman, the New-year, and the Little Fish rivers

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

None of these rivers contained any considerable stream of water: some of them were quite stagnant, and almost dry. Nevertheless, the great depth of their beds, and the abruptness of the banks, rendered the crossing of them with our heavy-loaded vehicles a task sometimes of no ordinary difficulty. We passed also over an extensive tract of mountainous country at the Zureberg, where the roads appeared to us most frightful and perilous. Certainly no wheel carriage used in England could have survived them; but our African charioteers jolted us along with great *sang-froid*, and without any material disaster. Sometimes we had two teams, of twelve oxen each, yoked to one wagon, to drag our loads of iron-ware up the steep hills; and then there was tremendous shouting, and barbarous flogging of the poor animals. But these are ordinary occurrences in Cape travelling. We saw very few inhabitants of any class, and few wild animals, except antelopes and quaggas in the distance. The features of the country changed alternately from dark jungle to rich park-like scenery, embellished with graceful clumps of evergreens; and from that again to the desolate sterility of savage mountains, or of parched and desert plains, scattered over with huge ant-hillocks and flocks of springboks. Here and there a solitary farm-house appeared near some permanent fountain or willow-margined river; and then again the wilderness, though clothed perhaps with verdant pasturage, extended for twenty miles or more without a drop of water.

At length, on the 21st of June, we reached Roodewal, a military post on the Great Fish River, estimated to be upwards of 130 miles from Algoa Bay, by the route we had followed, and about 40 miles distant from the spot allotted for our location.

Here we were received by the officers of the garrison and their ladies with the utmost kindness and hospitality. They insisted on our abandoning our tents and wagons during our stay, and establishing ourselves in their quarters, where some of them resigned their own apartments to accommodate our females and children. 'Roughing it,' as



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

we had been doing for the last four weeks, in tents and wagons, and after a journey of nine days over such execrable roads, and through a country so waste and lonesome that it seemed almost totally devoid of inhabitants, we felt the sudden and unexpected transition to the cordial hospitalities and English comforts of our agreeable hosts altogether delightful. We had not entered a house since we left Algoa Bay, except one or two comfortless boors' cabins, and indeed had not seen above a dozen farm-houses during our whole journey; the route we had followed having necessarily led us through one of the wildest and least inhabited tracts of the frontier districts.

On the following day we received a visit from Mr. Hart, a Scotch gentleman, residing in the vicinity, and father-in-law to Lieutenant Stretch, one of our kind entertainers. He had formerly been an officer in the Cape Corps (a Hottentot regiment raised for the defence of the colony), but was now superintendent of a great agricultural and commissariat establishment belonging to government, called the Somerset Farm, lying at the foot of the Boschberg mountains. Having resided altogether upwards of twenty years in Southern Africa, he was extremely well informed respecting the capabilities of the country and the character of the inhabitants. His information and advice, therefore, in regard to many points connected with the successful prosecution of the enterprise we were engaged in, were highly important, and were communicated with much kindly feeling, and with a certain shrewd sagacity which we found to be one of his characteristic features.

A numerous party of us were assembled at tea in the officers' dining hall, when Mr. Hart joined us. The Scottish accent, seldom entirely lost even by the most polished of the middle ranks of our countrymen, was heard from every tongue; and the broad 'Doric dialect' prevailed, spoken by female voices, fresh and unsophisticated from the banks of the Teviot and the Lothian Tyne. Hart, a man of iron look and rigid nerve, was taken by surprise, and deeply affected. The accents of his

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

native tongue, uttered by the kindly voice of woman, carried him back forty years at once and irresistibly, as he afterwards owned, to the scenes of his mother's fire-side; and recalled freshly before him the softened remembrances of early life—those tender and sacred remembrances which, though apparently buried beneath the cares and ambitious aims of after years, are never, in any good heart, entirely effaced. Our Scottish poet, Graham, has beautifully described this natural sentiment—not unallied to lofty virtues—in one of his neglected pieces.

"How pleasant came thy rushing, silver Tweed,
Upon my ear, when, after wandering long
In Southern plains, I've reached thy lovely banks!
How bright, renownèd Sark, thy little stream,
Like ray of columned light chasing a shower,
Would cross my homeward path! How sweet the sound,
When I, to hear the Doric tongue's reply,
Would ask thy well-known name!
And must I leave,
Dear land, thy bonny braes, thy dales,
Each haunted by its wizard stream, o'erhung
With all the varied charms of bush and tree;
Thy towering hills, the lineaments sublime,
Unchanged, of Nature's face, which wont to fill
The eye of Wallace, as he musing planned
The grand emprise of setting Scotland free?
And must I leave the friends of youthful years,
And mould my heart anew to take the stamp
Of foreign friendships in a foreign land?
Yes, I may love the music of strange tongues,
And mould my heart anew to take the stamp
Of foreign friendships in a foreign land;
But to my parchèd mouth's roof cleave this tongue,
My fancy fade into the yellow leaf,
And this oft-pausing heart forget to throb,
If, Scotland! thee and thine I e'er forget."

*Graham's British Georgics.*



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

On the 23rd of June, after spending two days at Roodewal, we proceeded on our journey. We were now provided with a new train of wagons, drivers, and attendants, from the sub-district of Cradock, in lieu of those that had accompanied us from Algoa Bay; and at the residence of the Field-Cornet Opperman, where we arrived the same evening, we were joined by an escort of armed boors under his direction, who had been called out to accompany and assist us during the remaining part of our journey, and to place us in safety upon the ground allotted to us. The distance we had still to travel, after reaching Opperman's, did not exceed twenty-five miles, but it proved to be by far the most arduous portion of our journey. We had now crossed the Great Fish River, and, though still within the old boundary of the colony, were upon its utmost verge to the eastward. The country beyond, for a distance of seventy miles, to the new frontier at the Chumi and Keisi rivers, had been the preceding year forcibly depeopled of its native inhabitants, the Caffers and Ghonaquas, and now lay waste and void, 'a howling wilderness' occupied only by wild beasts, and haunted occasionally by wandering banditti of the Bushman race (Bosjesmen), who were represented to us as being even more wild and savage than the beasts of prey with whom they shared the dominion of the desert.

The *Baviaans-Rivier*, or River of Baboons, (now the Lynden,) on the banks of which we had arrived, is one of the smaller branches of the Great Fish River, flowing from the north-east, and watering a rugged mountain-glen of about thirty miles in extent. The upper part of this glen can scarcely be said to have ever been permanently settled, but had formerly been occupied as grazing ground by a few Dutch-African boors, among the most rude and lawless of the whole colony. These men had been dispossessed, and some of them executed for high treason, about five years before, in consequence of their having taken a prominent part in an insurrection against the English government; and a portion of the lands thus forfeited were

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

now to be assigned as the location of our party. The lower part of the glen was still chiefly occupied by the relatives and former accomplices of these insurgents.

Having waited a day at Opperman's for some part of our escort, and a free black, formerly in the British army, who had been sent for to act as an interpreter, we moved forward on the 25th. After travelling a few miles, we entered the *poort*, or gorge of the mountains, through which the River of Baboons issues to the more open and level country where it joins the Great Fish River. In the very middle of this *poort*, we passed the residence of a substantial African boor; a gigantic fellow, six feet four inches in height, and corpulent withal, who had been one of the leaders in the late insurrection. His name was Prinslo; but from his remarkable size even among a race of very large men, he was usually known by the name of *Groot Willem*, big William. This African Goliath, however, in place of gnashing his teeth, like old Pope and Pagan in the Pilgrim's Progress (as would have been but natural), came forth very good-humouredly to shake hands with us, his new neighbours, as we passed; and drank to our better acquaintance out of his flask of home-made brandy. And 'as we went on our way,' like old Bunyan's pilgrims, we received, on passing the corner of the orchard, a present of excellent vegetables, and a basket of lemons and pomegranates; a testimony of good will, which we repaid by distributing among the family a few Dutch tracts and hymn books. Groot Willem's house and farm offices, were constructed in a nook of the glen, with tremendous precipices of naked rock rising above and around, so as barely to leave on the bank of the river sufficient space for the houses and cattle-folds, together with a well-stocked garden and orchard, inclosed with quince and pomegranate hedges, and a small plot of corn land below.

A couple of miles or so above this spot, we came to a point where the Lynden is joined by a subsidiary rivulet, called *Bosch-Fontein*—now the Plora. This little stream waters a valley of seven or eight miles in length, containing fine pasturage, and rich alluvial soil capable of being exten-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

sively cultivated by the aid of irrigation; without which, in fact, little or nothing can be raised in the arid climate of South Africa, at any considerable distance from the coast. Looking up this valley, which extends eastward behind the back of the Kahaberg, we observed the skirts of the magnificent timber forests, which cover the southern fronts of this range, stretching over the summits of the green hills at the head of the glen. In those hills are the sources of the Plora, which, being fed by more frequent rains than most other parts of the adjoining country, and protected from evaporation by the dense woods, furnish a perpetual supply of pure water; an advantage which in this country is quite invaluable, and for the want of which nothing else can compensate. To this valley, and the wooded hills which bound it, we gave the name of Ettrick Forest.

Leaving this subsidiary glen on our right, we proceeded up the River of Baboons. To this point the wagon track, wild and rugged as it was, might be considered comparatively safe and in good repair; but it now became difficult and dangerous to a degree far exceeding any thing we had yet encountered or formed a conception of; insomuch that we were literally obliged to *hew* out our path up the valley through jungles and gullies, and beds of torrents, and rocky acclivities, forming altogether a series of obstructions which it required the utmost exertions of the whole party, and of our experienced African allies, to overcome.

The scenery through which we passed was in many places of the most picturesque and singular description. Sometimes the valley widened out, leaving space along the river side for fertile meadows, or *haughs* (as such spots are called in the south of Scotland), prettily sprinkled over with mimosa trees and evergreen shrubs, and clothed with luxuriant pasturage up to the bellies of our oxen. Frequently the mountains, again converging, left only a narrow defile, just broad enough for the stream to find a passage; while precipices of naked rock rose abruptly, like the walls of a rampart, to the height of many hundred feet, and in some places appeared absolutely to overhang the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

savage-looking pass or *poort*, through which we and our wagons struggled below; our only path being occasionally the rocky bed of the shallow river itself, encumbered with huge blocks of stone which had fallen from the cliffs, or worn smooth as a marble pavement by the sweep of the torrent floods. At this period the River of Baboons was a mere rill, gurgling gently along its rugged course, or gathered here and there into natural tanks, called in the language of the country *zeekoe-gats* (hippopotamus pools); but the remains of water-wrack, heaved high on the cliffs, or hanging upon the tall willow trees, which in many places fringed the banks, afforded striking proof that at certain seasons this diminutive rill becomes a mighty and resistless flood. The steep hills on either side often assumed very remarkable shapes—embattled, as it were, with natural ramparts of freestone or trap rock—and seemingly garrisoned with troops of the large baboons from which the river had received its former Dutch appellation. The lower declivities were covered with good pasturage, and sprinkled over with evergreens and acacias; while the cliffs that overhung the river had their wrinkled fronts embellished with various species of succulent plants and flowering aloes. In other spots the freestone and basaltic rocks, partially worn away with the waste of years, had assumed shapes the most singular and grotesque; so that, with a little aid from fancy, one might imagine them the ruins of Hindoo or Egyptian temples, with their half-decayed obelisks, columns, and statues of monster deities.

It were tedious to relate the difficulties, perils, and adventures, which we encountered in our toilsome march, of *five days*, up this African glen;—to tell of our pioneering labours with the hatchet, the pick-axe, the crow-bar, and the sledge-hammer,—and the lashing of the poor oxen, to force them on (sometimes 20 or 30 in one team) through such a track as no English reader can form any adequate conception of. In the upper part of the valley we were occupied two entire days in thus *hewing* our way through a rugged defile, now called Eildon-Cleugh, scarcely three

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

miles in extent. At length, after extraordinary exertions and hair-breadth escapes—the breaking down of two wagons, and the partial damage of others—we got through the last *poort* of the glen, and found ourselves on the summit of an elevated ridge, commanding a view of the extremity of the valley. "And now, mynheer," said the Dutch-African field-cornet who commanded our escort, "*daar leg uwe veld*—there lies your country." Looking in the direction where he pointed, we beheld, extending to the northward, a beautiful vale, about six or seven miles in length, and varying from one to two in breadth. It appeared like a verdant basin, or *cul de sac*, surrounded on all sides by an amphitheatre of steep and sterile mountains, rising in the back-ground into sharp cuneiform ridges of very considerable elevation; their summits being at this season covered with snow, and estimated to be from 4000 to 5000 feet above the level of the sea. The lower declivities were sprinkled over, though somewhat scantily, with grass and bushes. But the bottom of the valley, through which the infant river meandered, presented a warm, pleasant, and secluded aspect; spreading itself into verdant meadows, sheltered and embellished, without being encumbered, with groves of mimosa trees, among which we observed in the distance herds of wild animals—antelopes and quaggas—pasturing in undisturbed quietude.

"Sae that's the lot o' our inheritance, then?" quoth one of the party, a Scottish agriculturist. "Aweel, now that we've really got till 't, I maun say the place looks no sae mickle amiss, and may suit our purpose no that ill, provided thae haughs turn out to be gude deep land for the pleugh, and we can but contrive to find a decent road out o' this queer hieland glen into the lowlands— like ony other Christian country."

Descending into the middle of the valley, we unyoked the wagons, and pitched our tents in a grove of mimosa trees on the margin of the river; and the next day our armed escort with the train of shattered vehicles set out on their return homeward, leaving us in our wild domain to our own courage and resources.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER III.

*Survey of the Location—Name of Glen-Lynden given to it—Visit from the Deputy Landdrost of the District—A Sabbath in the Wilderness—Nocturnal Alarms from Lions—Extract from the Author's Diary—Guard of Hottentots—Temporary Huts and Furniture—Purchase of Live Stock—Clearing of Ground—Planting of Gardens and Orchards—Author's Various Occupations—Medical Practice—Instruction of the Natives—Intercourse with the Dutch-African Colonists.*

Our wearisome travels by sea and land were at length terminated; and it was remarked that exactly six months, to a day, had elapsed from the departure of the party from Scotland to their arrival at their destined home. With the exception of myself and two or three other individuals, all the party had embarked at Leith for London on the 29th of December, 1819; and we reached our African location on the 29th of June, 1820. For six long months we had been pilgrims and sojourners; without any other home since we left London than the crowded cabin at sea and the narrow tent on shore. Now we had reached the 'Promised Land,' which was to be the place of our rest; and it may be conceived with what feelings of lively interest most of us assembled the following morning to sally forth on an exploratory excursion to the upper extremity and lateral recesses of the valley. Leaving a sufficient guard to protect our little camp, we proceeded on foot, well armed, to inspect our new domain, having as yet no horses, nor any other live stock whatever except a watch dog, which one of the party had purchased by the way. We found the valley sprinkled over, as has been already noticed, except at the extremities of its subsidiary cleughs, with beautiful clumps and groves of mimosa trees, interspersed with open

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

grassy pastures; while the river, a gurgling mountain-brook, meandered placidly through the fertile meadows. Ever and anon, as we advanced up the trackless vale, some of the wild animals which were then its only inhabitants came in view, giving animation to the sequestered landscape. A troop or two of quaggas, appeared trotting away, with the gait of the wild ass, over the lower declivities of the hills; the hartebeest (*antilope caama* or *bubalis*) and the duiker (*antilope mergens*) bounded gracefully from among the groves and thickets; while the rietbok (*antilope eleotragus*) and the wild-hog (*riet-vark*) rushed from their secret lairs among the reeds and sedge that occasionally fringed the stream. Having inspected the whole extent of our territory, we fixed upon a spot about three miles above our camp for the temporary settlement of the party, until such time as it should be considered safe for the several families to occupy separately their respective farms. This spot (which on a division of the lands fell into my father's allotment, and is now called Clifton) appeared to be the most central position, and likewise the best adapted for immediate cultivation. Here, therefore, we resolved to erect our temporary hamlet*.

The same day Captain Harding, the deputy-landdrost of Cradock (our district magistrate), accompanied by a land-surveyor, arrived to *locate*, or formally instal us in our lands, and to point out their boundaries. This service being completed the following morning, this officer again left us with his attendants, after strongly advising me to take careful precautions to avoid being surprised by our wild neighbours, the Bushmen and Caffers. He considered our position a very exposed one at that period; and, upon his suggestion, we resolved to place a nightly watch, to

* The name of *Glen-Lynden*, which was then given by some of us to the location, has been subsequently extended by the Government to the valley, river, and field-cornetcy, formerly denominated *Baviaans Rivier*. I have therefore generally used this Scottish appellation, which has now superseded the Dutch one, and become the permanent and official name.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

guard our camp from any sudden attack that might be attempted by marauders of those tribes.

The next day, July 2nd, was our first Sunday on our own grounds. Feeling deeply the importance of maintaining the suitable observance of this day of sacred rest, it was unanimously resolved that we should strictly abstain from all secular employment not sanctioned by absolute necessity; and at the same time commence such a system of religious services as might be with propriety maintained in the absence of a clergyman or minister. The whole party were accordingly assembled after breakfast, under a venerable acacia tree, on the margin of the little stream which murmured around our camp. The river appeared shaded here and there by the graceful willow of Babylon, which grows abundantly along the banks of many of the African streams, and which, with the other peculiar features of the scenery, vividly reminded us of the pathetic lament of the Hebrew exiles:—"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat; yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."

It was, indeed, an affecting sight to look round on our little band of Scottish emigrants, thus congregated for the first time to worship God in the wild glen allotted for their future home and the heritage of their offspring. There sat old ———, with his silvery locks, the patriarch of the party, with his Bible on his knee,—a picture of the high-principled, grave Scottish husbandman; his respectable family seated round him. There was the widow ———, with her meek, kind, and quiet look—(the look of one who had seen better days, but who in adversity had found pious resignation), with her three stalwart sons, and her young maiden daughter placed beside her on the grass. There, too, were others, delicate females—one of them very nearly related to myself—of whom I need not more particularly speak. There was ———, the younger brother of a Scottish laird, rich in blood, but poor in fortune, who, with an estimable pride, had preferred a farm in South Africa, to dependence on aristocratic connexions at home. Looking

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

round on these collected groups, on this day of solemn assemblage, such reflections as the following irressistibly crowded on my mind: "Have I led forth from their native homes, to this remote corner of the globe, all these my friends and relatives for good or for evil?—to perish miserably in the wilderness, or to become the honoured founders of a prosperous settlement, destined to extend the benefits of civilisation and the blessed light of the Gospel through this dark nook of benighted Africa? The issue of our enterprise is known only to Him who ordereth all things well: 'Man proposes, but God disposes.' But though the result of our scheme is in the womb of futurity, and although it seems probable that greater perils and privations await us than we had once calculated upon, there yet appears no reason to repent of the course we have taken, or to augur unfavourably of the ultimate issue. Thus far Providence has prospered and protected us. We left not our native land from wanton restlessness or mere love of change, or without very sufficient and reasonable motives. Let us, therefore, go on calmly and courageously, duly invoking the blessing of God on all our proceedings; and thus, be the result what it may, we shall feel ourselves in the path of active duty."—With these, and similar reflections, we encouraged ourselves, and proceeded to the religious services of the day.

Having selected one of the hymns of our national church, all united in singing it to one of the old pathetic melodies with which it is usually conjoined in the sabbath worship of our native land. The day was bright and still, and the voice of psalms rose with a sweet and touching solemnity among those wild mountains, where the praise of the true God had never, in all human probability, been sung before. The words of the hymn (composed by Logan) were appropriate to our situation, and affected some of our congregation very sensibly:—

"O God of Bethel! by whose hand thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage hast all our fathers led:

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Through each perplexing path of life our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread, and raiment fit provide:....
O! spread thy covering wings around, till all our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode our souls arrive in peace."

We then read some of the most suitable portions of the English Liturgy, which we considered preferable to any extempore service that could be substituted on this occasion; and concluded with an excellent discourse from a volume of sermons presented to me on parting by a revered relative, the Rev. Dr. Pringle of Perth. We had a similar service in the afternoon; and agreed to maintain in this manner the public worship of God in our infant settlement, until it should please Him, in his good Providence, to privilege it with the ecclesiastical dispensation of religious ordinances.

While we were singing our last psalm in the afternoon, an antelope (*oribi*), which appeared to have wandered down the valley without observing us, stood for a little while on the opposite side of the rivulet, gazing at us in innocent amazement, as if yet unacquainted with man, the great destroyer. On this day of peace it was, of course, permitted to depart unmolested.

On this and other occasions the scenery and productions of the country reminded us in the most forcible manner of the imagery of the Hebrew Scriptures. The parched and thorny desert—the rugged and stony mountains—the dry beds of torrents—"the green pastures by the quiet waters"—"the lions' dens"—"the mountains of leopards"—"the roes and the young harts (antelopes) that feed among the lilies"—"the coney of the rocks"—"the ostrich of the wilderness"—"the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;" these, and a thousand other objects, with the striking and appropriate descriptions which accompany them, recurred to us continually with a sense of their beauty and aptitude, which we had never fully felt before.

In our journey from Algoa Bay, we had seen in the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

distance a few herds of large game, chiefly of the antelope tribe; and we found our highland valley to be pretty well stocked with the animals mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. But we had as yet seen none of the beasts of prey that inhabit the country, with the exception of one or two jackals, although we had once heard the peculiar growl, or *gurr*, of the Cape tiger (or leopard), and been serenaded nightly by the hungry howl of the hyæna, almost all the way from the coast. We were not allowed, however, to continue long without a closer acquaintance with our neighbours of the carnivorous class. The lion introduced himself, in a mode becoming his rank and character, a few nights after our arrival at Glen-Lynden.

The serene weather with which we had been favoured during our journey, was succeeded on the 3rd of July by a cold and wet evening. The night was extremely dark, and the rain fell so heavily that, in spite of the abundant supply of dry firewood which we had luckily provided, it was not without difficulty that we could keep one watch-fire burning. Having appointed our watch for the night (a service which all the male adults, masters as well as servants, agreed to undertake in rotation), we had retired to rest, and, excepting our sentinels, were all buried in sleep, when about midnight we were suddenly roused hy the roar of a lion close to our tents. It was so loud and tremendous that for a moment I actually thought a thunder-storm had burst upon us. But the peculiar *expression* of the sound—the voice of fury as well as of power—instantly undeceived me: and instinctively snatching my loaded gun from the tent pole, I hurried out—fancying that the savage beast was about to break into our camp. Most of our men had sprung to their arms, and were hastening to the watch-fire, with a similar apprehension. But all around was utter darkness; and scarcely two of us were agreed as to the quarter whence the voice had issued. This uncertainty was occasioned partly, perhaps, by the peculiar mode this animal often has of placing his mouth near the ground when he roars, so that the voice rolls, as it were, like a

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

breaker along the earth; partly, also, to the echo from a mountain-rock which rose abruptly on the opposite bank of the river; and, more than all, to the confusion of our senses in being thus hurriedly and fearfully aroused from our slumbers. Had any one retained self-possession sufficient to have quietly noted our looks on this occasion, I suspect he would have seen a laughable array of pale or startled visages. The reader who has only heard the roar of the lion at the Zoological Gardens, can have but a faint conception of the same animal's voice in his state of freedom and uncontrolled power. Novelty in our case, no doubt, gave it double effect, on our thus hearing it for the first time in the heart of the wilderness. However, we resolved to give the enemy a warm reception; and having fired several volleys in all directions round our encampment, we roused up the half-extinguished fire to a roaring blaze, and then flung the flaming brands among the surrounding trees and bushes. And this unwonted display probably daunted our grim visiter, for he gave us no further disturbance that night.

A few days afterwards some of our people had a daylight interview with a lion—probably the same individual who had given us this boisterous greeting. They had gone a mile or two up the valley to cut reeds for thatching the temporary huts which we proposed to erect, and were busy with their sickles in the bed of the river, when, to their dismay, a huge lion rose up among the reeds, almost close beside them. He leaped upon the bank, and then turned round and gazed stedfastly at them. One or two men who had guns seized them hastily, and began to load with ball. The rest, unarmed and helpless, stood petrified; and, had the lion been so disposed, he might easily have made sad havoc among them. He was, however, very civil—or, to speak more correctly, he was probably as much surprised as they were. After quietly gazing for a minute or two at the intruders on his wild domain, he turned about and retired; first slowly, and then, after he was some distance off, at a

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

good round trot. They prudently did not attempt to interfere with his retreat.

After this, when we had moved our encampment farther up the valley, and had exchanged our tents for temporary cabins, we were visited several times, during the winter and ensuing spring, by lions, but without suffering any actual damage from them. On one of those occasions a lion and lioness had very nearly carried off, in a dark night, some of our horses, but were scared by a firebrand when within a few yards of their prey. When we had got some Hottentots placed beside us, we rode out once or twice, after being thus disturbed, to hunt those formidable visitants; but without coming to actual conflict with them for many months. I shall afterwards recur to our wars with these and other wild animals of the country.

To give the reader a more distinct idea of our situation and proceedings on our first settlement, I shall extract from my MS. journal the notes for a short period at this time, exactly as they were written down.

*Monday, July* 3. All hands mustered this morning to begin erecting our temporary huts at Clifton, three miles up the valley. One party appointed to cut willow-poles, another to cut reeds by the river, a third to carry the materials to the spot. Peter Rennie and myself left to guard the camp, for fear of a surprise from native banditti. Some large baboons among the rocks, on the hill tops, at first mistaken for Bushmen. The evening comes on wet. Our camp alarmed by a lion at midnight. [See previous account of this occurrence.]

4th. The weather again clear this morning. Continue our labours vigorously; but the want of cattle and wagons to convey the materials proves a great hindrance; the wood and reeds require to be carried two or three miles on men's shoulders. The necessity of keeping two sentinels all night is an additional hardship. This duty all the men of the party, whether masters or servants, share equally; relieving guard every four hours. Heavy clouds again begin to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

collect above the mountains. Great apprehensions that the weather will break before our huts are ready. Our provisions are also getting short.

5th. Went out with the woodcutters to-day. Saw a troop of quaggas and a hartebeest. Tried to shoot the latter, but could not get near enough. This antelope is about the size of a moderate pony, handsome in its shape, and fleet as a stag. Roused a wild-boar among some reeds, and succeeded in killing him. This species of swine resembles a good deal the common domestic hog, but is longer in the legs, and runs with considerable speed. I was told by the boors, that there is another sort found in the forests, which they call the *bosch-vark*, or wood-swine, much more fierce and dangerous than this kind, which they call *riet-vark*, or reed-swine. The flesh of the one killed to day was lean and dry, the animal being in poor condition.

6th. Sent off two men to Roodewal, distance about forty miles, to hasten a supply of provisions from the commissariat farm of Somerset; and wrote to Lieutenant Stretch, requesting him to purchase for me, if possible, a horse or two. Pressed on our hut-building. More appearances of change of weather.

7th. We were this day surprised by a fall of snow. It lies all around us about three inches deep. Though we knew that snow falls on the mountains we scarcely expected it in the valleys. But our position here is elevated, probably 4000 feet, at least, above the level of the sea. The roar of a lion heard at night up the valley. Kindled large fires round our camp.

8th. Continue our labours in providing materials for the huts. Very cold work, in consequence of the snow lying among the reeds. Begin to find it heavy labour without cattle. Mr. Sydserff's two men, though they only share the toil equally with the rest of us, appear disposed to mutiny. They are likely, I fear, to be troublesome fellows, at once lazy and conceited. Sandy ——, one of them, told his master to-day, that, though engaged to be his farm servant, he had not engaged to watch by night and work



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

by day, and, moreover, be every hour in bodily fear of being scalped by savages or devoured by wild beasts; and, though regularly indentured for three years, he has given warning that he will return to Algoa Bay by the first opportunity. Some grumbling might be excused, for the work is hard; but all ranks share alike, and this ungrateful lad seems to have forgotten, that he was in a state of absolute destitution when his master engaged him for this expedition.

9th. Our messenger returned to day from Roodewal—but without any horses. A supply of flour, however, will be with us in a few days. It is time, for we are now on short allowance. Our people have several times tried to shoot some of the antelopes which appear in the distance, but without effect. We are but indifferent hunters, and should soon starve, I perceive, if we had to depend on the chase—at least without horses.

10th and 11th. Working at our huts. Snow still on the ground. A lion seen to-day by the reed-cutters; but he walked off quietly without attempting to molest them.

12th. A soldier arrived from Roodewal, with a horse purchased for me by Lieutenant Stretch. Engaged the boor Engelbrecht, who is a temporary resident about two miles down the valley, to bring up his wagon and transport our tents, goods, &c. up to Clifton. Engelbrecht is what in America would be called a *Squatter*. He has no land of his own, and lives at present by sufferance on one of the farms forfeited by the rebel Boors. He cultivates no ground, but, with his family, lives entirely, without bread or vegetables, on the milk and flesh of his flock, and what he kills in hunting. He appears to be very ignorant and uncultivated, but is civil enough, and has a shrewd eye to his own interest. For a little additional pay he conveys to Clifton the wood we had cut for hut-building. Purchased a few sheep from him for slaughter.

13th. Two Hottentots from Somerset Farm arrived with a load of flour, which was somewhat damaged by the wagon having been overturned in the river. Received a letter from Mr. Hart, inviting me to accompany him upon

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

an excursion into Cafferland; but must stick to my post at present. Divided the garden ground and commenced cultivation.

14th. Departure of Engelbrecht, the Somerset wagon, &c. Wet and sleety weather. Our tents leaky, and far from comfortable. Several of the females rather seriously unwell. No medical aid nearer than Roodewal. Great want of female servants.

15th. Pressed on the thatching of the huts.

16th. *Sunday.* Weather again bright and serene, though rather cold. All the party well again, and in good spirits. Snow still on the hills. Report of guns heard up the valley. Boors from the Tarka hunting. Sunday, it appears, is too commonly thus spent by many of them.

17th. Black William (the free negro) arrived with letters from the magistrates of our district, Captain Stockenstrom, landdrost of Graaff-Reinét, and Captain Harding, deputy-landdrost of Cradock. They assure me that ten armed Hottentots will speedily be placed under my orders, for the protection of our party. The messenger brings a report, that ten of Opperman's cattle and seven of Engelbrecht's have been carried off by Bushmen.

18th. Rode out with my brother John and Black William to survey more carefully the valley and adjoining country. Nothing to be seen from the tops of the nearest hills, but other mountains, higher and more desolate, beyond them. The nearest farm-house on the Tarka about 15 miles distant from us. No wagon road across. Visited Engelbrecht's Kraal, but found it deserted. He, with his wagon, family, flocks, and herds, has moved off (perhaps from fear of the Bushmen) to some other *squatting* place. Now our nearest neighbour down the valley is Groot Willem, about 25 miles distant. Black William gave us some details of the insurrection of the Boors in this quarter in 1815; and showed the cave where Frederick Bezuidenhout fired on the party sent to arrest him. Found the remains of a vineyard planted by Gerrit Bezuidenhout, another of the rebel Boors. Curious paintings by the Bush-



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

men, on the front of a jutting crag in the vicinity. Isolated rock on the side of an adjacent hill, to which we gave the name of Charley's Chuckie. Gave Scottish names to several of the subsidiary glens and cleughs, or *kloofs*, as the colonists call them. Plenty of game in the distance; but, from being frequently hunted by the Tarka Boors, it seems very shy. Observed the traces of a lion near the river.

These details from my diary will convey a tolerable idea of the circumstances of our position at the commencement of our settlement. By degrees our situation became more comfortable. On the 25th of July, the ten Hottentots, promised by our civil magistrates for a temporary guard, arrived; and we were thus relieved from the necessity of keeping up nightly sentinels of our own body, and from any apprehensions of being surprised by marauders from the waste country to the eastward. These Hottentots were all well armed, and expert in the use of the musket. They were drafted for this particular duty from the service of the Dutch-African colonists of the Tarka and Agter-Sneeuwberg, to whom all of them were under contract; and were supplied with provisions at the expense of the district. I appointed one of the oldest and shrewdest of them serjeant over the rest, and made him responsible to me for their good conduct. Nor had I ever cause to complain, except in a very few instances, of neglect of duty or misconduct of any sort in these men, although, during the eight months we were thus guarded, we had many changes of them, as they were usually relieved by other Hottentots once in three or four weeks. There was great diversity of character and of civilisation among them. Some were intelligent mulattoes (or, according to the colonial phrase, *Bastaards*), the sons of colonists by native women. Others were of true Bushman blood—*caught* young, and *tamed* by the Boors. All of them, however, were respectful, faithful, and strictly honest. Although our stores, clothing, and other property of various kinds, were constantly within their reach, we never missed the smallest article.—I shall

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

speak of the Colonial Hottentots, as a class of men, more particularly in a subsequent chapter.

Having completed our temporary huts, which were constructed, after the fashion of the country, simply of a slight wooden frame thatched with reeds down to the ground, we moved into them, and made ourselves as snug as circumstances admitted of. None of us had brought any household furniture; so that it was necessary for each family to construct bedsteads, tables, stools, cupboards, &c. for their immediate use; and in proportion to the ingenuity and industry of the respective parties was their comfortable accommodation. As there was no carpenter amongst us, or any artisan whatever, except a saddler, it may easily be imagined, that our temporary dwellings and furniture were for the most part of a very rude and primitive description. There was no chimney, of course, in any of the huts; but, for culinary purposes, a small circular shed, plastered inside with clay, was erected in front of each; and, in cold evenings, a pan of live charcoal or embers from our wooden fires was the usual succedaneum for a blazing hearth. On the whole, however, these cabins afforded a sufficient shelter from the weather, and, rude as they were, appeared exceedingly comfortable, compared with the tents in which we had tabernacled during the three preceding months.

The object next in urgency, was to provide ourselves with a sufficient number of horses and draught-cattle for our immediate wants, and with breeding cattle and sheep to commence farm-stock. For this purpose each family sent one of their number over to the Tarka, a district rich in flocks and herds, to make purchases; and, with the assistance of one of our Hottentots for an interpreter, this necessary business was satisfactorily transacted. Good draught-oxen cost us on an average about 2*l.* each; cows 1*l.*; sheep (broad-tailed) about 3*s.*; and ordinary country horses from 3*l.* to 7*l.* Ten or a dozen stout watch dogs were also obtained.

The cultivation of gardens, and the clearing of land for

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tillage, became objects of engrossing attention, as the spring approached. Trenches were cut with much labour, to lead out the water of two streamlets for irrigating the fertile ground adjacent to our hamlet, which was mostly overgrown with mimosa trees. These trees were not large, but it was requisite to dig them entirely out by the roots, in order to clear the soil for the plough. Some of the families considered this labour unnecessary, or too severe, and sought elsewhere for patches of moist ground clear of trees and bushes; but the result in these cases was not so favourable. Some young fruit trees, sent by our friend Mr. Hart of Somerset as a present to my father, were planted at Clifton on the 15th of August; being the first commencement of an orchard on the location. We afterwards obtained an ample supply of slips, grafts, cuttings, &c. from some of our neighbours on the Tarka; and planted an orchard of apple, pear, peach, apricot, almond, walnut, plum and lemon trees, with an avenue of four hundred fig trees, and a small vineyard; the whole encircled by hedges of quince and pomegranate. The most of these plants throve extremely well; and the peaches, figs, and vines were loaded with fruit the third season afterwards. Garden seeds and roots were also sown and planted; but most of the seeds brought from England failed. We procured colonial seeds, however, from our neighbours, and succeeded in raising abundance of pumpkins, melons, beet-root, parsnips, carrots, lettuce, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, &c. Our English potatoes also throve well. Previous to our arrival, this valuable root was but little used in that part of the colony.

My father and brothers, with their Roxburghshire ploughman, ploughed and sowed with wheat the first cultured land on the location on the 1st of September. It was tilled with a Scotch iron plough, without wheels, guided by one man and drawn by two oxen,—to the great admiration of our Hottentot guard, who had never before seen any other plough than the enormous and unwieldy Dutch-Colonial implement of tillage, which has only one handle and no

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

coulter, and is usually drawn by eight, ten, or twelve oxen, and managed by three or four men and boys. The other families were all occupied in a similar way early in September, which is considered the first month of spring in South Africa.

During the two preceding months, we had suffered from cold more than wet, and that owing to the want of adequate shelter, far more than severity of climate. There was snow, indeed, on the summits of the mountains during most of that period, but in the valley it seldom lay above a few days; nor did I ever see ice there above a quarter of an inch in thickness.

Gardening had been to me in boyhood a favourite occupation. It was with no ordinary delight, therefore, that, after a dozen years of city life, I resumed this pleasing pursuit in the wilds of Africa. It would weary the reader, were I to indulge myself in detailing all my schemes, failures, and achievements in this department. My greatest desideratum was an adequate supply of skilful labour; but my success and enjoyment were, notwithstanding, beyond expectation.

I found other employments to occupy my leisure time agreeably. I had brought out a little assortment of carpenter's tools, the use of which, when a boy, had also been one of my favourite amusements. I was, therefore, not altogether unprepared to act the Robinson Crusoe in a small way; and, besides commodiously *furnishing* my own cabin, in a mode which I shall afterwards detail, I succeeded in manufacturing a rustic arm-chair and table for my father,—an achievement of which I was not a little proud. But my *chef d'œuvre* at this time was the construction of an oven; which I contrived to scoop out of a huge ant-hill, that happened to stand under an old mimosa tree at the head of my garden. After being properly plastered and paved within, it proved an excellent oven, and served all the hamlet to bake their household bread in for a couple of years.

To my other occupations, I was obliged occasionally to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

add that of *doctor;* for at this period the only medical gentleman within a hundred miles was the military surgeon at Roodewal, whose aid we could not reasonably look for except on very serious occasions. The medical skill that I could pretend to was of the most superficial description; but I had brought out with me a small chest of medicines, and had learnt to bleed on the passage from poor Dr. C——,who died at Algoa Bay; and, in that fine climate, my simple domestic medicines, with the occasional use of the lancet in inflammation, sufficed in all ordinary cases. One of our Hottentot guard, however, who was labouring under a severe pulmonary complaint, was far beyond the reach of my skill. I sent him home therefore to his relatives without delay, and heard that he died a few weeks afterwards.

In a similar limited and provisional capacity, I ventured to assume the office of religious instructor to the poor ignorant natives placed under my temporary direction. Having, with the aid of a grammar and dictionary, made myself, since our arrival at Algoa Bay, so far acquainted with the Dutch language, (now universally spoken by the colonial Hottentots,) that I could converse in it on familiar topics, and read the scriptures with tolerable fluency; I added, for the benefit of our Hottentot guard, a Sunday service in Dutch to our usual one in English. This service was of a very simple character; being confined to the reading and exposition of plain passages of Scripture, and of a short sermon or tract; some devotional portions of the liturgy used by the Dutch Reformed Church; and the singing of one or two hymns. Limited as were our ministrations in this way, they had a very pleasing effect. They were attended to with an earnestness which it was not less affecting than gratifying to witness. To two or three Hottentots (mulattoes) who could read a little, I presented Dutch New Testaments, which were received with the most lively feeling of thankfulness; and which they were afterwards observed to be often reading, or spelling out, to their comrades. Several of them frequently

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

came, at other leisure times, voluntarily to solicit further instruction; and one poor fellow, to whom my wife had given a New Testament, several months afterwards sent her, from his master's place, a hundred miles distant, the present of a milch-goat with twin kids, as a testimony of his gratitude.

I thus found myself all at once, and not a little to my own surprise, performing the novel and somewhat incongruous functions of a sort of civil and military officer, of a medical practitioner, religious instructor, engineer, architect, gardener, plasterer, cabinet-maker, and, I might add, *tinker*. In short I was driven to do the best I could in the peculiar position in which circumstances had placed me; and when (as was frequently the case) my own knowledge and the experience of others failed me, I was obliged to trust to 'mother-wit.'

About this period, we were somewhat teased by Sunday visits from our Dutch-African neighbours of the lower part of the Glen-Lynden valley and the Tarka. Solicitous to keep upon friendly terms with these people, I always made it a point to receive them courteously, and usually asked them to dine with me. But finding that they made a practice of visiting us on Sundays, either to gratify idle curiosity or with a view to commercial dealings, I fell upon a scheme which effectually relieved us from this annoyance. I took care to acquaint them that it was contrary to our principles to transact secular business on the Sunday; and when any of them came, I offered them a seat among my Hottentot audience, and invited them to read aloud the Sunday Service. Few of them, I found, could read even the New Testament without much stammering and spelling; and they considered it, moreover, a shocking degradation to sit down amidst a group of Hottentots. We were therefore speedily relieved altogether from their Sunday visitations. In other respects, we found them generally, however uncultivated, by no means disagreeable neighbours. They were exceedingly shrewd at bargain-making, it is true, and too sharp sometimes even for cautious Scotch-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

men; but they were also generally civil and good natured, and, according to the custom of the country, extremely hospitable. On the whole, their demeanour towards *us*, whom they might be supposed naturally to regard with exceeding jealousy, if not dislike, was far more friendly and obliging than could, under all the circumstances, have been readily anticipated.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER IV.

*The Location not adapted for extensive Cultivation—Application to Government for an enlargement of Territory—Excursion through the adjacent Country—The Tarka—Residence and domestic Economy of a frontier Stock-farmer—Village of Cradock—Deputy Landdrost—Zwagershoek—Ravages of Hyænas—Rural Hospitality—Somerset—Mr. Hart—Extracts from Diary—Crops destroyed by Rust or Mildew.*

AFTER we had resided a few weeks on the location, and made ourselves somewhat acquainted with the character and capabilities of the country, it became apparent to us, that the extent of land, allotted to the party, was altogether inadequate for the comfortable establishment of the number of families of which it was composed. On the footing of the Government scheme of emigration, we were entitled to receive only eleven hundred acres for the whole party, being one hundred acres for each adult-male placed on the land. Mr. Sydserff, indeed, one of the heads of families, had, through the interest of a friend, obtained a special grant of 500 acres in addition to his share of the general grant. But we were speedily convinced, that, in the situation where we were now fixed, even a thousand acres per family was an inadequate allotment. It was obvious that the rearing of flocks and herds must necessarily become the chief object of attention, and that agriculture could only be prosecuted with advantage to a very limited extent. We were distant from Algoa Bay, the only probable market for grain, at least 170 miles, a distance which might be considered to be virtually more than doubled by the character of the roads. We discovered, moreover, that neither grain nor other agricultural produce could be cultivated, at

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

that distance from the coast, by any other method than irrigation; while, at the same time, the supply of water which could be directed upon our lands, would not suffice for more than fifty or sixty acres. Seeing that such was the state of the case, I lost no time in making a strong representation to the Colonial Government on the subject; soliciting a liberal enlargement of the territory granted to the party, in order to afford a sufficient extent of pasturage to establish the several families comfortably as stock-farmers. A favourable reply to this application reached me on the 12th of September, offering the choice either of a considerable extension of our present boundary, or a new location of wider extent in the lower part of the valley. As it seemed expedient to consult our new friends Captain Harding and Mr. Hart, before we made our election on this point, I set out to visit those gentlemen on the 15th, being my first excursion of any extent since our arrival at Glen-Lynden. Mr. Peter Rennie accompanied me as far as Cradock.

There was at this time no wagon road out of the valley, except the difficult and dangerous one which we had cut out or repaired for the passage of the baggage-wagons on our first arrival. Being now mounted, however, on the light and hardy horses of the country, with an active Hottentot lad for a guide, who knew every pass of the mountains, and every bridle path through bosky dell and barren waste, for at least a hundred miles around, we cared little for beaten tracks, and struck across the hills in a direct line for Cradock. On gaining the steep and rocky summit of the ridge which divides the valley of Glen-Lynden from that of the Tarka and its subsidiary dells, I was struck by the change of aspect and of vegetable productions which was suddenly presented to me. Behind us, although the mountains were rocky and sterile-looking, they were sprinkled over, though scantily, with grass; whilst the valley itself, with its acacia groves and verdant meadows, appeared like a little Goshen of beauty and fertility. Before us, to the westward, the Tarka opened up in

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

dim perspective, with wild savage glens winding down to it through ridges of gloomy hills, which, as they approached the main valley, broke off into separate peaks, steep, sterile, and rocky, but assuming, in many instances, curious conical forms, at once singular and monotonous. The lower declivities of these hills were variegated here and there with patches of low brushwood; but there were no trees, excepting the fringe of willows and of thorny mimosas, which generally line the brinks of the rivers and the courses of the mountain torrents. Of any thing like grass there was little or no appearance, excepting in some of the recesses and declivities of the hills. The whole country appeared like a cheerless desert; and even the alluvial soil along the banks of the river had the aspect of a brown heathy waste.

Descending from the ridge of the mountain by a steep and stony path, tracked out by quaggas and other large game, we followed the rugged course of a torrent, until we reached, after a ride of about three hours, the farm of Elands-Drift (i. e. Ford of Elks), in the valley of the Tarka. This was the residence of an old Dutch-African Boor, named Winzel Coetzer, at that time our nearest neighbour; and as his house, farm, and mode of life, afford altogether a fair average sample of those of his class in the immediate vicinity of our settlement, I shall describe them with some minuteness.

On riding up to the place, which consisted of three or four thatched houses, and a few reed cabins (*hartebeest-huisjes*) inhabited by the Hottentot dependents, we were encountered by a host of some twenty or thirty dogs, which had been lying about in the shade of the huts, and now started up around us, open-mouthed, with a prodigious clamour, as is generally the case at every farm-house on the approach of strangers. In day-light, these growling guardians usually confine themselves to a mere noisy demonstration; but at night, it is often a matter of no small peril to approach a farm-house, for many of these animals are both fierce and powerful, and will not hesitate to attack a stranger, if, in

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their eyes, he has the ill luck to appear in any way suspicious. The barking of the dogs brought out Arend Coetzer, one of the farmer's sons, from the principal dwelling-house, a frank young fellow, who had previously visited us at Glen-Lynden. Seeing us thus beset, he came instantly to our help against the canine rabble, whom he discomfited with great vigour, by hurling at them a few of the half-gnawed bones and bullocks' horns which were lying in profusion about the place. The young boor was rejoiced to see me, and introduced me to his mother and sisters,—a quiet looking matron, and two bashful girls, who now appeared from the house. My companion was already known to them. "Wil Mynheer afzadel?" ("Will the gentleman unsaddle?") was the first inquiry. I readily agreed, intending, indeed, though it was still early in the afternoon, to spend the night at this place, with the view of becoming better acquainted with our rustic neighbours.

On entering the house, I found that the old boor had not yet risen from his afternoon nap, or siesta, a habit which is generally prevalent throughout the colony. He was not long, however, in making his appearance; and, after shaking hands with a sort of gruff heartiness, he took down a bottle of brandy from a shelf, and urged me to drink a dram (*zoopje*) with him, assuring me that it was good *brandewyn*, distilled by himself from his own peaches. I tasted the spirit, which was colourless, with something of the flavour of bad whiskey; but preferred regaling myself with a cup of tea, which had in the meanwhile been prepared and poured out for me by the respectable and active-looking-dame. This 'tea-water' is made by a decoction, rather than an infusion, of the Chinese leaf, and being diluted with a certain proportion of boiling water, without any admixture of milk or sugar, is offered to every visiter who may chance to arrive during the heat of the day. A small tin box containing sugar-candy is sometimes handed round with the 'tea-water,' from which each person takes a little bit to keep in his mouth, and thus to sweeten, in frugal fashion, the beverage as he swallows it.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

During this refreshment, I carried on a tolerably fluent conversation in broken Dutch with my host and his *huis-vrouw*; and gratified them not a little by communicating the most recent information I possessed of the state of European politics, respecting which old Coetzer was very inquisitive.

The domicile of my hospitable neighbours, in which we were thus seated, was not calculated to suggest any ideas of peculiar comfort to an Englishman. It was a house somewhat of the size and appearance of an old-fashioned Scotch barn. The walls were thick, and substantially built of strong adhesive clay; a material, which being well prepared or *tempered*, in the manner of mortar for brick-making, and raised in successive layers, soon acquires, in this dry climate, a great degree of hardness, and is considered scarcely inferior in durability to burnt brick. These walls, which were about nine feet high, and tolerably smooth and straight, had been plastered over within and without with a composition of sand and cow-dung, and this being afterwards well white-washed with a sort of pipe-clay, or with lime made of burnt shells, the whole had a very clean and light appearance.

The roof was neatly thatched with a species of hard rushes, which are considered much more durable and less apt to catch fire than straw. There was no ceiling under the roof; but the rafters over-head were hung with a motley assemblage of several sorts of implements and provisions, such as hunting apparatus, dried flesh of various kinds of game, large whips of rhinoceros and hippopotamus hide (termed *sjamboks*), leopard and lion-skins, ostrich eggs and feathers, dried fruit, strings of onions, rolls of tobacco, bamboos for whip-handles, calabashes, and a variety of other articles. A large pile of fine home-made soap graced the top of a partition wall.

The house was divided into three apartments; the one in which we were seated (called the *voorhuis*) opened immediately from the open air, and is the apartment in which the family always sit, eat, and receive visiters. A private

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

room (*slaap-kamer*) was formed at either end of this hall, by cross partitions of the same height and construction as the outer walls. The floor, which, though only of clay, appeared uncommonly smooth and hard, I found, on inquiry, had been formed of ant-heaps, which, being pounded into dust, and then watered and well stamped, assume a consistency of great tenacity. In making these floors, however, care must be taken to use only such ant-hills as have been broken up and plundered by the *aard-vark*, or ant-eater, and consequently deserted by the surviving insects; otherwise, in spite of all your pounding, you may find you have planted two or three troublesome colonies beneath your feet. This floor is carefully washed over every morning with water mixed with fresh cow-dung, in order to keep it cool and free from vermin—especially fleas, which are apt to become an intolerable pest in such mansions.

The house was lighted by four square windows in front,—one in each of the bed-rooms, and two in the *voorhuis*,—and also by the door, which appeared to be shut only during the night. The door consisted of reeds, rudely fastened on a wicker frame, and was fixed to the door-posts by thongs of bullocks' hide. The windows were without glass, and were closed at night, each with an untanned quagga skin. There was neither stove nor chimney in any part of the dwelling-house; but the operations of cooking were performed in a small circular hut of clay and reeds, which stood in front of it. The furniture of the sitting-room consisted of a couple of wooden-tables, and a few chairs, stools, and wagon-chests; an immense churn, into which all the milk saved from the sucking calves was daily poured, and churned every morning; a large iron-pot for boiling soap; two or three wooden pitchers, hooped with brass, and very brightly scoured; a cupboard, exhibiting the family service of wooden bowls and trenchers, pewter tureens, brandy flasks, with a goodly array in phials of Dutch quack medicines. A tea vase, and brass tea-kettle heated by a chafing-dish,—which, with a set of Dutch tea-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

cups and a large brass-clasped Dutch Bible, occupied a small table at which the mistress of the house presided,—completed the inventory. The bed-rooms, in which I more than once slept on future occasions, were furnished each with one or more large bedsteads, or stretchers, without posts or curtains, but provided with good feather-beds, spread on elastic frames, woven with thongs of bullock's hide, like a cane-bottomed chair.

In a corner of the hall, part of the carcase of a sheep was suspended from a beam; and I was informed that two sheep, and sometimes more, were daily slaughtered for family consumption; the Hottentot herdsmen and their families, as well as the farmer's own household, being chiefly fed upon mutton, at least during summer, when beef could not be properly cured. The carcases were hung up in this place, it appeared, chiefly to prevent waste by being constantly under the eye of the mistress, who, in this country, instead of the ancient Saxon title of 'giver of bread,' (*hlæfdiga lavedy*, whence our term *lady*), might be appropriately called the 'giver of flesh.' Flesh, and not bread, is here the staff of life; and the frontier colonists think it no more odd to have a sheep hanging in the *voorhuis*, than a farmer's wife in England would do to have the large household loaf placed for ready distribution on her hall table. At this very period, in fact, a pound of wheaten bread in this quarter of the colony was three or four times the value of a pound of animal food.

In regard to dress, there was nothing very peculiar to remark. That of the females, though in some respects more slovenly, resembled a good deal the costume of the rustic classes in England thirty or forty years ago. The men wore long loose trowsers of sheep or goat-skin, tanned by their servants, and made in the family. A check shirt, a jacket of coarse frieze or cotton, according to the weather, and a broad-brimmed white hat, completed the costume. Shoes and stockings appeared not to be considered essential articles of dress for either sex, and were, I found, seldom worn except when they went to church, or to merry-makings



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

(*vrolykheids.*) A sort of sandals, however, are in common use, called *veld-schoenen* (country shoes), the fashion of which was, I believe, originally borrowed from the Hottentots. They are made of raw bullock's hide, with an upper-leather of dressed sheep or goat-skin, much after the same mode as the brogues of the ancient Scottish Highlanders.

Having previously heard that the industrious dame, the Juffrouw Coetzer, sometimes manufactured leather dresses for sale, I bespoke a travelling jacket and trowsers of dressed springbok skin, the latter to be faced with leopard-fur, the price of which altogether was thirteen rix-dollars, or about one pound sterling. I purchased also the skin of a very beautiful leopard, which one of the young Coetzers had lately shot, for half a pound of gunpowder.

Old Coetzer and his family, like the remote Dutch colonists generally, were extremely inquisitive, asking a great variety of questions, some of them on very trifling matters. Englishmen are apt to feel annoyed by this practice, but without any sufficient reason; for though it betokens a lack of refinement, it is not at all allied to rudeness or impertinence; it is simply the result of untutored curiosity in the manners of people living in a wild and thinly-inhabited country, to whom the sight of a stranger is a rare event, and by whom *uews* of any description is welcomed with avidity. Instead, therefore, of haughtily or sullenly repelling their advances to mutual confidence, I readily answered all the questions, including those that respected my own age, the number, names, and ages of my family and relatives, the direction and extent of my present journey, and the like. In return, I plied them with similar and still more various interrogatories, to all of which they not only replied with the utmost openness, but seemed highly pleased with my frankness. In this manner I soon learned that my host had eight or ten brothers, all stout frontier graziers like himself, and all with numerous families. His own family consisted, (if I rightly recollect,) of six sons and as many daughters, several of whom were married and settled in the neighbourhood. Two of his sons, with their wives and families, were at present living at this

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

place in cottages adjoining to his house. The old dame informed me that she was herself by birth a Jourdan, and was descended from one of the French Huguenot families, who settled in the colony after the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. Her father, she said, could speak French; but she herself knew no language but Dutch. Her manner and address, however, retained something of French urbanity and politeness, which contrasted agreeably with the Batavian bluntness of her husband.

Having exhausted the usual topics of country chat, I suggested a walk round the premises, and we sallied forth, accompanied by old Winzel and his son Arend. They led us first to the orchard, which was of considerable extent, and contained a variety of fruit trees, all in a thriving state. The peach trees, which were now in blossom, were most numerous; but there were also abundance of apricot, almond, walnut, apple, pear, and plum trees, and whole avenues of figs and pomegranates. The outward fence consisted of a tall hedge of quinces. There was also a fine lemon grove, and a few young orange trees. The latter require to be sheltered during the winter, until they have attained considerable size, the frost being apt to blight them in this upland valley. All the other fruits are raised with ease; peach-trees often bearing fruit the third year after the seeds are put in the ground. From the want of care, however, or of skill in grafting, few of the fruits in this part of the colony are of superior sorts or of delicate flavour. The peaches especially are but indifferent; but, as they are chiefly grown for making brandy, or to be used in a dried state, excellence of flavour is but little regarded. Some mulberry trees, which had been planted in front of the house, were large and flourishing, and produced, I was informed, abundance of fruit. These were not the wild or white mulberry, raised in Europe for feeding silk worms; but the latter sort also thrive extremely well in most parts of the colony.

The kitchen garden was very deficient in neatness, but contained a variety of useful vegetables. Onions were raised in great abundance, and of a quality fully equal to those of



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Spain. Pumpkins, cucumbers, musk and water-melons, were cultivated in considerable quantities. The sweet potato was also grown here.

Adjoining to the garden and orchard was a small, but well kept vineyard, from which a large produce of very fine grapes is obtained, but these, as well as the peaches, are chiefly distilled into brandy.

The whole of the orchard, vineyard, and garden ground, together with about twenty acres of corn land adjoining, were irrigated by the waters of a small mountain-rill, which were collected and led down in front of the house by an artificial canal. This limited extent was the whole that could be cultivated on a farm comprising about six thousand acres. But this is quite sufficient for the wants of a large family; the real wealth of the farm, so far as respects marketable commodities, consisting in the flocks and herds raised on its extensive pastures. This old Winzel himself hinted—as, shutting up a gap in the garden hedge with a branch of thorny mimosa, he led us out towards the *kraals* or cattle-folds, exclaiming, in a tone of jocund gratulation, while he pointed to a distant cloud of dust moving up the valley—'Maar daar koomt myn vee—de beste tuin!' ('But there come my cattle—the best garden!')

On approaching the cattle kraals, I was struck by the great height of the principal fold, which was elevated fifteen or twenty feet above the level of the adjoining plain; and my surprise was certainly not diminished when I found that the mound on the top of which the pen was constructed, consisted of a mass of hard solid dung, accumulated by the cattle of the farm being folded for a succession of years on the same spot. The sheep-folds, though not quite so elevated, and under the lee, as it were, of the bullock-kraal, were also fixed on the top of similar accumulations. The several folds (for those of the sheep and goats consisted of three divisions) were all fenced in with branches of the thorny mimosa, which formed a sort of rampart around the margin of the mounds of dung, and were carefully placed with their prickly sides outwards, on

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

purpose to render the inclosures more secure from the nocturnal assaults of the hyænas, leopards, and jackals. Against all these ravenous animals the oxen are, indeed, quite able to defend themselves; but the hyænas and leopards are very destructive to calves, foals, sheep, and goats, when they can break in upon them, which they sometimes do in spite of the numerous watch-dogs kept for their protection; and the cunning jackal is not less destructive to the young lambs and kids.

While we were conversing on these topics, the clouds of dust which I had observed approaching from three different quarters, came nearer, and I perceived that they were raised by two numerous flocks of sheep, and one large herd of cattle. First came the wethers, which are reared for the market, and are often driven by the butchers' servants even to Cape Town, seven hundred miles distant. These being placed in their proper fold, the flock of ewes, ewe-goats, and lambs, was next driven in, and carefully penned in another; those having young ones of tender age being kept separate. And, finally, the cattle herd came rushing on pell-mell, and spontaneously assumed their station upon the summit of their guarded mound; the milch-cows only being separated, in order to be tied up to stakes within a small inclosure nearer the houses, where they were milked by the Hottentot herdsmen, after their calves, which were kept at home, had been permitted to suck for a certain period. Not one of those cows, I was told, would allow herself to be milked until her calf had first been put to her; if the calf dies, of course there is an end of her milk for that season. About thirty cows were milked; but the quantity obtained from them was scarcely so much as would be got from eight or ten good English cows.

The farmer and his wife, with all their sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, and grand-children, who were about the place, were assiduously occupied, while the herds and flocks were folding, in examining them as they passed in, and in walking through among them afterwards, to see that all was right. I was assured that, though they do not very

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

frequently count them, they can discover at once if any individual ox is missing, or if any accident has happened among the flocks from beasts of prey or otherwise. This faculty, though the result doubtless of peculiar habits of attention, is certainly very remarkable; for the herd of cattle at this place amounted altogether to nearly 700 head, and the sheep and goats to about 5,000. This is considered a very respectable, but by no means an extraordinary stock for a Tarka grazier.

Every individual of an African farmer's family, including even the child at the breast, has an interest in the welfare of the flocks and herds. It is their custom, as soon as a child is born, to set apart for it a certain number of the young live stock, which increase as the child grows up; and which, having a particular mark regularly affixed to them, form, when the owner arrives at adult age, a stock sufficient to be considered a respectable dowry for a prosperous farmer's daughter, or to enable a young man, though he may not possess a single dollar of cash, to begin the world respectably as a Vee Boer, or grazier.

After the folding of the cattle was over, my host showed us his corn-mill, which was of very small dimensions and simple construction. The water-wheel, which was driven horizontally by the little canal of irrigation on its passage to the orchard, was only about five feet in diameter, and the millstones not more than two. A slender iron axle, of which the lower end was fixed in the horizontal water-wheel, passing through a small hole in the centre of the nether millstone, was mortised into the upper one, which by this means was put in motion. The corn was supplied by an orifice in the upper stone, and the flour conveyed by a little wooden spout into a leathern bag; and this was the whole machinery. I was informed it would grind about a bushel of wheat in eight hours.

On returning to the house, the feet of all the family, commencing with Winzel and his wife, were washed in succession by an old slave woman. Supper was then served up, consisting chiefly of mutton broiled and stewed, with

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

excellent wheaten bread, butter, milk, and some dishes of vegetables and dried fruits. Supper (*avond-stuk*) is the principal meal throughout the interior of the colony; the only other regular meal being breakfast, which consists of nearly the same viands, and is taken about eight in the morning. Grace was said before and after meat by one of the young girls, daughters of our host.

My companion and I slept on feather-beds, spread on mats for us in the *voorhuis*, which is the usual dormitory allotted for strangers in houses of this description, where there are seldom spare beds or bed-rooms. On subsequent occasions, when I happened to spend a night at this house with my wife on our way to Cradock, we had a bed allotted to us in the principal sleeping chamber, old Winzel and his wife occupying another bed in the same apartment. Some others of our neighbours, however, who had superior accommodations, such as Barend Bester on the Tarka, and William Prinslo (Groot Willem) of our own valley, always had a separate chamber for us, however numerous might be their guests.

Next day, after an easy canter of about four hours through a more level country, generally covered with brown herbage resembling heath, and enlivened with a few ostriches and springboks, we reached the village of Cradock. This place, which was then the capital of an extensive sub-district of the same name (now included in the new district of Somerset), consisted of about thirty houses, with gardens and orchards watered by a canal of irrigation from the Great Fish River. It was graced by a decent-looking church; and boasted two small retail shops, where a variety of articles, and among others, tea, coffee, and sugar, could *sometimes* be purchased. The clergyman, and two or three other families of the village, were English. But we proceeded, without stopping, to Captain Harding's residence at Drie-Fonteinen (Three-Fountains), about half an hour's ride beyond the village.

Here I met once more with the refined hospitality and domestic comforts of an English home; and spent the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

greater part of two days very agreeably with our intelligent magistrate and his family. Having obtained his opinion in regard to various points connected with my party and location, and received some valuable information relative to the frontier districts and the native tribes, I left Drie-Fonteinen on the 18th; and, with the aid of my Hottentot guide, Dikkop Oray, having crossed the hills to the southward by the pass of the Bangberg (Fearful Mount), I descended into the valley where the Little Fish River has its sources, known by the name of Zwagershoek (i. e. Brother-in-law's Corner). Here, after galloping for some hours through tracts entirely destitute of wood, and thickly dotted over with ant-hillocks from three to four feet high, we reached, in a sheltered glen among steep hills, the house of Paul du Plessies, the field-cornet of the district, where I halted for the night. This man, I found, was an extensive breeder of horses, for which his lands were particularly well adapted, being exempt from the ravages of a disease which, in certain seasons, is very fatal to horses in many parts of the colony. He complained, however, and not without reason, that the swarms of hyænas, with which the neighbouring mountains abound, were almost as bad as the horse-pestilence; for he had had not fewer than seventy foals destroyed by these ravenous animals in the course of a single year.

Next day I continued my journey down the Little Fish River. I passed many substantial farm-houses, with orchards, vineyards, and corn-fields, skirted by small plantations of European trees, chiefly oaks and poplars. I stopped to breakfast at one of them (Barend Gryling's), according to the custom of the country. There being no inns, travellers on horseback usually contrive, if possible, to arrive before meal-time at a farm-house; and, although entire strangers, are expected, as a matter of course, to take a seat at the table. Such is the universal custom, except along the great roads. To be deficient in this sort of hospitality in the remoter districts, would be held infamous; and few but the very poorest boors, I found, would accept pecuniary remuneration for my own entertainment, though it was customary to make

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

a regular charge for corn to my horses. A small present to the children appeared the most delicate mode of discharging such obligations,—which, after all, are not very onerous in a country where a whole sheep is only worth half a crown. The domestic accomodations of the farmers in this quarter were in general much superior to those of Winzel Coetzer and other boors nearer the frontier line; the country having been longer settled, and property considered more secure.

On the 19th I reached the residence of Mr. Hart at Somerset; then a great government farm, now a village and seat of the resident magistracy of the new district of that name. It lies at the southern base of the Boschberg range, with the Little Fish River in front. The mountain towers up immediately behind the village, to the height, apparently, of about 2000 feet, exhibiting a magnificent front, clothed with hanging woods of forest timber, and diversified with hoary rocks, and steep buttresses of green turf. After heavy rains, when a number of little cascades appear flashing over the wooded cliffs, the front of this mountain is superbly beautiful. About 600 acres of land, I found, were now under cultivation on Somerset Farm, of which the greater portion had consisted of a swamp (*valei,*) reclaimed and subjected to the plough by the talent and perseverance of Mr. Hart.

After spending a week with my friendly countryman and his family, I returned home on the 27th; having, in this excursion, made a circuit of about a hundred and seventy miles, through one of the best peopled and wealthiest tracts of our pastoral district. The distance from Somerset to Clifton is about ten hours' ride, or sixty English miles.

Mr. Hart, agreeably to a promise he had made me, speedily paid us a visit at Glen-Lynden, and aided us very beneficially with his experienced counsel, in our deliberations on several points of importance. The friendship of this able and active man proved indeed, both on this and on subsequent occasions, of great advantage to our party.

Having decided upon accepting the alternative of having our present location enlarged by the extension of its bound-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ary about three miles farther down the valley, as proposed by government, our operations of ploughing, planting, sowing, &c. proceeded without interruption upon the same footing as hitherto. No event of extraordinary importance occurred for many months; but a few further extracts from my diary may serve to give the reader some notion of the sort of incidents which diversified the daily routine of our little settlement.

Oct. 1st. Arrival of the Somerset wagon with flour, seed-corn, &c. At Mr. Sydserff's request, I discharged his servant Sandy from the party, gave him a pass, counter-signed by the deputy-landdrost, and sent him off with the Somerset wagon towards Graham's Town. This lad has turned out to be at once a fool and a blackguard, and utterly irreclaimable.

4th. A sharp frost last night blighted all our early potatoes, pumpkins, melons, kidney beans, &c. It appears we had sown some of our seeds too early.

8th. (Sunday.) A troop of about twenty quaggas galloped through the corner of our gardens during divine service.

9th. A herd of hartebeests passed close to our huts, pursued by a pack of six wild-dogs (*hyæna venatica*). Fired at the latter, but without effect.

This day, Mr. John Rennie being out hunting, on Hyndhope Fells, fell in with two wild Bushmen, dressed in sheep skins. They ran off on his approach, but made no demonstration of hostility. He came upon six hyænas, devouring a hartebeest, and brought me its skull and horns.

11th. Visited by three boors from the Tarka, Jourdan, Erasmus, and De Beer, desirous of exchanging horses and cattle for guns and ammunition. Completed my map of the location.

16th. Surprised by a slight fall of snow. Weather chill and cloudy. The laughing-hyæna heard near the folds last night. The sound truly horrible.

21st. Fine weather. Killed a large yellow snake.

23rd. Received a visit from our district clergyman, the Rev.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

J. Evans, of Cradock. He brought a packet from the landdrost, conveying letters from the colonial secretary, assuring me of the continued support of government, and giving us the agreeable intelligence that a party of emigrants from the West of Scotland are speedily expected out, who will be located close beside us. Received also very pleasant letters from Scotland, from Dr. Philip, and from our parted comrade Mr. Elliott. Religious service in the evening by Mr. Evans. All much pleased and comforted.

24th. Mr. G. Rennie, who at my request had gone with a party of Hottentots to explore the country beyond the mountains, towards the Koonap River, returned with a very favourable report of it. Abundance of wood, water, and rich pasturage. He saw a great deal of large game, and the recent traces of elephants. Shot a gnu and hartebeest.

Nov. 1st. The weather warm and serene, like the finest summer weather in England. Two snakes, and a large scorpion killed. Turtle doves, cockatoos, thrushes, finches, and other birds of beautiful plumage become numerous.

6th. Violent storm of thunder. The peals fearfully loud. Magnificent clouds at sunset.

15th. A tiger-wolf (*hyæna crocuta*) broke into the kraal last night, and killed several sheep.

22nd. A wolf-trap constructed, with the aid of the Hottentots, of large stones and timber.

29th. A wolf (*hyæna*) caught in the trap.

30th. Another wolf caught, but breaks out and escapes.

Dec. 4th. A very heavy rain for three days, swells the river to an unfordable size. All the dry beds of torrents filled with furious floods.

7th. Weather again warm and serene. Mr. G. Rennie kills another wild-boar at Glen-Yair.

11th. Another wolf (*hyæna*) caught in the trap.

19th. My brother John finds stone fit for mill-stones, and, with the aid of one of the Hottentots, begins to construct a small mill on the model of Winzel Coetzer's.

26th. Visit from the chief magistrate of our district, Cap-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tain Stockenstrom, accompanied by Mr. Hemming. Very agreeable conference.

29th. My father narrowly escapes being gored by a furious ox. Blight appears in the wheat.

30th. Receive a large packet of letters and newspapers from Scotland. All deeply interested. This is the first packet of British newspapers that has reached us.

---

Nothing more remarkable than occurrences such as the above took place at our settlement for several months; with the exception of the destruction of our ripening corn by a sort of mildew or blight, which first appeared in the colony in the preceding season, and which continued for several successive years to destroy almost totally the wheat crops of the British settlers. This was a great discouragement to us; but as the government, in consequence of this calamity, continued to supply all the settlers with rations of flour for six months longer, our party did not suffer from it any material privation.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER V.

*Insurrection of Frontier Boors in* 1815—*Case of the Hottentot, Booy*—*Oppression of the Native Race*—*Conduct and Fate of Frederick Bezuidenhout*—*Views of the Insurgents*—*Failure of their Schemes*—*Their Surrender*—*Pursuit of the Fugitives*—*Desperate Resistance of the Bezuidenhouts*—*Trial and Punishment of the Prisoners.*

I HAVE previously alluded to an insurrection of Dutch-African Boors which broke out in 1815, and of which the sub-district (*Feldi-Cornecty*) of Bavian's River was the focus. As our location consisted of lands which had been forfeited by some of these insurgents, and as the facts of the case will illustrate in a striking manner the character of the frontier colonists, and the civil condition both of this class and of their coloured dependents, only a few years before our arrival, I shall here briefly relate the history of the affair. I collected the authentic details partly from the printed report, in Dutch, of a Special Commission appointed to try the criminals*, and partly from the accounts I received from the magistrates of the district, and from several of the boors themselves who had been implicated in the conspiracy.

Some time in 1814, a Hottentot, named Booy, appeared at the magistrate's office at Cradock, and complained of the oppressive conduct of Frederick Bezuidenhout, a Dutch-African colonist, who resided at the place now called Cameron's Cleugh, on Bavian's River. Booy, it appeared, had been for several years in the service of this Boor; but when the term of his contract had expired, Bezuidenhout peremptorily refused to permit him either to depart, or

* Sententie in de zaak van den Landdrost van Uitenhage, &c. in Cas Crimineel, contra Hendrik Fredrick Prinslo [and 33 other persons]—Kaap de Goede Hoop, 1816.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to remove what little property he had on the place. Captain Stockenstrom, who at that time filled the office of deputy-landdrost of the sub-district of Cradock, gave the complainant a letter to Opperman, the field-cornet of Bavian's River, directing that officer to inquire into the case; and in the event of the Hottentot's statement proving correct, to take care that his property was delivered to him, and that he was allowed to remove unmolested. The field-cornet having gone to Bezuidenhout's place with Booy, found the Hottentot's statement to be perfectly correct. The Boor at once admitted the facts; but instead of yielding obedience to the magistrate's order, he boldly declared that he considered this interference between him (a free burgher) and *his* Hottentot, to be a presumptuous innovation upon his *rights*, and an intolerable usurpation of tyrannical authority. He told the field-cornet that he set at defiance both himself and the magistrate who had sent him on this officious errand; and, to give farther emphasis to his words, he fell violently upon poor Booy, gave him a severe beating, and then bade him go and tell the civil authorities that he would treat them in the same manner if they should dare to come upon his grounds to claim the property of a Hottentot.

In elucidation of Bezuindenhout's conduct on this occasion, it is to be remarked that, up to a comparatively recent period, the Hottentot population within the limits of the colony had been universally subjected to a state of the most degrading thraldom, under the African boors. The laws of Holland had, indeed, from the earliest occupation of the country, prohibited the aborigines from being legally sold; and in public documents they were occasionally spoken of as a 'free people.' But colonial laws, usages, and prejudices, had long combined to reduce this unfortunate race to a state of actual bondage, in several respects even more wretched than negro slavery itself. They were, in fact, left entirely in the power of the white colonists; and in the remoter districts, their own limbs and lives, as well as the disposal of their children, were practically altogether at their

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

masters' mercy. In 1809, the Earl of Caledon, who at that time administered the Government of the Cape, had made a benevolent attempt to rescue this class of men from their abject and unprotected condition, by issuing a proclamation, which, by one of its provisions, deprived the colonists of the power, so long exercised as a legal and unquestionable *right*, of retaining the children of the Hottentots in bondage, under the name of apprenticeship, until their twenty-fifth year, and the adults, under other pretexts, often for life. This proclamation contained several other clauses, framed unquestionably with an anxious desire to improve the condition and protect the persons and property of this people. Considering the state of public feeling, and the progress of just views on such subjects, perhaps Lord Caledon's proclamation was, *at that period*, an effort in the cause of justice and humanity, nearly as great as the noble ordinance issued by General Bourke nineteen years afterwards. But, unhappily for the Hottentots and for the colony, many of the best provisions of Lord Caledon's enactment were neutralised by coercive clauses, admitted at the suggestion of certain provincial functionaries, to conciliate the feelings and serve the selfish views of the privileged classes, and which had a practical operation which his lordship most undoubtedly never intended to sanction. What was still more deplorable, Sir John Cradock, who succeeded Lord Caledon in the government, permitted himself to be so far influenced by the representations of the colonists that he rescinded, by another proclamation in 1812, the most important clause of Lord Caledon's enactment—that, namely, which secured to the oppressed natives a right to their own children; and thus re-established the iniquitous claim of the colonists to force them into apprenticed servitude, and sealed for sixteen years longer the degradation of the race.*

In this state of things, and with provincial functionaries

* See Dr. Philip's able Commentary on these two Proclamations. —*Researches in South Africa.* Vol. I. pp. 142, 175.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

in general deeply imbued with the feelings of the other colonists, the protection of the native race from oppression was out of the question. When the local magistrate happened to be, as in the present case, a man of enlightened views and determined character, a vigorous attempt might occasionally be made to interfere in defence of the natives, so far as the colonial law extended its feeble and faltering arm. But the indignant resentment with which such interference was repelled, clearly evinces how seldom it had hitherto been efficiently exerted. In regard to Bezuidenhout it is, moreover, to be recollected that, ever since the earlier days of colonial anarchy, which Mr. Barrow has so forcibly depicted, when the Boors used to murder and mutilate the Hottentots at discretion, he and his comrades had resided on this wild and secluded part of the frontier, where colonial legislation in regard to the aborigines had reached them only by hearsay, and where such terms as the 'rights of the natives' were still treated with unqualified contempt. The angry defiance, therefore, with which this rude back-settler met the magistrate's intervention in behalf of Booy, and the warmth with which his resentful feelings, *as an insulted free burgher*, were sympathised with by a large portion of the neighbouring colonists, exhibits, in a light equally striking and instructive, the frightful perversion of moral sentiment in the dominant class by the uncontrolled exercise of arbitrary power, and the deplorable condition of the natives who lay prostrate under their feet.

Upon receiving the field-cornet's report of Bezuidenhout's outrageous conduct, the magistrate instituted legal proceedings against him before the local court. But the Boor treated the regular summonses that were delivered to him with the same audacious contempt with which he had repelled the monitory intervention of the field-cornet; even threatening with personal violence the judicial messengers. The case was thus brought regularly before the Judges of Circuit, at Graaff-Reinét, in 1815; when the defendant maintaining the same contumacy, and refusing to appear, he was sentenced to imprisonment for contempt of court.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

It now became necessary to act with vigour, or else to expose the laws and courts of justice to the utter contempt of the colonists. The under-sheriff was therefore despatched by Captain Stockenstrom, who had recently been appointed chief magistrate (landdrost) of the district, to take Bezuidenhout into custody; and as this audacious burgher had sworn never to surrender himself, the officer of justice was accompanied by a military escort to protect him in the execution of his duty. As soon as Bezuidenhout saw this party approaching his house, he, with a coolness and determination worthy of a better cause, betook himself to a cave in a huge rock overhanging the river, into which he had previously conveyed a large quantity of powder and ball, together with a supply of provisions, to stand a siege; and, compelling two young men, who lived with him, to accompany him with their arms, he commenced a brisk fire upon the under-sheriff and the military. The place was then surrounded; and, as the desperate boor would listen to no parley, but continued to shoot resolutely at every man who came within reach of his long-barrelled elephant gun (*roer*), a fire of musketry was opened against the garrison of the cavern; the besiegers ensconcing themselves as well as they could behind the large stones and ledges of rock that lay around. At length, in Bezuidenhout's eagerness to get a good aim at one of the assailants, his person became so much exposed that a ball, fired by one of the Hottentot soldiers from the opposite side of the river, took effect, and killed him on the spot. Upon this, his two companions (one of whom was a *Bastaard* or Mulatto) surrendered themselves. They were carried to Graaff-Reinét, and committed to gaol, but discharged after a short imprisonment.

This affair excited a very great sensation in the country. A numerous assemblage of the Dutch-African colonists of Bavian's River, Tarka, and the adjoining sub-districts, was held at the funeral of the deceased burgher. Great excesses of inebriety took place; inflammatory speeches were delivered; and several of the most violent of these Colonial



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

'Patriots,' as they termed themselves, took a solemn oath over the corpse of Bezuidenhout to revenge his death. They swore to hang Landdrost Stockenstrom, and the Field-Cornet Opperman whom he had first sent to interfere on behalf of the Hottentot, Booy; and to drive the English troops and English laws over Bruintjes-hoogté. Nor did these feelings of animosity and these insane boastings evaporate with the fumes of the brandy with which, in appropriate libations, they had celebrated the obsequies of their hero. Soon afterwards, a meeting of the disaffected took place on the Tarka, under the direction of a man named Hendrik Prinslo, at which their *grievances* under the laws enacted for the protection of the native race, and the practicability of throwing off the yoke, were more fully discussed. A conspiracy was then entered into to bring about a general insurrection, and to call in the aid of the Caffers to assist them in expelling the English from the eastern parts of the colony. The recollection which many of these men retained of the state of anarchy in which this part of the country had been kept for several years at the commencement of the present century, encouraged them in the hope that they should be enabled, by means of the existing excitement, to restore at least a similar state of affairs, if not to achieve their entire independence of the English government.

These points having been agreed upon, a letter was drawn up at this meeting, and addressed to one Krugel, residing at Rhinosterberg in the northern part of the colony, on whom great reliance was placed by them, calling upon him to excite the inhabitants of that frontier to take up arms. This letter was drawn up by one Bothma, who had formerly been banished the colony for forgery. It was then signed by Prinslo, and confided to the charge of two brothers of the name of Muller, who had been admitted to the meeting. The Mullers, however, instead of conveying the letter to Krugel, proceeded with it to the Field-Commandant Van Wyk, a man of decided loyalty, who, upon ascertaining the nature of its contents, hastened to Cradock, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

placed it in the hand sof the deputy-landdrost, Mr. Van de Graaff. An express was despatched by this magistrate to the nearest military officer, Captain Andrews, at Van-Aard's Post, on the Great Fish River, who immediately sent a party of dragoons to seize Hendrik Prinslo. They succeeded in surprising and arresting him in his father's house, near the site of the present village of Somerset, before he or any of his party had the least suspicion that their proceedings had become known to the authorities.

The conspirators, though greatly disconcerted by the arrest of their principal leader, did not, however, abandon their enterprise. A deputation was sent to the Caffer chief Gaika, with instructions to propose an alliance between him and the insurgents, for the purpose of expelling the English from the eastern districts. As a bait to tempt the cupidity of the African magnate, they offered, in the event of success, to leave in his possession the Zureveld (Albany), and other tracts of territory west of the Great Fish River, from which the Caffers had been recently expelled by the British troops; whilst they (the Boors) would occupy the country on the Kat and Koonap streams, to the eastward. Gaika, however, showed himself too good a politician to be thus cajoled by his old antagonists. He told the deputies that he could not believe the colonists were serious in their proposal; that he suspected their design was merely to decoy the Caffers into the open plains, with the view of more effectually destroying them; but that, if they really meant what they said, he considered them to be very foolish men, as there was no probability of their succeeding in such an attempt; and that, finally, for his own part, he had no inclination to place himself, like a silly deer, between a lion on the one side and a wolf on the other (the English and the Dutch). He absolutely refused, therefore, to take any part in the quarrel.

This was not the only quarter in which the anticipations of the insurgents were doomed to be disappointed. Their design to raise the northern frontier through the means of



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Krugel, had miscarried. In their own vicinity they were scarcely more successful. The Field-Commandant Van Wyk, a man of talent and intrepidity, and of great influence in the district, called out the burghers of his division (the Tarka) on military duty, in order to have them under his own eye. While thus assembled, Landdrost Stockenstrom, who, on the first intelligence of the intended revolt, had posted to the disturbed district, appeared in the midst of them, and harangued them with so much effect on the madness as well as the criminality of those who were treasonably attempting to organise an armed resistance to the government, that the evil-disposed (if any were present) were daunted, and the wavering confirmed in their loyalty.

Such was the effect of these combined causes, the premature discovery of their designs, the arrest of their principal leader, the refusal of Gaika to co-operate, and the energy of the local authorities, that the insurgents, when they drew together, could not muster more than sixty burghers; and of these the greater proportion were inexperienced hot-headed young men, too ignorant to be able to form any adequate conception of the power of the government which they had thus dared to defy, but which they were totally incompetent to resist.

This band rode down to Van-Aard's, the nearest military post, and demanded the release of their captured leader, Prinslo; but as Captain Andrews did not think fit to comply, they retired without venturing upon an assault, and took possession of a pass which commands the valley of the Great Fish River, at the eastern termination of the Boschberg range, immediately below the influx of the Bavian's River. Here they were met, a few days afterwards, by a detachment of British troops, hastily collected by Colonel Cuyler from the frontier garrisons, accompanied by a body of their own countrymen, the burgher militia, under their local officers. As Colonel Cuyler's force advanced up the hill called Slaghters-nek, on the brow of which the insurgents were posted, the latter were

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

seen shaking hands together, as a mutual pledge to fight to the last; and there were doubtless men among them, and especially some of the near relatives of the deceased Bezuidenhout, of a character sufficiently resolute and desperate to dare any extremity. But while they were levelling their long guns to take deadly aim at the leaders of the advancing troops, and voices were heard loudly calling out in Dutch to the loyalist burghers to separate themselves from the military, in order to prevent bloodshed between brethren, Captain (afterwards Colonel) Fraser, ordering his men to halt, advanced alone to hold a parley with the rebels. A gun was levelled, and a finger was on the trigger, to seal the fate of this brave and generous officer; but the weapon was struck down by William Prinslo—my future acquaintance *Groot Willem*. Fraser called to their leaders and others whom he knew personally, and who loved and respected him. They gathered round him. He addressed them with energy on the folly of their attempting to resist the overwhelming force which, from more than one quarter, was advancing towards them; and on the insanity of shutting themselves out from all hope of mercy by the fruitless shedding of blood. They were touched and convinced by his address. They wavered in their resolution; and, after a brief consultation, all agreed to surrender,—with the exception of five of the more desperate delinquents, who, seeing that 'the game was up,' mounted their horses, and fled up the Bavian's River. These men were, Hans Bezuidenhout, brother to the deceased Frederick; Cornelius Faber, his brother-in-law; Theunis de Klerk; and Stephanus and Abraham Bothma; all deeply concerned in organising the insurrection. The rest of the band delivered themselves up to Colonel Cuyler, who disarmed them, and marched them down to Uitenhage, to wait the orders of the Government.

Meanwhile, Captain Fraser was despatched with a party of Hottentot dragoons, to arrest the rebels who had fled. Bezuidenhout and Faber, who resided near the source of

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the Bavian's River*, yoked their wagons, and putting their families and valuables into them, drove out of the valley and across the upland country towards the frontier, accompanied by the two Bothmas, and carrying with them their flocks and herds. Captain Fraser overtook them on the northern side of the Winterberg, upon one of the sources of the Tarka River; and, before they were aware of his approach, had placed his men in such a position as to intercept and surround them. Faber, who was riding in advance of his friends, in search of a convenient path for the wagons, first perceived the troops, and turned to give the alarm; but another detachment appearing behind, the unhappy fugitives saw that escape was impossible. Faber then alighted, and coolly levelled his gun to fire on the party nearest him—but received at that moment a ball through both shoulders, and was taken prisoner. The Bothmas were also seized without offering any serious resistance. But Hans Bezuidenhout, with a desperate courage, similar to that of his brother Frederick, deliberately placed himself by the side of his wagons, and opposed, single-handed, the whole force that surrounded him. He was repeatedly and urgently invited to surrender, but obstinately rejected all parley; and a soldier who approached him with a message was laid dead on the spot. His wife, a sister of Faber's, was an Amazon worthy of such a mate. Assisted by her son (a lad of fourteen years of age) she loaded seven muskets as fast as her husband could fire them off against the enemy, exclaiming, "Let us never be taken alive! let us die here together!" After the soldier fell, a volley was poured in upon them, which severely wounded both Bezuidenhout and his wife; but they still continued

* They occupied lands afterwards included in the Scotch Location. Bezuidenhout resided at the spot now called Craig-Rennie; and Faber had his kraal alternately at Clifton and Eildon. (See Map.) They lived in rude reed huts, and, excepting a small vineyard planted by Bezuidenhout, had scarcely made any attempt to cultivate the soil.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to fight with undiminished obstinacy, until at last a mortal shot finished the career of the former, and the wife, faint from fatigue and the loss of blood, was incapable of farther resistance. The conduct of this woman astonished every one present. Though desperately wounded, such were her fury and firmness that she pertinaciously rejected all assistance from the military surgeon, who had come to dress Captain Fraser's arm, which had been accidentally fractured just before the skirmish. Her son, a bold spirited lad, who had most courageously assisted his father in the conflict, was also severely wounded; but both he and the Amazonian mother ultimately recovered.

The sequel of the affair may be told in few words. A Special Commission of the Court of Justice was sent up to Uitenhage to try the prisoners. Thirty-nine were capitally convicted; six were condemned to death; and the rest to minor punishments. Five were executed on the 9th of March, 1816, at Van-Aard's Post, where they had first appeared in open rebellion; namely, Hendrik Prinslo, Stephanus Bothma, Faber, De Klerk, and Abraham Bothma. The sixth prisoner, Krugel, was transported for life. The rest were condemned to witness the execution of their comrades; after which some of them were set at liberty; and the others were punished by fine, forfeiture, imprisonment, or banishment from the frontier districts, according to their less or greater share of criminality in these transactions.

The Dutch-African inhabitants of the Tarka and of the lower part of Bavian's River, by whom our location was on three sides environed, consisted, in a great measure, of the persons who had been engaged in this wicked and foolish rebellion, or their family connections, of the names of Erasmus, Prinslo, Vandernest, Bezuidenhout, Labuscagnè, Engelbrecht, Bothma, Klopper, Malan, De Klerk, Van Dyk, &c. They had, however, received a lesson not likely to be soon forgotten; and we found them very submissive subjects to the Government, and inoffensive neighbours, so far as *we* were concerned. How far their feelings and conduct in regard to the coloured natives still require improvement, will afterwards appear.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER VI.

*Disheartening Occurrences at the beginning of* 1821—*Excursion with Mr. Hart—Flocks of Springboks—Desolate Plains—Zureberg Mountains—Magnificent Scenery—Haunts of the Elephant—Valley of the White River—Moravian Settlement of Enon—Anecdotes of the Caffer Wars—African Forests—Elephant Sagacity—Return across the Mountains—Account of the Slaughter of the elder Stockenstrom on the Zureberg by the Caffers.*

THE year 1821 began rather gloomily at Glen-Lynden. In the first place, the whole of our wheat crops were destroyed by the *rust* or mildew. Then a severe drought, which had commenced in December, lasted more than three months; so that the pastures were parched up; the river ceased to flow, except near its sources; the irrigation of our gardens and orchards was interrupted, and many of the young trees and other plants destroyed. About the same time we received information that the party of 500 Highlanders, who were expected out to occupy the country between us and the new Caffer frontier, had, in consequence of some untoward circumstances, entirely abandoned their intention of emigrating to the Cape; and, to crown our disappointments, the melancholy intelligence soon afterwards reached us, that the other Scottish party, which sailed from the Clyde on the 13th of October, 1820, had perished miserably near the equator, by their vessel (the Abeona transport) being destroyed by fire. Out of 140 of these unfortunate emigrants, only sixteen souls escaped; who, being picked up in their boats by a vessel homeward bound, had returned to Scotland. These concurrent disasters, crowding upon us all at once, greatly disheartened most of our party; and I was urged by some of them to apply to the government to remove us to Albany, since, owing to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the failure of the other Scottish parties, we would otherwise be left quite isolated among the rude Dutch-African Boors, on this remote and exposed part of the frontier. I prevailed upon all the families, however, to give the place a longer trial; and the discontinuance of the drought in the end of March, together with the arrival of a corporal and five men of the Cape Corps (Hottentot soldiers), whom, at my request, the acting governor had kindly sent for the protection of our settlement, in lieu of the district Hottentots, contributed not a little to the restoration of confidence and satisfaction.

Desirous of extending my knowledge of the colony and of the various classes of the population, I availed myself of the feeling of security afforded by the presence of our new military guard, to leave the location at this period, in order to accompany Mr. Hart on a journey which he had occasion to make through a part of the country very seldom traversed even by the colonists.

Leaving Somerset on the 25th of March with a Hottentot attendant, we pursued our journey over extensive plains, still parched by severe drought, and undulating heights, clothed with a brown and scanty herbage, and sprinkled over with numerous herds of springboks—the *antilope euchore* or *pygarga* of naturalists. In the earlier part of this day's route, near the banks of the Little Fish River, so numerous were those herds that they literally *speckled* the face of the country, as far as the eye could reach; insomuch that we calculated we had sometimes within view not less than twenty thousand of these beautiful animals. As we galloped on, they bounded off continually on either side, with the light and sportive velocity from which they derive their colonial appellation. They were probably part of one of the great migratory swarms which, after long-continued droughts, sometimes inundate the colony from the northern wastes*.

* A very graphic account of the migratory swarms of springboks, from the pen of Captain Stockenstrom, is given in Mr. Thompson's Travels, vol. i. p. 266, 8*vo. edit.*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

After passing the flocks of antelopes, the country became still more waste and dreary, and the noon-day sun flamed fiercely down upon us from a cloudless firmament. The monotonous landscape extended round us far and wide, enlivened only now and then by a few of the larger fowls of the country; such as the white vulture, wheeling high over head in the clear sky; the secretary-bird, walking awkwardly about, with its long feathered legs like black pantaloons, searching for its favourite prey, the snakes which infest the dry-parched land; and the stately paauw (or wild peacock), a species of bustard, about twice the size of a turkey, and esteemed the richest-flavoured of all the African feathered game. These, and a few ostriches in the distance, were the only living creatures we saw after we lost sight of the springboks, except the numerous lizards, green, brown, and speckled, which lay basking on almost every stone and ant-hill that dotted the sultry waste. No rain having fallen here for many months, the country was wholly parched up and desolate, and consequently deserted both by the smaller birds and by herbivorous animals. The deep melancholy silence was unbroken, save by our own voices and the sound of our horses' feet: even the hum of the wild-bee and the chirring of the grasshopper were unheard.

At length, after a toilsome ride of about fifty miles, during the latter half of which we had not found a single fountain, or pool, or running brook, to assuage our burning thirst, we reached about sunset the hovel of a Dutch-African boor, on the side of a rill that gushed, cool and limpid, from a savage-looking chasm of the Zureberg; the mountain towering overhead in precipitous crags, which echoed to the bleating of the folded flocks, and the loud barking of twenty or thirty watch-dogs. Here we were received with all the hospitality which the inhabitants of a wigwam, constructed of a few poles and reeds, could exercise. We supped on mutton and potatoes dressed with wild honey, and slept on a mat of rushes stretched on the floor, covered by a blanket of tanned lamb-skin with the wool on it.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Next morning, at an early hour, we ascended the first ridge of the Zureberg, by a steep and rugged footpath, worn by the boors' cattle when driven to the upland pastures. On reaching the summit, which at this place is probably not more than 1,500 feet above the level of the plains we had just crossed, we looked back, and beheld the steep front of the Boschberg mountain, stretching like a huge irregular rampart across the horizon about fifty miles behind; while, farther to the north-east, the loftier mountains near the Caffer frontier, the Kahaberg, the Dídima, the Luhéri, and the giant Winterberg, appeared, towering one beyond the other, distinct and well-defined in the clear blue sky, at the distance of seventy, eighty, and a hundred miles*. The atmosphere in this climate is generally so dry and free from vapours that large objects are seen distinctly at a very great distance, and therefore to European eyes often appear to be much nearer than they really are.

Turning our faces to the southward, we continued our journey across the successive ridges of the Zureberg, which extended before us nearly on the same level, but intersected by deep ravines, whose broken and stony declivities detained and wearied us exceedingly. The summits of the ridges were often almost flat, and covered with long, coarse, wiry grass, of the sort called *sour* (whence the names *Zureberg* and *Zureveld*); being of such an acidulent quality that sheep and cattle will not eat it without great reluctance, nor can they be safely fed upon it without frequent changes to more wholesome and nutritious pasturage. From this cause, perhaps, the narrow glens of this range, though sufficiently well watered, were almost totally uninhabited. In a tract of about twenty miles we only found one farm-house. Even the larger wild game appeared to be scarce on

* The spot where I crossed the Zureberg on this occasion is not included in my little map, being considerably to the westward of that part of the ridge which approaches New Year's River and Zwart-Water, and which we had crossed in our journey to the interior from Algoa Bay.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

those elevated pastures; but this was probably owing much more to the incessant pursuit of the huntsman than their aversion to the coarse herbage. Unprofitable as they appear, these alpine wastes have yet their uses and their features of attraction. They serve to collect the clouds which feed the fountains and streams that water the adjacent plains and valleys, without which the country would be altogether a desert. They were still frequented by several species of beautiful wild animals, which in former years had been far more numerous,—such as the quagga, the zebra, the hartè-beest, reebok, steenbok, klipspringer, oribi, &c. The rocky ravines also were inhabited by multitudes of baboons, and by the das or coney. Three kinds of partridge, two of bustard, and a variety of smaller birds, frequented the tracts of lank grass already mentioned. On the few straggling trees which grew here and there, by the margins of the brooks in the deep and silent glens, appeared the pendulous nests of the loxia and weaver-bird; and several species of eagles and falcons were seen hovering over head, or shooting from cliff to cliff across the valleys. Among other curious and rare plants which we found in one of the most sterile ravines of those mountains, was the Hottentot bread-tree, a species of palm, which grows to the height of eight or ten feet, and produces a sort of fruit, which I was told the natives pound into a paste and eat roasted. This plant was now in blossom, the flower rising from the top of the stem like a large cone or cauliflower, encircled by broad fan-shaped leaves. The tabular summits too of these hills were frequently covered, for an extent of many acres, with a profusion of tall liliaceous flowers, which in spring-time bepaint the whole ground with their rich blue or scarlet blossoms. The region, therefore, however unprofitable for the occupation of civilised man, is not without its appropriate inhabitants, nor devoid of utility and beauty in the beneficent arrangements of a creation where nothing—not even the sterile desert or naked rock—is placed without design, or left utterly unproductive. The aspect of this mountain-tract, and the obvious similarity

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of the country generally, in climate and productions, to ancient Palestine, recalled vividly to my recollection the following passages of that fine sacred poem, the hundred and fourth psalm:—

"He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills.

"They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

"By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

"He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

"The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats (antelopes?) and the rocks for the conies.

"The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

Pursuing our journey, the mountains before us became more lofty and desolate, and the rugged path, tracked out only by quaggas and antelopes, more intricate and difficult. We were forced frequently to alight, and to lead our horses, or drive them before us, through the rocky defiles, and along the dangerous brink of precipitous declivities. Descending the gorge of a rocky ravine, we then penetrated, as it were, through the bowels of the mountain, following the windings of a narrow but verdant glen, adorned with occasional clumps of copsewood and forest trees, and enlivened by a brawling rivulet.

At length this little stream entered a yet wilder chasm among the rocks, where the foot of man or beast might no farther accompany it, and we were forced again to ascend the mountain ridge. Here my companion had told me that an extraordinary prospect awaited us: but all my previous conceptions fell infinitely short of the reality. On the left, a billowy chaos of naked mountains, rocks, precipices, and yawning abysses, that looked as if hurled together by some prodigious convulsion of nature, appalled and bewildered

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the imagination. It seemed as if this congeries of gigantic crags, or rather the eternal hills themselves, had been tumultuously uptorn and heaved together, in some pre-adamite conflict of angelic hosts, with all the veins and strata of their deep foundations disrupted, bent, and twisted in the struggle into a thousand fantastic shapes; while, over the lower declivities and deep-sunk dells, a dark impenetrable forest spread its shaggy skirts, and added to the whole a character of still more wild and savage sublimity.

This was the fore-ground of a vast but sombre landscape. Before us, and on either hand, extended, far as the eye could reach, the immense forest-jungle which stretches from the Zureberg even to the sea-coast at the mouth of the Bushman's River. Through the bosom of this jungle we could distinctly trace the winding course of the Sunday River, like the path of some mythological dragon,—not from the course of its waters, but from the hue of the light-green willow-trees (*Salix babylonica*) which grow along its margins. Beyond, far to the south, appeared the Indian Ocean and the shores of Algoa Bay. To the right and west, rose the Rietberg mountains and the fantastic peaks of the Winterhoek. Nearer us, but hidden among the lower hills, and surrounded by dense forests, lay the Moravian settlement of Enon, which we were in search of. It lay far beneath us; for on this side of the Zureberg the low country is much inferior in elevation to the plains on the northern side, and the front of the mountain is proportionably more imposing.

These rugged ravines and that far-stretching forest were still the haunt of elephants and buffaloes, protected from extirpation by the enormous extent of jungle, which, consisting chiefly of evergreens and succulent plants, such as milkwood, spekboom, and euphorbias from fifteen to forty-five feet high, cannot possibly be burned down, and assuredly will never be rooted up by human industry, since the soil, from aridity, is unfit for cultivation.

After contemplating for a while this scene of savage magnificence, we descended the long declivities of the moun-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tain, and entered the verge of the forest which spreads half-way up its skirts. We entered at the head of a glen, by a path that well accorded with the other features of the landscape. It was an alley, made by the elephants when they issue forth from their sylvan recesses to ascend the mountain. It was about six feet wide, and arched over, like a summer alcove; for the elephant, forcing his way through the thickets, tramples down or breaks off the larger branches that obstruct his passage, while the lighter and loftier, yielding to the pressure of his huge body, meet again like a Gothic arch when the monarch and his troop have passed through. These animals march always in single file on such occasions; and a pathway, when once broken out, is soon trodden by them as bare, if not so smooth, as a gravel walk. Indeed, but for the services of the elephant as a pioneer, these dense and thorny forests, choked up with underwood, and interlaced with rope-like creepers, would be almost utterly impenetrable; and, even with his assistance, it requires some exertion and adroitness to force a passage through them. In many places, limbs of trees half broken off, and large bushes torn up by the roots, obstruct the passage, and one is every moment in danger of sharing the fate of Absalom from the numerous boughs that hang across the path. One of these, as I bent under it on my horse's mane, actually caught and pulled me off the saddle. In many places, too, several of these paths converge or cross each other, so precisely similar in appearance that, without an experienced guide, one is almost sure of losing his way; and even although we had a Hottentot guide (and the memory and adroitness of this race in such cases are most remarkable), and though my friend had himself once travelled this route, yet we lost our road notwithstanding, and got entangled among the thickets and gullies of one of those frightful ravines. As we toiled and struggled through the sultry mazes of the forest, we were not without some apprehension at the idea of being obliged to pass a night in it—not from any particular anxiety about shelter, for in this fine climate it is no great

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

adventure to spend a night 'under the greenwood bough'—but because we were aware that the elephants and buffaloes, whose recent traces we saw every where around us, are peculiarly dangerous in the night. The elephant, indeed, seeks not for man as his enemy, but if he accidentally encounters him, is apt to show him little reverence; and the buffalo is, at times, scarcely less dangerous. However, we at length threaded our way out of the leafy labyrinth, and gaining the grassy banks of the White River, reached the Moravian settlement before the night closed in. With Mr. Hart the missionaries were well acquainted; and besides this circumstance, which alone would have insured me every hospitable attention, I had brought with me from England, and forwarded to them, some packages of books, and a letter of introduction from the Rev. Mr. Latrobe, the superintendent of their society's missions, who is favourably known to the public as the author of a volume of Travels in this colony. I was welcomed, therefore, not merely with the hospitable urbanity which the benevolent brethren extend to every traveller, but with an affectionate and patriarchal cordiality peculiarly engaging; and I willingly accepted an invitation to remain with them, while Mr. Hart proceeded to Algoa Bay upon government business.

The valley of the White River lies at the bottom of the Zureberg mountains, which rise on this side to an elevation of about 2500 feet above the level of the subjacent country. The declivities of the mountain, and the whole of the subsidiary hills which encompass this glen, are covered with the clustering forest-jungle which I have described; but the banks of the stream are comparatively level and open, and covered with luxuriant pastures of sweet grass. The whole length of the vale may be altogether, probably, about ten or twelve miles, from the spot where the little river abruptly emerges from the recesses of the mountains to where it joins the Sunday River. The scenery of the upper part of the dell is very picturesque. Accompanying the course of the stream, as it meanders through the meadows, you have, on the right, lofty hills

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

covered with woods of evergreens, and broken by *kloofs*, or subsidiary dells, filled with large forest-timber. On the left the hills are lower, but also covered with copsewood, and in many places diversified by rocks and cliffs of deep red and other lively colours. The valley, winding among those woody heights, spreads out occasionally to a considerable breadth; and then again the converging hills appear to close it in entirely with huge masses of rock and forest. At every turn the outline of the hills varies, presenting new points of picturesque scenery; while, scattered through the meadows, or bending over the river margin, appear little clumps of evergreens, willows, and acacias; and sometimes groves of lofty forest-trees (chiefly yellow-wood, or Cape cedar) enrich the vale with a stately beauty not always met with in South African landscape. This combination of the wild, the grand, and the beautiful, is heightened in its effect by the exotic appearance of the vegetation: the lofty candelabra-shaped euphorbias towering above the copses of evergreens; the aloes clustering along the summits or fronts of the weather-stained rocks; the spekboom, with its light green leaves and lilac blossoms; the more elegantly shaped mimosa, with its yellow tufted flowers; the baboon's ladder, wild-vine, and other parasitical plants and creepers, that climb among the crags, and festoon in grotesque exuberance the branches of the loftiest trees, intermingled with jasmines and superb geraniums. These, and a thousand other shrubs and flowers, of which only a few are known to our green-houses, adorn even the precipitous rocks, and fill up the interstices of the forest.

The meadows, too, or savannahs along the river banks, are richly embellished, at least in the spring and early summer, with the large purple flowers of a species of amaryllis, which has a very splendid appearance. At the time of my visit, which was the autumn of the southern hemisphere, the vale was thickly overspread with a small, white, delicate flower, somewhat resembling the snow-drop The river itself, like our own River of Baboons, is but a large mountain torrent, bursting down after heavy rains, in



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

floods, which sweep over a great part of the level meads above described, and which fling up, in their violence, immense quantities of large rolled stones and gravel, through which the stream, when diminished by the summer heats, filtrates silently and unperceived. The current, however, even in the greatest droughts, is never entirely interrupted, though sometimes invisible; but always fills the large pools, or natural tanks, which spread out like little lakelets along its channel, and which its temporary floods serve to sweep and purify.

The Moravian settlement of Enon was situate near the centre of the valley of the White River, and in the midst of the scenery which I have attempted to describe. It stood upon a level spot of alluvial soil, near the margin of one of the deep lagoons formed by the river, and which the brethren have named the Leguan's Tank, from its being frequented by numbers of the large amphibious lizard called the leguan or guana. It was also, I observed, well stocked with a species of carp common to many of the South-African streams.

The village was laid out in the form of a long street; at the upper end of which were to be erected the church, school-room, work-shops, and dwelling-houses of the missionaries. A small part only of these buildings had as yet been completed; for the good brethren and their Hottentot disciples had returned but a few months before to re-occupy this station, after having been driven out of it by the Caffers in the war of 1819.

The number of Hottentots at this institution was then about 200. Their dwellings were, with a few exceptions, small wattled cabins of a very simple construction.

The extent of cultivation here was much inferior to what I afterwards witnessed at the elder Moravian settlement of Genadendal, where the whole village is enveloped in a forest of fruit-trees; but considering the short period that had elapsed since the inhabitants had returned to their labours, as much had been accomplished as could reasonably be expected. The appearance of the whole

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

place was neat, orderly, and demure. There was no hurried bustle, no noisy activity, even in the missionary workshops, though industry plied there its regular and cheerful task; but a sort of pleasing pastoral quiet seemed to reign throughout the settlement, and brood over the secluded valley.

There were at this time three missionaries at Enon, besides another brother who was absent on a journey—all of them natives of Germany. The eldest of these, who was also the superintendent of the institution, was the venerable Brother Schmitt, who, after spending his earlier years as a missionary on the desolate coast of Labrador, had been sent to Southern Africa. Mrs. Schmitt, an Englishwoman, and at this period the only white woman in the settlement, appeared to be a person exceedingly well adapted for the station she occupied. The two younger brethren were plain mechanics.

Regularity is one of the most striking characteristics of the Moravian system; and a love of order, even to excess, pervades every part of their economy. In order to give some idea of this, I shall mention the daily routine at this place, which is, I believe, precisely similar to that established at their other institutions in this country.

At six o'clock in the morning, the missionaries and their families are summoned together, by the ringing of a large bell suspended in front of the mission-house. The matin hymn is then sung, and a text of scripture read, for all to meditate upon during the day; and after drinking a single cup of coffee, they separate to pursue their respective occupations. At eight o'clock the bell re-assembles them to a substantial breakfast, consisting of fish, fruit, eggs, and cold meat; each person commonly drinking a single glass of wine. This meal, as well as the others, is preceded and followed by a short hymn, by way of grace, in which all the company join. As soon as breakfast is over, they retire to their separate apartments, for meditation or devotion, till nine o'clock, when the active labours of the day are again resumed, and continued till noon. At twelve o'clock precisely the bell is again rung; labour is intermitted; the



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

school is dismissed; and the brethren and their families assemble in the dining-hall to the mid-day meal. The dishes are sometimes numerous, (especially, I presume, when they have visiters,) but the greater part consist of fruits and vegetables of their own cultivation, variously dressed. I did not observe that any of the brethren drank more than a single glass of wine, and that generally mixed with water. The meal is enlivened with cheerful conversation, and is closed with the customary little hymn of thanksgiving. All then rise and retire, to occupy or amuse themselves as each may be inclined. Most of the missionaries, after dinner, take a short nap, a practice generally prevalent throughout the Cape colony, except among the English. At two o'clock, a cup of tea or coffee is drank, and all proceed again with alacrity to their various occupations, which are prosecuted till six. This latter hour concludes the labours of the day; the sound of the hammer is stilled, and the brethren assemble once more at the evening-meal, which consists of light viands, and is soon over. After supper they adjourn to the church, where a portion of scripture is briefly explained, or a homily delivered, either to the whole Hottentot congregation, or to one of the several sections in which the people are classed, agreeably to the progress they may have attained in knowledge and piety. All then retire to rest—with an appearance of cheerful satisfaction, such as may be naturally imagined to result from the habitual practice of industry and temperance, unembittered by worldly cares, and hallowed by the consciousness of having devoted their mental and bodily faculties to the glory of God and the good of men.

Though the Moravians find it impracticable or inexpedient to follow up in their missionary settlements some of the peculiar and rather monastic regulations, which are observed in their European establishments,—such as separating the married and the unmarried, the youth of different sexes, &c., still their precision and formality in classification are very remarkable. Among other pecu-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

liarities of this description, I may refer to the singular arrangement of their burial-grounds, which are divided and sub-divided, by walks crossing at right angles, into several compartments. One of these plots, thus marked off, is appropriated for the sepulture of the married missionary brethren and sisters; a second for the unmarried brothers; a third for the unmarried sisters; a fourth and fifth for baptized and married natives, male and female; a sixth and seventh for the unmarried and unbaptized natives, and so on. This certainly is carrying classification to a most fanciful pitch—especially that of mere mortal dust and ashes! Passing over this, however, there is unquestionably something very touching, as well as tasteful and picturesque, in the appearance of a Moravian burial-ground in South Africa. Situate at some little distance from the village, yet not far from the house of worship, cut out in the centre of a grove of evergreens, and kept as neat as a pleasure garden, the burial-ground of Enon formed a pleasing contrast to the solitary graves, heaped with a few loose stones, or the neglected and dilapidated churchyards, usually met with in the colony. The funeral service, too, of the Moravians is very solemn and impressive. And still more solemn must be the yearly celebration of their service on Easter morn, when the whole population of the settlement is congregated in the burial-ground, to listen to an appropriate discourse from the most venerable of their pastors, accompanied by an affecting commemoration of such of their friends and relatives as may have died within the year, and followed by hymns and anthems, sung by their united voices amidst the ashes of their kindred.

The missionaries at this place, like their German countrymen in general, appeared to have a fine taste for music; and the voices of the Hottentots being peculiarly mellow, there was nothing vulgar or discordant in their singing, but on the contrary, a sweet, solemn, and pathetic harmony. Nothing, indeed, can well be conceived more exquisitely affecting than the rich though simple melody of one of these missionary hymns, when sung by an African

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

congregation in the bosom of their native woods, where only a very few years ago no voice was heard, save the howling of wild beasts, or the yell of savage hordes.

Wishing to survey more extensively the vicinity of the White River, I started one morning before sun-rise, and set out on horseback on an exploratory ramble, accompanied by a Hottentot guide on foot, equipped with his gun and hunting gear. The sun had not yet risen over the bushy hills as we proceeded down the valley, and every tree and flower was bright and sparkling with dew, diffusing a grateful feeling of freshness in this thirsty land, where rain is precarious and often long denied. The rich fragrance of the African jasmine, clustering with its white flowers around the rocks and aged trees, agreeably attracted my notice. Blue-bells, too, almost precisely similar to those of our own Scottish braes, were growing among the tangled brushwood through which we wound our way; and a small bird now and then warbled a few wild notes, which much resembled the preluding quaver of the woodlark; but the song died away in a feeble trill, and all again was silent, save the cooing of turtle doves, which even at this season of the year (the autumn of South Africa) is continually heard at early morn, in a woodland country, and which produces a soothing though somewhat monotonous effect.

After proceeding a mile or two down the river, we struck into a path on the left hand, which led us into the bosom of the jungle, or *bosch*, as it is termed in this country, behind the woody heights which bound the White River on the south. The path on which we entered led us along a sort of valley, or rather avenue, through the forest of evergreens and brushwood, which covered the undulating country to the southward as far as the eye could reach. This avenue consisted of a succession of grassy savannahs, often of considerable extent, opening into each other through the jungle, and affording a wide range of excellent pasturage for the herds of the settlement. It had, however, the disadvantage of being destitute of water, excepting after heavy rains; and formerly another serious drawback was the extreme hazard

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

from the Caffers, to which the cattle pastured in it as well as their keepers were exposed, in consequence of the extent of woodland which surrounds it. Of this danger sufficient proof was exhibited to me by my guide pointing out, as we passed along, the spot where, only two years before, nine of his comrades had been slaughtered. Of this occurrence he gave the following account.

During the irruption of the Caffer clans, after the invasion and devastation of their country by the colonial troops in 1818, the mountains and forests of the Zureberg were occupied by numerous marauding bands of those barbarians, who poured themselves into the colony in a state of great exasperation, resolved either to recapture the cattle of which they had been plundered, or to indemnify themselves by carrying off those of the colonists. They had already several times menaced the Moravian village with nightly attacks; and as it was well known that parties of them were lurking in the vicinity, the cattle of the community were constantly guarded by ten or twelve of the most courageous and steady Hottentots, armed with guns. The Caffers have no other arms than clubs and javelins, and they knew well from experience that these herdsmen were expert marksmen, and that their own weapons were but ill fitted to compete with the firelock. They had determined, however, at all hazards, to possess themselves of the fine herd of cattle belonging to the settlement, and they proved successful.

The Hottentots had one day driven the cattle up this avenue into one of the open spots, or woodland prairies, which I have just mentioned, and observing no fresh traces of the enemy, seated themselves in a group, about a hundred paces from the side of the jungle, and began to smoke their pipes, each with his loaded gun lying close beside him on the grass. The Caffers, who were eagerly wating c all their motions from the neighbouring heights, judged that this was a favourable opportunity to attack them. Creeping through the thickets with the stealthy pace of the panther, they advanced cautiously to the skirts

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of the copsewood nearest to the herdsmen; and there, crouching in silence till they observed the incautious men earnestly engaged in conversation, and with their faces turned in a different direction, they burst out upon them suddenly with their frightful war-whoop. Pouring in a shower of assagais as they rushed forward, they almost instantly closed, club in hand, with the few not already transfixed by their missiles. So sudden and unexpected was the onset that only two of the ten Hottentots had time to fire. Two of the assailants fell; but their loss was bloodily avenged by the slaughter of nine of the herdsmen, one only of their number escaping by flying to the jungle, with two assagais sticking in his body; and the cattle of the settlement, to the number of about a thousand head, became a prey to the enemy.

The men thus slain were among the best and most industrious of the little community, and all of them left wives and families to deplore their untimely fate. The event overwhelmed the settlement with dismay; and as the cattle were the chief support of the inhabitants, and an attack upon the village itself was nightly anticipated, the institution was soon after abandoned, and the missionaries and their followers took refuge in the district-town of Uitenhage, where they were received with much sympathy. From this place of refuge, as I formerly mentioned, they had returned only a few months before my visit.

With this, and similar anecdotes of the Caffer wars, I was entertained by my guide, as we penetrated into the recesses of the woody wilderness, which had but recently been the haunt of those wild warriors, and where some of their marauding bands were reported to be still occasionally lurking.

But another object soon attracted our attention. The fresh traces of a troop of elephants appeared on our path, and my guide, after carefully inspecting their foot prints, declared that they had passed this way to the eastward only about an hour or so before us. Eager to have a sight of those extraordinary animals, which I had not yet seen in

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their wild state, I followed on their route as fast as the Hottentot could keep pace with me. For four or five miles we pursued their track in this manner through the mazy glades of the jungle, my attendant warning me every now and then, as the lofty evergreens crowded more densely around the path, to proceed with caution; and at every new opening among the thickets, we glanced eagerly forward and around, in the expectation of coming plump upon 'a covey of elephants.' Our hopes of overtaking them, however, proved fruitless, and on gaining an elevation where the copse opened up and admitted a view of the country for many miles before us, we saw clearly that we were too late. The sagacious animals had retreated just before sun-rise, as they usually do, to their less accessible haunts, and were, in all probability, now concealed in some of the more lofty woods or wild ravines that run up to the recesses of the Zureberg.

Turning our course to the left, we ere long gained a rude wagon-track, which led us back towards the White River valley. As it approached the glen, this path was closed in on either side for a considerable distance by the tall copse-wood, so luxuriant in its growth that one would suppose even a wolf or a leopard would scarcely be able to find a way through it. The path itself, originally tracked out by the elephants, appears to have been widened by the axe just sufficiently to allow a single wagon to pass along, and it now formed the only access on this side to the upper part of the glen. This pass, according to the account of my guide, had been the scene of another occurrence memorable in the traditionary annals of our Cape border-wars.

Many years ago, before the Caffers were dispossessed of this part of the country, and finally driven over the Great Fish River, the chief Kongo and his clan occupied the White River valley and the fastnessess of the adjacent mountains in great force. During one of the struggles which ensued, in consequence of Kongo's attempt to maintain himself in possession of this district, a party of seventy or eighty boors were sent to occupy this glen, while other

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

troops environed the Caffer camp from the opposite side. The boors rode in without opposition through this pass; but finding the enemy stronger than they expected, they became alarmed, and attempted to retreat by the same road. The Caffers, however, who on this occasion showed themselves not destitute of military skill, had, in the meanwhile, blocked up the narrow path by stretching a large tree across it near the centre, and fastening it with thongs and wattles at either end; and then stationing themselves in strong bands among the copsewood, they attacked the boors on all sides, as soon as they had fairly re-entered the defile, with showers of javelins, and slew a great number of them before they were able to force a passage through. From this catastrophe the spot obtained the name of the Caffer *Slag-boom* or *Toll-bar*.

On our return to Enon by the valley of the White River, I visited the forest (properly so termed, as distinguished from the *bosch* or jungle) whence the settlement is supplied with large timber. It grew in a secluded glen or *kloof*, running up between the subsidiary ridges abutting from the Zureberg, and was accessible only by a narrow path, cut through the thickets. The forest itself, like all the woods I have seen in Africa, was choked up by a rank exuberance of undergrowth and creepers, to such a degree as to appear quite impenetrable until a path had been opened into its recesses by the axe. Among other parasitical plants, the *baviaan's-tow* (baboon's-rope) protruded itself in all directions, in a wild web of tangled vegetation. Climbing, like ivy, the trunks of the loftiest trees, it coiled its snake-like creepers along the branches, stretched them from tree to tree like the cordage of a ship, or flung them dangling in the air like ladders of ropes—fitting ladders for the monkeys which inhabit these woods, and from which adaptation the plant derives its colonial name. One species of monkey's-rope, is the native vine of South Africa. It bears a fruit in size and appearance not unlike the large black cherry, seldom more than two or three in a cluster, and of a very delicate subacid taste. In summer, when it

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

is in bearing, these clusters have a very tempting and beautiful appearance, hanging in festoons from the very summits of the highest yellow-wood trees; but, though wholesome, this fruit is rather too acidulent to be eaten in any quantity, unless when freed from the stone, and sweetened with sugar as a conserve, as one finds it occasionally in the houses of the colonists. The leaves of this vine are shaped like those of the ivy, dark green and smooth on the upper, and rather woolly on the under surface; not deciduous, but evergreen.

The clumps of forest, comprising a great variety of fine large wood, are scattered throughout the vast jungle along the whole southern front of the Zureberg mountains; but the best timber is not unfrequently inaccessible, from the position in which it grows in the recesses of rugged ravines, or on the steep front of dangerous precipices. Such situations appear favourable in this climate to the growth of large trees, owing to the more abundant moisture which the porous crevices of the rocks convey to the roots, and the mists that roll over the summits to the foliage. The most common species was a tree greatly resembling the cedar in its external aspect, but belonging to a quite different genus, termed by the colonists geelhout, or yellow-wood (*taxus elongata*). I measured a venerable tree of this wood, growing on the bank of the river near the missionary village, and found it to be twenty-one feet in girth. I observed, also, iron-wood (*olea undulata*), stinkhout (*laurus bullata*), wild-olive (*oliva capensis*), red-ash (*cunonia capensis*), and many other woods prized for their useful qualities. Most of these were evergreens, and were trees of magnificent size and beautiful appearance. Among others used for the manufacture of household furniture by the missionaries, was a saffron-coloured timber, called sneeze-wood, from the effect of its pungent scent when newly cut, and which, among other good properties, is said to possess that of repelling all noxious vermin from its neighbourhood: on this account it is now much in request for bedsteads throughout the colony.

At the upper extremity of the White River valley,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I found a solitary farm-shieling. Here the proprietor's wife complained bitterly of the annoyance that she and her family received from the nocturnal visits of the elephants. They were, she said, 'too big to wrestle with.' They came out of the forest by night, trod down her little corn-field, devoured her crop of maize, pulled up her fruit trees, and tossed about, as if in wanton malice, articles that they could neither devour nor totally destroy; and only a few days previously, her husband, on returning home at a late hour, had made a narrow escape from one of those animals, which met him on the road and chased him several times round his wagon. She added, however, that they were far less dangerous than they had been when she and her family first came to reside in this wild though beautiful valley; and pointing to a rocky mound at a little distance, which rose abruptly from the grassy meadows, and overhung a pool of the river, she said that on the summit of that rock, not many years since, her husband used to lie concealed among the brushwood, and shoot the elephants as they passed down the glen in numerous herds, even at mid-day.

The following curious illustration of the peculiar sagacity of this animal was brought under my notice at this place. A few days before my arrival at Enon, a troop of elephants came down one dark and rainy night close to the outskirts of the village. The missionaries heard them bellowing and making an extraordinary noise for a long time at the upper end of the orchard; but knowing well how dangerous it is to encounter these animals in the night, they kept close within their houses till day-break. Next morning, on examining the spot where they had heard the elephants, they discovered the cause of all this nocturnal uproar. There was, at this spot, a ditch or trench, about five or six feet in width and twelve in depth, which the industrious missionaries had recently cut through the bank of the river, on purpose to lead out the water to irrigate some part of their garden ground, and to drive a corn-mill. Into this trench, which was still unfinished and without water, one of the elephants had evidently fallen,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

for the marks of his feet were distinctly visible at the bottom, as well as the impress of his huge body on its sides. How he had got in it was easy to imagine, but how, being once in, he had ever contrived to get out again, was the marvel. By his own unaided efforts it seemed almost impossible for such an animal to have extricated himself. Could his comrades, then, have assisted him? There appeared little doubt that they had; though by what means, unless by pulling him up with their trunks, it would not be easy to conjecture. And in corroboration of this supposition, on examining the spot myself, I found the edges of this trench deeply indented with numerous vestiges, as if the other elephants had stationed themselves on either side, some of them kneeling, and others on their feet, and had thus, by united efforts, hoisted their unlucky brother out of the pit.

After I had spent about a week at Enon, Mr. Hart again rejoined me, and I took leave of this romantic valley and its interesting inhabitants with impressions not soon to be forgotten.

On our return home, we took a different route through the forest, and across the first ridge of mountains—a route that led us through the very centre of the extraordinary scenery which struck me so much in our approach to the White River; and the nearer view which I thus obtained of it, increased, if possible, my admiration and astonishment. We rode along the summit of a mountain ridge, so narrow that there was often scarcely space for the foot path which was cautiously trodden by our horses. In many places a single false step would have precipitated horse and rider over the verge of a tremendous abyss, of which we could only vaguely distinguish the bottom, jagged with rocks, and shaggy with jungle. It was early morning when we traversed this savage scene, and the mists which hung upon the mountains, lifting or lowering their fleecy folds as we advanced, partially revealed, and again enshrouded, the chaotic labyrinth which extended around and beneath us—presenting sometimes glimpses of wild sylvan

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

beauty almost elysian, and then, on a sudden, unfolding just beneath us a gulf of black rocks and forests scathed by fire, such as poetic fancy might picture for the habitation of infernal demons. The scenery of the Zureberg far surpassed any thing of the kind I had either witnessed elsewhere, or formed a conception of from the descriptions of others.

In the midst of this mountain scenery we arrived at a spot where the elder Stockenstrom, landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, had been treacherously slain by the Caffers in 1811. Mr. Hart, who had served in the colonial campaign of that period under Colonel Graham, when the Caffers were dispossessed of this part of the country, related to me the circumstances of this melancholy affair as we rode along; and I now give the details as afterwards confirmed to me by other competent authorities.

Mr. Stockenstrom, who was by birth a Swede, and descended I believe from a family of ancient distinction in his native land, had, in 1803, a period when the affairs of the interior districts of the Cape colony were in a most anarchical state, "been prevailed upon," as Lichtenstein states, "to accept the office of landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, as a man who had all the qualities and knowledge requisite for occupying so arduous a post." His character for prudence, justice, and humanity stood so high, that at the period now referred to, he had acquired not only the respect of the Colonists and Hottentots, but also the confidence of the frontier Caffers. In December 1811, when the military force under Colonel Graham was on the point of entering the Zureveld (Albany including the Zureberg, &c.), in order to expel the Caffers from that territory, Mr. Stockenstrom, who commanded the colonial militia of armed boors, was despatched to confer with Gaika, and to satisfy that chief that no hostilities were intended against him, but solely against his uncle Islambi, Habanna, Kongo, and their confederates, who had occupied a tract of country westward of the Great Fish River to which the colonial government laid claim. Gaika was satisfied, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

pledged himself that his people should take no advantage of the absence of the boors from their homes, but remain at peace with the colony; and he faithfully kept his word.

The colonial troops entered the Zureveld in three divisions: the right commanded by Major Cuyler; the centre by Captain Fraser, accompanied by the commander in chief, Colonel Graham; and the left by Landdrost Stockenstrom. On the morning of the 28th December, Mr. Stockenstrom left his camp at the foot of the Zureberg, on the northern side, in charge of his son, Ensign (now Captain) Stockenstrom, and proceeded across the mountains with about forty men, in order to have an interview with Colonel Graham. On their route they had to pass along the narrow ridge called Slaghters-nek, which connects two arms of the great mountain chain; and on which Mr. Hart and I halted for a brief space, while he pointed out the localities rendered memorable by the events of this African campaign. One of the cleughs (*kloofs*) of the White River, beautifully lined with various sorts of tall forest-timber and thick brushwood, joins another cleugh, equally picturesque and magnificently wooded, stretching down into the valley of the Koornay, thus forming, together with the stupendous cliffs above, over-hanging their deep and sombre recesses, one of the most remarkable landscapes in Southern Africa. Mr. Stockenstrom and his party, on approaching this pass, perceived numerous bands of Caffers issuing from the thickets, and assembling on both sides of the footpath by which they had to travel along the narrow ridge (*nek*) in order to reach the opposite high land. Some of the boors strongly urged the necessity for caution in approaching these bands; others thought it the best policy to be beforehand with the Caffers by at once attacking them. Mr. Stockenstrom, however, who had great confidence in the more magnanimous part of the Caffer character, viewed this as a fine opportunity for exerting himself to prevent bloodshed, by persuading the Caffers, in an amicable conference, to leave the country

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

without further hostile operations. Contrary, therefore, to the advice of his most confidential counsellors, the Field-cornets Potgieter and Gryling, he rode straight up to the phalanx of Caffer warriors, and dismounted in the midst of them. This confidence appeared to have at once conciliated their good-will. The chiefs and principal men formed a circle around this venerable magistrate. The two field-cornets above mentioned and several other burghers had followed their leader closely, determined to share whatever hazard his generous confidence might incur. The number of Caffers increased every moment; but the conference was still of the most amicable nature, insomuch that even the most suspicious of the boors had relinquished all distrust, and mixed indiscriminately with the Africans. Mr. Stockenstrom was smoking with the chiefs in the most friendly and familiar manner, and was apparently making great progress in the object he had at heart, when one of his party perceived a dense mass of Caffers, keeping aloof in the deeper recesses of the thicket, and evidently communicating by messengers with some of the chiefs near them, who began to appear disturbed and agitated.

Captain Stockenstrom informed me that, many years afterwards, he had conversed upon the events of this day with several of the Caffers who were then present; and from their uniform testimony, given under circumstances when they could have no motive for deceiving him, he had arrived at the conviction that there was no *premeditated* treachery on this occasion. On seeing the colonial troop advancing at a distance, they had assembled, they said, with the view of opposing their march to the southward, by openly assailing them with their missiles at this narrow and perilous pass; but that when Mr. Stockenstrom, with a frank confidence, placed himself in their power, their most friendly feelings were called forth; nor was any act of treachery contemplated until, unhappily, in the midst of the conference, a messenger arrived with the intelligence that the right and centre divisions of the British force had

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

commenced hostile operations—that blood had been shed—and that some men of importance (Caffers) had already fallen. This intelligence having been brought to a chief*, then in the thicket with a strong party, one of his counsellors (*amapagati*) instantly suggested that the opportunity which now presented itself for striking a decisive blow was too good to be lost; for he conceived that the destruction of Landdrost Stockenstrom, whom those Caffers supposed to be the highest authority in the interior, and of the Field-cornets, whom they knew to be the principal leaders among the Boors, would strike such a panic as would cause the retreat of the whole assailing force, and leave them in quiet possession of the country. The proposal was made known to some of the other chiefs. The temptation was too strong to be resisted by the enraged Africans; and a whispering communication immediately ensued between the Caffers in the bush and those around the circle of conference†.

---

* It is not known who were the leading Caffer chiefs present on this occasion. Islambi was in the Zureveld, in the country near the Kowie River. Kongo, who was dying of an incurable disease, was on the Addo heights, where he was cruelly butchered, a few days afterwards, while asleep in his hut, by a party of boors. Habanna and Cassa were the principal chiefs of the Caffers then on the Zureberg; but I have not been able to ascertain that either of them was present at this conference.

† My friend the Rev. John Brownlee, missionary in Cafferland, has stated (I presume on Caffer testimony) in his valuable Notes appended to Mr. Thompson's Travels, that some of the Amadanka clan were principal parties at this conference; and supposes that their revengeful recollection of a bloody deed of colonial treachery in former days, by which their clan was almost extirpated, led them to incite their countrymen on this occasion to the fatal act of retaliation. But of this fact, however probable, there appears to be no certain evidence. (See *Thompson's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 341.)—I have, however, in my possession, unquestionable proof, that men, women, and children, were indiscriminately slaughtered during this campaign by the Boors and British troops.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

It was at this moment that the Boor who had observed these signs of bustle and agitation hinted his suspicions to his commander. Mr. Stockenstrom, whose attention had been occupied with the amicable discussion in which he was still engaged with some of the other chiefs, replied with a smile that there was no danger. But scarcely were the words uttered, when a frightful yell—the Caffer war-whoop—pealed the signal of destruction; and the shout was wildly re-echoed through the adjacent hills and dales for many miles around. A simultaneous rush was made upon the colonists from all sides. The tragic scene was brief. Mr. Stockenstrom and fourteen of his men fell, pierced by innumerable wounds. Such of the Boors as had drawn the muskets from their holsters fired at random, and killed a few Caffers; but the surviving colonists, of whom several were already wounded, were glad to avail themselves of the fleetness of their horses, to escape along the mountain ridge; and thus succeeded in reaching Colonel Graham's camp that evening,—with the exception of two, who not being able to get on horseback, crept into the thicket, and eluded the search of the Caffers, until darkness enabled them to re-cross the mountains to the spot whence they had that morning started. One of these two men was my acquaintance Paul du Plessies of Zwagershoek.

In the meanwhile, one little Bush-boy (the musket-bearer of a Boor), who had escaped unnoticed when the massacre commenced, reached the camp where Ensign Stockenstrom was posted, with the news of his father's fate, about an hour after the tragical event. The feelings of this officer (then a very young man) may be better imagined then described. He hurried towards the spot with about twenty men. On the way they came in collision with a numerous body of Caffer warriors, returning triumphantly from the scene of death, with the guns and horses of the slaughtered colonists. A fierce conflict ensued, in which the open nature of the ground gave the mounted Boors the decided advantage. The Caffers, unable to avail themselves effectively of the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

fire arms they had so recently obtained, were defeated with great slaughter, and driven back towards the main body of their countrymen, who had occupied in strong force the perilous passes of the mountains in the vicinity of Slaghters-nek, the field of massacre. The sun being then setting, and it being obviously too late to save any of the colonists who had been left on the field, young Stockenstrom, after a vain attempt to find the spot where his father had fallen, retired to protect his camp, which was threatened by parties of the enemy in other directions*.

The following day, Colonel Graham sent a party of

---

* As a pleasing contrast to these scenes of mutual enmity and slaughter, I have great satisfaction in quoting from the recent work of Mr. Kay, a Wesleyan missionary in Cafferland, the following interesting note in reference to this melancholy affair :—" The Honourable Capt.Stockenstrom, who succeeded his unfortunate father in the office of Landdrost of Graaff-Reinét, and who is at present Commissioner-General of the Eastern Province, and likewise a Member of Council, had occasion to visit Wesleyville (a missionary station in Cafferland) in April, 1829. On his arrival, the chiefs were called together, in order to receive a special message, with which he was charged from the Colonial Government. In the course of his address to them, he adverted to the lamentable events of former days; but at the same time remarked, ' We do not now seek each other with the musket or the assagai to shed each other's blood. When we meet, it is to shake hands and be good friends. The bad times have passed away. The Caffers killed my father; and some of you were near at the time. The Boors killed your father (old Kongo), and I was not far off when it happened. Those were bad doings; but now all is changed. You have received missionaries; you have now the same word of God that we have. The only difference between us is the colour of our skins; but though you are black and we are white, yet God has made of one blood all nations of the earth.' The palaver being ended, Capt. Stockenstrom dined at the Mission-House in company with the Chiefs."—*Kay's Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, p. 254.

In a letter from one of the missionaries present on this occasion



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

cavalry under Capt. Fraser, which formed a junction with that under Ensign Stockenstrom, after having likewise been desperately but ineffectually attacked by the Caffers. This united force then encamped near the scene of slaughter, and interred the mangled remains of the lamented landdrost and his unfortunate comrades*.

From this spot I looked round on the scenery which I have attempted to describe; and could well fancy the effect of the savage shout of exultation (described to me with sensations of horror by some of those who were present) pealed forth by two or three thousand barbarians, as they stood over their fallen enemies—and which was instantly responded to by similar shouts from hill to hill, and from glen to glen, as the joyful tidings were thus conveyed through the adjacent woods and mountains, then inhabited by a dense population of Caffers. The sonorous power of the Caffer voice, the stern and stupendous features of the country around, and the dismal spectacle of the field of slain, must have given to the scene at that moment a character indescribably terrific and appalling.

---

which Mr. Bannister has published, the following particulars are added to the above statement.

"To these observations (of Captain Stockenstrom) expressed in a manner at once simple and forcible, the Chiefs, who strongly felt them, warmly expressed their assent. Pato, Kama, and Kongo (sons of old Kongo) together with Kai, who had come with Brother Young from Mount Coke, dined with us, and behaved with great propriety. Such an occurrence would not have been thought within the range of possibility a few years ago."—*Bannister's Humane Policy*, p. 103.

* The precise spot where these bodies were interred could not, when I was there, be readily discovered. It is little to the credit of the Colonial Government that not even a rude stone has been erected to mark the grave of this meritorious magistrate, and of those who perished with him in the discharge of duty ennobled by a humane benevolence. Mr. Stockenstrom had been upwards of twenty-five years in the public service of the colony.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER VII.

*Interview with the Acting Governor at Somerset—Further Enlargement of the Location—Excursion to Albany—Appearance of the Country near the Coast—Situation of the Albany Settlers in July, 1821—Predatory Bushmen—Mulatto Hottentots settled at Glen-Lynden—Their Character—Sub-division of the Location—Author's Residence at Eildon—Description of an Emigrant's Cabin—Privations—The Ceded Territory—The Winterberg—Scenery of the Koonap River and its Branches—Excursion with a Party of Officers—A Herd of Elephants—Remarkable Escape of Lieutenant Moodie.*

In June, 1821, the Acting-Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, paid a visit to the eastern province, in order to inspect personally the situation and progress of the British settlers, and to redress, as far as possible, any grievances of which they had to complain. After making a circuit through Albany, he proceeded to Somerset, where I was invited to meet him, as the pressure of business elsewhere did not admit of his extending his tour to our location. I found Sir Rufane perfectly disposed to listen to every reasonable representation, and to remedy to the utmost of his power every disadvantage under which we laboured. He deplored the disappointments to which we had been subjected by the unexpected dispersion of the Highland party intended to have been placed near us, and the calamitous fate of those who had perished in the Abeona; and as he had given us reason twelve months ago to rely on being placed in immediate connection with a considerable population of our countrymen, he now offered, since that hope had been frustrated, to remove our party, if they desired it, to Albany, or to any other situation that they

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

might prefer. This was kind and considerate. But as our party had now fully made up their minds to remain at Glen-Lynden, I stated to Sir Rufane that I considered the most effectual way to promote their prosperity was to allow a liberal extension of the boundaries of the location, so as to afford an ample range of pasturage, and thus place the Scottish settlers fairly on a footing with the older colonists around them. To this he willingly consented, and gave orders that our territory should be extended down the valley till it was bounded below by the lands formerly occupied by Frederick Bezuidenhout, and recently granted to Captain Cameron, an officer of the 72nd regiment. Subsequently additional farms were granted separately to some of my brothers, and to other individuals of the party, on the Mancazana branch of the Koonap River (now Glen-Pringle), which is divided from Glen-Lynden by a single ridge of steep mountains. And thus, instead of the 1100 acres, to which we would have been confined by a strict adherence to the Government scheme of settlement, and which would have scarcely been equal to *one-third* of a grazier-boor's farm, we at length succeeded in obtaining from the considerate liberality of the Colonial Government, the munificent allotment of not less than 20,000 acres. This indeed was fully more than we could immediately occupy or adequately stock; but not more than in that part of the country was absolutely requisite for the complete establishment of eight or ten substantial farmers.

A few weeks after my interview with the Acting Governor, I accompanied my friend Mr. Hart on an excursion to Albany; in the course of which we visited Graham's Town, Bathurst, Port Frances, Theopolis, Salem, and all the principal locations of the English settlers from the Kareega to the mouth of the Great Fish River.

My first view of the country formerly called the Zureveld, in which the great body of those settlers were located, was from the summit of the steep hills that bound to the southward the valley or *kloof* in which Graham's Town is situated. From this elevated ridge we had at once under

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

our eye the whole of that extensive district, bounded by the ocean in front, and by the Bushman and Great Fish rivers on the right and left. This tract may be described as an immense plain; though it is very far from exhibiting over the greater part of its extent any thing like a level surface. Near the coast it is much diversified by small hills and gently rising grounds, and for the most part flows into an easy undulating outline. The streams or rivers also, which issue from the range of mountains we now stood upon, have in many places intersected it with deep and broad ravines, the sides of which are almost every where clothed with an impervious forest or jungle. On this account, it is difficult to cross the country from east to west with wheel carriages; and to travel along the banks of the rivers is still less practicable, from the innumerable gullies or kloofs, choked up with copsewood, that run down to the deep channels of the rivers from the plain or table-land on either side. By keeping aloof, however, from these subsidiary kloofs, and crossing the river-glens at convenient places, one may travel over the Zureveld easily and pleasantly, especially on horseback. In speaking of *rivers*, I may here remark, once for all, that this appellation is applied by the African colonists to every brook that merely exhibits a rill of running water, and even to many that can only occasionally claim that distinction; so that the term often appears, to a European apprehension, very unappropriately employed. The rivers of South Africa, with but few exceptions, are little else than periodical torrents, usually flowing with a diminutive streamlet, at the bottom of a huge chasm or glen, the banks of which rise on either hand, steep and shaggy with wood, like the side of a mountain; so that in many cases it will take one a full hour to cross from the top of one bank to the other, although the river at the bottom, on ordinary occasions, will scarcely wet your horse's hoofs as you ford it. But then these tremendous yawning gulfs, when filled by the sudden and excessive rains to which this climate is occasionally, though not frequently, subject, are swollen, from 'bank to brae,' with a mighty and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

furious torrent, which defies all control and obstructs all passage.

The forest-jungle, which clothes the ravines that border the rivers of Albany, was at the time of this visit still inhabited by herds of buffaloes, and some species of the antelope and the hyæna; but the elephant had retreated, since the arrival of the settlers, to the more impenetrable and solitary forests adjoining the Bushman and Great Fish rivers. The herds of hartebeests, quaggas, and other large game, described by former travellers as frequenting the open pastures, and adding so much life and beauty to the lonely landscape of Albany, had also almost totally disappeared, and with them the lion. A few scattered flocks of springboks were all that we observed remaining of the *ferœ naturœ*.

In travelling over the open plains and savannahs, we found very generally a light sandy soil of grey, yellow, or blackish hue, upon a clayey bottom; clothed in many places with a closer and more verdant turf than I had seen any where else in the colony; in others, waving with a crop of long spiry grass, among the roots of which the loose mould was often turned up and traversed by myriads of grey moles and field mice. The herbage, though abundant, was almost universally of the description called *sour*, and consequently not very suitable for sheep; but varying much in quality and appearance in different situations. The quality of the soil, likewise, varied very considerably in different places; but, except under the woods, it appeared generally much more meagre than the alluvial soils of the upper country, and of a description that would require frequent assistance from manure to render it permanently productive. The want, moreover, of fresh water in some places, and the precariousness or brackish quality of many of the brooks and fountains, together with the impracticable character of the river banks, and the poverty of the soil over a large extent of the more open country, appeared to present formidable obstacles to the existence of a dense population, or a very extended agriculture; and rendered no inconsiderable por-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tion of this much-lauded district unavailable for any other purpose than the pasturage of horned cattle and horses.

The general aspect of the country was nevertheless fresh, pleasing, and picturesque. The verdant pastures and smooth grassy knolls formed an agreeable contrast with the dark masses of forest which clothed the broken ground near the river courses. The undulating surface of the champaign country was moreover often agreeably diversified with scattered clumps or thickets of evergreens interspersed with groves of large trees, like a nobleman's park. Among the latter I frequently noticed the *erythrina cafra* or *corallodendrum* (called by the colonists *Caffer-boom*), a large and showy tree, often growing singly, and in early spring covered with a dazzling profusion of bright scarlet blossoms. In the lower bottoms, wherever a brook or fountain had been discovered, and the mould washed from the higher grounds presented a richer and deeper soil for cultivation, we found the emigrant at work in his field or garden; his reed hut or wattled cabin generally placed on the side of some narrow ravine, under the shade of a grove or thicket; his cattle and sheep-folds, his garden-fence, and even the division boundary from his neighbour's field, or the common lane, often carefully ditched and wattled with that peculiar neatness which the tidy English peasant displays in such circumstances. In other and but too frequent instances, we also encountered the sure indications of the sloven, the sluggard, the drunken, and the improvident. The exertions, too, of many of the more industrious colonists, appeared to have been, at first, rather preposterously applied; and much inexpertness and mismanagement might still be discovered in their farming operations. This was naturally to be expected from the class of people composing the mass of the emigrants, among whom was included but a very small proportion of practical agriculturists.

The houses they then inhabited, or were erecting, were chiefly of the description termed 'wattle-and-daub;' that is, a frame of posts, surmounted by a thatched roof, and wattled up to the eaves with limber boughs or saplings from

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the nearest thicket; the inner divisions constructed of the same materials, and the whole plastered with clay. And when neatly smoothed over and whitewashed, and embellished in front with the trim garden plot and wattled fence, these cabins often looked extremely handsome and picturesque, as we came suddenly in sight of them peeping out from the skirts of the ancient forest, or embowered in some romantic wood or evergreen shrubbery. But though readily and cheaply constructed, where materials can be so easily obtained, and apparently not ill adapted for a climate usually so mild and dry as that of Albany, these slender edifices proved quite inadequate to withstand the terrible floods and storms which sometimes, though rarely, visit this colony, as the settlers, to their cost, ere long experienced. Some individuals, more provident or better provided with means, had built houses of brick, stone, or 'Devonshire-cob;' and a few had imitated the African boor, in constructing solid walls of tempered clay, which, in a country where lime is too expensive to be used for cement, is probably the most secure and eligible material for ordinary farm-buildings.

At this period, however, the settlers had only slightly experienced the effects of their mistakes, and the pressure of their misfortunes. We indeed saw or heard of several families on different locations whose wattled or wooden huts had been accidentally destroyed by fire, with most of their effects; and many others whom we conversed with had a variety of complaints, exclusive of the total destruction of their first crops by the fatal *rust* or mildew. But there was as yet no appearance of great or general distress. And though even the most sanguine were now fully awakened from the delusive dreams of wealth and ease with which many of them had emigrated, and somewhat discouraged by the failure of their crops,—and though many were destitute of money and of all their accustomed comforts, yet, on the whole, they appeared by no means so much disheartened or disconcerted as might have been anticipated. The Acting Governor on his recent visit had shown every

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

disposition to redress real grievences, and to mitigate, as far as the power of the government extended, unavoidable calamities. The repayment of the wagon hire from Algoa Bay to the locations had been dispensed with by the Home Government; rations of flour and corn had been ordered to be served out till the next harvest was reaped; and certain local functionaries, who, by their arrogance or incompetency had given general dissatisfaction, were replaced by more suitable persons. These, and other encouraging circumstances, together with the genial influence of a most delightful climate*, supported the spirits of the Albany settlers at this period.—I reserve for a future chapter some notice of their subsequent calamities and of their present condition.

To return to our own location. In the beginning of October we were somewhat alarmed by the discovery of a band of predatory Bushmen lurking among the rocks and caverns of the wild mountains between us and the Tarka. Lieutenant Pettingal, an officer of engineers, who was then in our valley, engaged in the government survey of the country, discovered this horde in searching for some of his horses that were missing. Suspecting from the traces that they had been carried off by Bushmen, he went out with an armed troop in pursuit, and came upon a party of these wild marauders in one of the most savage recesses of the neighbouring mountains. They were at breakfast on a grey horse, which they had slaughtered; and had steaks roasting on the fire cut out of the flank, with the hide still upon them. Pettingal, enraged by the loss of his best blood horse, poured in a volley upon them; but, apparently, without effect, for they all scrambled off with inconceivable

* A settler near the Kap River, in whose cabin Mr. Hart and I spent a night on this journey, and who had previously resided some years in Canada, assured us that he counted all the natural defects of South Africa, balanced by its mild and salubrious climate, as but light when compared with the iron winters and endless forests of North America.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

agility among the rocks and bushes. He recovered, however, some of his own horses, and eight belonging to our neighbour Winzel Coetzer, which were tied up under an overhanging cliff near the top of a mountain.—I shall afterwards revert to our farther intercourse with this unhappy race of people, and to their past history and present condition on the colonial borders.

After the augmentation of our territory by the Colonial Government, I willingly availed myself of a convenient opportunity which offered for increasing the native population upon it, and thereby adding at once to our means of security and our profitable occupation of the land. It happened that several of the Mulatto Hottentots (*Bastaards*) who had been stationed with us during the first six months, belonged to a small body of that class who had for many years resided at Zwagershoek, under the protection of an old German settler of the name of Stollz. A favourable report, it appears, had been carried to this man of the treatment the coloured caste had experienced at Glen-Lynden; for in August, 1821, old Stollz wrote me a letter, requesting me to receive hospitably (*herbergzaamlyk*) upon our grounds certain families of his Hottentot vassals; and some time afterwards he sent over a messenger to intreat me urgently to visit him without delay, as he was about to die, and was anxious to confer with me respecting the future disposal and protection of his coloured dependents. I rode over accordingly with Mr. G. Rennie to see the old man; but when we reached Zwagershoek, we learned that Stollz had died two days before, and that we were only in time to attend his funeral. It took place next day, and was curious and characteristic enough. The scene of the funeral dinner reminded me of some of Sir Walter Scott's graphic sketches. The only real mourners were the coloured people, who were not admitted to the feast, and only permitted to follow the funeral at a humble distance. The landed property left by the deceased fell into the hands of covetous strangers; and the Mulattoes, who had occupied a large part of it as tenants and cottagers, were speedily dispossessed.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The most of these people flocked over to Glen-Lynden, where we engaged some of them as herdsmen and farm servants, and placed those who had cattle as tenants upon our unoccupied lands, upon condition, generally, of their rendering certain services in the cultivation of the soil. By this means we greatly strengthened our own hands, while we had at the same time the satisfaction of protecting and benefiting those oppressed and despised people. A dozen families or more thus found a temporary settlement in our valley, some of whom, under the sheltering patronage of old Stollz, had accumulated considerable property. One old man, Klaas Eckhard (who had lost a hand and an eye, but to make amends had *two* wives), possessed an ox-wagon, 60 head of cattle, 25 horses, and about 1,000 sheep and goats. Nicholas Blok, who had been steward to Stollz, had a wagon, a plough, 48 cattle, 18 horses, and about 500 sheep and goats. Joseph Arendz had a wagon, 50 cattle, 10 horses, and about 300 sheep and goats. Some others had cattle in smaller numbers. But two brothers, Christian and Karel Groepe, who had previously become tenants to my father, had a stock of sheep, cattle, and horses, more numerous than any of the rest, and equal to many of the poorer boors. These Groepes were the sons of an old German settler, who had once been field-cornet of Zwagershoek, but who (now in extreme old age) was considered to have *lost caste,* from his associating with his own children by a Hottentot woman.

When these people came to reside at Glen-Lynden, our immediate district magistrate, Captain Harding, had considerable doubts whether the colonial laws would sanction our receiving them on our grounds as *tenants* merely, without also indenturing them in every case as our *servants.* The almost universal usage throughout the colony was to consider all Hottentots, whether of pure or mixed blood, as under a legal obligation to be under *contract of servitude;* and Captain Harding, though a humane man and an able and upright magistrate, had adopted the same prejudice. As I differed from him about the application of a coercive

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

clause in Lord Caledon's proclamation of 1809 to such cases as the present, the matter was referred to the chief magistrate of the district, Captain Stockenstrom, who decided in favour of the more liberal interpretation, and thus the Mulattoes of Zwagerhoek became our tenants.

As every adult male among them possessed at least a musket and a horse, and they looked to me as their immediate protector, I now found myself in the novel situation of a petty 'border chief;' being able to muster upwards of thirty armed horsemen (including our own party and the six Hottentot soldiers) at an hour's notice. We therefore considered our location perfectly secure from any serious attack of the wild natives in the vicinity.

These Mulattoes were an acute, active, and enterprising race of men; but their unhappy condition as a degraded caste, and the irregular sort of life they had led, in some respects, under old Stollz, were not favourable to the formation of habits either of steady industry or strict morality. Stollz himself had exhibited the evil example of living in habitual concubinage; and, what was still more prejudicial, the sanctions of legal marriage were refused by the colonial church to their unions, except upon both parties exhibiting qualifications, which in nineteen cases out of twenty were quite unattainable in their existing circumstances. For instance—the clergyman of the district had refused to marry Christian Groepe, one of the most respectable and well educated of these men, to the woman who had been his faithful partner for nearly a dozen years, and had borne him eight children, merely because the poor woman, after several attempts, could not accurately repeat the church catechism! The fact is, there existed a strong prejudice among the white colonists against the full admission of the coloured class to ecclesiastical privileges, and the majority of the colonial clergy were so little alive to the apostolic duties of their sacred office as to lend their sanction, directly or indirectly, to these unchristian prejudices—which were also countenanced by the colonial laws.

Notwithstanding, however, these and other disadvan-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tageous circumstances, our Mulatto auxiliaries were, as a body, on the whole extremely well behaved. Their marriage unions, though acknowledged neither by the law nor the church, were, with rare exceptions, permanently and strictly adhered to. Though too much addicted to hunting and other idle habits of semi-civilised men, they were not unwilling to labour, and to labour vigorously, when an opportunity was afforded them of thereby improving their circumstances. Occasional inebriety, when temptation assailed them in the shape of a brandy hawker's wagon, (one of the worst nuisances of the colony), was perhaps their greatest vice. But not a few had virtue to resist even this besetting sin, when duly admonished of its enormity; and the worst of them did not surpass in the indulgence of this vice, many both of the Dutch and English colonists. With few exceptions, they attended regularly and devoutly at our Sabbath service; and, what was still more gratifying, they evinced great anxiety to learn to read, and to obtain copies of the Scriptures for the instruction of their children.

About this period our enlarged location was subdivided; and the several families took possession of their respective allotments. I then removed my own residence to Eildon, at the lower extremity of our territory, in order to occupy a farm which had been granted to me for my eldest brother, who had not yet arrived from Scotland. As the process of erecting and furnishing an African cabin had again to be performed on this occasion, I shall describe it somewhat minutely. It may help to give the reader a more distinct picture of our mode of life at that period than can be easily conveyed by general description.

The site which I fixed upon for my residence was about three miles distant from my neighbours on either side; Mrs. Rennie and her family being on the stream above me, and Captain Cameron below, with rocky heights and clumps of shrubbery intervening. I selected an open grassy meadow, with a steep mountain behind, and the small river in front, bordered by willow trees and groves of the thorny acacia.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

It was a beautiful and secluded spot; the encircling hills sprinkled over with trees and bushes, and the fertile meadow-ground clothed with rich pasture, and bounded by cliffs crowned with aloes and euphorbias.

As the hut I was about to erect was still only intended for a temporary residence, I adopted, with some variations, the mode practised by the coloured natives in constructing their slight habitations. Drawing a circle on the ground of about eighteen feet in diameter, I planted upright round this circle about twenty tall willow poles; digging, with an old bayonet, holes in the ground, just large enough to receive their thicker ends. I then planted a stouter pole exactly in the centre, and, drawing together the tops of the others, I bound them firmly to this central tree with thongs of quagga's hide. With the same ligature pliant spars or saplings were bound round the circle of poles, at suitable intervals, from bottom to top; and thus the wicker frame or skeleton of a cabin was completed, in the shape of a bee-hive or sugar-loaf. It was then thatched with reeds, the ends of the first layer being let about a couple of inches into the earth. Spaces were left for a door and a small window; but neither fire-place nor chimney formed any part of our plan. A convenient door, to open in two halves, was soon constructed of the boards of some packing cases; and a yard of thin cotton cloth stretched upon a wooden frame formed a suitable window.

With the assistance of my Hottentot servants I then proceeded to plaster the interior to the height of about six feet, with the composition mentioned at page 175. When the plaster was dry, the whole was washed over with a sort of size-paint, composed of pipe-clay and wood-ashes diluted with milk, forming a handsome and durable greyish stone colour.

Thus secured externally, the next point was to lay a dry and firm floor below foot. Following the custom of the country, I directed a dozen or two of large ant-hillocks, of which there were hundreds within view, to be broken up and brought into the hut, selecting those that had been

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

previously pierced and sacked by the ant-eater. This material, from having been apparently cemented by the insect architects with some glutinous substance, forms, when pounded and sprinkled with water, a strong adhesive mortar, which only requires to be well kneaded with trampling feet for a few days, in order to become a dry and compact pavement, almost as solid and impenetrable as stone or brick.

With the aid of my native assistants, I had thus obtained a commodious circular cabin, about eighteen feet in diameter, and nineteen feet high in the centre. In that mild climate this was sufficient for shelter; but for comfort something more was necessary. Except cooking utensils, travelling-trunks, and some cases of books, I had, as I have formerly mentioned, brought with me nothing in the shape of furniture; and I had been forced to abandon most of the rustic things I had made at Clifton, on account of one of our neighbours having unluckily imported a colony of bugs from London, which in a single season overran the whole hamlet, and occasioned us to destroy by fire most of the huts when we abandoned them. We thus got rid of bugs, and of a plague still more intolerable—of fleas; and though we once or twice found scorpions in our cabin at Eildon, this last formidable insect proved to be in reality by far the least vexatious inmate of the three.

But having, as I have already noticed, a touch of the Robinson Crusoe about me, I once more betook myself to the use of the hatchet, saw, and auger; and stimulated by necessity, 'the mother of invention,' I contrived, in the course of a few weeks, to have my new cabin commodiously and completely furnished. First, I partitioned off from the outer apartment two bed-closets, so contrived, that, by drawing a curtain or two, they could be lighted and ventilated at pleasure. In these, I constructed bedsteads; the frames being formed of stout poles of wild-olive (*oliva capensis*) from a neighbouring thicket, with the smooth shining bark left on them; and the bottoms on which were spread the mattresses, consisting of a strong elastic net-work



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of thongs of bullock's hide. With similar materials I made a sofa for the outer apartment, which also served occasionally for a sleeping couch; together with the frame of a table, and a few chairs and stools. Not one of these, excepting the table, had the touch of a plane upon it. But they looked nothing the worse for that; and the cabin and its rude furniture had something of the appearance of a rustic summer-house. My books, ranged high on a frame of spars over the bed-rooms, with a couple of firelocks slung in front, a lion's and leopard's skin or two stretched along the thatch above, with horns of antelopes and other country spoils interspersed, completed the appropriate decorations of my African dwelling.

A few huts, of a similar but still ruder construction, were erected behind my own for the accommodation of our native servants, for our little military guard, and for a store-room and kitchen. When these and the folds for the flocks and herds were finished, the establishment was considered, for the time, complete. The work of inclosing, cultivating, and irrigating a portion of land for a garden, orchard, and corn-field, was a task requiring much time and labour, and was not completed till after my brother had succeeded me in the occupation of the place.

The rations of flour, &c. were discontinued at the close of 1821; but as our wheat crops had succeeded pretty well this season, and we had now got a competent share of live stock on our farms, we ran no risk of wanting at least the *necessaries* of life. We killed our own beef and mutton; we had milk, butter, and cheese; we reared abundance of poultry; we cultivated with success potatoes, pumpkins, melons, with almost all the ordinary esculent vegetables, and some not known in Europe. We learned from our Dutch-African neighbours to make our own soap and candles; and to manufacture from the skins of our sheep and goats, tanned with mimosa bark, excellent leather for jackets and trousers—and which supplied a sort of clothing well adapted for a country full of thorny trees and jungles. All that we had occasion to purchase, therefore, were a few

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

*luxuries*—such as tea, coffee, sugar, wine, spices, &c. We usually got a sufficient quantity at a time, from Cape Town, or Algoa Bay, to last us a considerable period; but once or twice, our old stock being exhausted before the new arrived, we found ourselves entirely destitute of the most important of these articles—tea and sugar, of which neither Cradock nor Somerset then afforded a regular supply.

We were once subjected to a more serious privation. In the summer of 1821-22, we were again visited by a severe drought, which endured so long that at length our little river ceased to flow; and, although we had enough of water in permanent pools and fountains for ourselves and our cattle to drink, we could not get our wheat ground into flour, in consequence of all the mills on the river being stopped for want of water, and were soon left without bread. As all our neighbours were nearly in the same situation, we could neither borrow nor purchase. Our Dutch-African neighbours and our Hottentot servants took the matter very quietly. They could live very well on mutton and boiled corn, they said, for a month or two, till rain fell. Indeed many of them in the arid back country live entirely on animal food and milk, without either bread or vegetables. But it was different with us: we felt the want of *bread* as a grievous privation. For a week or two we made a shift to grind a daily supply with our coffee mill; but this at length also failed. The iron handle was repeatedly broken; and though I had enough of smith's or tinker's craft to repair it twice, the third fracture was beyond my skill; and we were then reduced to grind, or rather to bruise, our corn, by crushing a few grains at a time with a round stone upon a flat one. By this tedious process we procured a small cake or two daily; and with this we were forced to content ourselves, until we could obtain a supply of flour from Somerset. This was a *real* privation: but, after all, I must not forbear to add, that these same cakes, baked of coarse meal ground between two stones, and occasionally of my own grinding, made the sweetest bread, I think, I ever tasted.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

During my residence at Eildon, I made various exploratory excursions into the waste country lying between our valley and the New Caffer Frontier, which had remained totally unoccupied since the native inhabitants were driven out of it in 1819. This tract, on its first acquisition by the Colonial Government, was termed the Neutral Ground; afterwards, the Ceded Territory*. It comprises an irregular area of about 2,800 square miles, or a million and a half of acres, of which the upper part, immediately adjacent to our location, is a mountainous region, intersected with deep glens, abounding with wood, water, and pasturage. The streams issuing from these glens and their numerous subsidiary kloofs form the Kat and Koonap rivers.

In one of my excursions into this region, I was accompanied by a hunting party of our Mulatto Hottentots; and while they were engaged in chasing the eland, the gnu, and the hartèbeest, in the pastures below, I ascended the Winterberg, the loftiest and most remarkable mountain in this part of the country. Though steep, it is accessible on horseback to within 500 or 600 yards of the top, whence it is necessary to clamber up the shelving rocks on the western side; the tabular summit being surrounded apparently, in

---

* The former boundary of the Colony on the east,—as fixed by the Dutch Governor Plettenberg, in 1778, and afterwards confirmed at a conference held with the Chief Gaika, in 1797, at which Mr. Barrow was present,—was the Great Fish River, from its mouth to a spot near the influx of the Bavian's River (Lynden); and from thence continued along the summit of the Kahaberg, and of the ridge which divides Glen-Lynden from the valleys lying eastward of it, and the head-waters of the Tarka from those of the Koonap, till it reached the top of the Winterberg. The new boundary is formed by the Keisi and Chumi rivers, to the influx of the Gaga streamlet, and thence runs along the summit of the Katberg ridge to the Winterberg. The tract of country circumscribed by these two lines, and by the sea beach on the south, constitutes the 'Ceded Territory.' —(*See Map.*)

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

all other directions, by a perpendicular wall of basaltic rock, like the rampart of a fortification. In many places, gigantic natural columns abutted from this rocky rampart, like flanking towers and bastions, entirely separated, in numerous instances, by deep chasms from the front of the cliff. On these inaccessible turrets, we observed the eyries of several species of eagles and vultures. The base of the rocks was fringed with a belt of dwarf bamboo, not found in the country below.

The height of the Winterberg is generally supposed to be at least 6,000 feet above the level of the sea. Some engineer officers, who ascended it soon after me, estimated its elevation at about 8,000 feet; but I believe they had no instruments for ascertaining the fact scientifically, and am rather inclined, from other circumstances, to consider this estimate beyond the truth. The view from the summit is, however, very extensive in all directions. A large portion of the Amakosa territory, with the Indian Ocean beyond, can be viewed in clear weather to the south-east; and I distinctly perceived the remarkable peaks of Winterhoek near the sources of the Zwartkops River, distant fully 120 miles as the crow flies. The top of the Winterberg is usually covered with snow for about three months in the year, from which circumstance it doubtless obtained its colonial name. Its immediate height, however, from the upland country which surrounds it, is not very imposing—not more apparently than from 1,500 to 1,800 feet. In a recess, on its summit, we discovered what appeared, from fragments of skins, bones, and broken arrows, to be a Bushman's den —occupied, seemingly, at no distant period. To this race of wild huntsmen, who are endowed with extraordinary powers of vision, such an elevated watch-tower must afford great facilities for descrying afar off the game which they pursue, or the enemies whom they shun.

On subsequent occasions, I made excursions through other parts of the Ceded Territory. One of these was for the purpose of exploring the valley of the Mancazana, now

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

called Glen-Pringle*. I was accompanied by some of our own party, and by Diederik and Christian Muller, renowned Dutch-African huntsmen. We slept one night at the mouth of a subsidiary dell, which I named Elephant's Glen, from the circumstance of its wooded recesses being then inhabited by a troop of those gigantic animals, whose strange wild cry was heard by us the whole night long, as we bivouacked by the river, sounding like a trumpet among the moonlight mountains.

The scenery both of this and of the other chief branches of the Koonap river was of a very impressive character. The aspect of the country, though wild, was rich and beautiful. It was watered by numerous rivulets, and finely diversified with lofty mountains and winding vales, with picturesque rocks and shaggy jungles, open upland pastures, and fertile meadows along the river margins, sprinkled as usual with willows and acacias, and occasionally with groves of stately geelhout. Many of the mountain sides and kloofs were clothed with forests of large timber. At the time I refer to, the whole of this tract had been for some years abandoned to the undisputed occupation of the wild animals, which had consequently flocked to it in great numbers from the surrounding districts. In no other part of South Africa have I ever seen so many of the larger sorts of antelopes; and the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the buffalo were also to be found in the forests, though we *saw* none of these animals on this occasion. But the remains of Caffer hamlets, scattered through every grassy nook and dell, and now fast crumbling to decay, excited reflections of a very melancholy character, and occasionally increased, even to a most painful degree, the feeling of dreary *lonesomeness* which the wild grandeur of the scenery tended to excite.

On another excursion, I had the good fortune to fall in

* There is another Mancazana in the Ceded Territory—one of the sources of the Kat River. The name is derived from the Amakosa term *Umkasana*, or *Amakasana*, and signifies the 'River of Girls.'

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

with a troop of elephants—a truly magnificent spectacle, of which I shall endeavour to convey some idea by a more particular description.

In April 1822, Lieutenants Rivers and Pettingal, two engineer officers, accompanied by Captain Fox, with six or eight men of the Cape Corps cavalry, came up Glen-Lynden on an exploratory tour, and spent a night with me in my reed hut. I rode with them next day into the Ceded Territory; and while they ascended the Winterberg, I constructed, with the aid of the Hottentot soldiers, a sort of booth or shieling, for our shelter at night, on the skirts of a wood, in a lovely verdant glen at the foot of the mountain, all alive with the amusing garrulity of monkeys and paroquets. The aspect of the Winterberg from this spot was very grand, with its coronet of rocks, its frowning front, and its steep grassy skirts, feathered over with a straggling forest partly scathed by fire. As lions were numerous in the vicinity, we took care to have a blazing watch-fire, and a couple of sentinels were placed for our protection during the night. We received, however, no disturbance, and spent a very pleasant evening in our 'greenwood bower;' the spot, in jocular commemoration of one of the party, being thenceforth denominated Fox's Kraal or Shieling.

Next day, we followed the course of the Koonap over green sloping hills, till the increasing ruggedness of the ravines, and the prevalence of jungle, compelled us to pursue a Caffer path, now kept open only by the passage of wild animals, along the river margin. The general character of the scenery I have already described. During the forenoon, we had seen many herds of quaggas, and antelopes of various kinds, which I need not stop to enumerate; but after mid-day, we came upon the recent traces of a troop of elephants. Their huge foot-prints were every where visible; and in the swampy spots on the banks of the river it was evident that some of them had been luxuriously enjoying themselves by rolling their unwieldy bulks in the ooze and mud. But it was in the groves and jungles that they had left the most striking proofs of their recent

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

presence and peculiar habits. In many places paths had been trodden through the midst of dense thorny forests, otherwise impenetrable. They appeared to have opened up these paths with great judgment, always taking the best and shortest cut to the next open savannah, or ford of the river; and in this way their labours were of the greatest use to us by pioneering our route through a most intricate country, never yet traversed by a wheel-carriage, and great part of it, indeed, not easily accessible even on horseback. In such places the great bull elephant always marches in the van, bursting through the jungle as a bullock would through a field of hops, treading down the brushwood, and breaking off with his proboscis the larger branches that obstruct the passage, whilst the females and younger part of the herd follow in his wake.

Among the mimosa trees sprinkled over the meadows, or lower bottoms, the traces of their operations were not less apparent. Immense numbers of these trees had been torn out of the ground, and placed in an inverted position, in order to enable the animals to browse at their ease on their juicy roots, which form a favourite part of their food. I observed that, in numerous instances, when the trees were of considerable size, the elephant had employed one of his tusks, exactly as we would use a crow-bar—thrusting it under the roots to loosen their hold of the earth, before he attempted to tear them up with his proboscis. Many of the larger mimosas had resisted all their efforts; and, indeed, it is only after heavy rains, when the soil is soft and loose, that they can successfully attempt this operation.

While we were admiring these and other indications of the elephant's strength and sagacity, we suddenly found ourselves, on issuing from a woody defile, in the midst of a numerous herd of those animals. None of them, however, were very close to us; but they were seen scattered in groups over the bottom and sides of a valley two or three miles in length; some browsing on the succulent spekboom, which clothed the skirts of the hills on either side; others at work among

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the young mimosas and evergreens sprinkled over the meadows. As we proceeded cautiously onward, some of these groups came more distinctly into view; consisting apparently, in many instances, of separate families, the male, the female, and the young of different sizes; and the gigantic magnitude of the chief leaders became more and more striking. The calm and stately tranquillity of their deportment, too, was remarkable. Though we were a band of about a dozen horsemen, including our Hottentot attendants, they seemed either not to observe, or altogether to disregard, our march down the valley.

Captain Fox, who had only recently arrived from England, was very desirous of seeing an elephant-hunt; and the Hottentots, who were well experienced in such pastime, eagerly solicited permission to attack a group that were browsing in a thicket about a quarter of a mile distant; but it was judged imprudent as well as useless to make any such attempt. The sun was sinking fast towards the horizon; we had recently passed through a long succession of intricate and difficult defiles; a pass of the same description lay just before us; and the hills on either side rose steep, and rugged, and shaggy with an impenetrable forest of evergreens. To have commenced an attack, in such a situation, with our small guns and leaden bullets, on any part of a herd whose total number exceeded fifty elephants, would have been not only ineffective, but dangerous in the extreme. I confess, too, that when I looked around on those noble and stately animals, feeding in quiet security in the depth of this secluded valley—too peaceful to injure, too powerful to dread any other living creature—I felt that it would be almost a sort of sacrilege to attempt their destruction merely to furnish sport to the great destroyer man; and I was glad when, after a brief consultation, it was unanimously agreed to leave them unmolested.

While we were conversing on this subject, as we rode leisurely along through a meadow thickly studded over with clumps of tall evergreens, I observed something moving over the top of a bush close a-head of us, and had just time

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to say to the gentleman next me—'Look out there!' when we turned the corner of the bush, and beheld an enormous male elephant standing right in the path within less than a hundred paces distance. We halted and surveyed him for a few minutes in silent admiration and astonishment. He was, indeed, a mighty and magnificent creature. The two engineer officers, who were familiar with the appearance of the elephant in his wild state, agreed that the animal before us was at least *fourteen feet* in height; and our Hottentots, in their broken Dutch, whispered that he was "*een groot gruwzaam karl—bania', bania' groot!*"—or, as one of them translated it, "a hugeous terrible fellow, plenty, plenty big!"

The elephant at first did not seem to notice us; for the vision of the animal is not very acute, and the wind being pretty brisk, and we to the leeward of him, his scent and hearing, though keen, had not apprised him of our approach. But when we turned off at a gallop, making a circuit through the bushes to avoid collision with him, he was startled by the sound of our horses' feet, and turned towards us with a very menacing attitude, erecting his enormous ears, and elevating his trunk in the air, as if about to rush upon us. Had he done so, some of us would probably have been destroyed; for the elephant can run down a well-mounted horseman in a short chase: and besides, there was another ugly defile but a little way before us, where the only passage was a difficult pass through the jungle, with a precipice on one side and a wooded mountain on the other. However, the '*gruwzaam karl,*' fortunately, did not think proper to give chase, but remained on the same spot looking steadfastly after us; well pleased, no doubt, to be rid of our company, and satisfied to see his family all safe around him. The latter consisted of two or three females, and as many young ones, that had hastily crowded up behind him from the river margin, as if to claim his protection, when the rushing sound of our cavalcade startled their quiet valley.

I counted altogether fifty-three of the herd, and there were probably a few more concealed by the tall copsewood.

After passing the elephants, the valley, emerging from

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the mountains, gradually widened out, and spread itself into extensive open plains or savannahs; in the midst of which, near the influx of the Gola rivulet, we reached the wagon-road from Somerset to Fort Beaufort, where we found the tents and wagons of our fellow travellers.

To give the reader some idea of the peril of encountering the African elephant when enraged, I may here insert the following account by my friend Lieut. Moodie, of the 21st Fusileers, of his remarkable escape from under the feet of one, only a few months previous to the period of the above excursion. The account is extracted from a letter addressed to me by Mr. Moodie*.

"In the year 1821, I had joined the recently-formed semi-military settlement of Fredericksburg, on the picturesque banks of the Golana, beyond the Great Fish River. At this place our party (consisting chiefly of the disbanded officers and soldiers of the Royal African corps) had already shot many elephants, with which the country at that time abounded. The day previous to my adventure I had witnessed an elephant-hunt for the first time. On that occasion a large female was killed, after some hundred shots had been fired at her. The balls seemed at first to produce little effect, but at length she received several shots in the trunk and eyes, which entirely disabled her from making resistance or escaping, and she then fell an easy prey to her assailants.

"On the following day, one of our servants came to inform us that a large troop of elephants was in the neighbourhood of the settlement, and that several of our people were already on their way to attack them. I instantly set out to join the hunters; but, from losing my way in the jungle through which I had to proceed, I did not overtake them, until after they had driven the elephants from their first station. On getting out of the jungle I was proceeding

* It has already appeared, with several others of my anecdotes of African animals, in the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge,"—Article "*Menageries*."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

through an open meadow on the banks of the Golana, to the spot where I heard the firing, when I was suddenly warned of approaching danger, by loud cries of '*Pas-op!*'—*Take care!*'—in Dutch and English, coupled with my name; and at the same moment I heard the crackling of broken branches, produced by the elephants bursting through the wood, and the tremendous screams of their wrathful voices resounding among the precipitous banks. Immediately a a large female, accompanied by three others of a smaller size, issued from the edge of the jungle, which skirted the river margin. As they were not more than two hundred yards off, and were proceeding directly towards me, I had not much time to decide on my motions. Being alone, and in the middle of a little open plain, I saw that I must inevitably be caught, should I fire in this position, and my shot not take effect. I therefore retreated hastily out of their direct path, thinking they would not observe me, until I should find a better opportunity to attack them. But in this I was mistaken, for on looking back I perceived, to my dismay, that they had left their former course, and were rapidly pursuing and gaining ground on me. Under these circumstances I determined to reserve my fire as a last resource; and turning off at right angles in the opposite direction, I made for the banks of the small river, with a view to take refuge among the rocks on the other side, where I should have been safe. But before I got within fifty paces of the river, the elephants were within twenty paces of me—the large female in the middle, and the other three on either side of her, apparently with the intention of making sure of me; all of them screaming so tremendously, that I was almost stunned with the noise. I immediately turned round, cocked my gun, and aimed at the head of the largest—the female. But the gun, unfortunately, from the powder being damp, hung fire, till I was in the act of taking it from my shoulder, when it went off, and the ball merely grazed the side of her head. Halting only for an instant, the animal again rushed furiously forward. I fell—I cannot say whether struck down by her trunk or not.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

She then made a thrust at me with her tusk. Luckily for me she had only *one*, which still more luckily missed its mark; but it ploughed up the earth within an inch or two of my body. She then caught me with her trunk by the middle —threw me between her fore feet—and knocked me about with them for a brief space:—I was scarcely in a condition to compute the number of minutes or seconds very accurately. Once she pressed her foot on my chest with such force, that I actually felt the bones, as it were, bending under the weight; and once she trod on the middle of my arm, which, fortunately, lay flat on the ground at the time. During this rough handling, however, I never entirely lost my recollection, else I have little doubt she would have settled my accounts with this world. But owing to the roundness of her foot, I generally managed, by twisting my body and limbs, to escape her direct tread. While I was still undergoing this buffetting, Lieutenant Chisholm, of the Royal African corps, and Diederik, a Hottentot, had come up, and fired several shots at her, one of which hit her in the shoulder; and at the same time her companions, or young ones, retiring, and screaming to her from the edge of the forest, she reluctantly left me, giving me a cuff or two with her hind feet in passing. I got up, picked up my gun, and staggered away as fast as my aching bones would allow; but observing that she turned round, and looked back towards me, before entering the bush, I lay down in the long grass, by which means I escaped her observation.

"On reaching the top of the high bank of the river, I met my brother, who had not been at this day's hunt, but had run out on being told by one of the men that he had seen me killed. He was not a little surprised at meeting me alone and in a whole skin, though plastered with mud from head to foot. While he, Mr. Knight, of the Cape regiment, and I, were yet talking of my adventure, an unlucky soldier of the Royal African corps, of the name of M'Clane, attracted the attention of a large male elephant, which had

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

been driven towards the village. The ferocious animal gave chace, and caught him immediately under the height where we were standing—carried him some distance in his trunk—then threw him down, and bringing his four feet together, trod and stamped upon him for a considerable time, till he was quite dead. Leaving the corpse for a little, he again returned, as if to make quite sure of his destruction, and kneeling down, crushed and kneaded the body with his fore-legs. Then seizing it again with his trunk, he carried it to the edge of the jungle, and threw it among the bushes. While this tragedy was going on, my brother and I scrambled down the bank as far as we could, and fired at the furious animal, but we were at too great a distance to be of any service to the unfortunate man, who was crushed almost to a jelly.

"Shortly after this catastrophe, a shot from one of the people broke this male elephant's left fore-leg, which completely disabled him from running. On this occasion, we witnessed a touching instance of affection and sagacity in the elephant, which I cannot forbear to relate, as it so well illustrates the character of this noble animal. Seeing the danger and distress of her mate, the female before mentioned (my personal antagonist), regardless of her own danger, quitted her shelter in the bush, rushed out to his assistance, walked round and round him, chasing away the assailants, and still returning to his side and caressing him; and when he attempted to walk she placed her flank under his wounded side and supported him. This scene continued nearly half an hour, until the female received a severe wound from Mr. C. Mackenzie, of the Royal African corps, which drove her again to the bush, where she speedily sank exhausted from the loss of blood; and the male soon after received a mortal wound also from the same officer.

"Thus ended our elephant-hunt; and I need hardly say, that what we witnessed on this occasion, of the intrepidity and ferocity of these powerful animals, rendered us more cautious in our dealings with them for the future."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Wars with the Wild Beasts; Lion-hunting—Notices and Anecdotes of other Animals: Leopards; Hyænas; the Hippopotamus and Rhinoceros; the Buffalo; the Gnu; the Quagga; the Ursine Baboon, &c.—The Secretary-bird—Hanging Nests of the Loxia and Weaver-bird—Serpents; Antidotes against the effects of their Poison—The Guana, and other Reptiles —Insects—Exuberance of Animal Life.*

I SHALL devote this chapter to cursory notices of some of the more remarkable families of the Animal Kingdom with which we became more or less acquainted, in the course of occupying a position on the outskirts of civilisation; premising that these zoological scraps are intended for the general reader merely, and without pretension to add any gleanings of natural history worthy the particular attention of men of science.

In the first place, I shall now give some account of our wars with the beasts of prey—allowing, of course, due precedence to the lion. The first actual conflict of the Glen-Lynden settlers with this formidable animal occurred in June, 1821, while I was absent from home,—having gone to meet the Acting-Governor at Somerset. The following were the circumstances, as detailed to me by the parties present. A horse was missing, belonging to old Hans Blok, one of our Mulatto tenants, which, after some search, was discovered by the foot-prints to have been killed by a lion. The boldest men of the settlement having assembled to give battle to the spoiler, he was traced to a secluded spot, about a mile or upwards from the place where he had seized his prey. He had carried the horse with him to devour it at his leisure, as is the usual practice of this powerful animal.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

On the approach of the hunters, the lion, after some little demur, retreated to a thicket in a shallow ravine at no great distance. The huntsmen followed cautiously, and having taken post on an adjoining height, poured volley after volley into the thicket. This bombardment produced no perceptible effect; the lion kept under covert and refused to give battle; only when the wolf-hounds were sent in to tease him, he drove them forth again with a savage growl, killing two of those that had dared to approach him. At length Mr. George Rennie, the leader of the hunt, and a man of daring hardihood, losing patience at this fruitless proceeding, descended from the height, and approaching the thicket, threw two large stones into the midst of it. This rash bravado brought forth the lion. He sprung fiercely from his covert, and with another bound would probably have had our friend prostrate under his paw, but most fortunately at this critical moment, the attention of the savage beast was attracted by a favourite dog of Mr. Rennie's, which ran boldly up to the lion and barked in his face. The poor dog was destroyed in a moment: a single blow from the lion's paw rewarded his generous devotion with death. But that instant was sufficient to save his master. Mr. Rennie had instinctively sprung back a pace or two: his comrades on the rock fired at once with effect; and the lion fell dead upon the spot, with eight balls through his body.

Our next serious rencounter with the monarch of the wilderness occurred about the close of April, 1822. I was then residing on my farm at Eildon, in the bee-hive cabin, which I have described in the preceding chapter. My nearest neighbour, at that time, was Captain Cameron, a Scotch officer of the 72nd regiment, who had lately come to occupy the farm immediately below me on the river. I had gone down one evening with another gentleman and two or three female relatives to drink tea with Captain Cameron's family. The distance being little more than three miles, we considered ourselves next-door neighbours; and, as the weather was fine, we agreed to ride home by moonlight—no lions

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

having been seen or traced in the valley for nine or ten months. On our return, we were jesting as we rode along about wild beasts and Caffers. That part of the valley we were passing through is very wild, and encumbered in several places with thickets of evergreens; but we had no suspicion at the moment of what afterwards appeared to be the fact—that a lion was actually dogging us through the bushes the whole way home. Happily for us, however, he did not then show himself, or give us any indication of his presence; being probably somewhat scared by our number, or by the light dresses of the ladies waving in the moonlight.

About midnight, however, I was awakened by an unusual noise in the *kraal*, or cattle-fold, close behind our cabin. Looking out, I saw the whole of the horned cattle springing wildly over the high thorn fence, and scampering round the place. Fancying that a hyæna, which I had heard howling when I went to bed, had alarmed the animals by breaking into the kraal, I seized my gun, and sallied forth, undressed as I was, to have a shot at it. Though the cloudless full moon shone with a brilliant light (so bright in that fine climate that I have frequently read print by it), I could discover no cause for the terror of the cattle, and after calling a Hottentot to shut them again into the kraal, I retired once more to rest. Next morning, Captain Cameron rode up to inform me that his herdsmen had discovered by the traces in the path, that a large lion had followed us up the valley the preceding night; and upon further search, it was ascertained that this unwelcome visitant had actually been in my fold the preceding night, and had carried off a sheep. But as he appeared, by the traces, to have retreated with his prey to the mountains, we abandoned for the moment all idea of pursuing him.

The lion was not disposed, however, to have done with us on such easy terms. He returned that very night, and killed my favourite riding-horse, little more than a hundred yards from the door of our cabin. I then considered it full time to take prompt measures in self-defence; and sent a



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

messenger round the location to call out a party to hunt him, being assured by our Hottentots that, as he had only devoured a small portion of the horse, he would certainly be lurking in the vicinity. The huntsmen speedily assembled, to the number of seventeen horsemen, including Mulattoes and Hottentots; bringing with them a goodly number of strong hounds.

The first point was to track the lion to his covert. This was effected by a few of the Hottentots on foot. Commencing from the spot where the horse was killed, they followed the *spoor*, or track, through grass, and gravel, and brushwood, with astonishing ease and dexterity, where an inexperienced eye could have discovered neither footprint nor mark of any kind,—until, at length, we fairly tracked him into a large *bosch*, or straggling thicket, of brushwood and evergreens, about a mile distant.

The next object was to drive him out of this retreat, in order to attack him in a close phalanx, and with more safety and effect. The approved mode in such cases is to torment the animal with dogs till he abandons his covert, and comes forth into the open plain. The whole band of hunters then march forward together, and fire deliberately, either one by one, or in volleys. If he does not speedily fall, but grows furious, and advances upon his assailants, they must then stand close in a circle, and turn their horses rear-outward; some holding them fast by the bridles, while the others kneel to take a steady aim at the lion as he approaches, as he will sometimes do up to the very horses' heels,—crouching every now and then, as if to measure the distance and strength of his enemies. This is the moment to shoot him fairly in the forehead, or in some other mortal part. If they continue to wound him ineffectually till he waxes desperate; or if the horses, startled by his terrific roar, grow frantic with terror, and burst loose; the business becomes rather serious, and may end in mischief—especially if all the party are not men of courage, coolness, and experience. The frontier Boors are, however, generally such excellent marksmen, and withal so cool and deliberate, that they

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

seldom fail to shoot him dead as soon as they get within a fair distance.

In the present instance, we did not manage matters quite so discreetly. The Mulattoes, after recounting to us all these and other sage laws of lion-hunting, were themselves the first to depart from them. Finding that our hounds made little impression on the lion, they divided themselves into two or three parties, and rode round the jungle, firing into the spot where the dogs were barking round him, but without effect. At length, after some hours spent in thus beating about the bush, the Scottish blood of some of my countrymen began to get impatient; and three of them, Messrs. George and John Rennie, and James Ekron, a servant of my father's, announced their determination to march in and beard the lion in his den, provided three of the Mulattoes, who were superior marksmen, would support them, and follow up their fire should the enemy venture to give battle. Accordingly, in they went, (in spite of the warnings of some more prudent men among us,) to within fifteen or twenty paces of the spot where the animal lay concealed. He was couched among the roots of a large evergreen bush, with a small space of open ground on one side of it; and they fancied, on approaching, that they saw him distinctly, lying glaring at them from under the foliage. Charging their coloured allies to stand firm, and level fair should *they* miss, the Scottish champions let fly together, and struck—not the lion, as it afterwards proved, but a great block of red stone, beyond which he was actually lying. Whether any of the shot grazed him is uncertain, but, with no other warning than a furious growl, forth he bolted from the bush. The Mulattoes, in place of now pouring in their volley upon him, instantly turned and fled helter-skelter, leaving him to do his pleasure upon the defenceless Scots,—who, with empty guns, were tumbling over each other, in their hurry to escape the clutch of the rampant savage. In a twinkling he was upon them—and with one stroke of his paw dashed John Rennie (my brother-in-law) to the ground. The scene was terrific! There



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

stood the lion with his foot upon his prostrate foe, looking round in conscious power and pride upon the bands of his assailants,—and with a port the most noble and imposing that can be conceived. It was the most magnificent thing I ever witnessed. The danger of our friends, however, rendered it at the moment too terrible to enjoy fully either the grand or the ludicrous part of the picture. We expected every instant to see one or more of them torn in pieces; nor, though the rest of us were standing within fifty paces, with our guns cocked and levelled, durst we fire for their assistance. One was lying under the lion's paw, and the others scrambling towards us in such a way as to intercept our aim at him. All this passed far more rapidly than I have described it. But luckily the lion, after steadily surveying us for a few seconds, seemed willing to be quits with us on fair terms; and, with a fortunate forbearance, turned calmly away, and driving the hounds like rats from among his heels, bounded over the adjoining thicket like a cat over a footstool, clearing brakes and bushes twelve or fifteen feet high as readily as if they had been tufts of grass,—and, abandoning the jungle, retreated towards the mountains.

After ascertaining the state of our rescued comrade, (who fortunately had sustained no other injury than a bloody scratch on the back, and a severe bruise in the ribs, from the force with which the animal had dashed him to the ground,) we renewed the chase with our Hottentot allies, and hounds in full cry. In a short time we again came up with the enemy, and found him standing at bay under an old mimosa tree, by the side of a mountain stream, which we had distinguished by the name of Huntly Burn. The dogs were barking round, but afraid to approach him,—for he was now beginning to growl fiercely, and to brandish his tail in a manner that showed he was meditating mischief. The Hottentots, by taking a circuit between him and the mountain, crossed the stream, and took their station on the top of a precipice overlooking the spot where he stood. Another party of us occupied a position on the other side of the glen;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and placing the poor lion thus between two fires, which confused his attention and prevented his retreat, we kept battering away at him till he fell, unable again to grapple with us, pierced with many wounds.

He proved to be a large full-grown lion, about six years of age, as our coloured friends affirmed. He measured fully eleven feet from the nose to the tip of the tail. His fore leg below the knee was so thick that I could not span it with both hands; and his neck, breast, and limbs appeared, when the skin was taken off, a complete congeries of sinews. His head, which seemed as large and heavy as that of an ordinary ox, I caused to be boiled for the purpose of preserving the skull*, and tasted the flesh from curiosity. It resembled very white coarse beef, rather insipid, but without any very disagreeable flavour.

Our neighbours, the Nimrods of the Tarka, disapproved highly of our method of attacking this lion in the bush, and said it was a wonder he did not destroy some of us. They were highly diverted with the discomfiture of our three champions; and the story of "Jan Rennie en de Leeuw" long continued to be one of their constant jokes against the Scotchmen,—at which I have often seen some of them laugh till the tears ran over their cheeks. However, the Scotchmen, and especially the Rennies, were not long in redeeming their credit as huntsmen equally adroit as adventurous.

Several other lions were killed at Glen-Lynden and its vicinity, during my residence there; but I shall content myself with the description of another hunt, extracted from a letter†, written by my friend Mr. Philipps, of Glendour

* The skin of this lion, after being rudely tanned by our Hottentots, was, together with the skull, transmitted to Sir Walter Scott, as a testimony of the author's regard; and these trophies have now the honour to form part of the ornaments of the lamented Poet's antique armoury at Abbotsford.

† Afterwards printed in a pleasant little volume, entitled "Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and Cafferland."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

in Albany, who happened to be at the time on a visit to me. Being no great Nimrod myself, I was not present on this occasion.

After describing the rousing of the lion in a wild desert plain near the Zwart-Kei river, in the country of the Amatembu Caffers, Mr. Philipps proceeds:—

"The lion abandoned the grove of mimosas, and we followed him in full cry across the open plain. The Caffers, who had just come up and mixed among us, could scarcely clear themselves of our horses; and their dogs howling and barking—we hallooing—the lion full in view, making for a small copse about a mile distant, with the great number and variety of antelopes on our left, scouring off in different directions, formed altogether one of the most animating spectacles that the annals of sporting could produce.

"Diederik Muller and Lieut. Sheppard being on very spirited horses, were the foremost. Christian Muller gave the signal to dismount, when we were about two hundred yards from the copse. He desired us to be quick in tying the horses; which was done as fast as each came up; and now—there was no retreating. We were on lower ground than the lion, with not a bush around us. The plan was, to advance in a body, leaving our horses with the Hottentots, who were to keep their backs towards the lion, for fear they should become unruly at the sight of him.

"These preparations occupied only a few seconds, and were not quite completed when we heard him growl, and imagined he was making off again. But no!—as if to retrieve his character from suspicion of cowardice for his former flight, he had made up his mind to attack us in his turn. To the growl succeeded a terrific roar;—and at the same instant we beheld him bearing down upon us, his eyeballs glaring with rage. We were taken unprepared—his motion was so rapid no one could take aim;—and he furiously darted at one of the horses, whilst we were at their heads, without a possibility of preventing it. The poor horse sprang forward, and with the force of the action wheeled all the other horses round with him. The lion

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

likewise wheeled, but immediately couched at less than ten yards from us. Our left flank thus became exposed; but on it fortunately stood Christian Muller and Mr. G. Rennie. What an anxious moment! For a few seconds we beheld the monster at this little distance meditating, as it were, on whom he should first spring. Never did I long so ardently to hear the report of a gun. We looked at them taking aim —and then at the lion. It was absolutely necessary to give him a mortal shot, or the consequences might be fatal to some of the party. Every second seemed a minute. At length Christian fired. The under jaw of the lion dropped, blood gushed from his mouth—and he turned round with a view to escape. Mr. Rennie then shot him through the spine, and he fell.

"At this moment he looked grand beyond expression. Turning again towards us, he rose upon his fore feet—his mouth gushing blood—his eyes flashing vengeance. He attempted to spring at us, but his hind legs denied him aid. He dragged them a little space, when Stephanus put a final period to his existence, by shooting him through the brain. He was a noble animal, measuring nearly twelve feet, including the tail*."

Besides the lion, there are not fewer than five species of the genus *felis* found in the colony, which are known by the local names of *tiger*, *berg-tiger*, *luipaard*, *tiger-bosch-kat* (serval?), *roode-kat* (caracal?), and *wilde-kat* (*felis capensis*). The first of these, which is the real leopard (*felis leopardus*) is considerably the largest and most formidable. The *berg-tiger* has not, so far as I know, been distinctly classed by naturalists. The animal called *luipaard* by the Dutch-African colonists, and generally considered to be the

* Readers, who wish for further anecdotes of lion-hunting, will find an ample collection, together with some particulars respecting the habits of this animal, in a paper originally published at the Cape of Good Hope, in our South African Journal, and afterwards inserted in the Appendix to the Travels of my friend Mr. Thompson. *See* vol. ii. p. 375.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

*felis jubata,* is far inferior to the real leopard both in size and beauty.

The South-African leopard differs from the panther of Northern Africa in the form of its spots, in the more slender structure of its body, and in the legs not being so long in proportion to its size. In watching for his prey the leopard crouches on the ground, with his fore-paws stretched out and his head between them, his eyes rather directed upwards. His appearance in a wild state is exceedingly beautiful, his motions in the highest degree easy and graceful, and his agility in bounding among the rocks and woods quite amazing. Of this activity no person can have any idea by seeing these animals in the cages in which they are usually exhibited in Europe, humbled and tamed as they are by confinement and the damp cold of our climate.

The leopard is chiefly found in the mountainous districts of South Africa, where he preys on such of the antelopes as he can surprise, on baboons, and on the *das,* or coney (*hyrax capensis*). He is very much dreaded by the Cape farmers also, for his ravages among the flocks, and among the young foals and calves in the breeding season.

This animal is often seen at night in the villages of the negroes on the West Coast; and being there considered sacred, is never hunted, though children and women are not unfrequently destroyed by him*. In the Cape Colony, where no such respect is paid him, the leopard is shyer, and much more in awe of man. But though he seldom or never ventures to attack mankind, except when driven to extremity, yet in remote places his low half-smothered growl is frequently heard at night, as he prowls around, seeking for an opportunity to break into the sheep-fold. I have myself frequently heard his voice on such occasions.

The leopard, like the hyæna, is often caught in traps,

* My friend Mrs. Lee, whose intimate acquaintance with the natural history of Western Africa, entitles her opinion to the highest deference, informs me, on seeing this paragraph, that it is not the leopard that is found there, but a panther—consequently, an animal quite distinct from the *felis leopardus.*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

constructed of large stones and timber, upon the same principle as a common mouse-trap. When thus caught he is usually baited with dogs, in order to train them to contend with him, and seldom dies without killing one or two of his canine antagonists. When hunted in the fields he instinctively betakes himself to a tree, if one should be within reach. In this situation it is dangerous to approach within reach of his spring; but at the same time, from his exposed position, he becomes an easy prey to the huntsman. They were frequently shot on our location.

The African leopard, though far inferior to the lion or Bengal tiger in strength and intrepidity, and though he usually shuns a conflict with man, is nevertheless an exceedingly active and furious animal, and when driven to desperation becomes a truly formidable antagonist. The Cape colonists relate instances of frightful and sometimes fatal encounters between the hunted leopard and his pursuers. The following is a specimen of these adventures. It occurred in 1822, in the interior of the colony, and is here given as it was related by an individual who knew the parties engaged in it.

Two African farmers, returning from hunting the hartebeest, roused a leopard in a mountain ravine, and immediately gave chase to him. The leopard at first endeavoured to escape by clambering up a precipice; but being hotly pressed, and wounded by a musket-ball, he turned upon his pursuers with the frantic ferocity peculiar to this animal on such emergencies, and springing upon the man who had fired at him, he pulled him to the ground, biting him at the same time on the shoulder, and tearing one of his cheeks severely with his claws. The other hunter, seeing the danger of his comrade, sprang from his horse and attempted to shoot the leopard through the head; but, whether owing to trepidation, or the fear of wounding his friend, or the quick motions of the animal, he unfortunately missed. The leopard, abandoning his prostrate enemy, darted with redoubled fury upon this second antagonist, and so fierce and sudden was his onset, that before the boor could stab him with his hunting-knife, the savage beast

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

struck him on the face with his claws, and actually tore the scalp over his eyes. In this frightful condition the hunter grappled with the leopard, and, struggling for life, they rolled together down a steep declivity. All this passed far more rapidly than it can be described in words. Before the man who had been first attacked could start to his feet and seize his gun, they were rolling one over the other down the bank. In a minute he had reloaded his gun, and rushed forward to save the life of his friend. But it was too late. The leopard had seized the unfortunate man by the throat, and mangled him so dreadfully that death was inevitable; and his comrade (himself severely wounded) had only the melancholy satisfaction of completing the destruction of the savage beast, already exhausted with the loss of blood from several deep wounds by the desperate knife of the expiring huntsman.

Of the ferocity of the Cape leopard, another example occurred in the case of the Moravian missionary Mr. Schmitt, whom I met at Enon. This worthy man had gone out with a party of Hottentots at another Moravian station to hunt some hyænas which had been very destructive to their flocks; and with one of the Hottentots entered a thicket in pursuit of a tiger-wolf that they had wounded. Their hounds, however, instead of the hyæna, started a leopard, which instantly sprang on the Hottentot and bore him to the ground. Mr. Schmitt ran forward to the aid of the man with his gun cocked; but before he could find an opportunity of firing, the animal left the Hottentot and flew with fury at himself. In the scuffle he dropped the gun, but luckily fell above the leopard with his knee on its stomach. The animal seized him by the left arm with its jaws, and kept striking him with its paws and tearing the clothes in tatters from his breast. Schmitt, however, being a powerful man, succeeded, after receiving another severe bite or two, in seizing the leopard by the throat with his right hand, and held it down, in spite of its desperate struggles, for a few minutes; until, just as his strength was giving way, one of the Hottentots on the outside of the jungle, who heard his cries for help, came to his rescue,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and shot the ferocious beast right through the heart, so that its death was quite instantaneous. Had any life been left, its dying struggles might still have proved fatal to Mr. Schmitt. As it was, he was so terribly lacerated, that for several weeks his life was in the greatest danger. The Hottentot who was first attacked, was less severely wounded; but his face was so much torn by the animal's talons, that his eyes were filled with blood, and he was unable to render any aid to the missionary who had so generously come to his rescue.

Of all the beasts of prey, however, that inhabit South Africa, the common spotted hyæna (*hyæna crocuta*), called by the colonists the *tiger-wolf,* is the most voracious and destructive to the flocks. Were the courage of this animal equal to its strength, it would be exceedingly formidable, even to man himself—at least in a country where it exists in such numbers; but, happily, its cowardice is not less characteristic than its voracity. Though they are sometimes met with in packs or troops of twenty or more, I never heard of an instance of their attacking mankind either by day or night—within the colony. At the same time it ought to be remarked, that their awe of civilised man is probably greatly increased by his possession of the firelock; for among the Caffer tribes the same animal is found so much bolder, that he not unfrequently attempts to enter the huts of the natives, and even occasionally devours children and infirm people. But, in the latter case, his audacity cannot fail to be greatly increased by the wretched superstitions which induce those people to expose the bodies of their dead to be entombed in the maw of this universal devourer, and which cause them to regard the hyæna himself as a sort of sacred animal.

One of the chief functions of the hyæna in the economy of nature appears to be that of carrion-scavenger, an office which he divides with the vulture. The lordly lion, the imperial eagle, always kill their own game. The hyæna and vulture come after and gather up the offals. This animal devours not only the remains of dead carcases, but also the hide and the bones, leaving nothing but the skull and a few of

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the larger joints, which baffle even his enormous strength of jaw. Of his efficiency and dexterity in this office I have seen innumerable instances: one sample may suffice. When my horse was killed by the lion, as already described, only a very small part of the carcase was devoured by the destroyer; but next night the entire remains, bones and all, were carried off by the hyænas; and all that was ever afterwards discovered, was one of the hoofs and part of the skull, at a distance of several miles among the mountains.

I have cursorily noticed in my diary (page 187) the depredations of the hyænas in our folds, and our success in catching them in traps. For this contrivance we were indebted to the Hottentots. The trap was built of large loose stones, precisely in the form, and on the same principle, as the common mouse-traps to be seen in England, with a hanging door, also of stone, sustained by a cord, and baited at the farther end with a dead dog, or the entrails of a sheep. By this simple contrivance we speedily entrapped several of the depredators that had so much harassed us; and after having killed them with spears, their carcases were thrown out on the open plain. The smell of the *hyæna crocuta* is so rank and offensive that scarcely any animal will come near the carcase. When they are once fairly killed, even dogs leave them with disgust. Yet none of those we destroyed ever remained two nights undevoured. Their own voracious kindred uniformly came in the night and devoured them, leaving scarcely a remnant of the skull and larger bones to show where the rest had found a sepulchre *.

* Professor Buckland, in his interesting dissertation on the Kirkdale Cavern, is somewhat in want of direct evidence in support of his hypothesis, that the hyæna devours (contrary, I believe, to the habits of other beasts of prey,) the dead of its own species. This inference the learned naturalist was led to draw from the appearance of the hyæna bones in that remarkable cavern, which bore the evident marks of having been broken and gnawed in the same manner as the other animal remains there discovered. The fact above stated proves that the *hyæna crocuta* or *capensis*, at least, has no hesitation about the matter.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Three other species of hyæna are distinguished in the colonial nomenclature, as the *strand-wolf*, *berg-wolf*, and the *wilde-hond*. The strand-wolf is found exclusively on the coast, as its name denotes. It is larger than the tiger-wolf, and is said to be of a dark-grey colour. The berg-wolf, or mountain-hyæna, is also large, and of a lighter hue. I have only seen the latter at a distance, and the strand-wolf not at all; but their habits I was told are very similar to those of the tiger-wolf. The *wilde-hond*, or wild-dog, (*hyæna venatica*,) is an animal with which the colonists are but too well acquainted. It was first accurately described, and classed as a hyæna, by Burchell. It forms in fact the connecting link between the wolf and hyæna families, and in its habits and physical conformation partakes of the character of both. These animals always hunt in packs; they are swift of foot, and though not so powerful, are much fiercer than the other species of hyæna. When they break into a fold, or fall upon a flock of sheep in the field, they frequently kill and mangle ten times as many as they could possibly devour: they are consequently much dreaded by the farmer. Some of them have been occasionally tamed by the colonists. The *laughing-hyæna*, which I have repeatedly heard, but never seen, is reported by the colonists to be a distinct species, smaller than the three preceding; and is considered (I know not with what justice) to form a sort of link between the hyæna and the jackall families.

The hippopotamus still exists in the Great Fish river, towards its mouth, but it has become so scarce and shy as to be very seldom seen. It is more numerous in the Keisi. The rhinoceros is nearly extirpated within the old limits of the colony; and even in the Ceded Territory it is now so rare, that in all my excursions I never could even catch a glimpse of one. In the regions lying east and north of our frontier, however, hippopotami abound in all the larger rivers, and two species of rhinoceros inhabit the forests.

Of the South African buffalo (*bos caffer*) I can also say but little from personal knowledge; for though once nume-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

rous in Glen-Lynden and the adjoining districts, (as many local names testify, such as *Buffels-kloof, Buffels-hoek, Buffels-fontein,* &c.) these animals are now so rare and so shy in that immediate vicinity, that I never saw more than one or two, and of these I caught only a distant and hasty glance. The following particulars were obtained from Dutch-African huntsmen of my acquaintance.

The buffalo is a very formidable and powerful animal. He is considerably larger than the domestic ox. The front of his head is nearly covered by an invulnerable helmet, formed of the extended roots of his gigantic horns; and his skin is so tough that it is difficult to kill him with small guns, or without a mixture of tin to harden the bullets. He is described to be, what indeed his aspect appears strongly to indicate, an animal of a fierce, treacherous, and savage disposition. Even when not provoked by wounds, or driven to extremity in the chase, it is said he will attack, with the utmost ferocity, his great enemy man, if he happen to intrude incautiously upon his haunts; and what renders him the more dangerous is his habit of skulking in the jungle, when he observes travellers approaching, and then suddenly rushing out upon them. It has been remarked, too, (and this observation has been corroborated by the accurate Swedish naturalist Sparrman,) that if he succeeds in killing a man by goring and tossing him, he will stand over his victim afterwards for a long time, trampling upon him with his hoofs, crushing him with his knees, mangling the body with his horns, and stripping off the skin with his rough and prickly tongue. This he does not do all at once, but at intervals, going away and again returning, as if more fully to glut his vengeance.

Although I have no reason to question the truth of this description, it ought to be qualified by stating that though the buffalo will sometimes thus attack man, and even other animals, without any obvious provocation, yet this malignant disposition will be found, if accurately inquired into, the exception rather than the rule of the animal's ordi-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

nary habits. Though much fiercer as well as more powerful than the ox, and bold enough sometimes to stand stoutly on self defence even against the lion, it is, I apprehend, nevertheless, his natural instinct to retire from the face of man, if undisturbed, rather than to provoke his hostility. The proofs that are adduced of his vicious and wanton malignity arise chiefly from the following cause. The males of a herd, especially at certain seasons of the year, contend furiously for the mastery; and after many conflicts the unsuccessful competitors are driven off, at least for a season, by their stronger rivals. These exiles, like some other species of animals under similar circumstances, (the elephant for instance,) are peculiarly mischievous; and it is while skulking solitarily about the thickets, in this state of sulky irritation, that they most usually exhibit the dangerous disposition generally ascribed to the species.

It is, nevertheless, very true that the Cape buffalo is, at all times, a dangerous animal to hunt; as, when wounded, or closely pressed, he will not unfrequently turn and run down his pursuer, whose only chance of escape in that case is the swiftness of his steed, if the huntsman be a Colonist or European. The Hottentot, who is light and agile, and dextrous in plunging like an antelope through the intricacies of an entangled forest, generally prefers following this game on foot. Like all pursuits, where the spirit of enterprise is highly excited by some admixture of perilous adventure, buffalo hunting is passionately followed by those who once devote themselves to it; nor do the perilous accidents that occasionally occur appear to make any deep impression on those who witness them. The consequence is, that the buffalo is now nearly extirpated throughout every part of the Cape colony, except in the most extensive forests or jungles of the southern coast and eastern districts, where, together with the elephant, he still finds a precarious shelter.

The following incident, in buffalo-hunting, may serve as a specimen of this rough pastime: it was related to me by a Dutch-African farmer, who had been an eye-witness of the scene some fifteen years before. A party of Boors had

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

gone out to hunt a herd of buffaloes, which were grazing on a piece of marshy ground, interspersed with groves of yellow-wood and mimosa trees, on the very spot where the village of Somerset is now built. As they could not conveniently get within shot of the game without crossing part of the *valei* or marsh, which did not afford a safe passage for horses, they agreed to leave their steeds in charge of their Hottentots, and to advance on foot; thinking that if any of the buffaloes should turn upon them, it would be easy to escape by retreating across the quagmire, which, though passable for man, would not support the weight of a heavy quadruped. They advanced accordingly, and, under covert of the bushes, approached the game with such advantage, that the first volley brought down three of the fattest of the herd, and so severely wounded the great bull leader that he dropped on his knees, bellowing furiously. Thinking him mortally wounded, the foremost of the huntsmen issued from the covert, and began reloading his musket as he advanced to give him a finishing shot. But no sooner did the infuriated animal see his foe in front of him, than he sprang up and rushed headlong upon him. The man, throwing down his heavy gun, fled towards the quagmire; but the beast was so close upon him that he despaired of escaping in that direction, and turning suddenly round a clump of copsewood, began to climb an old mimosa tree which stood at the one side of it. The raging beast, however, was too quick for him. Bounding forward with a roar, which my informant described as being one of the most frightful sounds he ever heard, he caught the unfortunate man with his terrible horns, just as he had nearly escaped his reach, and tossed him into the air with such force that the body fell, dreadfully mangled, into a cleft of the tree. The buffalo ran round the tree once or twice, apparently looking for the man, until weakened with loss of blood he again sunk on his knees. The rest of the party, recovering from their confusion, then came up and despatched him, though too late to save their comrade, whose body was hanging in the tree quite dead.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Of the numerous family of antelopes which inhabited our glens and mountains I shall only particularly mention the gnu, which is now become rare in most parts of the colony. Some of these singular animals were always to be found on the mountain ridge which we called Hyndhope Fell, and in the environs of the Winterberg. Though shy, they appeared to have a large share of curiosity; bounding away when approached, and then returning again, in a sweeping circuit, to gaze on the traveller or huntsman; spurring up the dust with their hoofs, tossing their manes, lashing their sides with their long tails, and performing other evolutions not a little amusing. They are said to be strongly affected if a red flag be exhibited to them, but I never had an opportunity of trying the experiment. They are fierce and dangerous when wounded. I tried to rear a young one which a hunting party brought home with them (the poor animal following the horsemen when its dam was shot), but it soon pined and died. They have been frequently tamed by the boors, when thus caught young; but are said, when grown up, to become mischievous. The flesh, though of a wildish flavour, is more juicy than that of any other antelope that I have tasted, and has more the appearance of beef. The animal appears, in fact, to form an intermediate link between the antelope and the bovine families.

The distinctive characteristics of the other Cape antelopes are now so well described in many popular works, that I need not occupy my pages with details which at best would be but desultory and defective. I shall only remark that this family of animals consists, in South Africa, of not fewer than nineteen or twenty distinct species, ranging in size from the *blaawbok*, or pigmy antelope, which seldom exceeds ten inches in height, to the *eland*, as tall as the common ox, though more slender in its shape, and weighing from 700 to 1,000 pounds. This last-named animal, which is the *antilope oreas* of naturalists, is, I believe, now nearly extirpated in every part of the colony. The only herds I ever saw were in the immediate vicinity of the Winterberg, and in some other parts of the Ceded Territory.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The *quagga*, whose flesh is carrion, and even whose hide is almost useless, might be permitted, one would suppose, to range unmolested on his native mountains; but man, when he has no other motive, delights to *destroy* for the mere sake of pastime. Thus the poor quagga, in the absence of better game, is often pursued for sport alone. It is a timid animal, with a gait and figure much resembling those of the ass, though it is much stouter and handsomer than that animal as found in Europe. In swiftness it is far inferior to the horse, but it baffles the huntsman by flying for refuge to the most rugged parts of the mountains, where the horse can only follow with great difficulty. Timid as it is, however, even the quagga, when driven to desperation, will sometimes turn on its destroyer. A remarkable instance of this occurred within my knowledge. A young boor was pursuing a herd of quaggas, and being close upon some exhausted ones, attempted, for the sake merely of saving his shot, to drive one of them over a precipice; on which the desperate animal turned round, and seizing him by the leg with its teeth, dragged him from his horse, and actually tore his foot off at the ankle. The consequences were fatal to the huntsman; for, in spite of medical aid, mortification ensued, and he died a few days afterwards.

In noticing the wild animals of our vicinity, I cannot omit the ursine or dog-faced baboon, (*cercopithecus ursinus*, or *simia cynocephalus*,) which inhabits the hills and rocks of Glen-Lynden in great numbers, and from which the river derived its former Dutch appellation. This animal is found in all the mountainous districts of the Cape colony; and is known to naturalists from the descriptions of Sparrman, Vaillant, Burchell, and other scientific travellers. It is an animal of very considerable strength, and attains, when full grown, the size of a very large Newfoundland dog. It resembles the dog in the shape of its head, and is covered with shaggy hair, of a greenish brown colour, except on the face and paws, which are bare and black. On level ground it always goes on all-fours; but among the rocks and precipices, which are its natural refuge and habitation, it uses its

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

hinder feet and *hands* somewhat as a human being would do, only with inconceivably greater boldness and agility, in clambering up the crags, or in springing from cliff to cliff.

The ursine baboon is not believed to be in any degree carnivorous, but subsists on wild fruits, and principally on the numerous variety of edible roots and bulbs which abound in the districts it inhabits. These roots it digs out of the earth with its paws, the nails of which, from this cause, are generally short, as if worn down by constant use; in other respects they nearly resemble those of the human hand.

For defence against its enemies, such as the leopard, hyæna, wild dog, &c. the ursine baboon is armed with formidable canine teeth, nearly an inch long; and, when driven to extremity, will defend itself successfully against the fiercest wolf-hound. It has a mode of grappling its antagonist by the throat with its fore-paws, while it tears open the jugular artery with its tusks. In this manner I have known a stout baboon despatch several dogs before he was overpowered; and I have been assured by the natives that even the leopard is sometimes defeated and worried to death by a troop of these animals. It is only collectively, however, and in large bands, that they can successfully oppose this powerful enemy. In many of the mountainous districts, the leopard, it is said, subsists chiefly by preying upon baboons and monkeys; lying in wait and pouncing upon them suddenly, precisely as the domestic cat deals with rats.

Though thus armed for conflict, the ursine baboon, except in self-defence, appears to be a harmless and inoffensive animal. They are, it is true, occasionally troublesome to mankind, by robbing gardens, orchards, and corn-fields; but I never heard of any body being spontaneously attacked by them. There is, indeed, one remarkable story told of a party of these animals carrying off an infant from the vicinity of Wynberg, a village about seven miles from Cape Town, and, on the alarm being given by the distracted mother,



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

retreating with it to the summit of the precipitous mountains, 3000 feet in height, which overlook that pleasant village. My informants, persons of respectability, assured me that this incident had occurred within their own recollection ; and that the child was recovered by a party of the inhabitants, after a long, anxious, and perilous pursuit, without having sustained any material injury. This singular abduction, the only instance of the kind I ever heard of, may, after all, have been prompted possibly by the erratic maternal feeling of some female baboon, bereaved of her own offspring, rather than by any ferocious or mischievous propensity.

Be this as it may, the strong attachment of these creatures to their own young is an interesting trait of their character. I have frequently witnessed very affecting instances of this attachment, when a band of them happened to be discovered by some of the African colonists in their orchards or corn-fields. On such occasions, when hunted back to the mountains with dogs and guns, the females, if accidentally separated from their young ones, would often return, reckless of their own safety, to search for them through the very midst of their pursuers.

On more peaceful occasions, also, I have very often contemplated them with great pleasure and interest. It is the practice of these animals to descend from their rocky fastnesses, in order to enjoy themselves on the banks of the mountain rivulets, and to feed on the nutritious bulbs which grow in the rich alluvial soil of the valleys. While thus occupied, they usually take care to be within reach of some steep crag or precipice, to which they may fly for refuge on the appearance of an enemy ; and some of their number are always stationed as sentinels on large stones or other elevated situations, in order to give timely warning to the rest of the approach of danger. It has frequently been my lot, when riding through these secluded valleys, to come suddenly, on turning the corner of a rock, upon a troop of forty or fifty baboons thus quietly congregated. Instantly on my appearance, a loud cry of alarm would be raised by the sen-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tinels; and then the whole band would scamper off with the utmost precipitation. Off they would go, hobbling on all-fours, after their awkward fashion on level ground; splashing through the stream, if they had it to cross; then clambering, with most marvellous agility, up the rocky cliffs, often many hundred feet in height, and where certainly no other creature without wings could possibly follow them; the large males bringing up the rear-guard, ready to turn with fury upon the hounds if they attempted to molest them; the females, with their young ones in their arms, or clinging to their backs. Thus, climbing, and chattering, and squalling, they would ascend the perpendicular and perilous-looking crags, while I looked on and watched them, interested by the almost human affection which they evinced for their mates and their offspring; and sometimes not a little amused, also, by the angry vociferation with which the old satyr-like leaders would scold me, when they had got fairly upon the rocks, and felt themselves secure from pursuit.

There are other species of the ape family in South Africa, and a very beautiful bluish-green monkey inhabits the forests; but with those I cannot pretend to any particular acquaintance.

There are several other animals that fell more or less under my observation, on whose appearance or habits I should have been inclined to have made a few remarks, had the extension of these notices been compatible with the limits that I must necessarily prescribe to myself. Among these are,—the *bosch-vark*, or wood-swine (*sus æthiopicus*), a fierce animal, and armed with dangerous tusks, which protrude like those of the elephant; the African ant-eater (*orycteropus*, or *myrmecophaga capensis*), called *aard-vark*, or earth-pig, by the colonists, from its habit of burrowing in the earth—a shy and timid creature, which lives entirely upon ants; the *spring-haas*, leaping-hare, or Cape jerboa (*dipus*, or *pedetes caffer*,) an animal which also burrows in the earth, and which, in some points, seems to form a sort

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of link between the hare and the kangaroo; the porcupine (*hystrix cristata*); the *das*, or rock-rabbit (*hyrax capensis*), &c.

In the feathered kingdom, as well as in other departments of zoology, the Cape exhibits great riches and variety; but on this subject I must refer the reader to Vaillant's splendid work on the Ornithology of South Africa. I shall only here notice the singular secretary-bird, or serpent-eater (*falco serpentarius*). The former name is a mere fanciful appellation; the latter truly indicates his habits. With the legs of a crane, and the head of an eagle, the secretary belongs to the class of rapacious birds, and is now placed by naturalists between the eagles and vultures. In South Africa his presence is a peculiar blessing to the natives; for they are indebted to him for the destruction of a vast quantity of insects and reptiles, whose multiplication, unless their numbers were thus kept down, would be a formidable calamity. These birds always kill their prey before swallowing it. Whether the secretary meet with a serpent or a tortoise, he invariably crushes it under the sole of his foot; and such is the skill and force with which he gives the blow, that it is very rarely that a serpent of an inch or more in diameter survives the first stroke. When he meets with a serpent that is large enough to oppose a long resistance to him, he flies off with his prey in his beak, to a great height, and then dropping it, follows it in its descent with wonderful rapidity, so as to be ready to strike it when it falls stunned on the ground. Vaillant describes an obstinate battle between a secretary and a large serpent, in which the bird struck his enemy with the bony protuberance of his wing; but the mode of crushing with his foot is the more common. In general these birds exhibit no fierceness, and they are easily domesticated.

Passing over the other feathered tribes, from the magnificent eagles of the Winterberg to the tiny but brilliant-plumed family of sugar-birds (*nectariniæ*), which flutter

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

like insects round the blossoms, I shall mention only in passing the singular contrivances of those species of the weaver-bird which suspend their nests from the branches of trees. The object of this precaution is obviously to secure their offspring from the assaults of their numerous enemies, particularly the serpent race. To increase the difficulty of access to these 'tree-rocked cradles,' they usually impend over a river or precipice, while the entrance is always from below, and frequently through a cylindrical passage of twelve or fifteen inches in length, projecting from the spherical nest, exactly like the tube of a chemist's retort. The whole fabric is most ingeniously and elegantly woven of a species of very tough grass; and the wonderful instinct or foresight (or whatever else we may choose to call it) displayed by the little architect in its construction is calculated to excite the highest admiration. I have often seen twenty or more of these beautiful nests hanging from a single tree.

I must not omit to say something also of the serpents, a class of the animal creation for which Africa is so renowned. The species commonly accounted the most dangerous at the Cape are the *cobra-capella* (which is not the *cobra di capello* of India), the *puff-adder* (*vipera inflata* Burch.) and the *berg-adder* (or mountain snake). The first of these is exceedingly fierce and active, and sometimes, it is said, attains the formidable length of six or seven feet; I have, however, never met with any of much more than five. The cobra has been known to spring at a man on horseback, and to dart himself with such force as to overshoot his aim. The puff-adder, on the other hand, is a heavy and sluggish animal, very thick in proportion to its length, and incapable, when attacked in front, of projecting itself upon its enemy. To make amends, however, it possesses the faculty of throwing itself backward with perilous and unexpected effect. But its disposition is inert, and unless accidentally trod upon or otherwise provoked, it will seldom attack mankind. The berg-adder, though much smaller in

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

size than either of the preceding, is generally considered not less deadly, and it is the more dangerous from its being less easily discovered and avoided.

There is another species of serpent a good deal dreaded by the natives, from whom I obtained the following account of it. It is about three feet in length: its bite, though poisonous, is not fatal; but its peculiar property is the faculty it possesses of spouting its venom in the face of an assailant, or of any person approaching it within three or four paces, when the wind is in its favour. From this singular faculty, it is called by the Cape colonists the *spuig-slang*, or spirting-snake. If the venom enters the eyes, towards which the animal is supposed by instinct to squirt it, immediate blindness ensues. Several instances of permanent loss of sight from this cause were mentioned to me by intelligent Hottentots, whose veracity I had no reason to question.

There are several species of snakes which have come under my own observation, such as the *nacht-slang* (night-adder), the *schaap-steeker* (sheep-stinger), one species of the *boom-slang* (tree-snake), the *ringel-hals* (ring-throat), with a variety of others which I have not seen, and whose Cape names I have forgotten, which are also considered venomous, though not so deadly as the three species first mentioned. The real properties and habits of the numerous varieties of the serpent tribe which infest Southern Africa are still, in fact, but very imperfectly known to naturalists; and several of those reputed venomous by the colonists are probably harmless. Some men of science at the Cape have, however, recently directed their attention to this subject, and there is reason to anticipate much new and curious information from the zeal and ability with which the illustration of this as well as of other neglected departments of South African zoology is now prosecuted.

During my residence in the Cape Colony, and in the course of various journeys through the interior, I met with a considerable number of snakes; yet I do not recollect of ever being exposed, except in one instance, to any imminent

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

danger from these reptiles. On the occasion referred to I was superintending some Hottentots, whom I had employed to clear away a patch of thicket from a spot selected for cultivation, when one of the men suddenly recoiling, with signs of great alarm, exclaimed that there was a *cobra-capella* in the bush. Not being at that time fully aware of the dangerous character of this species, I approached to look at him. The Hottentots called out to me to take care, for he was going to spring. Before they had well spoken, or I had caught a view of the reptile, I heard him hiss fiercely, and then dart himself towards me amidst the underwood. At the same instant, instinctively springing backward to avoid him, I fell over a steep bank into the stony bed of the Lynden; by which I suffered some severe bruises, but fortunately escaped the more formidable danger to which I had too incautiously exposed myself. The Hottentots then assailed the snake with sticks and stones, and forced him (though not before he had made another spring and missed one of them still more narrowly than myself) to take refuge up a mimosa tree. Here he became a safe and easy mark to their missiles, and was speedily beaten down, with a broken back, and consequently incapable of further mischief. The Hottentots having cut off his head, carefully buried it in the ground, a practice which they never omit on such occasions, and which arises from their apprehension of some one incautiously treading on the head of the dead snake, and sustaining injury from its fangs; for they believe that the deathful virus, far from being extinguished with life, retains its fatal energy for weeks, and even months afterwards. This snake measured nearly five feet in length.

My Hottentot corporal Piet Spandilly, who assisted in killing this cobra, had a still narrower escape from a small but venomous snake, of which I have forgotten the Colonial appellation. Piet and his men (soldiers of the Cape Corps) were in a tent adjoining to mine, while I was erecting my second hut; and one morning when he rose from his couch of dry grass, Piet felt some living creature moving about his thigh in the inside of his leathern trowsers. Thinking

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

it was only one of the harmless lizards which swarm in every part of South Africa, he did not at first much mind it, but came out to the open air, laughing, and shaking his limb to dislodge the crawling reptile. But when a black wriggling snake came tumbling down about his naked ankles, poor Spandilly leaped high in the air, uttering a cry of horror; and, though he had in reality sustained no injury, could scarcely for some time be persuaded that he was not a dead man.

It is, in fact, from the apprehension of danger, or the instinct of self-defence, far more than from any peculiar fierceness or innate malignity, that the serpent race ever assail man or any of the larger animals. They turn, of course, against the foot that tramples, or the hand that threatens them; but happily nature has not armed them, in addition to their formidable powers of destruction, with the disposition of exerting those powers from motives of mere wanton malignity, or for purposes unconnected with their own subsistence or security. Were it otherwise, countries like the Cape would be altogether uninhabitable. As it is, the annoyance experienced from the numerous snakes is not such as, on the whole, to affect the comfort of those accustomed to it in any considerable degree.

Conversing on this subject one day with my friend Captain Harding, I inquired whether he had ever, in the course of his campaigns in the Caffer and Bushman countries, and when necessarily obliged to sleep in the desert or jungle in the open air, suffered injury or incurred danger from serpents. He replied, that the only occasion he recollected of being in any great hazard of this sort was the following. Being upon a military expedition across the frontier, he had slept one night, as usual, wrapt in his cloak, beneath a tree. On awakening at day-break, the first object he perceived on raising his head from the saddle, which served for a pillow, was the tail of an enormous puff-adder lying across his breast, the head of the reptile being muffled under the folds of his cloak close to his body, whither it had betaken itself, apparently, for warmth during the chillness of the night.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

There was extreme hazard that if he alarmed it by his moving, it might bite him in a vital part. Seizing it therefore softly by the tail, he pulled it out with a sudden jerk, and threw it violently to a distance. By this means he escaped without injury.

An incident, scarcely less alarming, occurred to the wife of the officer just mentioned. She was sleeping with her infant upon a camp-bed in a little clay-built cabin, such as are used by the military in their temporary cantonments in that fine climate,—when looking up one morning, she perceived a snake making its way through the thatch, almost directly above her couch, and swinging with its body to and fro, with its little malignant eyes gleaming upon her face. She screamed in terror, and covered up her child, in instant apprehension of the reptile's descent. Before the servant answered her call, it had in fact wriggled its way through the thatch, and fallen into the room, but fortunately without any attempt to injure the lady or her child. When destroyed, it proved not to be of a very dangerous species.

Somewhat similar was the situation, on one occasion, of Mrs. Devenish, another lady of my acquaintance. Going into her nursery one night, she found a puff-adder standing erect on its tail, by the side of the cradle where her infant lay asleep. She screamed in horror, but durst not approach for fear that the reptile, which began to hiss and inflate its jaws, as it usually does when irritated, should spring upon the child. Fortunately her husband was at hand, and, hearing her outcry, hastened to her aid, and with a single blow destroyed the serpent.

It is not very unusual, indeed, for snakes of various sorts to be found in the houses at the Cape, nor does it, in ordinary cases, excite any violent alarm when such inmates are discovered. They make their way both through the roofs and under the walls, in search of food and shelter, and especially in pursuit of mice, which many of them chiefly subsist upon. During my residence in the interior, however, I recollect only two instances of their being found in my own cabin. On one of these occasions I had sent a

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

servant girl (a bare-legged Hottentot) to bring me some article from a neighbouring hut. On returning with it, she cried out before entering the cabin—"Oh, what shall I do? A snake has twined itself round my ankles, and if I open the door he will come into the house." "Never mind," I replied: "open the door, and let him come in if he dare." She obeyed, and in glided the snake, luckily without having harmed the poor girl. I stood prepared, and instantly smote him dead; and afterwards found him to be one of the venomous sort called *nachtslang*.

People become used to these things, and even Europeans by degrees come to regard them with much indifference. While on a visit at the late worthy Major Pigot's, near Graham's Town, one day on going to take a book from some shelves in the drawing-room, I found a beautiful yellow snake, about six feet long, lying asleep upon the uppermost range of books. At first I took it for a stuffed specimen; but seeing him move his tail, I instantly lent him such a thwack as broke the poor fellow's back, and enabled me to demolish him at leisure. I afterwards learned that another snake had been killed a few days previously in the very same spot, and a third in the chamber where my wife and I slept. But they were all of the *boom-slang* family, and perfectly harmless.

Annoying and alarming as is the occasional presence of these reptiles in the gardens and chambers of the inhabitants in South Africa, the number of fatal accidents resulting from them is nevertheless remarkably few. Out of nearly five thousand British emigrants settled in Albany, I have not heard of more than three or four deaths in a dozen years occasioned by the bite of snakes; and I was informed by the Rev. Mr. Hallbeck, superintendent of Moravian missions, that among seven or eight hundred Hottentots, usually resident at the village of Genadendal, only two deaths had occurred from this cause during seven years that he had resided there. Many individuals, indeed, had been bitten during that period, but all of them, with those two exceptions, had been cured, either by remedies in com-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

mon use among the Hottentots (as transmitted to them from their ancestors,) or by the use of antidotes furnished by the missionaries.

Eau de luce is the most common and approved antidote employed by Europeans. The mode of using it is to give the patient five drops in a glass of water, and to repeat the dose every ten minutes till the force of the poison be counteracted,—applying it, also, at the same time, externally to the wound. The readiest, and perhaps the best remedy, if instantly and boldly applied, and one in common use among the natives, is to suck the wound well with the mouth. In doing this, no danger need be apprehended by the operator, unless there should happen to be any sore or puncture about the lips or tongue which might afford the poison direct access to the blood; for it is well known that the venom of the most deadly snakes may be swallowed with impunity. Before sucking the wound it should be well scarified with a lancet or pen-knife, and allowed to bleed freely. If sweet milk can be had, the patient is made to drink of it abundantly, and the wounded part is also immersed in it, or bathed with brandy or hartshorn.

The following singular remedy is much used by the Hottentots, and by many of the colonists, who have borrowed it from them. When a person is bit by any of the more venomous snakes, a fowl is instantly procured, and the fleshy part of the breast being cut open, it is pressed fresh and palpitating to the wound. The virus is, by this means, rapidly abstracted; and if the poison be very deadly, the fowl speedily exhibits clear proof of its malignancy,—becomes drowsy, droops its head, and dies. It is then withdrawn, and a second is cut open and applied in the same manner;—a third, if requisite; and so on, until it appears, from the decreased influence of the poison on the fowls, that its destructive virulence is effectually subdued. The worst crisis is then considered to be past, and the patient, in most cases, recovers.

An instance of the successful use of the above remedy

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

was mentioned to me by Mr. Wait, a Scotch farmer at Camtoos River, near Algoa Bay. His youngest child, a fine boy of about three years of age, while playing in the garden, had stumbled on a very large puff-adder, and was bit by it. The mother, (to whom the terrified infant betook itself, lisping out that a 'big worm' had bit it,) instantly cut open the breast of a fowl, as she had been previously instructed to do by the Hottentots, and applied it to the part. In a few minutes the animal sickened and died. A second was applied, and died also. A third was so much affected by the venom as to appear giddy and stupid, but survived the operation. The child was then made to drink largely of sweet milk; the limb was placed in a running stream, and afterwards smeared over with tar, which gradually removed the violent inflammation, and the livid hue which had begun to spread over it; and in the course of a few days the parents enjoyed the happiness of seeing their child (rescued by this means alone from a frightful death) once more restored to perfect health.

A large serpent resembling the boa-constrictor is found in the country north-east of Natal, and in the vicinity of the Orange River; and rumours prevail among the Hottentots of its being also occasionally found within the colony. If it exists so far south, however, it must be extremely rare, as I never was able to discover a well-authenticated instance of its being seen.

A large amphibious lizard, called the *leguan*, a species of guana, is found in the rivers. It has sometimes been mistaken for the crocodile, but is perfectly harmless, and subsists upon vegetables, earth-worms, and insects. It is from three to six feet long. It lives partly on land, but always near some deep pool of a river, to which it betakes itself with great celerity, if surprised. Its flesh and eggs are considered delicate food. An amusing incident occurred with one of these reptiles when our party first came up Glen-Lynden. Two of our Scotch servants being out with

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their guns, found a leguan asleep on the bank of the river. Supposing it to be a crocodile, they valorously determined to shoot it, but took aim over a ledge of rock, at a cautious distance, and with so much trepidation, that the supposed crocodile, more surprised than harmed, effected a rapid retreat to the water. On relating the adventure, the size and terrible appearance of the animal were ludicrously exaggerated, the creature being represented as at least ten or twelve feet long; while the lads were ready to make *bonâ fide* affidavit that their bullets rebounded like peas from the impenetrable scales of this monstrous kaiman.

Among the numerous small lizards of the country is found the curious and delicate chameleon. One species of lizard called the *geitje*, of about the same size as the chameleon, but much more rare, is considered very venomous. I heard of several well authenticated instances of noxious and even fatal effects from its bite, but never saw the reptile itself.

Of the insect kingdom, I shall have occasion to notice the locust (*gryllus devastator*) in a subsequent chapter. The other genera, though almost infinite in variety, and some of them, such as ants, flies, and beetles, inconceivably numerous, are not nearly so troublesome as in many other climates. The termes of South Africa is not the destructive species; and mosquitoes are scarcely known, except in a few damp situations near the coast. Tarantulas and scorpions are found; but accidents occurring from their bite are rare, and, so far as I could learn, never fatal. I was myself once bit by a centipede, and was at first somewhat alarmed by the rapid and painful inflammation arising from the puncture; but it was cured in a few hours by the application of the leaves of a species of wormwood (*artemisia afra*), prescribed by an old Hottentot woman.

The exuberance of animal life is certainly one of the most remarkable and impressive features of Southern Africa. The abundance and variety of the larger game in the upland pastures of the wilderness has been repeatedly adverted to. The forests and wooded glens are all alive with their fea-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

thered habitants, many of them adorned with the most splendid plumage. The mountains and the rocks have their appropriate occupants. The sea-coast and many of the rivers swarm with fish and water-fowl; and the inland streams, less fruitful in the finny tribes, are full of crabs and tortoises, and vocal in spring with the shrill chirping of millions of frogs. The arid deserts, uninhabitable by man, furnish food and refuge to the ostrich and the serpent-eater; and in the tracts of death-like desolation, where even those solitary birds cannot find a fountain, life is still found pouring forth from the inexhaustible womb of the parched yet pregnant earth: thousands of lizards and land-tortoises are seen crawling about, or basking on the rocks and stones, and myriads of myriads of ants are building their clay pyramids, or busily travelling to and fro, in long black trains, across the sultry ground.

But to describe this exuberance, this endless teeming forth of animal existence, would require language too glowing to suit the prosaic style of these familiar sketches. It would, to describe it adequately, require powers far beyond any I can boast,—an imagination rich as that of my honoured and highly gifted friend Mr. Coleridge, when he poured forth his magnificent 'Hymn to the Earth:'—

"Earth! thou Mother of numberless Children, the Nurse and the Mother;
Sister thou of the Stars, and beloved by the Sun, the rejoicer!
* * * * * *
Mightier far was the joy of thy sudden resilience: and forthwith
Myriad myriads of lives teemed forth from the mighty embracement.
Thousand-fold tribes of dwellers, impelled by thousand-fold instincts,
Filled, as a dream, the wide waters: the rivers sang on their channels:
Laughed on their shores the hoarse seas: the yearning ocean swelled upward:
Young life lowed through the meadows, the woods, and the echoing mountains,
Wandered bleating in valleys, and warbled in blossoming branches!"

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER IX.

*State of Glen-Lynden Settlement in July, 1822—Road-making—Military Guard withdrawn—Arrival of Relatives from Scotland—Departure of the Author for Cape Town; his Views there—Graaff-Reinét—The Sneeuwberg—Household of an affluent Grazier—Hospitality of the Inhabitants—The Great Karroo—Habits of the Ostrich—Gaol at Beaufort, and its Inmates—Journey along the Ghamka River—Transition from Sterility to exuberant Vegetation—Hex River—Arrival at Cape Town.*

THE state of our little settlement at the close of its second year, in July, 1822, was, on the whole, prosperous. The first difficulties had been surmounted; the severest privations were past. A crop, though a somewhat scanty one, of wheat and barley, had been reaped. The gardens were well stocked with vegetables. The flocks and herds were considerable in number, and gradually increasing. The necessaries of life were secured; comforts and conveniences were slowly accumulating. The several families had all obtained Hottentot servants; and, being now familiarised to the country and its various inhabitants, had begun to feel quite at home on their respective farms.

Among other improvements, the frightful road down the glen had been so far repaired and ameliorated, that wagons could now travel on it, if not with ease, at least without imminent danger. This had been accomplished by the vigorous voluntary labours of the party, assisted by our Mulatto tenants, for two months; the Colonial Government having, at my request, relieved for one year our coloured allies from all other public services, in consideration of their aid in this enterprise. It may be worth while to mention that, in accomplishing this arduous work, we overcame one of



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the chief difficulties—the removal of the enormous blocks of stone which frequently obstructed the only practicable line of road—not by the aid of blowing-irons, but by the joint application of fire and water. This process, which we learnt from the Hottentots, consisted simply in kindling a large fire of wood upon and around the mass of rock we wished to get rid of, and, when it was well heated, to sweep off the fire, and dash suddenly upon it several buckets-full of cold water,—which, by causing an instantaneous change of temperature in the mass, generally split it, if it lay in an isolated position, into a number of manageable fragments *.

Our guard of six Hottentot soldiers was withdrawn by the Colonial Government in January; but as we were now well strengthened by our Mulatto tenantry, we could dispense with military support. Hitherto we had neither suffered actual damage, nor been disturbed by any serious alarm, from our wild neighbours to the eastward, although several of the Boors on the Tarka and Great Fish River had been recently subjected to their depredations. Our only intercourse with the Caffer tribes had consisted in one or two amicable visits which a few of them, chiefly females, had paid us, in search of employment, and whom, in obedience to the colonial regulations at that time, we had sent back to their own country under an escort.

* I afterwards found that this mode of splitting rocks had been practised with great success by Captain Stockenstrom, at Graaff-Reinét, in constructing an aqueduct along the side of a hill for the use of that village. The same process is also well known in Hayti, and is employed on a large scale there by the Negro engineers, as I am informed by my intelligent friend Mr. Richard Hill, of Jamaica, who, on recently travelling through that interesting island, found magnificent public roads carried through some of the most difficult passes of the mountains by this simple operation. It seems probable that it was solely by this means that Hannibal facilitated the famous passage of his army over the Alps; and that the story of his pouring *vinegar* on the rocks after he had heated them with fire, is a fabulous addition to the real facts.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

In July, 1822, my eldest brother arrived with his family and some other relatives from Scotland; and, having placed in his possession the farm of Eildon, which I had occupied for the last nine months, I prepared myself to proceed to Cape Town, in order to occupy a situation to which I had been appointed by the Colonial Government.

I have mentioned in the commencement of this narrative the nature of my aims and expectations in emigrating to the Cape. One of my chief objects, the establishment of my father's family in rural independence, had been fully accomplished. Towards the rest of the party, also, I had now fulfilled the duties which I undertook when I became their leader and representative. All that I could do to promote their prosperity had been done, so far at least as depended upon my residence on the location. A longer residence there could do little to benefit my own family. Land, without adequate capital to occupy it, was scarcely of any value; and my pecuniary means were too slender either to purchase sufficient stock or procure effective labour. I had, therefore, from the commencement of our enterprise, regarded farming, under my peculiar circumstances, as a resource only to be resorted to in the event of my failing to obtain some suitable employment under Government.

The situation to which I had been appointed was that of librarian of the Government Library at Cape Town, an excellent institution, established principally by the exertions of Colonel Bird, the Secretary to Government. This charge had been offered me by the governor, Lord Charles Somerset, some time after his return to the colony in the close of 1821, in consequence of the interest exerted in my behalf in Downing-street, by Sir Walter Scott, Sir John Macpherson, and other influential friends. As regards emolument, indeed, the appointment was but an humble one; the salary being only 1000 rix dollars—or about £75 sterling. But the duties were not very onerous, and were peculiarly adapted to my tastes and habits. I was not unaware of the inadequacy of the income for the support of a family in



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

so expensive a place as Cape Town; but I was encouraged to hope that, by means of the press, I might be enabled to realise a competent income for my family, and at the same time to benefit my fellow-colonists by the diffusion of useful information. I knew that Colonel Bird, whose influence had once been great, was well disposed to promote my views on these points; but I was not then aware how extremely repugnant were the Governor's own sentiments to any liberal use of the press, as a vehicle for the diffusion even of useful knowledge, (altogether apart from party politics); and, consequently, how utterly incompatible were the views I entertained with those of his administration. But of this topic hereafter: I return to my journal.

With the view of enlarging my acquaintance with the interior of the colony, I resolved to travel down to Cape Town by land; the distance being by the nearest route—that through Graaff-Reinét and the Great Karroo—nearly 700 miles. After a short stay at Somerset Farm (where one of my brothers now filled the situation of agricultural superintendent under our friend Mr. Hart), I commenced my journey on the 17th of August, in an ox-wagon, accompanied by my wife and her sister. As we had an extensive desert to pass through, we took care to carry with us an adequate supply of provisions.

We reached Graaff-Reinét in two days and a half. The distance from Somerset is estimated to be from 75 to 80 miles; but the roads being good and our oxen fresh, we proceeded at the most rapid rate of ox-wagon travelling, which is about thirty miles a day. The intervening country, which has been long occupied by Dutch-African colonists, has been repeatedly described by travellers under the names of Agter-Bruintjes-Hoogtè and Camdeboo.

Graaff-Reinét is a handsome country town, situated at the southern base of the Sneeuw Bergen, or Snowy Mountains, and contains about two thousand inhabitants. Being well watered by a canal from the Sunday River, and the streets planted with lemon trees, it looks like a green oasis in the midst of a brown and arid desert. Its prosperity

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and beauty are owing, in an eminent degree, to the exertions of the Stockenstroms, father and son, who were for upwards of twenty years resident here as chief magistrates of the district. My friend, Mr. George Thompson, has given a good description of the place in his Travels, to which I beg to refer the reader. We stopped here three days, under the hospitable roof of Mr. M'Cabe, formerly military surgeon at Roodewal; during which period I obtained much information respecting the northern districts of the colony and the wild tribes on its borders, from the landdrost, Capt. Stockenstrom, the district clergyman, Mr. Faure, and other intelligent local functionaries.

We left Graaff-Reinét on the 23rd, in company with Jacob Maré, a respectable burgher of that place, who, with his wife and two daughters, was also bound for Cape Town with wagons. Having placed myself under the experienced guidance of old Jacob, we ascended the Sneeuwberg by a long and steep acclivity, proposing to travel for a considerable way along the summit of those mountains, on account of the excessive drought, and consequent want of water and pasturage, which prevailed in the Karroo plains below. The temperature of the Sneeuwberg was at this season very cold, and all the higher points were covered with snow. The loftiest peak, called Compass-Berg, is considered, according to the most accurate estimate yet made, to be 6500 feet above the level of the sea. The aspect of this elevated region was bleak, rugged, and bare of wood; but well watered, and, for Africa, rich in pasturage. It consists of a sort of plateau or table-land, rising abruptly from the plains of Camdeboo and the Karroo in immense buttresses of naked rock; the ledges or strata of which, as Mr. Barrow has accurately remarked, are so perfectly horizontal, and so regularly squared at the angles, that but for their vast height and magnitude they might be taken for gigantic lines of masonry. The uppermost stratum consists of sand-stone, intermingled, at intervals, with quartz: the bases are schistus. There is no appearance of granite. The soil on the summit is a stiff clay, thickly strewed with loose stones, but bearing, where

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

it can be irrigated, good crops of wheat and barley. There is no timber, and scarcely a thicket of brushwood throughout the whole of the Sneeuwberg; so that the inhabitants are mostly obliged to use, for fuel, either a very small shrub (*stoebe rhinocerotis*), or the dung of their cattle, dried like turf, and to bring timber for building either from the coast or from the forests of Glen-Lynden and the Kaha.

The following day we reached the place of Schalk Burger, an affluent grazier, where we spent the night. The house, which was large, substantial, and well furnished, we found full of guests, there being not fewer than eight-and-twenty besides ourselves, all respectable-looking African farmers or travellers, mostly with their wives and children. How they were all accommodated I could not easily guess; but when I made some apology for increasing the number of their visiters, in consequence of the piercing cold wind which prevented our sleeping in our wagons, the bustling hostess assured me, with a smile, that they had abundance of accommodation, and bedding for many more guests. So far as bedding went, this was certainly the case; for on retiring to rest I was conducted to a *slaap-kamer*, containing three good curtained bedsteads, furnished with two, three, or four feather-beds each; but in one of these were already deposited my wife and her sister. Such, indeed, was not unusually the arrangement made for us when we slept (as we sometimes found it necessary to do) in the houses of the Dutch-African colonists during our journey. Even in the best houses in the remote districts, the sleeping apartments are few, and usually contain two or three beds each. In a country where there are no inns, and where universal hospitality prevails, the crowding of one or more entire families into the same bed-room cannot, perhaps, always be avoided, and, from having become customary, appears not even to be regarded as inconvenient. It is a custom which indicates both lack of refinement and great simplicity of manners. A century ago, a state of things not very widely dissimilar prevailed in the most respectable farm-houses of Scotland, and still prevails in the cottages of the peasantry.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

We spent the following forenoon with this family, which furnished a pleasing specimen of the Sneeuwberg farmers, a class of men of whom Mr. Barrow thirty years ago gave so favourable a report. After breakfast, some more company arrived, whom I found to be neighbours and relatives come to spend the Sunday with our patriarchal host. We were soon after invited to attend their religious service in the hall, round which the whole company were silently seated; and I was glad to see what I had never witnessed on the frontier, that the slaves and Hottentots belonging to the household were also freely admitted. After singing some hymns and reading some portions of scripture, our landlord addressed the company in an exhortation, apparently extempore, of about half an hour in length. It appeared to me very sensible and appropriate, and was listened to with every appearance of devout attention.

After this becoming service, all the company sat down to a plentiful and cheerful repast, consisting chiefly of stewed meats, according to the Dutch fashion, but very well cooked, and varied with baked fruits, pastry, pickles, and salads in abundance. The spoons and some of the other articles were of silver; the capacious tureens of well burnished pewter; the plates of China and English delf, with napkins, &c. There was country wine; but glasses were only placed for the men, who drank of it very moderately; the women not at all.

I left them in the afternoon; much pleased with the good humour and good sense that seemed to prevail among these rustic inhabitants of the mountains. There was nothing very *Arcadian* certainly about them; but their appearance was decent and comfortable, and their manners frank, hospitable, and courteous. Notwithstanding the heavy damage occasioned throughout the district by mildew in the crops, and recent violent rains, plenty was apparent every where. I afterwards learned, indeed, that our host was one of the wealthiest, and, at the same time, one of the worthiest men and best masters in the Sneeuwberg. His 'substance' might almost have rivalled that of Job and Jacob

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

in their most prosperous days. He possessed eleven *plaatzen*, or farm-properties, pastured by 13,000 sheep, and from 2000 to 3000 cattle, besides horses, corn, &c. He had only one son; and notwithstanding his unbounded hospitality, had saved much money; and this, I was told, he generally lent out to his poorer neighbours without interest; it being a maxim with this liberal man, that it is "more profitable to assist one's friends than to hoard money by usury."

As an evidence of the simplicity of manners existing among this class of people, I may mention that notwithstanding the wealth of the family and their numerous coloured servants, Schalk Burger's only son drove himself our wagon with a team of oxen, with which his father had furnished me for the next stage, in order to keep my bullocks fresh for the arduous journey before us.

The hospitality for which the Dutch-African colonists have always been famed, I found still prevailing unimpaired in the Sneeuwberg. Not only this family, to whom it would have been an insult to have offered remuneration of any sort, but every other I visited in that quarter, positively refused any compensation for lodging or provisions; while many of them made us presents of loaves of fine bread, dried fruits, comfits, &c., although we were perfect strangers to them, and all that they could know of us was such slight information as might be furnished by our fellow-travellers, the Marès.

From erroneous information obtained at Schalk Van Heerden's, the next place we stopped at, we were induced to descend from the Sneeuwberg by a most frightful-looking path, in the expectation of being enabled to cross the Great Karroo by the banks of the Kareega river; but after going nearly two days' journey out of our way, we found ourselves constrained to relinquish the attempt, on account of the total want of water in the channel of this periodical river. We had no alternative, therefore, but to shape our course along the skirts of the desert, towards the source of the Ghamka, where the drostdy, or district village of Beaufort, had been recently erected.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The Great Karroo is an arid desert, about three hundred miles in length, by from seventy to eighty in breadth; bounded by the Sneeuwberg and Nieuwveld ridges of mountains on the north, and by the Zwartberg, or Black Mountain ridge, on the south. It is not a sandy plain, and bears no resemblance to the Sahara, or the Arabian deserts. It consists of a sort of table-land, or elevated basin, thinly covered with an argillaceous soil, largely impregnated with iron, upon a substratum of rock or gravel. Some large portions of it are perfectly level, but in others the surface is diversified by slaty hills and eminences, some of which would appear considerable, save for the lofty mountains which bound the Karroo on all sides, except towards the east, where it extends into Camdeboo. Its medium height above the level of the sea is estimated at about three thousand feet. It is crossed by many beds of rivers, or rather torrents, most of which run from north to south, and find an exit for their waters to the coast through a few breaks in the southern chains of mountains. These rivers, however, are for the greater part of the year either entirely dried up, or furnish only a few scanty pools, barely sufficient for the wild animals—zebras, quaggas, ostriches, &c.,—which frequent this inhospitable region. Not unfrequently even those brackish pools and fountains also fail, as was the case at the time of our journey; and then the Karroo becomes almost impassable by man, and a large portion of it uninhabitable even by the wild beasts.

In such a region, where rain is rare, and dews almost unknown, the vegetation must of necessity be at all times extremely scanty; and in summer, when the sun has dried the soil to the hardness of brick, it ceases almost entirely. Except along the courses of the temporary rivers, which for the most part are marked by a fringe of mimosas, not a tree, nor a bush, nor a blade of grass, decks the wide expanse of the waste. Low stunted shrubs, resembling heath; numerous species of fig-marigolds and ice-plants (*mesembryanthemum*), *ghanna-bosch* (*salsola*), *gorteria*, *asters*, &c.; some sorts of prickly *euphorbia*, and other succulent plants

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and bulbs, whose roots nature has fortified with a tenfold net of fibres under the upper rind, to protect them during the long droughts, are alone able to subsist in the arid Karroo. During the dry season even these appear to be for the most part parched into a brown stubble, thinly scattered over the indurated or slaty soil; but in the early spring, when the ground becomes moistened with the fall of rain, these plants rush into vegetation with a rapidity that looks like enchantment, and in a few days millions of flowers of the most brilliant hues enamel the earth. It is chiefly at this season, when the whole dreary waste may be said to be transformed into a vast flower garden, that the colonists of the Sneeuwberg, the Nieuwveld, the Bokkeveld, and the Roggeveld, whose alpine farms are then chilled with keen frosts and the piercing mountain winds, descend into the Karroo to pasture their herds and flocks on the short-lived vegetation.

At the time of our journey no rain had fallen on the Karroo for upwards of twelve months, so that I saw it under its most desolate aspect. Not a vestige of green pasturage was to be descried over the surface of the immense monotonous landscape; and the low heath-like shrubbery, apparently as sapless as a worn-out broom, was the only thing our cattle had to browze on. No wild game was to be seen: all had fled apparently to some more hospitable region. Not even a wandering ostrich or bird of prey appeared to break the death-like stillness of the waste.

On the 28th we commenced our journey along the northern skirts of the wilderness. After travelling fourteen hours without water, we reached a brackish fountain about four in the following morning, our poor oxen almost quite exhausted with a hard journey of nearly forty miles. The road, however, was excellent, being hard and smooth as a gravel walk. In the vicinity of the fountain we saw a few ostriches. The following night we halted at a boor's place, on the Zout Rivier (Salt River), a brook appropriately named, for its waters were so brackish as to be scarcely drinkable, though the residents here had no other. The margins of

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the brook were literally white with nitrous efflorescence, as if covered with hoar-frost; and the soil of the fields adjacent so impregnated with saltpetre as to be entirely barren, and incapable of cultivation. The boor, Du Ploit, was a frank talkative fellow, and a great Nimrod in his way. He entertained us all the morning with anecdotes of his only neighbours, the lions, leopards, hyænas, koodoos, gemsboks, ostriches, and other wild animals of the wilderness.

This boor, like others on the skirts of the northern deserts of the Cape, made the pursuit of the ostrich, for the sake of its plumage, one of his chief occupations, thus combining profit with pastime. He showed us the skins of five or six he had lately shot, informing me that an ostrich's skin, after the finest plumes (about forty-five in number) have been taken from it, brings the huntsman from ten to seventeen rix-dollars, or from 15*s*. to 25*s*. sterling. The fine feathers bring in Cape Town from 6*d*. to 1*s*. each. Du Ploit said that it was exceedingly difficult to get within musket-shot of these birds, owing to their constant vigilance, and the great distance to which they can see. The fleetest horse, too, will not overtake them, unless stratagem be adopted to tire them out; but by several huntsmen taking different sides of a large plain, and pursuing them backward and forward till their strength is exhausted, they may be at length run down. If followed up too eagerly this chace is not destitute of danger, for the huntsman has sometimes had his thigh bone broken by a single stroke from the wing or foot of a wounded ostrich.

Du Ploit's account of the habits of this bird confirmed, in all material points, the statement given by Professor Lichtenstein in his African Travels. He said that at the season of breeding the male generally associates to himself from two to six females. The hens lay all their eggs together in the same nest, each contributing from twelve to sixteen; and in incubation the birds take their turns in the nest, the male usually taking the charge at night, when his superior strength is most requisite to protect the eggs or the newly fledged young from jackalls, tiger-cats, and other

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

enemies, which are said to be not unfrequently found lying dead around the spot, slain by a stroke from the powerful foot of this gigantic bird. The nest consists merely of a shallow cavity scooped in the ground, having the earth raised round the edges to keep the eggs in their proper position. The eggs are placed upon their points, so that the greatest possible number may be covered by the body of the bird. About thirty eggs at the most are hatched, though double that number are sometimes found in and around a nest. The females continue to lay during incubation; but the supernumerary eggs are placed outside the nest, being reserved for the nourishment of the young birds when they first issue from the shell, and are too tender to digest the hard and acrid food on which the old ones subsist. The period of incubation is from thirty-six to forty days. In the middle of the day the nest is occasionally abandoned by all the birds, the heat of the sun being then sufficient to keep the eggs at the proper temperature.

An ostrich egg is considered as equal in its contents to twenty-four of the domestic hen. When taken fresh from the nest, they are very palatable, and are wholesome, though somewhat heavy food. The best mode of cooking them that I have seen is that practised by the Hottentots, who place one end of the egg in the hot ashes, and, making a small orifice at the other, keep stirring the contents with a stick till they are sufficiently roasted; and thus, with a seasoning of salt and pepper, you have a very nice omelet.

The ostrich of South Africa is a wary animal, and displays little of that excessive stupidity ascribed to it by some naturalists. On the borders of the colony, at least, where it is eagerly pursued for the sake of its valuable plumage, this bird displays no want of sagacity in providing for its own safety or the security of its offspring. It adopts every possible precaution to conceal the place of its nest; and abandons it, after destroying the eggs, if the nest has been disturbed, or the footsteps of man are discovered near it.

The food of the ostrich consists of the tops of various

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

shrubby plants which abound in the desert. This bird is so easily satisfied in regard to water that he is constantly to be found in the most parched and desolate tracts, which even the antelopes and beasts of prey have deserted. His cry at a distance is said so much to resemble that of a lion, that even the Hottentots are sometimes deceived by it. When not hatching, they are frequently seen in troops of thirty or forty together, or amicably associated with herds of zebras or quaggas, their fellow tenants of the wilderness.

On the 30th, we saw several large troops of ostriches; and in the vicinity of a fountain where we halted, our Hottentot drivers, while tending the oxen, came upon two ostrich-nests, one of which contained twenty-four fine fresh eggs; in the other the eggs had all been broken, apparently by the birds themselves, as is said to be their practice on finding their nests discovered.

We stopped three days at Beaufort, where we were most hospitably entertained by our Scottish countryman Mr. Baird. In the place itself,—a village of about twenty houses, on the northern verge of the Karroo, and supplied with water by two permanent fountains,—there was little worthy of remark; but the drostdy *tronk*, or gaol, which I visited more than once, in company with Mr. Taylor, the clergyman of the district, was an interesting though a deplorable scene, and requires a more particular notice.

This tronk consisted of a single apartment, of about twenty feet long by twelve or fourteen broad; and for the purposes of light and ventilation, had only one small grated opening, in the shape of a loop-hole, at a considerable height in the wall. Into this apartment were crowded about thirty human beings, of both sexes, of all ages, and of almost every hue,—except white. The whites, or *Christen menschen*, as they call themselves, are seldom imprisoned, except for some very flagrant outrage—and then in some place apart from the coloured prisoners; lest the 'Christian' thief or murderer should be dishonoured by being forced to associate with his brother men of swarthy hue, even though many of the latter, as in the present case, should be guiltless of any crime.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The condition of this gaol was dreadful. On the door being opened, the clergyman requested me to wait a few minutes until a freer ventilation had somewhat purified the noisome atmosphere within—for the effluvia, on the first opening of the door, was too horrible to be encountered. This I can well believe; for when, after this precaution, we did enter, the odour was still more than I could well endure; and it was only by coming frequently to the open door to inhale a renovating draught of wholesome air, that I could accomplish such an examination of this dismal den as the aspect and condition of its inmates urgently claimed from humanity. Whether there was at this time an unusual number of prisoners,—or with whom lay the fault of not more effectually providing for their accommodation and cleanliness, I cannot say; but if it was owing to the negligence of the local functionaries, it was the duty of the Circuit Court to call them to account for it, and to see that adequate funds were appropriated to erect a decent gaol for the district. But this was not a singular case; at that time the gaols for the coloured classes throughout the Colony, with the exception of that of Graaff-Reinét, and perhaps one or two others, were a disgrace to humanity. How far they have been improved since, I cannot pretend to say.

The prisoners being desired to range themselves around the walls, exhibited a strange array of wild and swarthy visages, squalid with neglect and misery, and sickly with confinement. There were runaway slaves, standing with shackled limbs and lowering looks, sullenly awaiting their awarded punishment, and the arrival of their owners to drag them back to the house of bondage. There were Hottentots, clothed in a costume half native, half European —the sheep-skin caross of their forefathers, and the leathern trowsers of the boor. Some of these were complainants at the drostdy against the fraud or oppression of the colonists to whom (agreeably to colonial *law*) they were bound in servitude; and they were immured (agreeably to colonial *practice*) in this vile tronk, until their masters found it convenient to answer their accusations, and probably to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

get them well flogged for daring to complain: such, at least, was then the usual result. Others were merely Hottentots out of service, who had been apprehended by the field-cornets, and sent here until some white man should apply to have them *given out* to him on contract.

There were wild Bushmen, too—with aspect, dress, and demeanour yet more barbarous and bizarre than the rudest of the colonial Hottentots. The whole raiment of the females, besides the caross, or sheep-skin mantle, consisted of a piece of leather cut into narrow thongs, and bound like an apron or small petticoat round the loins. The dress of the males was still more scanty. Their woolly hair, growing in separate tufts, fell naturally into spiral curls, and hung, matted with grease and iron ore, dangling like a bunch of tobacco-twist, over their narrow, black, and piercing eyes; while their cheeks (at least those of the younger females) were ornamented with alternate streaks of red and white ochre. The offence for which they were in general confined was absconding from the service of the farmers, after having, under the pressure of famine, sold themselves and their children to thraldom for a mess of pottage. Some, however, of these Bushmen, as well as of the slaves and Hottentot prisoners, were accused of more heinous crimes, and were awaiting the arrival of the annual Circuit Court to stand their trial. But all castes and grades, the innocent and the guilty, and the injured complainant equally with the convicted and hardened malefactor, were crowded together without distinction into this narrow and noisome dungeon.

There was yet another group, more interesting, perhaps, than any of the others. It was a family of Caffers, consisting of two men, a woman, and child, and a youth of about sixteen. The men were seated, naked, on the clay floor, heavily ironed, and having their ankles fixed to a huge iron ring, which confined them like stocks in a recumbent posture. One of them displayed a frame of herculean size and strength; but his countenance, though free from ferocity, was unanimated by intelligence. The calm and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

thoughtful features of his comrade, a man of middle age, expressed nothing of mere animal or savage passion, but were marked by a certain air of mental dignity and reflection. The female was said to be the wife of the latter; and she had an infant encircled in the warm folds of her mantle. Her dress consisted of the ordinary caross of ox or antelope hide, dressed with the hair upon it, together with a short petticoat of similar materials, and a kerchief of finer leather (from the skin, I believe, of the weasel or wild-cat) drawn, like a veil, over the bosom—indicating, altogether, feelings of womanly modesty and decorum, pleasing to meet with amidst so much wretchedness and barbarism, and forming a favourable contrast to the disgusting nudity of most of the other females around her. Her deportment was quiet and subdued; and her features, if not handsome to European eyes, were yet expressive of gentleness and simplicity of character. But the Caffer youth who stood beside this female, and who looked like her younger brother, was truly a model of juvenile beauty. His figure, which was almost entirely naked, displayed graceful ease and great symmetry of proportion. His high broad forehead and handsome nose and mouth approached the European standard; and the mild, yet manly expression of his full black eyes and ingenuous open brow, bespoke confidence and good will at the first sight.

These Caffers were waiting the arrival of the Circuit Court to stand their trial on a charge of murder. In endeavouring to escape to their own country from the district of Swellendam, they had been driven by hunger to steal a sheep. A boor's amazonian wife pursued them, and ordered her son, a boy of twelve or fourteen years of age, to fire on them. The boy fired, and shot one of the Caffers, whose comrades then turned in fury and slew the woman. This act roused the colonists on every side to rise in pursuit of them, and the unhappy fugitives were soon hunted down and delivered up to justice. They had been confined in the Beaufort gaol some months before my arrival, and were then awaiting their trial on the arrival of the Court of Circuit,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

which was expected in a few days. Owing to the want of evidence, however, or some similar cause, their case was not decided by the judges that season; and twelve months afterwards I heard that they were still lying immured in the horrid gaol where I saw them. What was their ultimate fate I was never able to ascertain.

On the 3rd of September we left Beaufort, and proceeded to cross the Karroo by the course of the Ghamka or Lion's River. This, like the other *rivers* of the desert, is a mere temporary torrent, furiously flooded after the violent deluges of rain, which occur in this part of the colony once, perhaps, in two or three years. At other times, its channel is almost entirely dry—only retaining here and there scanty pools, replenished occasionally by thunder showers in summer.

The first day after leaving Beaufort, the aspect of the desert, and the manifestations of its drought and sterility were dismal enough. In the course of twenty miles I counted the skeletons (or rather such remnants as the hyenas had left) of thirty-two oxen, which had recently perished on this inhospitable route. Along the course of the Ghamka there was, however, a narrow fringe of mimosa trees, with occasional tracts of alluvial soil thickly covered with *ghanna*, a species of salsola, the ashes of which form a pure white caustic alkali, generally used by the colonists for making soap. This, and other shrubby plants, bruised by our wagon wheels as we passed along, emitted a pungent aromatic odour. Late at night we halted at a spot where the oxen found water in some brackish pits dug in the channel of the Ghamka, but there was nothing for them to browse but the dry and acrid shrubbery.

For four successive days we continued our journey through this desolate region, without seeing a human dwelling, and scarcely a living creature, with the exception of some flocks of ostriches, a couple of koodoo antelopes, and one or two solitary jackals and hyænas. We generally travelled till about midnight, and rested till past noon the following day, in order to allow our oxen light and leisure to pick up such scanty fare as the wilderness afforded—



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and that was indeed wretched enough. Travelling at night through the Karroo is sometimes hazardous, from the oxen being frightened by lions, and running off and overturning the wagons; but the severe drought which had driven the quaggas and antelopes from this quarter of the wilderness, had also freed us from this danger—for the beasts of prey never fail to follow the wild game in their migrations. Sometimes we could find no water, even by digging in the bed of the river; and what we found at other times was so brackish and thick with mud as to be almost unfit for use. The frequent lowing of our oxen for food and water was extremely dismal and affecting; and we were fain to pacify the poor animals as well as we could by cutting down the mimosa trees to enable them to snatch some scanty refreshment, by browsing on the meagre foliage and on the parasitical plants which grew upon the branches. Their strength and spirit, already impaired for want of sufficient nourishment before we reached Beaufort, began rapidly to decline; and many of them had become very lame, owing to the sharp flinty roads wearing their hoofs to the quick. A team of ten fine young oxen that I had brought fresh and fat from Somerset, were by this time entirely disabled; and I began to dread that we should actually be detained in the midst of this dismal desert. With the greatest exertions we were not able to travel more than about fifteen miles a-day. With fresh oxen and good pasturage we should have proceeded at double that rate.

On the 7th we reached the place of a grazier, named Nel, about thirty miles from the foot of the Zwartberg, whose ridges now rose dark and massive before us. A small but permanent fountain furnished water for the flocks, and there was some small appearance of vegetation in the vicinity. In other respects the place was very wretched and dreary; and Nel complained that he was sadly plagued by lions and wolves. A daughter of this boor's, a girl about fifteen years of age, was one of the comeliest females of European race I had seen in the colony.

We continued our journey for four days longer through

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

a country nearly of the same character; for some time as level as a lake, and afterwards composed of long undulating ridges of dark purple slate. Having abandoned the course of the Ghamka on its approach towards the Zwartberg, we directed our route along the skirts of that black and barren ridge of mountains,—crossing many beds of torrents, which exhibited evident marks of being occasionally filled with streams of vast power and volume, though at present few of them afforded even a draught of brackish water to refresh us and our melancholy cattle. In the channel of one of these, named the Dwyka, or Rhinoceros River, we halted on the 9th about midnight. Next morning I found the bed of this river, which was covered with blue sand, to be more than a hundred yards in width, but without a drop of water. By digging pits in the sand, however, we obtained enough, though of very indifferent quality, to furnish a scanty supply for our cattle, and to fill our kegs and bottles for the two following days. We then pushed on as fast as the exhausted oxen could travel, for there was not a drop of water to be had for a space of nearly forty miles. With great exertion we got through this last and worst tract of the desert; and, at length, about midnight on the 11th, we reached the banks of the Buffalo River, and heard, to our great delight, the rushing sound of a running stream. Our oxen had scented the water at a distance, long before either the rush of its current, or the far louder shrilling sound of the myriads of frogs that piped and croaked along its margin, could be heard; and, as we approached it, the loose cattle ran off at full speed to the water; and even those in the teams could with difficulty be restrained from following their example, and plunging headlong with the wagons into the river. And no wonder; for since we had left the Sneeuwberg, on the 27th of August, we had not met with a flowing stream, excepting the Salt River; and the poor animals had been for most part of the time on short allowance both of water and of food.

Next morning (Sept. 12th) at sun-rise, when I issued from my wagon, I was equally astonished and delighted



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

with the change in the aspect of the country. We were still on the skirts of the Karroo, and the general outline of the landscape was precisely similar to that of the desert we had just passed; but there was all the difference between life and death. Around us were still the same monotonous plains and ridges, covered with heathy shrubs, and diversified with a fringe of mimosa trees along the courses of the torrents. But these courses were here filled with copious streams; the mimosas were bright with fresh foliage; the heathy shrubs covered the ground with a dark-green crop of luxuriant herbage, glowing with variegated blossoms, and resembling nothing so much, in my recollection, as rich fields of clover. Even the broad wagon-road, usually as hard and as bare as a threshing floor, was here overrun with verdant creeping plants, as close as a camomile-bed. The fig-marigold (*mesembryanthemum*) was expanding its radiated crowns over thousands of acres—the plant itself almost hidden by the full blown flowers, and the whole air filled with its delicate odours. But I was still more struck by the magnificent profusion and variety of elegant liliaceous flowers in full blow—of the ixia, iris, gladiolus, amaryllis, and other tribes—which sprinkled the whole country, in many places so thickly as to paint large tracts with their predominant hues. Birds, too—finches, thrushes, and delicate sugar-birds, as rich and varied in plumage as the colours of the shrubs and flowers among which they sported,—with the turtle dove (*columba risoria*) cooing amorously in every mimosa brake—added another delightful feature of life and happiness to the vernal beauty of the wilderness; while, in the distance, flocks of springboks were seen browsing on the juicy shrubbery.

This exhilarating contrast to the dreary scenes of desolation from which we had just emerged, was entirely the effect, I found, of ten or twelve days' heavy rain, which, about six weeks before, had deluged the whole south-west angle of the colony, and extended thus far across the Bokkeveld and Black Mountains, into the skirts of the Great Karroo. This rain, falling on the long parched desert just

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

at the commencement of the South African spring, had awakened all its dormant powers of vegetation, and covered, as if by enchantment, its baked and naked surface with this exuberant display of verdure and beauty.

From this place to Cape Town the same vernal flush extended over the country, diversified only by the changes of soil and vegetable productions. The broken state of the roads, washed away in many places by the heavy rains, and crossed by deep gullies and dangerous torrents, formed now our chief obstacle; for as soon as we had emerged from the desert, I found no difficulty in hiring fresh oxen from the farmers to help us forward.

On the 17th of September, after a piercingly cold night, spent on the summit of the mountains which divide the Karroo from the warm valleys towards the south-west, we reached, by a long and steep descent, the romantic-looking glen of Hex-Rivier (Witch's River.) Here, instead of the squalid and slovenly cabins of the poor cattle-boors around the desert, we found elegant and capacious dwellings, skirted by orange groves, vineyards, and corn-fields, and by extensive orchards, with the peach and almond trees covered with blossoms. The inhabitants, with more general intelligence and acquired politeness than the back-country boors, evinced, at the same time, that the hospitality for which they have long been celebrated was still a characteristic feature. Many positively refused any remuneration for the lodging and entertainment which they readily afforded, and for the welcome supplies of fruit which they spontaneously pressed upon us. Except being detained some days by the overflowing of the Hex and Breede rivers, we had no further adventures to encounter; and the fertile vales of Wavern and Wagon-maker's Valley, through which we passed, having been described by almost every traveller who has landed at Table Bay, I shall merely add that I reached Cape Town on the 25th of September, with my female companions—much less exhausted than might have been expected by our tedious and trying journey.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER X.

*Residence in Cape Town—Favourable Prospects—Professions and Character of the Government—Permission to publish a Journal refused—Commissioners of Inquiry—Mr. Fairbairn—Establishment of a private Academy—A Magazine and Newspaper commenced—Jealousy of the Government—The Cape 'Reign of Terror'—Suppression of the Newspaper—Discontinuance of the South-African Journal—Persecution of the Editors—Suppression of the Literary Society—Conduct of the Government Press—Deplorable State of Society—Ruin of the Author's Prospects.*

My residence in Cape Town continued from September 1822 to February 1825, with the interval only of one short excursion to which I shall afterwards advert. This period was, by far, the busiest, and, to me, the most eventful portion of the six years which I spent in South Africa. But as it would be impossible, even were it desirable, to comprise in this volume a detailed account of all the transactions in which I was then engaged, I shall confine myself chiefly to such characteristic occurrences as may best serve to convey to English readers some idea of the state of the colony at that period.

For some time after my first arrival in Cape Town, things appeared to wear a very favourable aspect. The Governor had declared himself a friend to the mitigation of slavery, and had just issued a proclamation containing some beneficial and many plausible enactments; and, for the first time in the history of the colony, a white man was capitally punished for the murder of a slave. Great anxiety was professed for the establishment of English schools, and the encouragement of the English language and literature in South Africa. The public library, now under my personal charge,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

appeared to be warmly patronised by the Governor, and by all the chief functionaries. There was some talk also of offering me the superintendence of the Government Gazette, and of rendering that journal subservient to the diffusion of useful information throughout the colony. This was an object quite to my liking, and in which I only wanted the countenance of government to engage my most devoted services.

While matters exhibited this encouraging aspect, and while I saw opening around me fields of public usefulness far beyond my own humble powers adequately to occupy, I wrote home to invite Mr. Fairbairn, an early and intimate friend, to join me at Cape Town, in order to share with me in the toils, and (as I then hoped) the honours, of the career I had too sanguinely sketched out for our conjoint activity. My friend, with an ardour equal to my own, and with talents and acquirements far surpassing mine, came at my call—to share my toils—and with me to suffer treatment to which I shall leave the reader to apply the fitting epithet when he has read this chapter*.

Long before Mr. Fairbairn had joined me, however, I had acquired a more intimate acquaintance with the character of the colonial administration, and formed a truer estimate

---

* The following extract from a letter which I received from Mr. Fairbairn on his accepting my invitation, will at least show how different were the views and feelings he brought with him from those of which he was afterwards so malignantly accused.

" *March* 2, 1823.

" It gives me unspeakable pleasure to find you once more among 'Books and Men.' Your late acquaintance, the lions and quaggas, having lost their ancient veneration for the Muses, you had good authority for turning to the more docile *Batavi-Africani*. I have no doubt from what you tell me, and from the accounts I read of the Cape, that your views in Cape Town are well founded, and cannot, without some unforeseen mischief, fail to be realised to a very satisfactory extent. I will join you (D. V.) about six weeks after you

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of their views. I soon saw that their professed anxiety to encourage education and the diffusion of knowledge, was a piece of political hypocrisy, assumed to cloak the real character of the government from the prying eyes of his Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry, whose arrival in the colony was then daily expected. Of Colonel Bird's inclination to promote my views, and to encourage a more liberal use of the press than had formerly been permitted, I could

---

receive this epistle. My resolution was finally taken upon reading your last letter, and all my friends here approve of it. * * *

"Your hint about Magazines and Newspapers pleases me exceedingly. What should hinder us from becoming the Franklins of the *Kaap?* The history of the settlement requires to be brought down by rational men on the spot for a good number of years. Little or nothing has been done in the natural history of South Africa since Sparrman and Vaillant; and it is a rich region in that respect. There are still unknown kingdoms, or at least provinces, for us to explore.

"I have a number of literary schemes in my head, some of which may furnish us with matter for communion. I suppose you have no such thing as public lectures among you on any subject. Yet surely popular lectures on Chemistry, Geology, Botany, and other departments of science, might be rendered both acceptable and useful to your new countrymen. Turn your thoughts to this topic till we meet.

"In Europe, and especially in Britain, so many great poets are looking on the same objects that we see, and describing them with so much force and beauty, that one feels oneself fairly 'overcrowed,' and dare not even aspire to be heard. Who can think of aught but listening when Byron, Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, and Campbell, are sending their strong sweet voices through every winding vale of this delighted land? The character of African scenery is, I suppose, different from ours. The manners of the singular tribes surrounding you—your own destination at the extremity of the 'dry nurse of lions'—in every circumstance I can think of, there is much to excite, deepen, and fully employ the strongest imagination. What should hinder us, my dear friend, from 'giving to song' the unknown streams and nameless mountains of the *Kaap?*"

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

have no doubt; but that officer no longer possessed any influence. An irreconcilable quarrel had taken place between him and Lord Charles Somerset; and his Excellency's counsels were now chiefly directed by a man who once pretty accurately described his own character by saying, that he was 'a Whig in principle and a Tory in practice.' His *avowed* principles were generally sound and liberal; but he was not long in proving himself to be the unscrupulous promoter of measures utterly subversive of all enlightened policy and good government. He might be termed the Metternich of our petty political theatre; and he seemed to suit the times and the place, for the Governor, under the flimsy veil of late-assumed liberality, was by education, habit, and character, as determined a foe to free discussion, and as intolerant of any the slightest opposition to his own arbitrary will and narrow views, as if he had been bred up at the feet of the Holy Alliance.

From such a government I saw there was little to hope; but, as great reforms were anticipated from the investigations of the Commissioners of Inquiry, I resolved to keep myself as independent of government patronage as I could, and look forward to better times. Meanwhile, it was necessary to secure a competent income for my family; for my appointment in the library was not only inadequate in emolument, but also (as I was speedily made to feel) most precarious in tenure—being, in fact, like almost every other appointment in the colony, entirely dependent on the pleasure of the Governor. I therefore made arrangements for receiving under my charge a few youths, for private tuition, and had soon as many from the principal families of the place as I could conveniently attend to.

In renouncing all idea of connection with the government Gazette, however, I did not abandon my views of rendering the press subservient to the grand object of public instruction, but determined to establish, if possible, an independent periodical in Cape Town. I was encouraged to prosecute this purpose by the most enlightened inhabitants of the colony, both English and Dutch; and I soon

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

found a zealous coadjutor in the Rev. Mr. Faure, one of the Dutch clergymen of Cape Town, who entertained similar views for the instruction of his countrymen.

As we made no secret of our scheme, some rumour of it soon reached the ears of the Governor; and while we were engaged in preparing a prospectus for public circulation, and a memorial to his Excellency, soliciting permission to publish our projected journals (without which we knew we could not proceed a single step), I received a visit from a gentleman, previously unknown to me, a confidential retainer, at that time, of our Colonial Court. He strove earnestly to persuade me that the prosecution of the enterprise I had in view, would be detrimental to my personal interests in the colony; but finding me deaf to his representations on that score, he at length plainly told me that Lord Charles Somerset had expressed to him his opinion in regard to our projected undertaking—and that his Excellency's opinion was decidedly adverse to it.

Unmoved by this intimation, Mr. Faure and I sent in our memorial to the Governor on the 3rd of February, 1823. After waiting five weeks, we received a verbal reply through the lips of the Colonial Secretary, in the following words:—"His Excellency the Governor has not seen your application in a favourable light."

This response was rather too much in the 'Grand Seignior' style to satisfy me; and I spoke of writing again, to solicit either the honour of a personal interview, or the satisfaction of a written reply. This course the Colonial Secretary (as a private friend) anxiously deprecated. The Governor's jealousy of an independent press, he said, was too deep-rooted to be influenced by any force of argument; and to demand a written reply would be regarded as a most offensive proceeding. If insisted on, he significantly added, that a written reply would doubtless be given, but probably in such terms as might prove most prejudicial to my future prospects in the colony. Such being the state of things, there was no alternative but either to transmit our application to the Home Government, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

thus place ourselves in an attitude of opposition to the Governor, or submit in silence, and wait patiently for better times. Like prudent men we chose the latter course.

The Commissioners, Mr. Bigge and Major Colebrooke, arrived in July following. They received with attention all my communications, and, so far as I could judge, appeared disposed to appreciate fully my views in regard to the press. But their commission did not authorise them to interfere, or even to express an opinion in the colony, on this or any similar topic. They could only report to the Home Government; and to us there was, therefore, still no choice but to wait the result with renewed patience.

A few months afterwards, Mr. Fairbairn arrived; and as there now appeared only a remote probability of our being enabled to avail ourselves of the important services of the press in furtherance of our schemes, we resolved to direct our exclusive attention, for the present, to the establishment of a private academy for the instruction of the colonial youth. There existed at that period no public institution for classical education, and no private academy of any respectability, with the exception of one recently opened for the Dutch-African youth by my friend Mr. Faure. Our scheme was therefore warmly encouraged by the most influential inhabitants of Cape Town and its vicinity, and especially by such of the civil functionaries and military officers as had families. Thus supported, we furnished a large house in the outskirts of the town, and opened our academy with the most favourable prospects of success. Nor were those anticipations erroneous. In a very short time, we numbered among our pupils the sons of almost all the principal British residents, and many of the Dutch; a considerable number being placed as boarders under my roof. The regular superintendence of the establishment devolved on Mr Fairbairn, who was eminently qualified to do it justice, being an accomplished scholar, well versed both in ethical and physical science, and experienced in classical tuition. My own services in the establishment were comparatively of slight importance; and my time, moreover, was still almost

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

entirely occupied by the attendance required at the government library.

While matters were in this position, I was surprised, on the 2nd of December, by a summons from the Governor to receive a communication on the subject of the press. His Excellency informed me that Earl Bathurst had been pleased to permit the publication of our proposed journal, provided care was taken that nothing appeared in it "detrimental to the peace and safety of the colony." After some admonitory remarks of his own, Lord Charles gave, with obvious reluctance and with a very ill grace, his sanction for us to proceed with the publication.

The way being thus opened, Mr. Faure and I immediately announced our intention of publishing our respective journals in Dutch and English every two months alternately,—six numbers of either publication thus appearing annually. Mr. Fairbairn then joined me as co-editor of the 'South-African Journal.' Mr. Faure's work was entitled 'De Zuid-Afrikaansch Tydschrift,' which has the same signification in Dutch.

At the same time, Mr. Greig, a printer, who had recently arrived from England, and established a printing press in Cape Town, commenced the publication of a weekly newspaper, entitled the 'South-African Commercial Advertiser.' Every such attempt had heretofore been at once arbitrarily quashed by the colonial authorities; but the presence of the Commissioners of Inquiry, and the decision of Earl Bathurst in our case, deterred the government from then directly interfering with Mr. Greig's publication, although they went as far as they decently could to discountenance and discourage it. The first number of this newspaper appeared on the 7th, and a second on the 14th of January, 1824. Hitherto, neither Mr. Fairbairn nor I had any connection, and scarcely any acquaintance, with Mr. Greig; but after issuing his first two numbers, he found himself in want of editorial aid, and solicited us to undertake the literary management of the paper. As the control of an efficient press, with a view to the diffusion of useful knowledge throughout

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the colony, was the great object of our ambition, we agreed, after coming to a clear understanding in regard to principles, to undertake this charge also.

For a few months every thing went on most prosperously. The newspaper, which we published both in English and Dutch, was popular beyond our most sanguine expectations; and our magazine, of which the first number was issued on the 5th of March, was also warmly welcomed by a respectable body of subscribers. We were anxious to merit public support by indefatigable attention to our various duties. Nor had we undertaken more than what with systematic industry and division of labour we could easily execute. I had ample leisure in the government library for literary composition; and, with a coadjutor so able, the editorship of a weekly paper and a two-monthly magazine was rather a pastime than a task. Our academy also was in a very flourishing state, and the number of pupils constantly increasing. It was most efficiently conducted by Mr. Fairbairn; the classical languages, and other superior branches of education, being taught exclusively by himself; while subordinate teachers were employed under his superintendence for the Dutch, French, and other modern languages, and for drawing, mensuration, and similar departments. Our most sanguine hopes of private prosperity and public usefulness seemed about to be fully realised.

In order to lessen, if possible, the morbid jealousy of the Governor, we printed our magazine at the government press, although the printing thus cost us more, and was far worse executed, than if we had consented to have had it done by Mr. Greig; and we ventured to flatter ourselves that the colonial authorities, in spite of their former habits, would, for their own credit, under the eyes of his Majesty's Commissioners, not venture rashly to interfere with us. But we were soon roughly awakened from our dream of security.

No objection was openly made to any expression in the first number of our magazine; though I afterwards learnt that several articles had given umbrage to the Governor

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and his confidential advisers*. But it was the newspaper which they regarded with the deepest dislike, and which they watched with unsleeping vigilance for an opportunity to pounce upon and crush it. It was not, however, till four months after its establishment, and when the publication had fairly secured the approbation and warm support of the whole community, that they fully made up their minds to throw off the mask of moderation, and attempted to smother the new-fledged freedom of the press, and in fact to extinguish all public discussion in any shape.

We had strictly excluded personality (the besetting vice of small communities) from our columns: not the shadow of a complaint could be brought against us on that score. Mere party politics we had shunned, as being altogether

---

* The articles reported to me as having been considered most 'obnoxious' in this number, were the 'Introduction,' by Mr. Fairbairn, which contained some remarks on the influence of the general diffusion of knowledge in checking the abuses of despotic power, and elevating the character of individuals and of nations,—a Review of Commissioner Bigge's valuable Report on New South Wales—and some verses of mine upon the 'Suppression of a Constitutional Government in Spain, and the extinction of a Free Press in Germany.' I subjoin a few of the verses in order to give the reader some idea of the extent to which the spirit of the 'Holy Alliance' then prevailed at the Court of our South-African autocracy.

Alas, for Spain! that fiercely fought,
Nor vainly, 'gainst a nobler foe;
Now by the Bourbon sold and bought,
And shamed and sunk, without a blow.

Alas, for Spain! a fitting fate
Awaits her with her recreant chief;
Foul superstition, fraud and hate,
And mockery amidst her grief.

And thou, betrayed and trampled Pole,
And Saxon of the Elbe and Rhine,
I see the iron pierce your soul—
The tears commingling with your wine.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

alien from our objects as colonial journalists. Topics likely to excite violent controversy in the colony, such as the

---

I hear deep curses whispered low—
See fingers grasp the warrior's brand,
To snap the bondman's chain—but no!
Ye have the heart without the hand!

But now my glance to England turns,
A beacon-light 'midst ocean set,
Impregnable—which brightly burns
To tell where Freedom lingers yet.

And to that Guardian Isle the eye
Of fettered Europe fondly bends,
Waiting for Freedom's battle cry
To wake the earth's remotest ends.

* * * * *

And hark—it sounds!—I hear it now—
And Britain rouses at the peal,
And binds the helmet on her brow,
And grasps once more the glittering steel.

Her mighty voice is on the breeze,
Her martial step is on the plain,
Her flag's afloat upon the seas,
To bid the fallen rise again!

Up rise the nations at her call,
As once they started with a bound
To hurl to earth the tyrant Gaul
Who fiercely trod them to the ground.

But not, as then, their necks to bow
Ignobly to the traitor's yoke:
The moral Sampson wakens now—
The tyrant's talisman is broke!

Yes! Congresses and Courts must yield
To Nations bursting from their chain;
While, under Britain's guardian shield,
Law, Freedom, Truth, begin their reign.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Slavery question, the condition of the Aborigines, &c. (however decided were our own opinions on such points), we had also carefully abstained from discussing. We had in fact rejected numerous communications on all these subjects, considering it injudicious to arouse premature debate, even on legitimate and important public questions, in the then critical condition of the press and of the colony. We had, therefore, flattered ourselves that it would be scarcely possible for the most jealous scrutiny to find a plausible pretext for interference. But it was our singular fate to be sacrificed not for sins *actually* committed, but from the apprehension of those that we might *possibly* commit.

We had introduced the practice of reporting law cases, and on this point the Governor and some of his advisers happened to be peculiarly sensitive; insomuch that although they had nothing to allege against the paper as respects the impartiality and discretion with which such reports had been hitherto given, they could not tolerate the continuance of such a privilege. The immediate cause of their interference was this. There was a prosecution for libel then before the Supreme Court, at the instance of the Governor. In the course of the trial the defendant (one Edwards, a reckless and desperate adventurer,) had brought forward certain scandalous and libellous charges against the character of Lord Charles Somerset, both in his public and private capacity; and to prevent the possibility of such charges being reported in the newspaper, the Fiscal* was instructed to assume the censorship. This took place on the evening of the 4th of May, after we had corrected the leading article for the paper of the following morning, which happened to

* The powers of a Cape Fiscal, an officer (now superseded) combining the functions of Attorney General and Superintendent of Police, are sketched with his usual felicity by the author of the 'State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822.'—"He is powerful to punish the slave and to accuse the free man. He may bring forward charges tyrannically, or withhold them corruptly. He may tease one part of the society by little vexatious police regulations, and indulge another part in less venial acts." &c. &c.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

be of my composition.* From the report of Edwards' trial also, every offensive allusion had been carefully expunged; as was afterwards proved to the Commissioners of Inquiry,

* It was a curious coincidence that this last leading article had been written for the express purpose of warning the colonists against being led astray by such desperadoes as Edwards, or, more perilous still, by such wretches as Oliver the Spy, who was then at the Cape, and in the active employment of the government. I subjoin the concluding paragraphs, as a specimen of our uniform *political* tone.

"To the Dutch Colonists, now our countrymen and fellow-subjects, we particularly address the following remarks. However much they may occasionally have been galled by the unfair or unfeeling sarcasms of English travellers and journalists, they may rest assured that the regards of the government and people of England are directed towards them with indulgent liberality and affection. Let authors be judged of by their words, but nations and governments only by their actions. England, of all nations that ever existed, pursues the most liberal system of policy towards the colonies she has won or nurtured. Her ministers, no doubt, are fallible, like other men; they have sometimes erred in regard to the administration of the colonies, and may possibly err again; but it must be from ignorance of the truth, if the British Government ever permits deliberate injustice to be done towards any appendage of the empire. This colony, if abandoned by England, would fall an easy prey to the first rapacious tyrant that chose to seize upon it. Under her free and fostering guardianship alone, may we rationally hope to attain permanent prosperity, liberty, and happiness.

"Let, therefore, no temporary vexations, nor any possible accumulation of private annoyances, ever for a moment weaken the firm loyalty of our fellow-subjects (whether Dutch or English) towards the wise, just, and beneficent government of England. Is she not doing for us all we have ever asked of her—and more? Has she not sent out able and honourable men to inquire into our local grievances, disadvantages, and restrictions — his Majesty's Commissioners, who are at this moment traversing the remotest districts of our country, to hear and see and report upon whatever requires to be amended? Whoever now sits sulkily down and broods fretfully over his wrongs, or disadvantages, instead of availing himself of the *legitimate*



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

by the production of the attested proof sheet, actually sent to press when the Fiscal interfered.

The crisis having thus arrived, Mr. Fairbairn and I explained to Mr. Greig the course we had determined to pursue; namely, never to compromise our birth-right as British subjects by editing any publication under a censorship. But we advised him to weigh maturely all the consequences, and either act upon our principles, or continue the newspaper without us, as he might judge best. Mr. Greig, however, declared himself resolved to follow the same course, and announced next morning, in our last paper, that in consequence of the Fiscal's assumption of the censorship, the publication would be discontinued until the decision of his Majesty's Government on the subject should be ascertained.

This course, which necessarily involved an immediate appeal to the Government, and perhaps to the Parliament, at home, would seem to have been quite unexpected by Lord Charles Somerset and his advisers, and to have exasperated his lordship beyond all bounds of common prudence or decorum. He instantly issued a warrant, upon

---

channel which has been so considerately opened for their redress, deserves to bear them for ever unpitied—and can never hereafter ascribe the fault to the neglect of the British Government.

"Above all, let all good and patriotic citizens beware of any *intemperance*, in word or deed, towards any individual to whom the legal authority of government has been delegated. We are FREEMEN; and, if any of our rulers do oppression or wrong, they can be called to answer for it at the bar of their country, as well as the meanest of their fellow-subjects: but their office and persons ought to be duly respected so long as they continue to occupy the stations to which our gracious Sovereign has been pleased to promote them. If there be any persons in the colony (we trust there are none) who would teach men disrespect to even the shadow of LEGAL AUTHORITY, let good citizens beware of them. Fools and desperadoes may talk or act intemperately: wise and patriotic men ought to be distinguished by candour, calmness, and self-possession."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

his own responsibility (a perilous power lodged with the governor for great state emergencies only), directing Mr. Greig's press to be sealed up, and ordering himself to leave the colony within a month from the date of the warrant*.

The Cape 'Reign of Terror' had now commenced, and events succeeded each other with a rapidity and violence which the actors mistook for energy and decision. My turn came next. The second number of our Magazine had been published on the 7th of May. The warrant for Greig's banishment was issued on the 8th. On the 13th the Fiscal sent me a summons to attend at his office, where he informed me that several articles and paragraphs in our Magazine had given high offence to the Government; that had the obnoxious passages been observed while the work was in the press, he (the Fiscal) would have expunged them, or suppressed the number; and that he must now have a satisfactory 'pledge' that nothing 'obnoxious or offensive to Government' should appear in future. After a long conversation—during which I pressed him in vain to show me by what law, Colonial, Dutch, or English, he assumed the right of restricting the legal privileges of the press—I said that as it was quite impossible for us even to conjecture what might be deemed 'obnoxious' by the Colonial Govern-

* The details of Mr. Greig's case, together with some correspondence between Lord C. Somerset and the Colonial Department, which led to a second suppression of the same newspaper by Earl Bathurst in 1826, may be seen in No. 470 of the Parliamentary Papers of 1827. That paper does not, however, contain a most important correspondence which took place between Mr. Fairbairn and Mr. Secretary Huskisson in 1827 and 1828, and which led first to the establishment of a *licensed* press, at the Cape, and finally, under Sir George Murray, to its *legalised freedom*. The principal part of this latter correspondence was published in the Oriental Herald for February, 1829. A pamphlet was also published by Mr. Fairbairn in London, in 1827, entitled "Papers explaining the Cause of Lord Bathurst's last Interference with the Press at the Cape of Good Hope."



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ment, and as we could not admit any such right of censorship as he claimed, our only safe course, and the best course for all parties, would be to discontinue the publication for the present. Accordingly next morning Mr. Fairbairn and I sent the Fiscal a written notice to that effect, and on the 15th the discontinuance of the work was announced by advertisement in the Gazette.

These occurrences produced a strong sensation in Cape Town. No public meeting could be held without the Governor's permission; but a petition to the King in Council, praying for the extension to the colony of the privileges of a free press, was drawn up, and signed by a very large proportion of the most respectable inhabitants, including almost the whole of the English merchants. This petition was couched in the most moderate and decorous language, and only referred in very calm and measured terms to the recent extraordinary transactions. Such was the panic, however, that had been excited by the sentence of banishment issued against Mr. Greig, that comparatively few of the Dutch inhabitants dared to sign it. The Governor's power, they said, 'was absolute, and his resentment ruin.' They durst not venture, therefore, even to petition the King, contrary to the pleasure of the Governor. Such abject dread of arbitrary power found little sympathy, of course, in our breasts. Mr. Fairbairn and I signed the petition.

This expression of public sentiment alarmed while it enraged the Government. They wished to smother the press without provoking public discussion at home. Another attempt was made to save appearances. Lord Charles summoned me to appear immediately before him at his audience-room in the Colonial Office. I found him with the Chief Justice, Sir John Truter, seated on his right hand, and the second number of our 'South-African Journal' lying open before him*. There was a storm on his brow,

* The article which was pointed out by the Fiscal, and again by the Governor at this interview, as the most 'obnoxious,' was one on the State and Prospects of the English Emigrants in South Africa,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and it burst forth at once upon me like a long-gathered south-easter from Table Mountain. "So, Sir!" he began—"you are one of those who dare to insult me, and oppose

---

—more especially some of the concluding remarks. The lamentable condition of the settlers at that time, and the mode in which *they* were treated by the Colonial Government, will be afterwards noticed. I insert a sample of this article, to give the English reader some idea of what in those days was denounced in a British colony as 'obnoxious,' 'radical,' and 'seditious.'

"We come now to consider the causes of the failure of this scheme of emigration.

"1. The first and most decisive cause, we apprehend, is the population having *preceded*, instead of having *followed*, the influx of capital.

"2. An arbitrary system of government, and its natural consequences,—abuse of power by local functionaries, monopolies, restrictions, &c.

"3. The vacillating and inefficient system pursued in regard to the Caffers.

"4. The appearance of the rust, an unprecedented and till then almost unknown disease in the wheat crops.

"Capital and free government are essential to the success of colonisation. North America, from the possession of the latter chiefly, has far outstripped all other European colonies. The Spanish and Portuguese settlements, and the Cape of Good Hope, from the want of both, are yet in their infancy. In speaking of the Cape, we intend no reflection on our existing authorities. They have, no doubt, considered it their duty to administer the Government as authorised by England, and as it devolved upon them from their predecessors. We ascribe neither praise nor blame to any individual, but we cannot pass over a cause so influential without stating it frankly, though not invidiously."

This was the most 'personal' paragraph in our Journal, though it was only one of many denounced by Lord Charles and his Fiscal.

It is not a little gratifying to me to be enabled here to add, that not very long after the suppression of our Magazine, we received the communication which I have taken the liberty to insert below, from one whose appreciation of the work afforded us at the time no slight consolation. Having forwarded our Magazine and a pamphlet upon

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

my government!"—and then he launched forth into a long tirade of abuse; scolding, upbraiding, and taunting me,—with all the domineering arrogance of mien and sneering insolence of expression of which he was so great a master—reproaching me above all for my *ingratitude* for his personal favours. While he thus addressed me, in the most insulting style, I felt my frame tremble with indignation; but I saw that the Chief Justice was placed there for a witness of my demeanour, and that my destruction was sealed if I gave way to my feelings, and was not wary in my words. I stood up, however, and confronted this most arrogant

---

the state of the Settlers to Mr. Brougham (the present Lord Chancellor), that eminent person, who, through his whole career, has never omitted to encourage any honest exertions in the cause of human improvement, however humble or remote, when brought under his notice, thus replied to the author, who was then personally entirely unknown to him. (A sentence or two relating to another topic are omitted):—

"*London, Nov.* 20, 1824.

"SIR,

"I have received your letter of the 1st of September, in which you refer to a former communication; and I lose no time in letting you know that I never received any such letter or papers*. About the same time with your letter of September 1st, I received a Pamphlet and a Magazine, the latter of which I have read;—and I return you many thanks for the pleasure and information which it has afforded me. A journal so ably conducted in the distant colony where you reside, is highly creditable to our country; and by diffusing useful information and sound and liberal opinions, it cannot fail to produce the best effects. * * * *

"I expect soon to have the pleasure of reading your pamphlet. In the meantime I wish every success to yourself and Mr. Fairbairn, both in the conduct of your Academy and Journal. And I am

"Your obliged and obedient servant,

"*T. Pringle, Esq.*" "H. BROUGHAM.

* The letter referred to was one which I had addressed to Mr. Brougham after the suppression of the Newspaper and Magazine. It contained an account of those proceedings, and was accompanied by a file of Newspapers; but the packet, it appears, was lost.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

man with a look under which his haughty eye instantly sunk, and replied to him with a calmness of which I had not, a few minutes before, thought myself capable. I told him that I was quite sensible of the position in which I stood—a very humble individual before the representative of my sovereign; but I also knew what was due to myself as a British subject and a gentleman, and that I would not submit to be *rated* in the style he had assumed by any man, whatever were his station or his rank. I repelled his charges of having acted unworthily of my character as a government servant and a loyal subject;—I defended my conduct in regard to the press, and the character of our magazine, which he said was full of 'calumny and falsehood;'—I asserted my right to petition the king for the extension of the freedom of the press to the colony; and I denied altogether the 'personal obligations' with which he upbraided me, having never asked nor received from him the slightest personal favour, unless the lands allotted to my party, and my own appointment to the Government Library, were considered such,—though the latter was, in fact, a public duty assigned to me, in compliance with the recommendations of the Home Government. This situation, however, I now begged to resign, since I would not compromise my free agency for that or for any appointment his lordship could bestow.

Lord Charles then saw he had gone a step too far. He had, in fact, misapprehended my character, and had made a not uncommon mistake, in taking a certain bashfulness of manner (*mauvaise honte*) for timidity of spirit. And as his object *then* was not absolutely to quarrel with, but merely to intimidate me, and thus render me subservient to his views, he immediately lowered his tone, and had the singular meanness, after the insulting terms he had used, to attempt to coax me by a little flattery, and by throwing out hints of his disposition to promote my personal views, if I would conduct myself 'discreetly.' He wished the magazine, he said, still to go on; and even alleged that the Fiscal had in some points exceeded his instructions in regard

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to us. But this attempt to cajole, when he found he could not bully me, disgusted me even more than his insolence. I saw the motive, and despised it: I saw the peril, too, and feared it: '*timeo Danaos!*' I resolutely declined, therefore, his repeated invitations (to which he called the Chief Justice formally to bear witness) to recommence the magazine, unless *legal protection* were granted to the press. And so ended my last conference with Lord Charles Somerset. I retired, and immediately sent in the resignation of my Government appointment.

We still hoped we might, at all events, be allowed to go on quietly with our academy, and now resolved to devote our exclusive attention to it, and to other objects remote from politics, till better times should dawn on the colony. But we speedily found that what some of our Dutch friends had said was but too true—'the Governor's power was absolute, and his resentment ruin.' Lord Charles, after this conference, appears to have determined to crush us totally. He could not decently, without some misdemeanour on our part, shut up our academy, but he openly denounced Mr. Fairbairn and myself as 'inveterate radicals;' and declared our academy to be 'a seminary of sedition.' Such sentiments openly avowed by a Governor armed with almost despotic authority, however much disliked personally, had an amazing effect. In the eyes of some persons opposition to the pleasure of 'the powers that be,' right or wrong, is always a sufficient proof of democratic or seditious principles; and in the present case, many who had no respect whatever either for the opinions or the character of Lord Charles Somerset, had nevertheless great apprehension of offending him by appearing to patronise those whom he seemed determined to put down. The personal influence of a Governor, in such a community as the Cape, can indeed be but faintly conceived by people in England. Under the old system, or what Lord Charles used to call 'the decent order of things,' that influence was all but omnipotent.

The consequences may easily be conceived. From that moment the prosperity of our academy was blasted. Week

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

after week pupils were taken away, some on one pretext, some on another; until, in the course of a few months, scarcely half our former number remained. This result was probably accelerated by certain occurrences which took place shortly after the affair of the press, and of which the following is not the least memorable and characteristic.

The establishment of a Literary and Scientific Society at the Cape had been one of the objects to which we had most earnestly directed our attention, with a view to the intellectual improvement of the colony; and in order to prepare the public mind for the formation of such an association, two able articles from the pen of Mr. Fairbairn had appeared in successive numbers of our Magazine. After the suppression of the press, we still cherished the hope of succeeding in this object, which had now become of more importance than ever, since by that event, 'light' was 'by one entrance quite shut out.' Besides, as such societies have been generally tolerated, and even liberally patronised by some of the most despotic Governments of ancient and modern times, we flattered ourselves that even our South-African 'divan' would be disposed rather to encourage than obstruct the direction of the public mind to such pursuits, both for the sake of their own credit in the eyes of the Commissioners and the Home Government, and in order to withdraw attention from more unpleasant topics. The Governor's personal hostility towards ourselves, we hoped, might be perhaps abated, when he saw that our views were exclusively directed to objects from which *all* political discussion was strictly excluded. And we entertained, moreover, the not unworthy expectation of extending our influence in society, and even of benefiting our academy, by exhibiting proofs of the moderation of our principles, and the practical utility of our aims.

On the 11th of July, accordingly, we met with a few of our friends at the house of Messrs. Thompson and Pillans*,

* The former of these gentlemen is the author of "Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa," published in 1827. And besides

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

merchants, in Cape Town, to concert measures for carrying this purpose into effect. Some fundamental resolutions were adopted; a committee of three persons was appointed to prepare specific regulations; and I was invited to act as secretary *pro tempore*. We had, from time to time, similar preliminary meetings, at each others' houses, at which the regulations of the proposed society were maturely considered, and several persons of scientific acquirements were added to our number. Meanwhile, to guard against any possible misapprehension of our views, copies of an address, pointing out the precise objects of the proposed institution, and a report of our sub-committee on the same topic, together with the rules adopted by the founders, were transmitted to the Colonial Office, the Fiscal, the Members of the Court of Justice, and to the Commissioners of Inquiry*.

---

him and his intelligent partner, Mr. Pillans, our other associates at this meeting were the Rev. Dr. Philip, Superintendent of Missions; Messrs. W. T. Blair, of the E. I. Company's Civil Service; H. E. Rutherfoord, merchant, B. Moodie, W. L. Von Buchenroder, and C. T. Thornhill.

* The following are extracts from these papers:—

"It has likewise been found a prudent measure, and very conducive to the peace and permanency of such associations, to exclude many topics of great interest and importance, but on which men's opinions are formed, rather from their natural temperament and the accidents of life, than from universally-admitted axioms, or indisputable authorities. Under this head, we must rank the conduct of existing Governments, or what is called the Politics of the Day, Controversial Theology, and in slave-countries, we may add, the subject of Slavery."

"With the wide field of Physical and Moral Science before us, it would argue no excess of prudence or good taste to step aside into the thorny and perplexed ways of uneasy, unfruitful, and interminable controversy. The Geology of South Africa, it is agreed by all, still requires elucidation, and no doubt some important discoveries in that department await the judicious and patient inquirer;—the Mineralogy of the Cape is yet in its infancy;—and what a rich, inexhaustible region of delightful research, with a certainty of abundant

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

So perfectly unexceptionable did the principles of the association appear even to persons most afraid of giving umbrage to the Governor, and so praiseworthy its objects, that at our third meeting, which was held on the 11th of August, applications for admission were presented from a large number of respectable individuals, comprising some of the principal Government functionaries*. And on purpose to conciliate the Governor, by affording him an opportunity of appearing to advantage, as the promoter of science and literature in the colony, a deputation was appointed to wait upon his Excellency, to solicit him to become the Patron of the Society. This deputation consisted of Sir John Truter, the Chief Justice, Dr. Truter, a member of the Bench (and brother-in-law of Mr. Barrow, of the Admiralty), Mr. Cloetè, advocate, two Indian residents, two medical gentlemen, and two English merchants of Cape Town. Mr. Fairbairn and I, for obvious reasons, avoided assuming any unnecessary prominence in the business.

The Governor, however, did not allow time for the deputation to wait upon him. He had been watching our proceedings all along, with a most feline vigilance, and now sprung forth upon us like a tiger from his den. He called the Chief Justice to his presence, and gave him such a rating

---

success, does the surface of this Colony present to the Botanist and student of Natural History, for the exercise of their respective talents and observation! If the Society turn its exertions zealously in this direction, Agriculture and the most important arts of life may, in a short time, be improved and extended by its labours."

"*Rule* 2.—Any subject not involving the Politics of the Day or Controversial Theology, shall be open to discussion at the ordinary meetings; and these *excepted topics* shall at no time be admitted into the papers or conversations of the Society."

* The members at this time had increased to sixty-one, comprising among others the Chief Justice, and two other members of the Bench, the Deputy Fiscal, Mr. Lind, four other civil servants, two advocates, four ministers of religion, nine medical gentlemen, and twenty-one merchants.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

for joining the Society, that Sir John, almost frightened out of his wits, anxiously entreated me to withdraw his name from the list of members; at the same time assuring me, with a sort of rueful simplicity, that he conscientiously believed the institution to be a most praiseworthy one, and calculated to be of inestimable advantage to the community!

With Mr. Advocate Cloetè his lordship came at once to the point, and told him distinctly that he was resolved to crush the institution; adding, with vindictive emphasis, that it was "quite sufficient for him to know that this Society had originated with Mr. Pringle and Mr. Fairbairn—for he was fully determined, so long as he held the reins of Government, to oppose and thwart every thing, without exception, which emanated from them, or in which they were concerned."

To show that he was in earnest, Mr. Fairbairn and Dr. Philip, and afterwards Mr. Pillans, were officially summoned before the Fiscal, and charged with holding 'illegal meetings;' and a proclamation, dated Feb. 19, 1800, which had been issued by Sir George Yonge, during the first occupation of the colony by the British, for the suppression of *Jacobin Clubs*, was read to them as the law which would be enforced in the present case, should we venture to hold any further meetings.

A correspondence then ensued between Mr. Blair (a mild, accomplished, and most courteous man), who had presided as chairman of our last meeting, and the Colonial Government, in which every effort was used to soothe the Governor's prejudices, and to obviate, if possible, his objections. But it was all in vain. Courtesy and conciliation only drew forth further insult. "His Excellency considers" (so ran the official missive) "that he should greatly deviate from his duty in giving countenance to an establishment conducted by persons who have *wilfully* paid so little regard to the Authorities and established Regulations of the Colony."

Seeing that the Governor was thus inveterately resolved to extinguish our embryo institution, we determined that he should at least have the credit of doing it formally and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

officially, and not by mere menace and intimidation. We therefore drew up a respectful memorial, and sent it round for the signatures of the members. The hostility of the Governor to the institution being now well known, many were intimidated from signing: but still it was sent in with thirty-six respectable names. The petition was peremptorily refused; and the association was, of course, immediately broken up. A complete history of the affair, with copies of the papers and correspondence, was then drawn up by us, and laid before the Commissioners of Inquiry.

I must hastily pass over, along with many other strange occurrences of that period, an intimation which I received from a person in the service of Government, and who was certainly then on very confidential terms with the acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. Peter Brink, that a warrant had been signed for the inspection of my private papers by the Fiscal, together with those of my friends Dr. Philip and Mr. Fairbairn, on the pretext of searching for 'illegal documents.' The Fiscal afterwards strenuously denied to the Commissioners of Inquiry that any such warrant against *me* had ever existed; but it is certain that his whole conduct at the time, and especially his summoning me before the Court of Justice to answer his interrogations upon oath, were of a character to confirm my belief of some such stigmatising measure being in contemplation, as part of the system of *terrorism* then pursued by the Colonial Government.

It was difficult, indeed, to conjecture to what lengths the violence of arbitrary power would at that dismal period proceed. Fear is the most cruel of all passions, and infuriated by the fear of exposure, the Colonial Government seemed determined to strike down every man who should dare even to *look* or *think* disapprobation of its deeds. A frightful system of espionage pervaded every circle of society, and rendered perilous even the confidence of the domestic hearth. *Oliver*, the well-known Government spy, who had been sent out from England to be provided for at the Cape with a lucrative situation under Lord Charles, was most actively engaged during this crisis, as was universally believed, in

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

his former vocation. Informers and false witnesses abounded; and rumours of 'plots' and 'disloyal combinations against the Governor' were assiduously kept afloat, for purposes as obvious as they were mischievous.

The Government Gazette had been long systematically employed for purposes of public deception, and sometimes of personal calumny. It had denounced the most respectable heads of the Albany settlers as seditious radicals, merely because they proposed to meet to petition the Government respecting their grievances. It had sent forth most audacious misrepresentations, for the purpose of *effect* in England, respecting the Tulbagh Drostdy, the Government free-schools, the mitigation of slavery, the state of the frontier, the treatment of the native tribes, and other topics too multifarious to enumerate. Latterly it had been most assiduously employed in promulgating hints, and that too in Government proclamations and advertisements, respecting 'an evil spirit' and 'malignant views' evinced by some of the community; and in recording the presentation of numerous addresses to his Excellency, from the Court of Justice, the Government Departments, the Burgher Senate, and other public bodies, 'expressive of the strongest sentiments of loyalty!' This sort of work might, perhaps, be considered the legitimate province of such a journal under such a government. But not contented even with the services of the Gazette, a scurrilous pamphlet was surreptitiously printed at the Government press in October, 1824, for the sole purpose of defaming the character of the Rev. Dr. Philip, who (for reasons to be afterwards noticed) was more obnoxious to the Governor, if that were possible, than even Mr. Fairbairn or myself. The fact, from its astounding folly, seems scarcely credible; but it is, nevertheless, most certain that Dr. Philip obtained a complete copy of this pamphlet when only a very few had been distributed, and laid it before the Commissioners of Inquiry on the 19th of October, and that the facts of its being printed by the order and under the immediate inspection of the acting Colonial Secretary, and copies of it circulated by

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the Governor himself, were fully substantiated; and, what was not less remarkable, that the printer's name was omitted by express order from the Colonial Office, in the very teeth of a proclamation issued four months previously, imposing a heavy penalty for every such omission! Five hundred copies were stitched and ready for distribution, when the investigations of the Commissioners alarmed the Governor; the copies which had been distributed were hastily recalled, and the whole impression destroyed.

The state of society in Cape Town, and indeed throughout the colony, at this period, was truly deplorable. Mutual confidence was shaken; distrust, apprehension, and gloom everywhere prevailed; and men, according to their several characters and circumstances, were perturbed by angry excitement or prostrated by slavish fear. The singular *audacity* of the Government in some of the transactions I have noticed, and in others of a still more startling description which fall not within the scope of this narrative, absolutely paralysed the mass of the community with terror; and at length impressed them generally with the conviction that the Governor, who could venture thus to act under the very eyes of the King's Commissioners, must feel himself so strongly backed *at home* as to defy alike official inquiry and individual complaint. So strong had become this conviction, that whoever was discovered to be a complainant to the Commissioners, or supposed to have furnished them voluntarily with any information respecting abuses, was immediately set down as a 'marked and ruined man*.' And

* The influence of such impressions in deterring the inhabitants, and especially persons in office, from giving information to the Commissioners, even respecting the most notorious abuses and oppressions, may be partly estimated, in spite of the official cautiousness of the language, from some remarks in their "Report upon the Administration of the Government at the Cape of Good Hope."—"Notwithstanding," observe the Commissioners, "the favourable disposition manifested towards us by the head of the Government, we soon had reason to be convinced that impartial or unsolicited

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

even the Commissioners themselves, (though unquestionably as honourable men as England ever intrusted with a difficult and delicate public duty,) began to be very generally suspected of being either the mere puppets of Earl Bathurst, or the blind dupes of Lord Charles Somerset; an unworthy surmise, arising from the extreme caution which their instructions constrained them to observe in regard to all complaints which related to the personal conduct of the Governor. Those who, strong in a better faith, had dared to vindicate their claims to the privileges of British subjects, and who by doing so had become '*obnoxious*' (such was the specific term) to the Colonial Government, were now looked upon as persons under a sort of civil proscription, with whom it was no longer safe to associate, or even to hold casual intercourse*. Many illustrations, at once

---

disclosures upon the mode in which the Government had been administered, or even explanations of the particular instances in which the exercise of its authority seemed questionable, were not to be expected from the civil servants who at that time held official situations."—"We have reason to believe that a general understanding existed at that time, and which has since been more distinctly pronounced, that any civil servant who should venture to make disclosures to us of circumstances in his department without having previously communicated them to the Colonial Government, would be liable to dismissal from office."—"We think it right to notice it as an impression in some degree prevalent, and which may therefore partly account for the reluctance of individuals to afford us voluntary information."—(See *Parliamentary Papers* for 1827, No. 282.) —The real fact is, that persons in the service of Government, while they were *ostensibly* invited by public proclamation to afford every information in their power to the Commissioners, were privately given to understand, and even in some instances officially threatened, that they would be 'instantly dismissed from office' if they should *dare* to make any 'gratuitous communication.' I do not make this assertion without adequate evidence of the fact. A person in office showed me a letter to this effect, addressed to himself from the Colonial Office, at the very period of which I am writing.

* If any reader should fancy that I may have drawn this picture of

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ludicrous and humiliating, of the pusillanimous prostration of the public mind at this crisis, remain vividly in my recollection; but I refrain from giving pain to individuals, otherwise respectable, by recording them. Nor were people's apprehensions apparently without foundation. I shall notice only one instance. A meritorious clergyman of the Church of England, a friend of mine, was informed by a functionary of high rank, then the chief adviser of the Governor, that he was regarded at Government House as one of the 'disaffected,' because 'it was observed that he still continued to associate with Mr. Pringle and Mr. Fairbairn.' It would, however, be harsh, and probably unfair, to ascribe without qualification the *whole* of this persecution to the Governor personally. Tyrannical and vindictive as he was, I have little doubt that much of what was then said and done, and of which Lord Charles Somerset got the credit, was said and done without his knowledge or beyond his

---

colonial servility too strongly, I would beg to refer him to the statement of a gentleman well qualified, from his intimate knowledge of the Cape, and from the station of Government Secretary which he so long and ably filled there, to give a correct judgment on the subject. I regret to add, that he has also been latterly enabled to judge of what he describes from bitter experience, having been himself one of the chief victims of Lord Charles Somerset's violent and implacable resentment. In a pamphlet, published at Cape Town in 1827, this officer makes the following remarks:—

"It would be to suppose persons very ill informed of the state of society in colonies," [Col. B. should have added, *under an arbitrary government*,] "if it were thought necessary to prove the great extent of influence the opinions of Government House command. To be in disgrace at Government House is nearly to be banished society: to offend a Governor is nearly to become an outlaw. No one dares to look at, or to greet the individual, who has incurred viceroyal displeasure; few venture to give opinions not consonant with those of the arbiter of wisdom, who presides over the fortunes of every member of a Colonial community."—*Observations on the Letter addressed by Sir R. Donkin to Earl Bathurst: By Lieutenant-Colonel Bird. Cape Town*, 1827.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

intention. But such will ever be the case under a system of government such as he had organised, and to which he pertinaciously clung till it crumbled beneath his grasp and crushed him in its ruins; a system where integrity and independence found no soil to grow in, where truth could not with safety be spoken, and where the servile and the selfish, basely solicitous to recommend themselves in the yes of their patron, could scarcely fail to carry insult and persecution towards the objects of his dislike, in many cases beyond the bounds he himself may have purposed.

Such is a faint picture of the state of things at the Cape in the beginning of October, 1824. Before this period I had become convinced that, whatever the final result might be as regarded the system of Government, my personal prospects in the colony were for the present entirely blasted, and that to continue the struggle longer would only sink us deeper in ruin. I began therefore to prepare seriously for returning to England, where, though my prospects were dark enough, I should at least be once more under the protection of British laws, and at liberty to follow whatever course Providence might open to me, regardless alike of the favour or the frown of men 'drest in a little brief authority.' With this view, I resolved to make a hasty excursion to the eastern frontier, in order to see once more my relatives at Glen-Lynden; leaving my wife meanwhile in Cape Town; and my friend Fairbairn continuing to superintend our little academy,—which now looked like a consumptive patient whose recovery is quite hopeless, though dissolution may be for a brief space protracted.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAP. XI.

*Excursion to the Interior—Accident near Genadendal—Return to Cape Town—State of Affairs—Second Journey to the Eastern Frontier—State of the Settlers in Albany; their Calamities and Privations; their Treatment by the Government; Subscription for their Relief; their Progressive Advance, and present Prosperous Condition.*

On the 8th of October, 1824, I set out on my projected excursion to the interior, in company with my esteemed friends, Mr. W. T. Blair and Captain Miller, of the East India Company's service, who were bound on a journey of benevolence to the British settlement in Albany, and to the principal missionary stations that lay near our route. Travelling on horseback, we passed rapidly through the well-peopled district of Stellenbosch, and the vine-cultured vale of Franschehoek; and having crossed by the magnificent pass of that name the great range of Drakenstein mountains, we reached on the 11th the Moravian settlement of Genadendal, or Vale of Grace.

It was Sunday morning when we approached the village; and the voice of sacred song was ascending from the rustic chapel, in the midst of its venerable grove of oaks, harmonising finely with the quiet sabbath-like seclusion of that beautiful spot. We sat down under a tree near the door of the chapel, and enjoyed the sweet repose of the scene, till the service was concluded. We were then welcomed by the good missionaries with their characteristic courtesy, and spent the rest of the day most pleasantly among them and their Hottentot disciples.

We left Genadendal the following morning; but had not proceeded above seven or eight miles, when I met with an



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

accident which effectually interrupted my journey. My horse being bit, or snapt at, by an ill-mannered cur, in passing a boor's place, gave a sudden spring to one side, by which I was thrown violently from my saddle to the ground, and had one of my thigh bones fractured*. There

* Owing to my lameness from a hurt received in childhood, I may, perhaps, be considered peculiarly liable to such accidents as the one here mentioned. Nevertheless, though I was almost daily on horseback during my residence in South Africa, and frequently made long journeys in that mode, I never met with any other serious accident of this sort, except once at Glen-Lynden, when I had another bone broken. An inconvenience of the country of more general application is the difficulty, in remote situations, of procuring surgical or medical assistance. The remarkable salubrity of the climate, in which contagious diseases are almost unknown, renders the latter, perhaps, of inferior importance; but my own experience may serve to show how awkwardly many of the inhabitants are situated in regard to surgical aid on sudden emergencies. On the other occasion referred to, I despatched a messenger to Roodewal, distant forty miles, for the military surgeon, there being at that time no other medical gentleman within more than 100 miles. But when my messenger reached the Great Fish River, he found it in a furious flood; and as there is not a bridge from its source to the sea, there was no alternative but to wait a few days till it became fordable. On the present occasion the case was different—but not better. There was a surgeon resident at a country town about thirty miles distant. But when my messenger arrived he was lying drunk—had been drunk for ten days—and was expected to be drunk for ten days to come. Not choosing to trust my limbs in the hands of such a sot, I wrote next to Cape Town for a surgeon: but before my medical friend there could leave his other patients and get out to me, more than a fortnight had elapsed; and by that time I had no longer need of his aid, for with the help of good brother Stein, one of the missionaries, I had managed to get the fracture reduced—the inflammation had abated—and all was doing well.

I was detained at Genadendal nearly two months by this accident; but my wife came out from Cape Town to me, and brought with her a few of my favourite books, so that the time passed away

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

was no alternative but to be carried back to Genadendal, which I was fortunately still so near, and where I was certain of experiencing every kind attention in the power of the benevolent brethren to bestow. And it is with feelings of pleasing remembrance I add that my anticipations were in that respect most fully realised. The kindness of all, and especially of the Rev. Mr. Hallbeck, the amiable and intelligent superintendent, during my inevitable detention there, deserves my most grateful commemoration.

I returned to Cape Town early in December, and spent that and the following month in winding up my concerns there. After selling off my furniture, together with a stock of articles purchased for our academy, and a large quantity of printing paper (which had been ordered for our magazine, and had unluckily arrived after its discontinuance), I had the mortification to find that the state of affairs was even worse than I had feared. We had commenced our establishment on borrowed capital; the expenses of furnishing a large high-rented house, and keeping six or seven servants, had been very heavy; while, on the other hand, our period of prosperity had been far too brief to compensate for the preliminary outlay; and great loss was necessarily sustained in disposing of articles for many of which there was scarcely to be found a purchaser. The upshot was, that I found myself overwhelmed with debts to an amount quite ruinous and appalling in my then situation, as I had no means left even for the temporary support of my family. To think of proceeding to England in such circumstances was out of the question, since my prospects there were altogether precarious. I determined, therefore, to retire to my 'location' at Glen-Lynden, where I had still a portion of land and a few sheep and cattle, and

---

swiftly and pleasantly. The repose and seclusion we here enjoyed were peculiarly delightful after the harassing turmoil to which we had been recently subjected.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

where I could find means to subsist in the midst of my relatives, at little or no expense, for a short period—and there wait for better times. To raise funds for the journey, I sold off the only property I parted with reluctantly—my books. I then sat down and drew up a statement of my case to Earl Bathurst, complaining of the persecution I had endured, and soliciting redress and compensation for my losses. Of this memorial I left a copy in the hands of the Commissioners of Inquiry,—to whom I had previously transmitted the details of the principal transactions mentioned in the preceding chapter.

My friend Fairbairn, being a single man, was not so deeply involved as I was in pecuniary losses. Nevertheless, he also suffered severely; and his health, at this period, was long in a most precarious and dangerous state. He declined, however, a share of my 'lodge in the lone wilderness;' resolving to remain in Cape Town, and continue to support himself by teaching, so long as a few pupils remained; and, if that resource failed, to trust to Providence for some other means of subsistence till 'better times' should come. And thus we parted—ruined in circumstances, indeed, but sound in conscience and character—'cast down, but not in despair.'

The 'personal narrative' of my second residence and travels on the eastern frontier, must be compressed into a narrow space. On the 11th of February we embarked in a coaster for Algoa Bay; our friend, Major Dundas, who had just been appointed landdrost of Albany, and his lady, being passengers in the same vessel. We found Port-Elizabeth, of which we had assisted to lay the foundation in 1820, now a considerable and rapidly increasing town; already, in fact, the second place in the colony, and promising ere long to rival, if not to outstrip, the present capital. We stayed about a week at Betheldorp, in order to enable me to examine thoroughly the system and progress of missionary instruction there; and I was, indeed, most agreeably surprrised by the amazing improvement which had taken

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

place in the condition of the inhabitants since the time of my former visit*.

At Uitenhage, where we also spent a few days, with our friend, the Rev. A. Smith, clergyman of the district, I was informed by that most upright and excellent man, that an attempt made by him and a few intelligent inhabitants to establish a society for 'promoting Religious and General Instruction throughout the district,' had been arbitrarily quashed by the Government, about the same period that our Literary Society was suppressed at Cape Town. He and his coadjutors had submitted in silence, and were waiting, like many other good men throughout the colony, in uncomplaining patient endurance, for the result of the Commissioners' investigations.

Resuming our former mode of travelling in the ox-wagon, we proceeded by the romantic Moravian settlement of Enon (described in my sixth chapter), and by the Methodist village of Salem on the Assagai River, to the Missionary station of Theopolis, where I spent a couple of days to examine the state of that institution. Then, journeying at a leisure pace through the English locations, we visited in succession the farm-cottages of Mrs. General Campbell, Mr. T. Philipps, Mr. Dunn, and Lieutenant Gilfillan, along the coast, near the mouth of the Kowie River; all situated in a most charming country, so gracefully disposed and richly ornamented by the hand of Nature, that the scenery has been frequently described, and with great justice, as bearing a striking resemblance to a nobleman's park in England, only on a far more vast and magnificent scale.

It was a curious circumstance, that in crossing the mouth of the Kowie River in a ferry-boat, we were rowed by two Scotchmen, who turned out, on inquiry, to be part of those

* The result of my observations on this occasion were communicated in a letter to Dr. Philip, which may be found in his '*Researches*,' vol. i. p. 226.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

who had survived the destruction of the unfortunate Abeona transport, and who alone of all the party had afterwards persevered in finding their way to South Africa.

Leaving our agreeable friends on the coast, we proceeded through a number of the other locations, with whose inhabitants we had no personal acquaintance. We found many of them very squalid in appearance, and ill-dressed, although, since the distribution of a relief fund which I shall presently notice, none were absolutely without the means of subsistence. With the exception of a few half-pay officers, and other families who possessed some independent income, scarcely one of the higher class of emigrants had escaped the pressure of severe distress and privation; and the wretched condition of most of their dwellings at this period, showed that even their hopes of renovated prosperity had been nearly extinguished.

After a visit to the late Major Pigot, at whose hospitable mansion we met also with our countrymen Captain Campbell and Lieutenants D. and J. Moodie, Messrs. Carlisle, and other intelligent heads of parties, we proceeded to Graham's Town, which we reached on the 20th of March.

My journey through Albany, on the present occasion, had been chiefly for the purpose of collecting authentic materials for an account of the British settlement, intended for a volume which I had then in contemplation. But I afterwards abandoned, or at least postponed this design, and furnished my friend, Mr. George Thompson, with most of my notes for his work. After the multifarious details that have been published on this subject by Mr. Bird*, Mr. Thompson †, and more recently by Mr. Kay ‡, I shall restrict my observations to a brief space, and chiefly to points which these writers have omitted to notice.

---

* See his 'State of the Cape in 1822,' and especially the judicious note on the Settlers by the editor, Mr. Colebrooke.

† 'Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa,' vol. ii. p. 146.

‡ 'Travels and Researches in Caffraria,' p. 429.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The scheme of settling a British population on the eastern frontier of the colony was a wise and statesman-like measure, as its results, after fourteen years' experience, have most decidedly proved. But the details of the plan were in some points not very judiciously devised, nor well suited to the nature of the soil and climate. A large proportion of the emigrants were, moreover, but little prepared by previous habits, physical or moral, for the occupation of a new country; and the seeds of disunion had been profusely sown, even on the passage out, in most of the ill-assorted parties in which large numbers had been associated, and which were in many cases composed of the most heterogeneous materials. These circumstances alone could scarcely have failed to produce a great deal of dissatisfaction and disappointment. But when to these were added the almost total destruction for five or six successive years of their wheat crops by blight; the calamitous visitation of a terrible deluge of rain in October, 1823, which swept away nearly half their huts and gardens; and, more galling than all, the cruel neglect and insolent tyranny of the Colonial Government, and its local functionaries, ever since the departure of Sir Rufane Donkin, in 1821; it is not surprising that a large proportion of the settlers—those especially who had sunk all their resources in the enterprise,—should have been driven almost to despair, or that their appeals to the Home Government were loud and importunate.

Such was the situation of the Albany settlers when his Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry arrived at Graham's Town, in February, 1824. They were instantly deluged, as may be imagined, by complaints of a very multifarious description, many of which were probably beyond the power of the most beneficent government to relieve. But passing over the natural defects of the soil and climate, the real and remediable grievances of the settlers were sufficiently formidable; and of these by far the most intolerable were entirely owing to outrageous and obstinate misgovernment. It is not possible, in the present publication, to enter deeply into details; but the character of the system may be suffi-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ciently illustrated by stating a few well-known and incontrovertible facts. In the violence of his resentment against Sir Rufane Donkin, Lord Charles Somerset, immediately on his return to the Colony, overturned at once, and without listening to any remonstrance, many of Sir Rufane's best measures for the benefit and security of the settlement. A popular and courteous magistrate (Major Jones) was displaced, and a person appointed landdrost in his stead, whose only concern was to please his patron, without even the show of any regard for the interests or the feelings of the inhabitants; while those who were on the list of 'obnoxious' persons were treated with deliberate and systematic insult*. The village of Bathurst was ruined. The settlement of Fredericksburg was thrown defenceless, and obliged to be abandoned by the half-pay officers, who had been placed there as an advanced post to cover the Zureveld†. All commercial intercourse with the Caffers was forbidden under most severe penalties. The necessary enlargement of the locations was refused; whilst lavish grants of land were at the same time given to numbers of the frontier boors of the very worst class. Some of the principal heads of parties (among whom were Major Pigot, Captain Campbell, Mr.

* "As prompt exertions were required to relieve the settlers from the most pressing disabilities, arising from the inadequacy of the lands in the first instance assigned to them, it was unfortunate that the important and multifarious duties of landdrost of the district were intrusted by Lord Charles Somerset to a person who neglected the interests of the settlers, and who aggravated the feelings of the Governor by attributing the dissatisfaction that undoubtedly did from this cause prevail to a spirit of turbulence and disaffection to the Government."—*Report of Commissioners of Inquiry, in Parl. Papers for* 1827, *No.* 371, *p.* 91.

† "The final abandonment of this station was the immediate consequence of withdrawing the military guard."—"If the settlement had been encouraged by Lord Charles Somerset, we do not doubt that it would have succeeded."—*Report of Commissioners, ibid.*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Philipps, Mr. Moodie, and other most intelligent and respectable men), having proposed to 'consult together upon the most advisable mode of making the Governor acquainted with the peculiarities of their situation*,' and having given respectful intimation of such intention to the landdrost, were put down by a most insulting proclamation, which not only prohibited any such meeting as 'a high misdemeanour,' subject to arrest and prosecution, but stigmatised those who had promoted it with the most unmerited and cruel imputations†. To leave no doubt of the personal feelings which dictated these proceedings, the Rev. Mr. Geary, the English clergyman of the district, was furnished with a private list, in the Governor's own writing, of 'obnoxious' individuals, with whom he was cautioned to have no intercourse whatever; and among these 'marked' persons were Major Pigot, Capt. Campbell, and others, as loyal, accomplished, and high-spirited men as could be found in the colony: their British spirit of independence, in fact, which refused to truckle abjectly to despotic power, was their real offence. This list afterwards fell by a singular chance into the hands of the very persons stigmatised in it, and, as may be imagined, did not tend to soothe their exasperated feelings‡.

The Special Report of his Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry on the state of the settlers (dated May 25, 1825) has not been printed, but their general sentiments may be

* See Memorial of the Albany Settlers to Earl Bathurst, dated March 10, 1823.—*Parl. Papers for* 1827, *No.* 444, *p.* 11.

† This proclamation may be seen in the work entitled 'State of the Cape in 1822,' p. 236.

‡ It is highly to the credit of the Home Government that these persecuted and meritorious gentlemen had not only their grievances as settlers fully redressed, but several of them, under Sir George Murray's administration, were promoted to public office in the colony. Captain Campbell was appointed Civil Commissioner of Albany; Major Pigot (now deceased) was made Protector of Slaves; Lieutenant D. Moodie, Resident Magistrate; Mr. Philipps, a Justice of the Peace, &c.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

pretty correctly inferred from the tenor of the report above referred to, in which certain points of the policy of the local government are briefly animadverted on.

Meanwhile great sympathy had been excited in Cape Town and throughout the colony, by the accounts received of the extreme distress to which a large portion of the settlers, and especially those who 'had seen better days,' were reduced. The labourers and mechanics in general had found adequate employment at the government buildings, and about the district towns; but the great majority of the upper and middle classes were now in a state of utter destitution—many even without sufficient food or decent clothing. A society for their relief had been established in Cape Town some time previously, which was liberally supported by the inhabitants, and particularly by the visiters from India. In 1824, a strong appeal was made by this association to the British public, and to their countrymen in India, in behalf of the suffering emigrants*, and the claim was responded to with that promptitude and liberality which Englishmen have never failed to evince when their generous sympathies are called forth for worthy objects. About 7,000*l.* was remitted from India and England, independently of about 3,000*l.* collected in the colony. This fund was placed in the hands of a sub-committee in Albany, to be distributed among the settlers, according to a scheme very judiciously framed from data carefully collected on the spot †.

* Being myself at that time (1823-4) officiating as acting secretary of this society, in the absence of my friend Mr. Rutherfoord, I drew up a statement, entitled 'Some Account of the Present State of the English Settlers in Albany, South Africa,' and transmitted it to be published in London, as a pamphlet, to promote the subscription. It is due to my own family and relatives to add, that none of them either applied for or consented to receive any share of this relief fund. Through the blessing of Providence on their exertions, they were not driven, as were some who had moved in a superior sphere, to that melancholy necessity.

† A bold attempt was made by a certain unscrupulous partisan to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

This liberal and timely fund of relief was distributed among the settlers in January, 1825; and about the same period a most beneficial, though tardy and reluctant, change took place in the policy of the Colonial Government. So singular and sudden, indeed, was this change, that it can only be accounted for on the supposition that the Governor had either received imperative orders from the Home Government to alter his ruinous policy in respect to Albany; or, that the remonstrances of his Majesty's Commissioners had at length opened his eyes to the pit which he was thus digging for his own destruction. In February, 1825, Lord Charles Somerset and Sir Richard Plasket, the new Colonial Secretary, visited the eastern districts, and made a circuit through the locations of the settlers; and for the first time since his return to the colony, the Governor really evinced a disposition to 'extend his favour' to this unfortunate settlement. "On this occasion various grievances were redressed; claims for additional lands were considered, and in many instances allowed;" "loans to a considerable amount were issued to many;" "the full rights and title-deeds of the locations were made over to the different parties;" "an officer of high reputation for talents and integrity was appointed Landdrost of Albany; some of the settlers, most distinguished for ability and independence, were solicited to accept appointments in the local magistracy; and every thing, in short, was done to retrieve the settlement, and to soothe and

---

obtain for the local authorities possession of this fund, or at least the mischievous management of its distribution; but the scheme was defeated by the firmness of Dr. Philip and Mr. Rutherfoord. For this worthy act these gentlemen were assailed, first by threats of a legal prosecution, and finally by a pamphleteering persecution from the Government press. But the attack recoiled most disgracefully upon its authors. Mr. Rutherfoord afterwards published a full account of the whole affair, with a reprint of the Government pamphlets, under the title of 'Documents originally published at the Cape of Good Hope,' &c. London: Underwood, 1825.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

conciliate the feelings of the people, soured by suffering, and exasperated by neglect*."

Such was the posture of affairs in Albany, at the time of my visit in March, 1825. "The distribution of the subscription fund, which took place at a most critical period, had restored comfort, credit, and confidence to a numerous and respectable class of people, who were depressed and degraded by debt and destitution; and the other favourable circumstances enumerated conspired to renew the spirit of industry and enterprise, which had almost given place to despair†."

The settlement being thus placed in a more natural position, and the chief obstacles to its prosperity removed, a new and brighter era commenced; and, notwithstanding the partial continuance of blight in the wheat crops for several years longer‡, the district has ever since continued to advance steadily, and with accelerating strides, in the march of improvement. The luxuriant pastures of the Zureveld Proper, being from their acidulent quality generally unfit for sheep, have been gradually covered with numerous herds of horned cattle. Within a certain distance of the coast, wheat, barley, and maize, are now successfully cultivated without irrigation; and most of the European fruits, with potatoes, pumpkins, and other esculents, are raised in great abundance, and of excellent quality. But what is of far more importance for the prosperity of the settlement, it has been found that fine wool can be produced on the more inland pastures of the district, of a quality fully equal to the best Spanish or Australian. At the period of my last visit

* Thompson's Travels, vol. ii, p. 174.

† Ibid, p. 176.

‡ It is curious that Chili, which lies mostly in the same latitude as the Cape, was visited about the same period by a similar disease in the wheat, which for several successive seasons ravaged the crops of that country.—See Mier's Travels in Chili: also Thompson's Travels, vol. ii. p. 176.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

in 1826, Lieut. Daniel, Major Pigot, Major Dundas, the new Landdrost, Capt. Campbell, and one or two other enterprising individuals, were raising experimental flocks of merinos, which were just beginning to excite some attention among their neighbours, but which the older Dutch-African colonists then generally regarded with apathy or derision. Now, in 1834, there are about 12,000 fine-woolled sheep in Albany, the owners of which are realising large profits; insomuch that the attention of the whole colony has been at length vividly awakened to the high importance of this branch of husbandry, which promises to prove a mine of inexhaustible wealth for South Africa.

During the same period, the commercial affairs of the district have progressed beyond all expectation; and the internal trade with the Caffer and other native tribes, which has been created almost entirely since the arrival of the British settlers, is becoming every day more extensive and important. Graham's Town, the capital of the district, which in 1820 was a mere military post, is now a thriving and bustling country town, with about 2000 inhabitants, chiefly English. Besides the established church (English), it boasts three chapels for protestant dissenters (Independent, Wesleyan, and Baptist), a free-school for youth of both sexes, and an infant school, supported by voluntary subscription. It also now possesses two subscription libraries, agricultural, missionary, and temperance societies, a savings' bank, and a weekly newspaper.

"The attention given to education in this district," says the 'South African Almanac for 1833,' "reflects the highest credit on the inhabitants in general, and may be considered a sure earnest of its ultimate prosperity. The number of children under instruction in Albany, at a moderate computation, cannot be less than 1,400, which gives the ratio of nearly one to every seven of the entire population."

I shall conclude this brief notice of the Settlement, with the following extracts from the respectable publication just quoted:—"The climate of Albany is temperate and salu-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

brious, and may be pronounced highly congenial to a European constitution, and eminently restorative to such as have been impaired by the enervating effects of a tropical sun. The cold is never severe, the thermometer in the depth of winter being seldom below the freezing point, while the heat of summer is rarely oppressive."

"On a full and impartial review of the present state of this district, it may now be confidently stated, that the intentions of the British Government in forming the Settlement have at length been crowned with complete success. Not only do innumerable dwellings and inclosures present themselves in every part of the district, but many works of public utility have also been completed.

"Many of the inhabitants have established themselves comfortably and respectably, and can look around them on an active and enterprising race of young persons, rising into life with a fair prospect of future usefulness. Many have attained a degree of opulence at which they never could have expected to arrive in Europe, where they must have shared in the privations of the middle classes of a redundant population; and none, except in a few peculiar cases, have any reason to complain of the land of their adoption."

---

While this sheet is passing through the press, I have received 'The Graham's Town Journal,' for January 2, 1834, which contains a very satisfactory review of the condition and prospects of the Albany district, at the commencement of the present year. The trade with the Caffer tribes had greatly improved, both in extent and in the substantial character of the articles required by the natives. For some time past the frontier has enjoyed perfect quiet and security. The mechanics and labourers were fully and profitably employed. The agriculturists were flourishing; and it is especially stated that they have now the fairest prospects "that from the growth of WOOL alone, the colony will soon be in a condition to vie with the most valuable possessions of the British Crown."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER XII.

*Return to Glen-Lynden—Swarms of Locusts—Excursion to Graaff-Reinét, and Conference there—Colonial Slavery—Bechuana Refugees—The Ficani Marauders—Banditti of the Neutral Ground—Notices of the Bushmen, and of the barbarous Policy pursued towards them in past and present Times.*

AFTER spending about a month with our friends in Graham's Town and its vicinity, we proceeded to Glen-Lynden, where we had the satisfaction of finding our relatives in much more prosperous circumstances, as husbandmen, than any party of settlers that we had seen in Albany. In spite of occasional ravages from rust and locusts, they had saved abundance of wheat for their own consumption, and had some to spare for the market. Their flocks and herds also had continued to thrive and increase. Some of them were now lodged in very comfortable dwellings: my brother at Eildon had erected a commodious farm-cottage of stone and brick, with a chimney in the chief apartment—being the first chimney that had yet been built in the sub-district or field-cornetcy. My old bee-hive cabin, which was still in good repair, had been transformed into a kitchen.

I have mentioned that the Glen-Lynden settlers had suffered from the ravages of locusts. Those destructive insects had made their appearance in this quarter of the colony the preceding year (1824), being the first time they had been seen since 1808. They continued to advance from the north in 1825; in 1826 the corn crops at Glen-Lynden were totally destroyed by them; and during 1827, 1828, and 1829, they extended their ravages through the whole of the northern and eastern districts of the colony.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

In 1830, they again disappeared. Their inroads, according to the best accounts I could obtain, appear to be renewed periodically, about once in fifteen or twenty years, and generally continue for several years at a time.

The locust of South Africa is not the same with the Asiatic, but a distinct species, to which Lichtenstein has given the name of *gryllus devastator*. The swarms which infest the colony appear to come originally always from the northward, and are probably bred in the vast deserts of the interior, north and south of the Gareep or Orange River. In coming up Glen-Lynden, we passed through a flying swarm, which had exactly the appearance, as it approached, of a vast snow-cloud hanging on the slope of the mountain from which the snow was falling in very large flakes. When we got into the midst of them, the air, all around and above, was darkened as by a thick cloud; and the rushing sound of the wings of the millions of these insects was as loud as the dash of a mill-wheel. Lichtenstein has used the very same similitudes in describing them. The ground as they passed became strewed with those that were wounded, or had wings broken in their flight by coming in contact with their neighbours. But those formed but a trivial portion of the whole enormous mass. The column that we thus passed through was, as nearly as I could calculate, about half a mile in breadth, and from two to three miles in length. Much larger columns are frequently seen. The following details are chiefly extracted from a paper transmitted to me the preceding year by Captain Stockenstrom, for our South African Journal.

The flying locusts, though often seen in such numbers as to obscure the sky when they are passing, and to destroy luxuriant fields of corn in a few hours, are less dreaded by the farmers than the larvæ, devoid of wings—vulgarly called by the colonists *voetgangers* (foot-goers). On the approach of the flying locusts, the husbandman, if the wind be favourable, kindles fires around his fields, and raises a dense smoke, which will probably prevent them from alighting. But the younger, or jumping locusts, no such slight obstacle will

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

check in their course; and a powerful stream alone, on the side they approach, can save the crops of the agriculturists from their ravages. Stagnant pools they cross, by the leading multitudes being drowned, and forming a bridge for those following: even the Orange River is crossed, where it flows calmly, by their myriads, in this manner. In the same manner fires are extinguished by the incalculable numbers which precipitate themselves on the flames in succession, and which, by perishing, provide a passage for the rest. Their numbers are, indeed, so inconceivably great, that the inhabitants regard their approach with the utmost dismay, as involving not merely the destruction of their crops and gardens, but often, also, of the entire pasturage of the country; in which case the farmer has no resource but to hasten from the district where they have 'devoured every green thing,' in order to search for precarious subsistence for his flocks in such parts of the wilderness as they may have missed in their migration. Failing to find such privileged tracts, his flocks must perish.

The locusts usually begin their march after sunrise, and encamp at sunset; and unhappy the husbandman on whose fields they quarter themselves. If their halting-place happens to be observed in the neighbourhood of a farm-house, the inhabitants frequently endeavour to destroy them by driving flocks of sheep and cattle to the spot before the sun rises, in order to trample them to death; but unless the number be comparatively inconsiderable, little benefit is derived from such efforts.

The flights and swarms of locusts are usually followed by immense flocks of birds, which subsist entirely on those insects and their larvæ, and which Captain Stockenstrom says somewhat resemble the Cape mountain-swallow. I did not see any of those birds myself, but Mr. Barrow has described them as a species of thrush, about the size of the common skylark. This bird is called by the colonists *spring-haan-vogel* (locust-bird); it is never seen in the colony except in pursuit of the locust-swarms, which it follows in



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

countless flocks, and builds its nest and rears its young in the midst of its prey*.

"Not only the locust-bird," says Captain Stockenstrom, "but every animal, domestic and wild, contributes to the destruction of the locust-swarms; fowls, sheep, horses, dogs, antelopes, and almost every living thing, may be seen devouring them with equal greediness; whilst the half-starved Bushmen, and even some of the Colonial Hottentots, consider them a great luxury, consuming great quantities fresh, and drying abundance for future emergencies. Great havoc is also committed among the locusts by their own kindred; for as soon as any one of them gets hurt, or meets with an accident which impedes his progress, his fellow-travellers nearest to him immediately turn upon him and devour him with great voracity."

Other topics, however, crowd upon me too urgently to allow any further space for scraps of natural history. The state of the native tribes both within and beyond the colonial boundary, and especially in the immediate vicinity of our settlement, attracted my earnest attention upon our return to the frontier; but it will be convenient to proceed a little farther with my personal narrative before I specially advert to this important topic.

In July I met, by appointment, with Dr. Philip, at Somerset, and proceeded to Graaff-Reinét with him and Mr. Read, the friend and fellow-labourer of Vanderkemp. Dr. Philip was then upon a tour of visitation to the various missionary institutions under his superintendence, and was proceeding to Griqua Town and other stations beyond the northern frontier. As Graaff-Reinét was upon his route, and I had long promised a visit to the landdrost, Captain Stockenstrom, I embraced the opportunity to accompany Dr. Philip to that place; one of my chief objects being to bring these two meritorious and remarkable men, who had

* See Barrow's Travels, vol. i. p. 210.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

previously been not a little jealous of each other's views in regard to the native tribes, to a better mutual understanding. This purpose I had the satisfaction of seeing happily accomplished. Dr. Philip accepted an invitation from Captain Stockenstrom to spend a week in his house with us, during which the present unhappy condition of the aborigines, and various schemes for their protection and improvement, were daily discussed,—until the landdrost and the missionary found that their views really coincided on all material points, and only differed on minor details. They parted with feelings of mutual respect and good-will; and it will be seen in the sequel how zealously both of them have ever since striven, in their respective spheres, and with a noble rivalship, for the elevation of the African race to the rank of freemen and fellow-christians.

The Rev. William Wright (now Dr. Wright), a clergyman in the service of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and a zealous advocate for the oppressed natives, happened also to be a guest at Landdrost Stockenstrom's at the same period,—being then on his return from an exploratory tour through the missions in Cafferland; and the information furnished by the acute observation of this gentleman, and by the missionary Brownlee, who had recently visited me at Glen-Lynden, supplied topics for much conversation, and many valuable suggestions in regard to measures for promoting the civilisation of the Caffer tribes. On this occasion, likewise, I obtained from Captain Stockenstrom some interesting details relative to the recent history of the frontier Caffers, and especially the surrender of the chief Makanna, which will be found in an ensuing chapter.

The subject of Slavery in the colony, and the discussion of measures for its extinction, also occupied much of our attention at this friendly conference. Our host, though a hereditary slave-holder, and perhaps not altogether free from some of the jealous feelings of his class towards the Abolitionists, was nevertheless most deeply sensible of the evils of Slavery, and of its degrading influence alike on the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

master and the bondman; and, as he afterwards practically proved, was most sincerely anxious to promote measures for its extinction. I had also become personally acquainted with the state of the slaves during my residence in Cape Town, where most of my household servants were of that class, engaged on hire from their owners; and I had long been convinced, from sad observation, of the utter fallacy of the allegation, then so constantly heard both in the colony and in England, that slavery at the Cape was 'so mild as to be almost nominal.' I had seen it, on the contrary, continually overflowing with misery, cruelty, and debasement. But having long ago stated elsewhere my opinions and experience on this subject*, I need not here repeat the humiliating and revolting narrative, especially as, through the blessing of a beneficent Providence, a very short period will finally expunge that foul blot from the Cape colony in common with every other dependency of the British empire. I shall content myself with merely mentioning one single illustration of the system which fell under our notice at this very time and place.

As Dr. Philip and I were walking one day in the street of the village, just in front of the landdrost's house, my friend was accosted by name by a man of the Malay race. On Dr. P. enquiring how he came to know him, the man replied that he had occasionally seen him at the house of

* An article on the State of Slavery at the Cape, which I wrote in January, 1826, and transmitted to my friend, Mr. T. Campbell, for the New Monthly Magazine, appeared in that journal in October following; and, by a remarkable train of circumstances, led to my subsequent acquaintance with Mr. Buxton and Mr. Z. Macaulay, and eventually to my becoming Secretary to the Anti-Slavery Society. The article referred to was afterwards republished in the Anti-Slavery Reporter (No. XX. vol. i. p. 289). Another article, of which Dr. Philip contributed by far the most valuable portion, may be seen in the same work, vol. ii. p. 161. Dr. Wright has published a comprehensive treatise on the same subject, entitled 'Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope.' Longman, 1831.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

his former master in Cape Town. He then, of his own accord, told us the following distressing story.—He was a slave, and had a wife and several children also in slavery. Being an expert wagon-driver, his master was offered a high price for him by a person from Graaff-Reinét, who happened to be at Cape Town. The offer was accepted, but the agreement concealed from the object of it. He was ordered to proceed with the wagon of his new purchaser into the interior, but given to understand that it was on his old master's business, and that he should return in a few months. On arriving at Graaff-Reinét, however, he was made acquainted with the transaction, and then found that he was for ever separated from all he cherished on earth. Even some little property in money and clothes, which he had hoarded and left behind him, he had never been able to recover, although two or three years had elapsed, and he had made repeated applications for it. The poor man appeared extremely dejected, and his melancholy tale was afterwards fully confirmed to us on other and undoubted authority.

But such occurrences as this were, at no remote period, of almost every day occurrence, and sink into insignificance when compared with the revolting cases which stain the judicial records of that colony, even within the last few years,—such, for instance, as the atrocities of Laubscher and Le Roex (detailed by Dr. Wright), of the Bosches, tried at Graham's Town in 1833, and many others of a like description. Truly, as poor Gebhardt, the son of a Cape clergyman, executed for slave-murder in 1822, said to Dr. Wright, as he was about to ascend the scaffold—" Slavery is a bad system: it is even worse for the masters than it is for the slaves!"—Thank God! it will soon be only the name of a curse and an abomination that has passed away!

About the time of our visit to Graaff-Reinét (where Mrs. P. and I remained about a month on this occasion), several hundred natives belonging to various tribes of Bechuanas, were driven into the colony from the north-east, mostly in a state of utter starvation. These refugees

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

had been forced from their homes partly by the ravages of the wandering hordes called Mantatees and Ficani, described in Mr. Thompson's work, and partly by the predatory expeditions of certain bands of banditti, of mixed colonial and African lineage, who had recently fixed themselves in the fastnesses of the Stormberg mountains, and had from that circumstance obtained the name of *Bergenaars* (mountaineers). These latter miscreants had been, as it afterwards appeared, constantly aided and encouraged, in their marauding incursions, by unprincipled white Colonists, who clandestinely supplied them with arms and ammunition in exchange for the cattle, and in some cases for the children and females, of the slaughtered tribes*.

In order to prevent the unfortunate refugees from being reduced to a state of absolute and unconditional slavery, they were, by a mandate of the government, ordered to be brought into the district towns of Graaff-Reinét and Somerset, and were there apprenticed out, upon certain conditions as to good treatment, among such of the colonists as did not possess slaves. Several families of them were sent to our location, where I believe they still reside, and who proved very faithful servants. Many others of them fell under my personal observation; and one, a poor orphan boy, of about nine or ten years of age, came to be placed, by a singular accident, under my own protection, and afterwards accompanied me to England†. They were all of the Bechuana, or great Caffer family, and some of them were very handsome. One man of the Támaha tribe was, I think, the finest specimen of the human figure I ever beheld in any country—fully six feet in height and graceful as an Apollo. A female of the same party, the wife of a chief or captain, was also a beautiful creature, with features of the most handsome and delicate European mould.

We had been placed in no little alarm by the rumoured approach of the wandering Ficani horde towards the Win-

* See Philip's Researches, vol. ii. pp. 81, 291.

† See Note 1, at the end of the volume.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

terberg frontier soon after my arrival at Glen-Lynden in April; and in order to ascertain what foundation there was for these reports, Mr. George Rennie had proceeded with a party of Mulattoes into the Amatembu (or Tambookie) country beyond the Zwart-Kei river. Here they met with two friendly chiefs of the Amatembu tribe, Powána and T'Quassa, who informed them that their nation had been defeated some little time previously by the Ficani, near the mountain Hanglip, only about eight hours' ride from the frontier of the colony; and, in confirmation of this statement, they pointed to many of their followers who had been severely mangled in the conflict, and whose wounds were not yet healed. Being quite unable to withstand such formidable invaders, these chiefs said that they and their people intended to fly for refuge into the colony, should they again advance westward*.

This information having been confirmed by intelligence conveyed to us by our friend Mr. Brownlee from Cafferland, we became apprehensive that our little settlement might be suddenly overwhelmed by an irruption of this moving host of 20,000 barbarians. I therefore transmitted a statement of the facts to Mr. Mackay, landdrost of the new district of Somerset, in which Glen-Lynden was now included, and to Major Forbes, acting commandant on the frontier, soliciting from these officers such protection for our settlement as might be considered needful. Major Forbes, who had obtained intelligence of the threatening attitude of the Ficani through a different channel, immediately sent up a small party of the Cape Corps cavalry, to cover our location, and speedily followed himself to inspect the situation of affairs. On account of this prompt attention to the security of our part of the frontier, Major Forbes received a severe reprimand from the Governor; and the patrol party was ordered to be instantly withdrawn, for no other reason, apparently, (indeed *avowedly*,) than because he had acted upon information chiefly furnished by *me*.

* See, for further details, Thompson's Travels, vol. i. p. 370.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

This was quite of a piece with the miserable policy that had ruined Fredericksburg; but, happily for our party, the Ficani, instead of advancing upon the colony, turned back to the eastward, and were not again heard of until they were discovered, three years afterwards, on the Umtata River, and extirpated by an expedition from the colony *.

Our settlement had scarcely been relieved from the immediate apprehension of being overwhelmed by the ferocious Ficani, when we were forced to solicit protection from our civil authorities, from the inroads of another class of freebooters. A band of native banditti had for some time past established themselves among the rocks and woods

---

* It is now ascertained that this wandering horde of barbarians consisted of two tribes of Zoolas, or north-eastern Caffers, dislodged from their native seats on the sources of the rivers Tutugela and Mapoota, by the ferocious career of the Zoola conqueror, Chaka. Deprived of their country and their cattle, and driven by famine to desperation, these tribes, under the guidance of a chief named Matuana, pursued for several years a devastating predatory warfare against other clans of the Caffer and Bechuana family living near the sources of the Umzimculu, Umzimvubu, and Gareep or Orange rivers †. At length they appear to have taken possession of a tract of country on the Umtata river, about 250 miles from our frontier, on the eastern confines of the Amatembu territory, with the view probably of fixing themselves there permanently; for they are described by an eye-witness, in 1828, as having constructed huts, cultivated the ground, and being actually *located* with their wives and children. In this spot they were attacked and destroyed by the British troops in 1828, under circumstances which seem strongly to demand investigation; for if the account given by the Rev. Mr. Kay, in his recent work, may be relied upon, this unhappy horde, who, however guilty towards others, were blameless towards the colony, were massacred unresistingly, without warning and without mercy.—See *Bannister's Humane Policy*, p. 150; and *Kay's Researches in Caffraria*, p. 328.

† See *Mapoota*, *Tutugal*, *Um-zimcooliana*, *Um-zimvoobo*, *Gariep*, &c., in Mr. J. Arrowsmith's excellent new Map of the Cape of Good Hope.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of the Neutral Ground, composed partly of *wild* Bushmen from the north-east, partly of *tame* Bushmen (as they are termed), who had absconded from the service of the boors; and they were rendered more dangerous and desperate by having been recently recruited by one or two runaway slaves, and by several deserters from the Cape corps, who possessed fire-arms. This band of desperadoes were reported to be under the command of a Bushman named Dragoener, who had formerly been in the service of our neighbour Diederik Muller, but who, on being flogged on some occasion by a kinsman of his master's, with an *agter-os-sjambok* (a tremendous whip of rhinoceros hide), had fled to the desert, and sworn eternal enmity to the colonists. He had at length become the captain of this band of freebooters, and under his enterprising guidance their depredations became every day more extensive and formidable. From the field-cornetcies of Glen-Lynden and the Tarka they had carried off a considerable number of horses, partly, perhaps, in order to deprive the colonists of the means of speedy pursuit, and partly to serve them in hunting the larger game, with which that tract of country then abounded. The horses, moreover, when worn out in hunting, served them for food. Three horses, belonging to my brother at Eildon, were captured while I was residing with him, and devoured by these robbers, as was ascertained by a party who went in pursuit, and who found only their hides and hoofs. Twelve oxen were carried off from a boor at the Plora, and driven into a ravine of the forest, where the robbers, finding themselves hotly pursued, cut the throats of all the cattle, and escaped through the jungle. Cattle, calves, and sheep, were stolen continually from our Mulatto neighbours; and one of them, named Groenberg, in attempting resistance, was dangerously wounded by poisoned arrows. About the same time, a boy who was tending a flock of sheep was carried away along with his flock, and detained for some days. He reported on his return that the expediency of killing him, in order to prevent discovery of their retreats, had been seriously debated by the robbers, but that their leader

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

saved his life, and sent him home unharmed. A Hottentot herdsman belonging to my brother John was actually murdered by a party of Bushman banditti, when he first took possession of his lands in the Mancazana valley ; but this last outrage happened a considerable time subsequent to the period of which I am now speaking, and was probably committed by another band.

These freebooters might have been able, perhaps, to make out a good case against the colony, had they been heard in their own defence. The country we now occupied had belonged very probably to their ancestors. Some of them had been in their childhood carried by the boors into servitude when their kindred were slaughtered, and had been themselves considered as slaves, and often treated like brutes. The regular slaves who had absconded from bondage, and the deserters who had fled from a military service into which they had been drafted by compulsory enlistment, had all suffered wrongs against which the heart and soul of man naturally revolts, and which in fiery natures tend to awaken the thirst of vengeance. But however guilty the colony may have been in pursuing a system of injustice and oppression which had, directly or indirectly, driven most of these unhappy outlaws to their present mode of life, it was obvious that their predatory career could not be allowed to continue. Neither could the boors, some of whom boasted that only a few years ago they used to lie in wait for the Bushmen, and shoot them like baboons, be permitted to resume their old habits of murderous private retaliation. I wrote to the landdrost, urging that some plan should if possible be devised, combining protection to the colonists with mercy to the outlaws, for putting an end to this state of things. Commandoes of boors were then sent out after the usual mode; but these the outlaws contrived to baffle or elude. At length they were surrounded in one of their fastnesses on the Koonap river by a strong party of military and burgher militia, and summoned to surrender. But their leaders, either having no hope of pardon, or determined rather to perish than return to servi-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tude, refused to capitulate, and made a desperate attempt to break through the environing force. One or two, it is said, succeeded; but Dragoener and most of his boldest comrades being slain, the rest were taken prisoners, and the band effectually broken up.

Referring the reader to page 235 for another brief notice respecting the predatory Bushmen, by whom our settlement was occasionally annoyed, I shall here offer a few remarks respecting the general habits and treatment of this singular and unfortunate race of men.

The Bushmen or *Bosjesmen* (as they are termed by the Dutch colonists), appear to be the remains of Hottentot hordes, originally subsisting, like all the aboriginal tribes of Southern Africa, chiefly by rearing sheep and cattle; but who have been driven, either by the gradual encroachments of the European colonists, or by internal wars with other tribes, to seek for refuge among the inaccessible rocks and deserts of the interior. Most of the hordes now known in the colony by the name of Bushmen are entirely destitute of flocks or herds, and subsist partly by the chase, partly on the wild roots of the wilderness, and, in seasons of scarcity, on reptiles, locusts, and the larvæ of ants, or by plundering their hereditary foes and oppressors, the frontier boors.

The Bushmen retain the ancient arms of the Hottentot race, namely, a light javelin or assagai, similar to that of the Caffers, and a bow and arrows. The latter, which are their principal weapons, both for war and the chase, are small in size, and formed of slight materials; but owing to the deadly poison with which the arrows are embued, and the dexterity with which they are launched, they are missiles truly formidable both to man and beast. One of these arrows, formed merely of a piece of slender reed tipped with bone or iron, is sufficient to destroy the most powerful animal. Nevertheless, although the colonists very much dread the effects of the Bushman's arrow, they know how to elude its range; and it is, after all, but a very unequal

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

match for the firelock, as the persecuted natives by sad experience have found.

Having descended from the pastoral to the hunter state, the Bushmen have, with the increased perils and privations of that mode of life, necessarily acquired a more ferocious and resolute character. From a mild, confiding, and unenterprising race of shepherds, they have been gradually transformed into wandering hordes of fierce, suspicious, and vindictive savages. By their fellow men they have been treated as wild beasts, until they have become in some measure assimilated to wild beasts in habits and disposition.

Whether any considerable hordes of these people existed in their present state previous to the occupation of the country by Europeans, seems to be doubtful; but it is certain that numerous tribes, once subsisting in ease and affluence on the produce of their herds and flocks, have by the incessant incroachments of the colonists been either driven to the sterile deserts, and of necessity transformed to Bushmen, or utterly extirpated. This process has been carrying on, as the authentic records of the Colony prove, for at least a hundred and twenty years. And thus on the outskirts of our ever-advancing frontier, numerous wandering hordes of destitute and desperate savages—the South-African 'Children of the Mist'—have been constantly found in a state of precarious truce, or of bitter hostility, with the colonists.

The annals of the barbarous wars that have been so long carried on between this race of men and the frontier boors, would fill a large volume. The works of Thunberg, Sparrman, Barrow, Lichtenstein, Burchell, Thompson, and of other respectable travellers, abound with these details, and Dr. Philip has added many more from other authentic sources. I shall not here rehearse the melancholy history, which is indeed far too voluminous for my limits, but in order to give the reader some idea of the system pursued towards this race of men, I subjoin a few illustrations not before published.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

First, I shall give an anecdote of the olden times, as told by an actor in the bloody drama. It is the case of the Dutch colonists, by one of themselves; and I shall only premise that the letter from which I print it, (and which I have received within these few weeks,) is written by a gentleman with Dutch blood in his veins, himself a colonist, and warmly attached to the Dutch-African population—though an enlightened friend also to the aboriginal race. I withhold the name of my correspondent, who is a most respectable and trustworthy person, lest by giving it publicity I should expose him, as others have been exposed, to bitter colonial persecution.

" I was travelling," he says, " some little time ago, over the dreary wastes near the northern frontier, in company with —— ———, field-cornet of ————, whom I think you have met with during your residence in this country, and who is certainly one of the most respectable inhabitants of the district,—and, withal, of a very frank and honest disposition. He was commenting on the measures then in progress for establishing a sort of *cordon sanitaire,* in order to cut off all intercourse with those parts of the interior where the small-pox was raging destructively among the native tribes. I found this man very rational, candid, and liberal, until Dr. Philip's name happened to be mentioned; upon hearing which he immediately broke forth into a strain of angry invective (unmixed, however, with vulgar abuse) against that gentleman; attributing to his exertions and representations all the recent ' arbitrary measures' (as he termed them) to which the colonists had been subjected. Knowing this to be a sore point, I allowed his indignation full scope to vent itself; but as soon as he became calm, I remarked to him that it must, nevertheless, be admitted that abominable cruelties had been committed against the natives. ' Who denies that?' rejoined ——— with the same vivacity he had just displayed in inveighing against Dr. Philip. ' God forbid that I should deny we have much to answer for!'

" ' I still often shudder,' he continued, ' when I think

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of one of the first scenes of the kind which I was obliged to witness in my youth, when I commenced my burgher service. It was upon a commando under Carl Krotz. We had surprised and destroyed a considerable kraal of Bosjesmen. When the firing ceased, five women were still found living. The lives of these, after a long discussion, it was resolved to spare, because one farmer wanted a servant for this purpose, and another for that. The unfortunate wretches were ordered to march in front of the commando; but it was soon found that they impeded our progress—not being able to proceed fast enough. They were, therefore, ordered to be shot. The scene which ensued often haunts me up to the present hour. The helpless victims, perceiving what was intended, sprung to us, and clung so firmly to some of the party, that it was for some time impossible to shoot them without hazarding the lives of those they held fast. Four of them were at length despatched; but the fifth could by no means be torn from one of our comrades, whom she had grasped in her agony; and his entreaties to be allowed to take the woman home were at last complied with. She went with her preserver, served him long and faithfully, and, I believe, died in the family. —May God forgive the land!'

"This was said with much feeling; and a chill of horror held us both silent for some minutes. I then said, 'Dr. Philip never published any thing half so bad as this!'—'But what is the use of ripping up old sores?' was the rejoinder. 'This happened when I was a boy, and I am now old and grey. There are, perhaps, not ten men in the whole colony who would not now shrink with horror from such a proceeding. Where were religion or law in those days? Moreover, there was at least some pretext for that slaughter. Those Bosjesmen had committed several murders and depredations on our frontier. We were living in a state of bitter feud and constant warfare with the natives, and both parties were intent on mutual extermination. But what had your Ficani done when *they* were destroyed by wholesale slaughter by your British commanders? While the *boor*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

is threatened with the prison and the gallows if he but fires a shot in defence of all he possesses in the world, of his life, his family, his property,—a regular army is sent by the Government hundreds of miles into unknown parts, on purpose to destroy a whole tribe of people, of whom we never so much as heard before, who never did us the slightest injury, who, against our arms, were utterly defenceless—and this act committed within the last few years, too, when one hears of nothing but humanity, religion, and new laws for protecting the slaves and native tribes! Here we had massacre in all its horrors—shooting of men in cold blood—the murder and mutilation of helpless females and children, and other atrocities too horrible to describe. But all this, I hear, your English missionaries defend* or wink at, because it was done by Englishmen in authority, and does not tell against us unfortunate Boors.—There is no use,' he continued, 'in trying to avoid the small-pox. Come into the colony it will. Rust, locusts, droughts, we have had already, and ten thousand plagues more may we expect, as punishments for the blood which lies upon this land!'

"Here my fellow-traveller gave his horse the whip, and galloped off in a state of high excitement, while I pondered over what had passed; not a little comforted, amidst these melancholy recollections, by the evidence exhibited to me on this, as on many other occasions, of the improved state of moral sentiment among my fellow colonists. There is, you may rest assured, much good material fit to be worked upon even among the frontier Boors, and which, if wisely

* This refers, I presume, to a letter by Mr. Boyce, a Wesleyan Missionary, inserted in the South African Advertiser, for March 13, 1833, defending the justice and expediency of destroying the Ficani. Mr. Kay, as we have seen, takes a widely different view of this transaction from his brother Missionary. But the above is merely given as the view (tinged, as it is, perhaps, with national prejudice) taken of the affair by a Dutch-African colonist.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

applied, might be rendered of essential advantage in the great structure of African civilisation. It has indeed often been my lot to be thrown by accident or otherwise among Cape colonists in their unguarded moments, when with evident sincerity and contrition they have deplored the deeds of blood, both of early and recent times, by which the colony has been polluted, evincing clearly that, through the influence of religious instruction, their ideas in regard to the treatment of the natives and coloured races generally are undergoing a very rapid and beneficial change. It is therefore a great and a mischievous mistake, in giving an account of the melancholy occurrences which the pen of truth may have to expose and censure, to charge the 'Cape-Dutch Boors' *indiscriminately* with such deeds, or to represent them in the aggregate as monsters of barbarity."

While I willingly insert these concluding remarks of my respectable correspondent, and am well disposed to concur in the opinion that the influence of religious instruction, combined with the high moral tone uniformly maintained by the *liberal* part of the press in regard to the coloured races, has done much, within the last few years, to humanise the sentiments of the more respectable portion of the Dutch-African colonists, yet we must not delude ourselves with the fallacious notion that the progress of light and knowledge *alone* will effect either a speedy or complete change in the state of things. Civilisation and information must of necessity make but slow and feeble advances among a class of people so situated as the white back-settlers of the wild and thinly peopled regions on the Bushman frontier. Nor is it the knowledge simply of what is just and right that will induce men to act justly, or wisely, or humanely. Look at the long and arduous struggles we have had in enlightened, humane, and religious England to obtain the abolition of the abominable Slave Trade, and of the not less abominable State of Slavery. Look at the depth of ungenerous and unchristian prejudice in regard to the coloured race, which pervades free and religious America, like a feculent moral fog. I do not consider the Dutch-African colonists

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

as worse than other people would be and have been in similar circumstances—not certainly worse than the Spaniards in America—not worse perhaps than the British in Australia. Moreover, having been myself for years resident on a frontier exposed to the incursions of the native tribes, and witness to the annoyance and damage sustained by my own relatives from their depredations, it can scarcely be supposed that I am insensible to the provocations often received by the colonists, or altogether without sympathy for *their* situation. But on that very account I am more deeply impressed with the conviction of their unfitness to be the judges or the avengers of their own wrongs. Were they the most humane and enlightened people in the world, they could not safely be trusted with such perilous powers. Without strong *legal restraints*, such, alas! is human nature on the large scale, that mere humanity will always be too feeble for passion and selfishness.

But let us revert once more to facts. Nor need we recal the barbarous acts of ancient times: let us look merely at the legalised butcheries of the Bushman race, which were incessantly going on while I was myself in the colony, and of which only a small portion has been recorded in the works of Thompson and Philip. I well recollect of the field-commandant Van Wyk, generally considered one of the most respectable men in the Cradock district, halting at my cabin in 1821, as he returned with his commando of boors from an expedition against some hordes of Bushmen on the Bamboosberg, who had committed depredations in the Tarka. He and his men, as I was then told, had slain upwards of eighty souls, and had taken captive a considerable number of women and children,—some of whom I afterwards saw at the residence of our neighbour Winzel Coetzer, in the service of one of his sons who had been on the expedition. It was an expedition ordered by the Government to repress the aggressions of the Bushmen; and this was the regular mode in which these affairs were managed. The kraal was surprised, the males consigned to indiscriminate slaughter, and such of the women and children as survived the



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

massacre were carried into captivity. Scores of such expeditions have taken place since, and the system continues to this very hour but little, I fear, if at all abated in its enormities. Nay more, atrocities still less excusable, because altogether wanton and unprovoked, are even now perpetrated with impunity. The following is a sample.

In November, 1829, a commando went out against a horde of Bushmen near the Sack River, who were reported to have been guilty of some depredations. The party did not, however, find the horde they were in search of; but, in returning, they came upon another horde who were at that time living in peace with the colonists, and who were not accused nor suspected of having been guilty of any offence. This kraal they thought fit to surprise, and shot seven of the unsuspecting and unresisting people in cold blood. As the party returned from this doughty exploit, a Bushwoman was observed lying near the path, wrapped up in her caross, apparently asleep. The commander, without uttering a word or asking a question, levelled his musket and fired. The caross heaved up—and an aged female, in the agonies of death, rolled out of it. And the party rode on, without considering the matter worthy even of a passing remark! Now, the facts of this horrid murder have been substantiated upon the oaths of several of the persons present, and the official documents, as I am assured upon authority which it is impossible for me to doubt, are now, or at least were very lately, in the possession of Mr. Oliphant the Attorney-General, at Cape Town. But, for reasons of which I am yet ignorant, no punishment whatever has been inflicted upon the persons implicated in these transactions.

Without going farther into a subject which has been already so ably discussed and so amply illustrated by my friend Dr. Philip, I shall only, in conclusion, express my conviction of the utter futility of looking for any effectual change of system from any power *within* the colony. All that can be expected from the most benevolent governor (unless he were a statesman of an order such as our secondary dependencies are but rarely blest with) is the applica-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tion of palliatives, which may perhaps mitigate the suffering, but which cannot possibly heal the sore. Unless, therefore, the subject is seriously taken up by the Home Government, and some comprehensive plan wisely devised and perseveringly carried into execution, for the protection and civilisation of the tribes that surround the colony, no other result can be rationally contemplated than the prolongation, for generations yet to come, of the same revolting scenes of mutual wrong and barbarity. The bitter fountain will still pour forth its bitter waters. The frontier colonists, be they Dutch or British, *must* of necessity continue to be semi-barbarians, so long as the *commando system*—the system of hostile reprisals—shall be encouraged or connived at; and so long as the colonists are permitted to make encroachments on the territory and the natural rights of the natives, the colony can never have a safe or a settled frontier. Mutual enmity and reciprocal outrage will proceed as heretofore. The weak will gradually melt away before the strong; tribe after tribe will be extirpated as their brethren have been extirpated; and year after year, while we continue to *talk* of our boundless benevolence and our Christian philanthropy, fresh loads of that guilt which the Almighty has denounced in awful terms—the blood-stained guilt of OPPRESSION, will continue to accumulate upon our heads as a nation.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The Hottentots—Progress of Colonial Encroachments—Reduction of the Aboriginal Race to Servitude—Their Condition at the close of last Century—Their Wars with the Boors—Oppressions and Cruelties—Colonial Redress—Case of Stuurman—Condition of the Hottentots during the Author's Residence in the Colony—Exertions of Mr. Buxton and of Dr. Philip for their Relief—Emancipating Ordinance of 1828—Colonial Clamours—Account of the Settlement at Kat River.*

In describing the insurrection of the Boors on the eastern frontier in 1815, I have cursorily noticed the former condition of the enthralled colonial Hottentots. I shall devote this chapter to a rapid sketch of the progressive changes in the circumstances of that people from the first settlement of the colony to the present day; concluding with an account of the experiment recently made to reinstate the aborigines in the full rights of freemen, and to establish a limited number of them as small landholders.

When the Dutch began to colonise the southern angle of the African continent, about the middle of the seventeenth century, they entered the country as friends, and easily obtained from the natives, for a few trinkets and flasks of brandy, as much territory as was required for their infant settlement. The native inhabitants, afterwards known by the name of Hottentots*, are described by the best authorities as being at that period a comparatively numerous

* "The name," says Mr. Barrow, "that has been given to this people is a fabrication. *Hottentot* is a word that has no place or meaning in their language; and they take to themselves the name under the idea of its being a Dutch word. Whence it has its deri-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

people, living in pastoral ease and abundance on the produce of their herds and flocks. They were divided into many tribes, under the patriarchal rule of their respective chiefs or elders; and as they did not, like the Caffers, cultivate grain or esculents, their only steady occupation was the care of their cattle. Enjoying a serene and temperate climate, little clothing or shelter was sufficient for their wants. A mantle formed of sheep-skins, sewed together with threads of sinew, and rendered soft and pliable by friction, sufficed for a garment by day and a banket by night. A hut, framed of a few boughs or poles covered with rush-mats, and adapted to be conveyed like a tent on the backs of their pack oxen, was a sufficient protection from the weather. A bow and poisoned arrows, and the light spear or javelin known by the name of assagai, were their only arms, and were used alike for war or the chase. They were then (as their descendants continue to be) bold and ardent huntsmen; for, with the formidable beasts of prey which inhabit the country they had to maintain incessant warfare, in defence of their flocks, and in contending for the dominion of the desert. They had also, like other barbarians, their quarrels and wars with each other; but these appear to have been generally conducted with as moderate a degree of ferocity and bloodshed as is to be found among any people in a similar state of society. Yet, though of a mild and somewhat inert disposition, they were by no means deficient in courage. They defeated Almeida, the first viceroy of the Portuguese in India, and

---

vation or by whom it was first given, I have not been able to trace. When the country was first discovered, and when they were spread over the southern angle of Africa, as an independent people, each horde had its particular name; but that by which the collective body as a nation was distinguished, and which at this moment they bear among themselves in every part of the country, is *Quaiquæ*."—(*Barrow's Travels in Southern Africa*, vol. i. p. 100.)—Tachart, Dapper, and other early writers agree in the same statement.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

slew himself with seventy-four of his men, in a fierce conflict at the Salt River, near the spot where Cape Town now stands; and they maintained, in 1659, an obstinate though unsuccessful war with the Dutch colonists, in resisting the first attempts to occupy part of their country.

A portion of territory having been ceded by treaty and peace re-established, the intercourse between the European settlers and the natives continued on an amicable footing for nearly fifty years; the latter maintaining with singular fidelity the engagements they had entered into*. The territorial occupation of the country to any considerable extent, was not at first the object of the Dutch East-India Company, under whose controul the settlement was placed; and there was neither mineral wealth nor extraordinary fertility of soil, to tempt to the forcible appropriation of native labour in a way similar to what occurred in the West Indies, Mexico, and Peru. At length, however, the Dutch settlers discovered that though the country furnished neither gold nor silver, nor any of the much prized tropical products, it was well adapted for the culture of corn and wine, and for the rearing of flocks and herds almost without limit. Emigrants, accordingly, began to flock to South Africa; and the 'white man's stride,' with or without the nominal acquiescence of the natives, was gradually extended†. Predatory expeditions against the more distant tribes, for the sake of obtaining possession of their cattle, began, also, to be practised, and were incessantly renewed by the more unprincipled portion of the colonists; the feeble government not daring to punish these outrages, "because," says a despatch of the Governor and Council, in 1702, "half

* Kolben, vol. i. p. 58. See also Dapper and La Croix.

† The usual mode of measuring out a new farm, during the Dutch occupation, was for the *Veld-wagt-meester* of the district to *stride* or pace the ground; and half an hour's stride in each direction from the centre, or one hour's walk across the *veld* (country) was the regulated extent of the farms. See Barrow, vol. i. p. 29.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of the colony would be ruined, so great is the number of the inhabitants implicated*."

After the lapse of little more than a century, the European intruders had acquired possession of the greater part of the extensive region now embraced by the colonial boundary, including the entire country inhabited by the Hottentot race, with the exception of the arid deserts which afford a refuge to the wandering Namacqua, Coranna, and Bushman hordes, and which are too sterile and desolate to excite the cupidity of any class of civilised men†.

But it was not the soil of their country merely of which the Hottentots were deprived in the course of these encroachments. In losing the property of the soil, they also gradually lost the privilege of occupying even the least valuable tracts of it for pasturing their flocks and herds—their only means of subsistence. People without land could have no occasion for cattle—no means of supporting them. Their flocks and herds, accordingly, also passed by degrees into the possession of the colonists. Nothing then remained of which to plunder them save the property of their own persons; and of that, the most sacred and unalienable of all property, they were also at length virtually deprived. The laws enacted by the Dutch Home Government, it is true, did not permit the Hottentots to be publicly *sold* from owner to owner, as Negro slaves and other farm stock were sold in the same colony; but, by the colonial laws and usages, they were actually deprived of a right to the free disposal of their own labour, and reduced to a condition of degrading, grinding, and hopeless bondage, in some respects even more intolerable than colonial slavery of the ordinary description.

Abundant melancholy illustrations of the process by which this debasing change in the condition of the aboriginal

* Commissioner Bigge's Report on the Hottentot Population; Parliamentary Paper, No. 584 for 1830, p. 2. See also Bannister, Appendix, p. cxvi.; and Philip, vol. i. pp. 23, 33, 36—39.

† See Thunberg, Sparrman, Vaillant, Barrow.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

race was accomplished, are to be found in the works of the various European travellers who traversed the interior of the colony during the latter portion of last century*. I shall quote, however, only a few sentences from Mr. Barrow, one of the most eminent of those travellers, the whole of whose account of the natives (and among other points his correction of the grossly exaggerated reports of their filthiness and deformity) is well deserving of the reader's perusal.

After mentioning the comparative happiness and more numerous population of the Hottentots in their independent state, which in the eastern part of the colony existed so late as to about twenty years before the period of his travels (1798), Mr. Barrow thus proceeds.—"Some of their villages might have been expected to remain in this remote and not very populous part of the colony. Not one, however, was to be found. There is not, in fact, in the whole extensive district of Graaff Reynet, a single horde of independent Hottentots; and perhaps not a score of individuals who are not actually in the service of the Dutch. These weak people, the most helpless, and in their present condition perhaps the most wretched, of the human race, duped out of their possessions, their country, and their liberty, have entailed upon their miserable offspring a state of existence to which that of slavery might bear the comparison of happiness. It is a condition, however, not likely to continue to a very remote posterity. Their numbers of late years have been rapidly on the decline. It has generally been observed that where Europeans have colonised, the less civilised nations have always dwindled away, and at length totally disappeared."—"There is scarcely," he continues, "an instance of cruelty said to have been committed against the slaves in the West-Indian islands, that could not find a parallel from the

* See Thunberg, vol. i. p. 304, vol. ii. p. 155; Sparrman, vol. i. pp. 241, 306, vol. ii. p. 310; Vaillant, vol. i. p. 300, vol. ii. pp. 118, 392, of First Journey.—N. B. The references are to the English translations of these works.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Dutch farmers of the remote districts of the colony towards the Hottentots in their service. Beating and cutting with thongs of the hide of the sea-cow (hippopotamus) or rhinoceros, are only gentle punishments; though these sort of whips, which they call *sjambocs*, are most horrid instruments, being tough, pliant, and heavy almost as lead. Firing small shot into the legs and thighs of a Hottentot, is a punishment not unknown to some of the monsters who inhabit the neighbourhood of Camtoos River.—By a resolution of the old government, as unjust as it was inhuman, a peasant (boor) was allowed to claim as his property, till the age of five-and-twenty, all the children of the Hottentots in his service to whom he had given in their infancy a morsel of meat. At the expiration of this period the odds are ten to one that the slave is not emancipated. But should he be fortunate enough to escape at the end of this period, the best part of his life has been spent in a profitless servitude, and he is turned adrift without any thing he can call his own, except the sheep's-skin on his back*."

Mr. Barrow has been generally regarded in the colony as strongly prejudiced against the frontier boors, many of whom were violently disaffected to the English Government, and in a state of anarchy and insurrection at the period of his travels. But making every allowance for the influence of such feelings, there cannot be a doubt that the statement he has given of their treatment of the natives at that time is substantially just. An officer of my acquaintance, who served in the interior of the colony at the time of Mr. Barrow's travels, and who has resided there ever since the second capture of the Cape, in the midst of the Dutch-African colonists, with whom he has constantly lived on the most friendly terms, furnished me, in 1823, with an account of the state of the Hottentots thirty years ago, which fully corroborates the statement of Mr. Barrow. I subjoin a short passage from his MS., and

* Travels in Southern Africa, vol. i. pp. 93—95.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

only withhold the writer s name, lest I should by its insertion expose him to colonial odium.

"At that time (1798-1802) the Hottentots were a miserable abject race of people; generally living in the service of the boors, who had so many of them that they were thought of little value as servants, and were treated more like brute beasts than human beings. Indeed, the colonists in those days scarcely considered them human. They were mostly naked: seldom was one of them to be seen with any other clothing than the sheep-skin caross, together with a piece of jackal's skin, for the men, and a wretched sort of leathern apron for the women, attached to a girdle of raw hide, which encircled their loins. Their food was commonly the flesh of old ewes, or any animal the boor expected to die from age. If he was short of that, he shot a few quaggas or other game for them. Their wages was generally a few strings of glass-beads in the year; or, when the boor returned from a journey to Cape Town, a tinder-box and knife were considered a reward for faithful services. Perhaps a very obedient man, and more than commonly industrious, got a heifer, or a couple of ewes, in a year. And if by accident any of these poor wretches happened to possess a few cattle, there was often some means fallen upon by the boor to get rid of him, and thus his cattle became his master's. When a Hottentot offended any boor or booress, he was immediately tied up to the wagon-wheel, and flogged in the most barbarous manner. Or if the master took a serious dislike to any of these unhappy creatures, it was no uncommon practice to send out the Hottentot on some pretended message, and then to follow and shoot him on the road; and, when thus put out of the way, his relations durst not make any inquiry about him, else they also were severely punished. Such was the condition in which we found the natives at that period."

It cannot be thought surprising that people thus treated, though naturally one of the mildest and least enterprising families of the human race, should be driven by despair to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

take up arms against their oppressors. Accordingly, we find that about the period to which the above extracts refer, and while a large body of the frontier colonists were in a state of insurrection against the English Government, a considerable number of the Hottentots in the eastern districts fled into Cafferland, leaving their wives and children, in most cases, in the hands of the colonists; and having instigated some of the Caffer chiefs to aid them in an attack upon the colony, a formidable irruption took place; the boors near the frontier were attacked and driven from their farms, their houses were burnt to the ground, and their arms and ammunition seized to a large extent by their former bondmen. Some white families were slaughtered; but, considering the provocations the natives had received, their retaliation was far from being bloody. The assembled boors were at length defeated at Camtoos River, under their ablest leader, Field-Commandant Vanderwalt, who was slain in the conflict; and they were so much dispirited by this disaster, that they fled with their families in all directions, and were pursued by the victorious Hottentots and their Caffer allies to Kayman's River, near the site of the present district town of George. Here the natives were met by a body of English troops, and the colonial militia of the Swellendam district, and driven back to the forests of the Zureberg and Sunday River.

I cannot now enter into the details of those troubled times, which continued with little intermission until after the second capture of the colony by the English, in 1806. Suffice it to say, that the natives were partly subdued by force, and partly gained over amicably by the English, upon whom they naturally threw themselves for protection. The majority were induced to return to the service of their former masters, who in many cases still held as hostages their wives and children. A native regiment, which had been formed in 1796 or 1797, by General Craig, was greatly increased by the numbers who eagerly flocked to enlist in it; and about 200 were permitted to settle near Algoa Bay with Dr. Vanderkemp, who in the midst of these turmoils commenced,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

in 1802, his Hottentot mission, from which, in spite of innumerable discouragements, inestimable benefits have eventually flowed to the aboriginal race and to the colony*.

The frontier colonists do not appear to have learned either wisdom or humanity by the sufferings to which many of them had been subjected during these disturbances. On the contrary, in proportion to the contempt in which they had been accustomed to hold the natives, was their exasperation at their attempt to vindicate their claims to the rights of MEN, and at the degree of success which had attended that attempt. After the submission of the insurgent Hottentots, many of the colonists continued to treat them worse than ever. Maimings, murders, cruelties of all sorts, and some too shocking to be described in decent language, were perpetrated upon these unhappy people—more especially in the district of Uitenhage†. The proclamation of Lord Caledon‡ (mentioned at page 191), humanely intended for their protection, rather increased the animosity than excited the fears of those who still fancied themselves beyond the reach of legal responsibility. A letter, however, from the missionary Mr. Read, in which some of those enormities were mentioned, having been published in England, in 1808, attracted attention in high quarters§ and Mr. Read and Dr. Vanderkemp were called to Cape Town in 1811, to give

* See Philip's Researches, vol. i, pp. 63—107, *et passim.*

† Of those deeds of darkness, I have now before me a statement or journal, written from 1806 to 1811 by a highly respectable resident, who gave it to me as I was about to leave the colony. It is a large folio manuscript, extending to forty-four pages, and contains a brief detail of crimes and cruelties committed against Hottentots, chiefly in the frontier districts, with the names of all the parties and witnesses, many of whom are still alive. It is a truly horrible record, and but too well bears out all that Mr. Barrow has alleged against the back-country boors of former days.

‡ Commissioner Bigge on the Hottentot Population, p. 5.—Philip's Researches, vol. i, p. 142.

§ Bannister, Appendix, p. ccxiii.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

information to the Governor on the subject. They instantly obeyed the summons; and produced such evidence of intolerable oppressions as led to the appointment of a special commission for the investigation of the cases. But before further proceedings could take place, the Earl of Caledon was relieved by another governor, and Dr. Vanderkemp died.

Nevertheless, in consequence of the facts made known by the missionaries, the important measure was at this period adopted of instituting judicial circuits. These consisted of deputations of members of the Supreme Court, appointed to proceed annually through the interior districts, on purpose to investigate all complaints and abuses, and to try all offences brought under their cognisance. On their first institution, however, these Circuit Courts did not afford any very encouraging prospect of their realising the purposes intended by the Government. Being usually composed of persons who were themselves slave-holders, and deeply imbued with the predominating colonial feelings in regard to the African race, their early verdicts were generally far more remarkable for extreme leniency to white delinquents, than for accordance with the claims of impartial justice, or regard to the lives and limbs of his Majesty's coloured subjects. The following cases may serve for specimens. One miscreant, named De Clercq, a wealthy colonist, who was convicted, upon the clearest evidence, of having been in the *habitual practice* of mutilating his Hottentots in a most inhuman and indescribable manner, was merely subjected to a fine of 500 rixdollars, or somewhat less than 50*l.* sterling. And another monster, in the district of Swellendam, named Cloetè, who was found guilty of shooting, in mere wanton wickedness, a Hottentot woman, with a child in her arms, was solemnly doomed to kneel down blind-folded, to have a naked sword passed over his neck by the executioner, and to be banished the colony, under the penalty of becoming liable to 'a severer punishment' if he should return; the latter part of the sentence, being merely intended to save

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

appearances, was never actually enforced*. However, after some severe animadversions by Sir John Cradock, upon these and similar verdicts, the Circuit Courts became somewhat more attentive to outward decency, at least, in their decisions; and the alarm and exposure produced by the publicity of the proceedings, and the facilities which they afforded for the reception of complaints from the natives in the remote districts, had a very beneficial effect in intimidating the more savage portion of the colonists from the perpetration of such gross outrages as had once been common.

Without entering into any detailed review of colonial legislation respecting the native population, I shall merely observe that a proclamation issued by Sir John Cradock, in 1812, and another by Lord Charles Somerset, in 1819, had a decided tendency to deteriorate the condition of the Hottentots†. But even in regard to points where the colonial law was better, such, with very rare exceptions, was the disposition of the landdrosts and inferior local functionaries to connive at, or openly to support, the oppressive encroachments of the colonists upon the natives, that the protective clauses of Lord Caledon's well-meant proclamation had become in most of the districts nearly, if not altogether, a dead letter‡. Some of these functionaries enforced coercive regulations of their own, in direct contravention both of the spirit and letter of those clauses. The Hottentots were considered, and systematically treated, as incapacitated to hold land, or to exist in any other condition, even though they had the means, than that of menial servitude to the colonists. Their complaints of ill-usage were generally treated with neglect, or repelled by punishment; while

* The details of this case, which occurred in July, 1812, together with Sir John Cradock's spirited remarks on the sentence, may be seen in 'Fisher's Importance of the Cape of Good Hope.' London, 1816.

† See Commissioner Bigge's Report on Hott. Population, p. 9.

‡ Commissioners' Report on Government of the Cape, pp. 9, 19.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

large licence was given to the exertion of arbitrary authority by the masters. Moreover the colonists, with but few exceptions, were, to use the words of Commissioner Bigge, "averse to the natives receiving moral or religious instruction of any kind;" and the provincial functionaries, who were for the most part thoroughly imbued with the same feelings, and who, in the exercise of their discretion, were subject to no controul, suffered only a very limited number to join the missionary institutions, and in many cases, and more especially in the district of Uitenhage, harassed those institutions with such intolerable oppressions as greatly to circumscribe their usefulness, and frequently to endanger their very existence*.

The circumstances which attended the extinction of the last independent kraal, or horde, of free Hottentots within the colony, will serve well to illustrate the state of colonial feeling which then existed towards the race.

Among the principal leaders of the Hottentot insurgents in their wars with the boors, were three brothers of the name of Stuurman. The manly bearing of Klaas, one of these brothers, is commemorated by Mr. Barrow, who was with the English General Vandeleur, near Algoa Bay, when this Hottentot chief came, with a large body of his countrymen, to claim the protection of the British. "We had little doubt," says Mr. Barrow, "that the greater number of the Hottentot men who were assembled at the bay, after receiving favourable accounts from their comrades of the treatment they experienced in the British service, would enter as volunteers into this corps; but what was to be done with the old people, the women, and the children? Klaas Stuurman found no difficulty in making a provision for

* See, on the above points, and on the condition and treatment of the Hottentot population generally, the valuable Report of Commissioner Bigge, already repeatedly referred to; also Dr. Philip's work, *passim*; and the admirable letters of Dr. Vanderkemp to the Colonial Authorities, inserted in the Appendix to Mr. Bannister's 'Humane Policy.'



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

them. 'Restore,' said he, 'the country of which our fathers have been despoiled by the Dutch, and we have nothing more to ask.'—I endeavoured to convince him, (continues Mr. Barrow,) how little advantage they were likely to derive from the possession of a country, without any other property, or the means of deriving a subsistence from it: but he had the better of the argument. 'We lived very contentedly,' said he, 'before these Dutch plunderers molested us; and why should we not do so again, if left to ourselves? Has not the *Groot Baas* (the Great Master) given plenty of grass-roots, and berries, and grasshoppers for our use? and, till the Dutch destroyed them, abundance of wild animals to hunt? and will they not turn and multiply when these destroyers are gone?'"

On the settlement of the civil disturbances in the interior of the colony, after it had reverted to the Dutch, in 1803, Klaas Stuurman, who had rendered essential services to the Government in the pacification of his insurgent countrymen, was formally appointed a Hottentot Captain by Governor Janssens; and a tract of land was allotted to the three brothers and their followers, on the Little Camtoos River, in the district of Uitenhage. They then retired thither with such scanty stock of sheep and cattle as they could muster, and continued to live quietly, after the manner of their forefathers, by pasturage and hunting.

On the death of Klaas Stuurman, who was killed shortly afterwards by an accident in hunting the buffalo, his brother David succeeded him, by the unanimous suffrages of the little community, as chief of the kraal. The existence of this independent horde gave, however, great offence to the neighbouring boors,—the more especially as the Stuurmans had particularly distinguished themselves as leaders of the Hottentots, during the late disturbances. The most malignant calumnies were propagated against David Stuurman, which Colonel Collins appears to have received with too easy credulity, when he visited Uitenhage in 1809. The kraal was most jealously watched, and every possible occasion embraced of preferring complaints against

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the people, with the view of getting them rooted out, and reduced to the same state of servitude as the rest of their nation. For seven years no suitable opportunity presented itself to obtain the accomplishment of this purpose; but at length, in 1810, when the Colony was once more under the Government of England, David Stuurman and his chief associates became outlaws in the following manner.

Two Hottentots, belonging to this kraal or village, had engaged themselves, for a certain period, in the service of a neighbouring boor; who, when the term of their agreement had expired, refused them permission to depart—a practice at that time very common, and much connived at by the local functionaries. The Hottentots, upon this, went off without permission, and returned to their own village. The boor followed them thither, and demanded them back; but their chief, Stuurman, refused to surrender them. Next day the boor returned with his field-cornet and a party of armed colonists, to take them by force. Stuurman, on the approach of this band, drew up his men, and called out to the field-cornet to beware—for, if he attempted to enter his kraal in arms, he would fire upon him. On this the boors laid down their guns, and tried to cajole him, by fair words, to yield the point. Stuurman, however, was staunch to his friends, and refused. A report of his contumacious conduct was, therefore, made to the Landdrost Cuyler; and that functionary issued an imperative order for the Hottentot chief to appear instantly before him, to answer for his audacity. Stuurman, apprehensive probably for his personal safety, was so infatuated as to refuse or delay compliance; and, in consequence of this, his arrest, and the destruction of his kraal, were forthwith determined on. But as he was well known to be a resolute man, and much beloved by his countrymen, who regarded him as a sort of national champion, it was considered hazardous to attempt his seizure by open force, and the following stratagem was fallen upon by the colonists, to accomplish this purpose.

A boor, named Cornelius Routenbach, a heemraad (member of the landdrost's council) had by some means or other



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

gained Stuurman's confidence, and this man engaged to entrap him. On a certain day, accordingly, he sent an express to his friend Stuurman, stating that the Caffers had carried off a number of his cattle, and requesting him to hasten with the most trusty of his followers to aid him in pursuit of the robbers. The Hottentot chief and his party instantly equipped themselves and set out. When they reached Routenbach's residence, Stuurman was welcomed with every demonstration of cordiality, and with four of his principal followers was invited into the house. On a signal given, the door was shut, and at the same moment the landdrost (Major Cuyler,) the field-commandant Stollz, and a crowd of boors, rushed upon them from an inner apartment, and made them all prisoners. The rest of the Hottentot party, who had remained outside, perceiving that their captain and comrades had been betrayed, immediately dispersed themselves. The majority, returning to their kraal, were, together with their families, distributed by the landdrost in servitude to the neighbouring boors. Some fled into Cafferland; and a few were, at the earnest entreaty of Dr. Vanderkemp, permitted to join the missionary institution at Bethelsdorp. The chief, and his brother Boschman, with two other leaders of the kraal, were sent off prisoners to Cape Town, where, after undergoing their trial before the Court of Justice, upon an accusation of resistance to the civil authorities of the district, they were condemned to work in irons for life, and sent to Robben Island, to be confined among other colonial convicts.

Stuurman's kraal thus effectually broken up, the Landdrost Cuyler asked and obtained, as a grant for himself, the lands the Hottentots had occupied. Moreover, this functionary kept in his own service, without any legal agreement, some of the children of the Stuurmans, until after the arrival of the Commissioners of Inquiry in 1823.

Stuurman and two of his comrades, after remaining for some years prisoners in Robben Island, contrived to escape, and effected their retreat through the whole extent of the colony into Cafferland, a distance of more than six hundred miles. Impatient, however, to return to his family, Stuur-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

man, in the year 1816, sent out a message to the missionary Mr. Read, from whom he had formerly experienced kindness, intreating him to endeavour to procure permission for him to return in peace. Mr. Read, as he himself informed me, made application in his behalf to the Landdrost Cuyler —but without avail: that magistrate recommended that he should remain where he was. Three years afterwards, the unhappy exile ventured to return into the colony without permission. But he was not long in being discovered and apprehended, and was once more sent a prisoner to Cape Town, where he was kept in close confinement till the year 1823, when he was finally transported as a convict to New South Wales. What became of Boschman, the third brother, I have never learnt.—Such was the fate of the last Hottentot chief who attempted to stand up for the rights of his countrymen*.

* The above statement having been published by me after my return to England in 1826, attracted the attention of the upright and benevolent General Bourke, then Lieutenant Governor at the Cape, who immediately wrote to the Governor of New South Wales in behalf of David Stuurman. In consequence of this intervention, as I understand, Stuurman was relieved from some of the severities of his condition as a convict, and obtained what is called 'a ticket of leave,' an indulgence which gives the holder the privilege of earning wages for his own benefit. In 1829, the four children of David Stuurman, through the kindly aid of Mr. Bannister, presented a memorial to Sir Lowry Cole, then Governor at the Cape, intreating his Excellency's intervention to procure the recal of their banished parent; but I am not aware that any steps were taken in the affair by Sir Lowry. In 1831, General Bourke having been appointed Governor of New South Wales, I had some correspondence on the subject with him in London; and he then obtained the consent of the Colonial Department to Stuurman being restored to his native country and family, provided his return was not opposed by the Cape Government. The 'Last Chief of the Hottentots,' however, had been released by death, before General Bourke reached his new Government. A communication which the General was so good as address to me, soon after his arrival at Sydney, conveyed the information that Stuurman had died in the hospital, in 1830; and that his conduct in the colony had been good.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I turn now to the general state of the Colonial Hottentots during my own residence at the Cape. Their condition had certainly been in some points improved since the days of Barrow. That writer estimates the whole number of the race then existing within the colony at about 15,000 souls, and states that of late years they appeared to be rapidly decreasing. That they had been in former times much more numerous than they were when Mr. Barrow wrote, cannot be doubted; though he apparently somewhat underrates their numbers in 1798. In Mr Thompson's population tables, they are rated in 1806, at 20,426; and in 1823, at 30,549; exhibiting a gradual increase of about 10,000 in seventeen years. This proves at least that since the colony became a permanent appendage to the British empire, the protection of the aboriginal race had been rendered somewhat more efficient, and their condition in some respects ameliorated. The rapid increase of the European population, which during the same period, from 1806 to 1823, had increased from 27,000 to 49,000, had created a degree of competition for Hottentot servants which, even under all the disadvantages of their situation, necessarily secured for the natives, as a body, milder treatment than in former days, and formed, perhaps, not the least influential cause of the increase of their numbers. Accordingly, I found them *generally* more decently clothed and better fed than they are described by very competent witnesses to have been in 1798. (See pages 378—380.) But to this observation there were still numerous exceptions. Even in the houses of some of our wealthiest neighbours on the Tarka, were to be found Hottentot females with no other covering than the sheep-skin caross, and the wretched apron of leathern thongs hung round the loins. And among the men sent to be our guard at Glen-Lynden, in 1821, was a poor fellow from the Rhinosterberg, named Slinger, who had never possessed *decent* clothing till I gave him a pair of old trousers. This man informed me that he and his family were chiefly maintained by their master on quagga's flesh; and he exhibited to me the marks of a musket-ball through the calf of his leg, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of swan-shot in other parts of his body, which he said had been fired at him by a former master, for absconding from his service! This, however, had occurred several years before; and, since the example made of the insurgent boors in 1816, such acts of violent outrage had certainly become comparatively rare in our eastern province.

But with all the mitigations and ameliorations that had taken place, the condition of the Hottentots, as a class of people, was still exceedingly deplorable—their spirit broken, and their character degraded. I cannot give a better description of their general state than in the words of a very intelligent colonial correspondent, who has himself been for many years a provincial functionary, and possessed of the best possible opportunities for forming a correct and impartial judgment on this subject. He states expressly, that, "until the Hottentots were placed (in 1828) on the same footing with the rest of his Majesty's *free* subjects in the colony, they were decidedly in a more degraded condition than the slaves, in every respect, except that they were not *saluble*, and this very distinction was itself one cause of their greater degradation. They were employed in every species of occupation in which slaves are employed, and were subject to the same sort of coercion and punishment. They were not so well fed as the slaves, and seldom clad by the master. There was not the interest to render them comfortable which operated in favour of the slaves. The dangers and privations to which the slave-owner would never think of exposing his purchased bondman, were forced upon the Hottentot without scruple or hesitation*." And in illustration of the fact last stated, the writer remarks, that in places infested with lions, Hottentots were almost invariably sent to attend the cattle; the lives of the slaves being considered too *valuable* to be risked, while a Hottentot could be replaced with little difficulty and at no expense.—"Male slaves," he continues, "often, it is true, took Hottentot wives, from

* See some very instructive remarks on this topic by Dr. Philip in his *Researches*, vol. ii. p. 314.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the natural desire to be the fathers of free children, but few female slaves took Hottentot husbands; to do so was considered in them a 'falling-off.' The Hottentots were universally far less respected than the slaves, and had consequently become less respectable. They had gradually sunk in their own estimation, as they became weaker and weaker as a nation, and as they were treated with more and more severity and contempt."

He farther remarks, that he had "often heard many well-disposed Dutch-African farmers, who had passed all their lives among slaves and Hottentots, and constantly employed both classes in their service, maintain, when the experiment of emancipating the latter from coercion was proposed, that such a scheme was altogether chimerical; and that the innate improvidence of the Hottentot race rendered 'leading strings' necessary for them till their dying day. They would contrast the anxiety of the slave to add to his little comforts with the recklessness of the Hottentot, expending all his wages in strong liquor or on useless finery, and squandering his live stock as soon as it was left at his disposal, utterly regardless of the morrow. And they would thence argue, that if *property* were not involved, you might beneficially and safely give freedom to the slaves, while you could not, without great danger and damage to all parties, emancipate the Hottentots; forgetting," he justly adds, "that the opposite conduct of these two classes might be reasonably accounted for, not from any essential difference of nature, but from the effects of stimulants operating to a certain extent even upon the slave, to which the Hottentot, in his state of abject depression, was a stranger."

Such was the condition and character of the enthralled aborigines of the Cape Colony, when Dr. Philip published, in April, 1828, his important work, entitled 'Researches in South Africa.' By this publication, the oppressions of the native race, as they existed under the sway of England, were for the first time brought fairly under the eye of the British public. At the same time Mr. Fowell Buxton (who, in conjunction with his venerable friend Mr. Wilberforce,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

had exerted himself to obtain, several years before, the appointment of that Commission of Inquiry which has rendered such essential services to South Africa), had given notice of a motion in Parliament for the full extension of the rights of freemen to the Hottentot people. A serious debate in the House of Commons was anticipated; although of the triumphant result, in a case so irresistible, it was difficult to doubt—especially when brought forward with the support of such a phalanx as had cordially pledged themselves to aid Mr. Buxton on this occasion—a phalanx comprising the names of Brougham and Mackintosh, of Denman and Lushington, and many others enshrined in the annals of humanity. It is with a melancholy pleasure that I recal to mind, in connexion with this subject, the circumstances of my first acquaintance with the late Sir James Mackintosh, and of spending the greater part of two delightful days with that highly-gifted and fine-minded man, while he was preparing for the anticipated debate. But before the day for the discussion of his motion arrived, Mr Buxton found himself a conqueror, without a conflict. Sir George Murray, then Colonial Secretary, having in the meanwhile made himself master of the case, and being happily in this instance unembarrassed by any powerful 'colonial interest' in parliament, yielded with generous frankness all that was asked by the friends of humanity. Mr. Buxton claimed for the Hottentot race simply the full enjoyment of the civil and social rights to which by the law of England they were acknowledged, as free men, to be entitled—that they should, in short, be placed by law on the same footing precisely with the rest of his Majesty's free subjects in the same colony. This claim was fully concurred in by the Government; and it was agreed that an Order in Council should be issued without delay to carry it into effect.

It would, however, be unjust to General Bourke, then Acting-Governor at the Cape of Good Hope, not to mention that long before intelligence reached the colony of what had occurred in England, he had issued the 50th Colonial Ordinance, by which the same object—the effectual eman-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

cipation of the Hottentot people—was accomplished*. On this Ordinance being transmitted to Downing-street, all that was necessary was added by Sir George Murray —an Order in Council, namely, confirming it in all points; with the important clause, that it should not be competent for any Governor or other Colonial Authority to alter or abrogate any of its provisions. This Ordinance was passed at the Cape of Good Hope on July 17, 1828, only two days subsequent to the public concurrence of the Colonial Secretary in parliament to the principle of Mr. Buxton's motion; and it was ratified by the Order in Council on January 15th, 1829. Thus was the Magna Charta of the Aborigines of South Africa secured.

On the promulgation of the emancipating Ordinance, a prodigious clamour was raised throughout the colony, in which a very large proportion of all classes of the white population joined, including persons high in office, who ought to have evinced a very different spirit. The absolute ruin of the colony from this measure was loudly and confidently predicted. It was asserted that the fields would lie untilled, and the flocks go untended, for want of labourers and herdsmen; and that the white inhabitants generally would be reduced to ruin from this cause, and by being plundered by marauding hordes of Hottentot banditti. For it was assumed, as a result not to be questioned, that no Hottentot would work unless compelled by coercion, and

* Captain Stockenstrom, then a Member of Council at the Cape, had the merit of strongly advocating this important measure, and of recommending to the Lieutenant-Governor's consideration the propriety of the total repeal of all the laws which imposed peculiar disabilities on the coloured classes. The Rev. Dr. Wright, also, had availed himself of the opportunities which he then enjoyed of frequent intercourse with General Bourke, to bring under his notice the oppressions endured by the natives, and to urge the immediate enactment of a protective ordinance—a measure to which the General's own benevolent feelings strongly disposed him, although he at first hesitated about taking so decided a step without special instructions from home.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

that the whole race would betake themselves to a life of idleness, vagrancy, and robbery, when no longer held in servitude by compulsory laws. The *retrogression* of the race into *barbarism* was affected to be deplored; and the whole of these calamitous consequences were ascribed, in terms of no measured vituperation, by a swarm of pro-slavery pamphleteers and journalists, to Mr. Buxton and 'the Saints' at home, and to Dr. Philip, Mr. Fairbairn, and a few other 'meddling, mischievous hypocrites' in the colony. That the ignorant Dutch-African boors should exhibit great jealousy of the political importance and equal privileges conferred on a race of people whom they had from infancy been accustomed to regard as an inferior caste, doomed to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the 'Christians,' was not at all surprising; but more liberal sentiments might have been naturally expected, one would imagine, from many of the English colonists (and those not of the lowest class) who joined most vociferously in this ungenerous outcry. But the British settlers had now become active competitors with the boors for native labourers, and in placing themselves in a similar position, the majority had with lamentable facility adopted similar sentiments. It is with sorrow I feel myself forced to corroborate the severe but just remark, that "if the Hottentots have gained little by their service with the Cape-Dutch masters, that of the English settlers has not been more advantageous*."

Not having been myself in the colony at the period when this great change in the condition of the natives was effected, it is particularly satisfactory to me to be enabled to describe the results, upon the authority, and mostly in the words, of a very intelligent correspondent, himself a provincial functionary, and in every respect a most competent evidence on the subject. My friend admits, that immediately on the promulgation of the Ordinance, vagrancy to

* Commissioner Bigge on the Hottentot Population, p. 22.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

a considerable extent did take place among the Hottentots. Finding themselves all at once released from the coercive shackles and oppressive disabilities to which their race had been so long subjected, a large portion, from a not unnatural impulse, left the service of the colonists as soon as their contracts of servitude expired, and some even fancied themselves authorised by the new law to break short those engagements. Many repaired to the missionary institutions (which but few had been previously permitted to enter), without having adequate means to maintain themselves there. Numbers flocked to the district towns and villages, where the temptations of cheap brandy, procurable by little labour, soon betrayed many into profligate habits, and led some of them to commit depredations on the flocks of the farmers. These disorders, my correspondent observes, might have been very easily restrained by the due enforcement merely of the existing laws against vagrancy; and he quotes the opinion of Mr. Justice Burton, as perfectly coinciding with his own upon this point. But for some time it seemed as if the greater part of the provincial functionaries had tacitly combined to refrain from enforcing the *existing laws* for the suppression of the petty disorders which prevailed; with the view, apparently, of increasing the clamour against the emancipating Ordinance, so generally detested by the dominant classes, and of thus promoting the aims of those who were striving to obtain the repeal of that Ordinance, or, at all events, the enactment of some very strong coercive laws for the coloured population. Happily, however, at this crisis, the Order in Council of January 15, 1829, arrived in the colony; which, leaving no alternative for the Colonial Authorities but the unqualified enforcement of the Ordinance, quashed for ever all such mischievous intrigues*. It soon became apparent, also, to every one

* The indispensable importance of the Order in Council, and, above all, of the clause inserted in it at the suggestion of a staunch friend of humanity, by which the Colonial Authorities were peremp-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

that the accounts of disorders committed by the Hottentots, with which the pro-slavery journals continually overflowed, were most maliciously and preposterously exaggerated;* and moreover, many thefts which had been loudly ascribed to them, were discovered to have been committed by a band of white depredators at Graham's Town. In point of fact, although there was a great deal of drunkenness among the more demoralised portion of the natives who had flocked to the district towns, and a good deal of pilfering, doubtless, by those whom the indulgence of this destructive vice had driven to desperate shifts for subsistence, yet even among this class nothing like systematic robbery, deliberate outrage, or serious disturbance of the peace did actually take

---

torily debarred from altering the law as now fixed, was not long in being fully proved. General Bourke was speedily succeeded in the Government by Sir Lowry Cole, and the latter had scarcely been installed in his new office, when a serious attempt was made to bring about a reversal of the 50th Ordinance. One of the Judges, with this view, drew up a voluminous document, in order to persuade the Governor and his Council that the white colonists and the coloured population (although free) ought not to be governed by the same laws. Sir Lowry Cole, with the best intentions in the world, and with all his frank honesty of nature, was not an unlikely man to have been led astray by such representations,—as his deplorable attempts to patch up the execrable slave code at Mauritius, with its fetters, chains, and pronged-collars, sufficiently indicate (see Anti-Slavery Reporter, vol. ii. p. 335, and vol. iii. pp. 70, 293). The attempt to get the Hottentot Ordinance rescinded, might thus have probably *for a moment* succeeded, had the Order in Council confirming it not arrived in the nick of time to frustrate the schemes of the enemies of the native race, who were not a little confounded by the unexpected appearance of that document.

* Among many other satisfactory testimonies of the gross exaggeration of the disorders ascribed to the Hottentots after their emancipation, I have recently had the gratification of obtaining on that point the valuable evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel Bell, the present Secretary to the Cape Government.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

place. On the contrary, the partial disorders, naturally occurring under such circumstances, were found to be very easily repressed by the ordinary police of the country, when due diligence was used to effect this object; while the quiet and orderly conduct of the great body of the Hottentot people furnished the best practical refutation of those who had represented the whole race as unfit for the enjoyment of rational liberty.

The great body of the Hottentot people still remained, in fact, just as they were formerly, servants to the white colonists, though with some essential differences in their condition. They could no longer be flogged at the mere caprice of the master, if they happened to offend him. They could not now be punished, until they had been tried and condemned on competent evidence by a magistrate, and for a legal offence. Their children could no longer be forcibly taken from them; they were free to change their masters when their terms of service had expired; and they could no longer be compelled to serve for inadequate wages, or for none. They formed now, in short, a body of *free peasantry*, instead of being a degraded caste of miserable and oppressed *serfs*.

The general condition of these emancipated helots, after four years of freedom, is well described in a letter written by a most respectable resident, and inserted in the 'South-African Advertiser' for June 16, 1832, the accuracy of which I am enabled to vouch for on recent and high *official* authority. I may add that the 'great improvement' mentioned by the writer in the moral condition of the people, was still proceeding at the close of 1833 with a steady pace.

"You inquire whether I have not noticed the paucity of crime charged against the Hottentots, and other coloured classes, at the last circuit; in reply to which, I am happy to say that it has been a matter of remark, and is a fact worthy of record, that crime amongst the coloured population has of late greatly diminished. Not only is the *number* of the delinquents lessened, but the *character* of the offences

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

charged is of a much lighter cast than heretofore. This state of things might have been anticipated by persons of ordinary sagacity; but, under the excitement occasioned by the promulgation of the 50th Ordinance, people could not calmly calculate the results to be expected from such an important alteration as an entire change in the condition of one whole class of the community;—and, because a few of that class were found to abuse that liberty of which they all at once found themselves in possession, the colonists were led to complain grievously of the law,—which in fact merely removed unjust disabilities from a particular portion of their fellow subjects,—without reflecting that the evils complained of were only of a temporary character—the natural results of the re-action. During the last circuit, I have had opportunities of witnessing the conduct of the coloured population, under a variety of circumstances; and of hearing a great deal more said respecting it than I actually saw; and from the whole I may venture to assert, and the fact is undeniable, that a *great improvement* is clearly manifest in their moral condition. They are gradually acquiring information; many display provident habits who formerly paid no regard to the future; and an earnest desire to procure for their children the benefits of education is very generally observable among them. All these circumstances may be overlooked by a casual observer, but they are 'signs of the times,' which indicate that an important alteration in the state of our society may be looked for; and this will assuredly take place in spite of all opposition to the contrary. Who, then, would not wish, amidst changes of whatever nature, to be found ranked with the humane? and how superlatively miserable will that man be who finds himself defeated in his attempts to perpetuate injustice, or to protect cruelty!"

In the meanwhile another important experiment has been made upon the Hottentot race. This was an attempt to establish a portion of them as occupiers of land. The justice and expediency of restoring to this class of men

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

some small portion of the soil of their native country—of the land of their forefathers, had been urged upon the attention of the Home Government in 1824 by Mr. Buxton, in moving for papers relative to the condition of the Hottentots, and for accounts of all grants of land made either to Hottentots or Bushmen*. In 1823, the subject had been brought under the notice of his Majesty's Commissioners at the Cape, partly by a paper submitted to them by myself†, and also, I believe, by more comprehensive statements given in by Dr. Philip, and afterwards, in substance, comprised in his work. In 1825, while resident on the eastern frontier, I drew up memorials for grants of land in the Ceded Territory for eight of the most respectable families of Mulatto Hottentots residing at Glen-Lynden; and which (though then unattended to) I had the satisfaction of bringing under the favourable consideration of

---

* See Dr. Philip's remarks on the 'Return' to an address of the House of Commons on this motion; and on Lord Charles Somerset's statement in regard to lands granted to Hottentots.—*Researches*, vol. ii. p. 245.

† The paper referred to, dated October 12, 1823, was entitled 'Hints of a Plan for defending the Eastern Frontier of the Colony by a Settlement of Hottentots.' The scheme proposed was, to plant a line of villages or hamlets in suitable situations through the Ceded Territory, from the Winterberg mountain to the coast;—the inhabitants to be composed of free Hottentots, selected partly from the several missionary institutions, and partly from the most intelligent of those in the service of the colonists;—the arable land to be divided in small shares among the inhabitants, and granted on perpetual quit-rent, or in freehold, with a commonage for pasture to each village;—a native field-cornet and schoolmaster to be appointed to each village, and missionaries or chaplains to be stationed in central situations to visit them in rotation for religious instruction;—the settlers to be trained to arms as a militia, and placed under the superintendence of a magistrate specially selected for the charge.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

General Bourke, just before my departure for England in 1826. The Commissioners of Inquiry, moreover, had shown themselves decidedly favourable to the granting of land to the natives, although it appears from their Report printed in 1830, that they considered it "desirable that the Hottentots should not be congregated in one spot; and that in restoring to them a portion of that territory which was once their own, and in admitting them to the enjoyment of privileges in common with the rest of his Majesty's subjects in South Africa, any measures should be avoided which might tend to impress them with an opinion that they are destined to form a distinct class of the population."*

It was not, however, till 1829 that steps were adopted by the local Government to restore to a portion of the aboriginal inhabitants a share in the soil of South Africa. Capt. Stockenstrom had the entire merit of proposing the measure; and, having obtained the approbation of the Government to the plan he had drawn up, he was authorised to carry it into execution in his capacity of Commissioner General of the Eastern Province. The spot selected for the experiment was a tract of wild country from which the Caffer chief Makomo had been expelled a short while before. It is a sort of irregular basin, surrounded on all sides by lofty and majestic mountains, from the numerous kloofs of which six or seven fine streams are poured down the subsidiary dells into the central valley. These rivulets, bearing the euphonic Caffer names of Camalú, Zebénzi, Umtóka, Mankazána, Umtuárva, and Quonci, unite to form the Kat River, which finds its way through the mountain barrier by a stupendous *poort* or pass a little above Fort Beaufort. Within this mountain basin, which from its great command of the means of irrigation is peculiarly well adapted for a dense population, it was resolved to fix the Hottentot settlement.

* Commissioner Bigge's Report on the Hottentot Population, p. 22.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The following account of the mode in which this interesting colony was established is chiefly (though not exclusively) compiled from a paper drawn up by the officer to whose able management it was intrusted, and which appeared in the South-African Almanac for 1831. The experiment was at first intended to be upon a small scale. The Commissioner-General proceeded to make known the views of Government, and to invite from the several missionary stations, and from other quarters where Hottentots had congregated, a limited number of men of good character for the new colony, giving a preference to those possessed of property, and to such as had served in the Cape Corps. It was soon found impracticable, however, to adhere to any principle of strict selection. Hottentots flocked in from all quarters, and among many of known respectability and steady habits, many also of very indifferent character, and even some who had till then been considered vagabonds, came and entreated to be put upon probation. The Commissioner was somewhat puzzled how to act with these last; but, from a humane feeling which does him much honour, he adopted the more indulgent course.*

* The plan adopted in the distribution of the land was, to divide the whole tract into locations of from four to six thousand acres each; to plant in each location one, two, or more villages or hamlets, according as eligible situations were found for irrigation; to divide the arable land into allotments of from four to six acres, of which every family capable of cultivating it received one, while additional lots were reserved for such as should distinguish themselves by superior industry, or by their exertions in maintaining good order, or who after the period of probation should be able to show that they possessed ample means for the profitable occupation of more land. The pasture land was reserved for commonage to each location. The conditions imposed on the grantees were, to build a substantial cottage of comfortable dimensions, to inclose the arable ground, and to bring it into a proper state of cultivation within a period of five years; at the expiration of which, the conditions being fulfilled, the property was to be granted in freehold; but if these

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Meanwhile the threatening attitude of the Caffers, exasperated by their recent expulsion from this fertile spot, rendered it indispensible to arm the new settlers to enable them to protect their lives and property. This was considered a most dangerous step by the white colonists in general, who viewed a congregation of Hottentots armed with muskets, and for the most part destitute of property and even of food, with far greater apprehension than they did the wild Caffers who had been driven out of this mountain-valley. It was confidently predicted that these coloured settlers would soon turn the weapons with which they were intrusted against the colonists, as well as against the Caffers, and that all the horrors of the Hottentot war at the close of last century would be renewed. The clamour became loud against intrusting them with arms; but the more generous and wiser policy prevailed. "The recollection," says Captain Stockenstrom, "that the Hottentots in question were going to appear on our stage in a new character, and that the new stimulus now given, and the different tone observed towards them, would place them in a different light in their own eyes as well as in the eyes of the community at large, and would naturally alter the springs of their propensities and actions,—raised the Governor above the influence of

conditions were neglected, the allotment to revert to Government. Each holder of one or more allotments to have a right to keep a quantity of live stock on the location in proportion to the extent of his arable land and the capabilities of the pasturage. Within each location an allotment was reserved for the site of a school; and the situation for a town to be hereafter founded was marked out below the *poort*, near Fort Beaufort.

The boundaries of the settlement will be found traced upon the Map, with some of the principal villages, bearing the names spontaneously conferred on them by the Hottentots, in honour of the persons whom they justly consider as the best friends of their race. The village of *Wilberforce* has been accidentally omitted by the engraver. Balfour was the name of a missionary institution established by the Glasgow Society among Makomo's Caffers before their expulsion from this territory.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

those alarms. Muskets were ordered to be lent to those who had none of their own; as much ammunition was issued as was deemed requisite for self-defence; and they were called upon in return to show themselves capable of enjoying rational freedom, and worthy of the higher destiny now placed within their reach." And the heart of the African responded nobly to the call. "The Hottentot, escaped from bonds," (I quote the expression of my friend Fairbairn,) "stood erect on his new territory; and the feeling of being restored to the level of humanity and the simple rights of nature, softened and enlarged his heart, and diffused vigour through every limb!"

It was in the middle of winter (about the end of June, 1829) when the first settlers were located. About two hundred and fifty men capable of bearing arms were, with their families, settled in five parties, on such localities as would enable them to lead out the water for irrigating the land given them to cultivate. The principal families, among whom were the whole of our former Mulatto tenants from Glen-Lynden, possessed a considerable quantity of live stock; but there were great numbers who were totally destitute of property of any description,—destitute even of food for daily subsistence. Yet under these circumstances, although no aid whatever was given them by Government, except arms for their defence and a very small portion of seed-corn, even the most destitute abstained from theft—a crime to which in their servile state they are said by some (though I think unjustly) to have been prone. Those who had cattle assisted their poorer friends and relatives with a generous liberality which is characteristic of the race. Those who had neither food nor friends, lived upon *veld-kost*, i. e. wild roots and bulbs dug out of the soil, until the land they had planted returned them a harvest. Multitudes subsisted in this manner without a murmur for many months. Extraordinary industry was at the same time exerted. With the most wretched implements they cultivated an extent of land which astonished every one; and, independently of the labour required in culture, the various

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

parties displayed extraordinary rivalship in the construction of canals to convey water for the irrigation of their fields and gardens. In some places those canals were carried through the solid rock; in others it was necessary to cut to the depth of ten or twelve feet to preserve the level; while their entire length through all the locations extended to upwards of 20,000 yards.* Meanwhile they had sustained many fierce attacks from the Caffers, generally made in the dead of night, and had bravely repulsed them, without ever indulging the spirit of retaliation or repaying evil for evil. When the winter was over the Caffers ceased to harass the locations, and the neighbouring chiefs, especially Makomo who had been driven out of this territory, ere long entered into the most friendly relations with the settlers. Their industry having been rewarded with an abundant harvest, especially of vegetables, their numbers continued constantly to increase by fresh accessions of their countrymen, until they at length amounted altogether to upwards of four thousand souls, of whom about seven hundred were armed with muskets.

The Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, visited the settlement the year after its establishment, and expressed himself highly gratified with the entire success of the experiment to which (much to his honour) he had given his sanction. It is indeed the act of all others that will confer the most lasting credit on Sir Lowry's administration. He then appointed the Rev. Mr. Thomson, who had previously been a presbyterian missionary in Cafferland, to the ministerial charge of the settlement; but left it for the present without any civil functionaries except the native field-cornets and heads of parties appointed by Captain Stockenstrom. I may observe that although the prosperity of the settlement is doubtless mainly owing to the industry and docility of the people themselves, and to their manly determination to prove themselves worthy of their newly-acquired privileges, there can be no question that their success and good conduct are

* Graham's Town Journal, June, 1832.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

also to be in no small measure ascribed to the judicious arrangements and careful superintendence of Captain Stockenstrom—to the great and well-merited influence of Mr. Read, the missionary, who resided among them from the commencement—and likewise to the valuable labours of the presbyterian pastor, Mr. Thompson. Letters are now lying before me from these three meritorious individuals, and I cannot perhaps by any other means so well convey to the reader a correct impression of the results of this important experiment as by giving a few extracts.

Mr. Thomson, whose letter is dated "Balfour, Kat River, June 26, 1831," and is addressed to his father in England, remarks that "when the Magna Charta of the Hottentots was first published, there were many, and even sensible men, who predicted that innumerable evils and disasters would arise out of it; but three years' experience has proved them dreamers. The fact that virtue, industry, and sobriety have increased, is a very stubborn testimony. And when the progress of this little colony of coloured people for the last two years, and their present prosperity, are had regard to, we have a direct and overwhelming proof of the safety, wisdom, and national benefit of the measures adopted towards them, and of what may be expected by pursuing the same liberal and philanthropic principles towards all who are now in bondage."—After mentioning the numbers of the Hottentot settlers, and their remarkable orderly conduct, the writer proceeds.—"They are the most efficient covering cordon on this part of the frontier the colony ever had, and the most peaceable and loyal subjects. And again, if they are regarded simply as free settlers on the soil, no settlement ever bid fairer for success. They transported themselves hither at their own expense, lived on their own resources, and have had no aid from any quarter, except a small quantity of seed-corn the first year from Government; and, though struggling with great difficulties and under many disadvantages, they are now in the second year supported from the produce of their fields, and have disposed of a considerable surplus (30,000 lbs. of barley) for the troops,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

besides other produce carried to market at Graham's Town." Mr. Thomson, after giving a very gratifying detail of the success of his ministerial services in the infant settlement, adds—"Legal marriage is now become honourable among the people, and established, and connected with their ideas of morality and religion. Our parish (which is 60 miles long by from 25 to 30 broad) is recognised by the presbytery in the colony; and it will be an astonishing sight to our white brethren, the colonial elders, to see a black or brown one sit down with them to consult on matters of religion! There will be a hard battle to gain in regard to this point, as strong prejudices still exist even in some who are otherwise good people."

My next extract is from a letter addressed to myself by Captain Stockenstrom, on his arrival in England last summer, in reply to an application that I made to him for authentic information respecting the state of the native race. After detailing the circumstances attending the emancipation of the Hottentots, and the considerations that led to the settlement of a portion of them on the Caffer frontier, the writer thus continues—"The settlers at Kat River now display the utmost anxiety to have schools established among them, and several that have been opened are in a very flourishing state. So eager are they for instruction that, when better teachers cannot be obtained, if they find any person of their own class who can merely spell, they get him to teach to the rest the little he knows. They travel considerable distances to attend divine service regularly; and their spiritual guides speak with delight of the fruits of their labours. No where have Temperance Societies been half so much encouraged as among this people, formerly so prone to intemperance; and they have, of their own accord, petitioned the Government that their grants of land may contain a prohibition against the establishment of canteens, or brandy-houses. They have repulsed the Caffers on every occasion on which they have been attacked, and are now upon the best terms with that people. They pay every tax like the rest of the inhabitants They have cost the Government nothing except a little ammunition for their

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

defence, about fifty bushels of maize, and a similar quantity of oats, furnished to them for seed-corn, and the annual stipend of their minister. They have rendered the Kat River by far the safest part of the frontier; and the same plan followed up on a more extensive scale would soon enable Government to withdraw the troops altogether, and put an end to that desultory warfare which cannot fail greatly to retard the improvement both of the colony and of its barbarous neighbours.

"Petty misdemeanours we must suppose occur in this as in every other community; but they have not hitherto cost the public a magistrate, and the nearest functionary of the kind is two long days' ride distant. I recollect only two cases tried before the Circuit Courts in which settlers of the Kat River were the accused, and these were but trivial ones. In short, the most prejudiced men who have travelled through the locations, admit that the Hottentots have done wonders; and that as far as the land is arable they have made a garden of it from one end to the other.

"The statement now given may possibly by some be considered as too favourable; and individuals may be found who, jealous of the success of this experiment in refutation of all their sinister predictions, may point out indolent and unworthy characters in the Kat River settlement; such, of course, existing there as well as in every other place where numbers of men are congregated. But to these objectors I would reply, that I never meant to represent the Hottentots as devoid of faults, or better than other people in the aggregate. I have only wished to show that, as soon as they were treated as reasonable beings, they acted reasonably; and the facts now stated can be proved to the letter."

The letter of Mr. Read brings down my intelligence to the period of its date, October 10, 1833. I shall only quote the following sentences.—"Our settlement goes on well. Much grain has been harvested; and the people having obtained the contract for supplying barley to the troops at Fort Willshire and the new Post, much more land is cultivated this year than last. Captain Campbell, who lately visited us, as Acting Commissioner-General in Captain

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Stockenstrom's absence, was quite delighted with the appearance of things here, which far surpassed every idea he had previously formed."

These testimonies doubtless proceed from men, who, however intelligent and trust-worthy, may be considered as naturally partial to a settlement which owes its prosperity in so eminent a degree to their own meritorious exertions in their several spheres. But the evidence of *all* who have visited the place, whatever were their previous prejudices or predilections, corroborates unanswerably the truth of the facts I have stated. I shall not quote the exhilarating accounts given by Dr. Philip, Mr. Fairbairn, Dr. Wright, Mr. Bruce, and other zealous friends of the native race, or of Mr. Kay, who, in his recent work, has spoken so warmly of what he there witnessed. But Mr. Justice Menzies, who will not be so readily suspected of any undue leaning to the coloured class, was, it appears, not less highly pleased with the condition of this settlement, as he found it on one of his judicial circuits, than the most enthusiastic of its friends or founders.* And I shall conclude the gratifying list of testimonies on this topic with that of the Graham's Town Journal, a paper conducted with very considerable ability, though too frequently actuated (as I grieve to perceive) by a most unworthy spirit towards the best and truest friends both of the Africans and of the British emigrants. This Journal describes the inhabitants of the Kat River in the following terms:—"Great activity has been displayed, and the incipient marks of civilisation are observable in every direction. During the last season, were produced on the settlement 450 muids of wheat, 1,500 muids of barley, and 400 muids of Indian corn, besides large quantities of caffer-corn (millet), potatoes, pumpkins, sweet cane, and many other provisions. Their loyalty and attachment to the British Government are beyond suspicion; and it may not be uninteresting to state that at the last receipt of taxes they contributed to the revenue a sum of 2,300 rix-dollars. All the ordinances of religion are punctually attended

* South African Almanac for 1831, p. 236.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to by them, whilst in their families, and in the more public transactions of life, they evince an extensive practical acquaintance with the requirements of Christianity. Education is in great repute, and a manifest desire to give their children the benefit of instruction is a feeling every where observable. Two Infant Schools have been established, and are well attended."* Again, on a more recent occasion, the same paper observes —"In the Kat River settlement, where it is said there are concentrated 4000 inhabitants, and these consisting of persons of colour and of different tongues and tribes, there is no resident magistrate, nor have they a single police officer to preserve the peace; and yet from what we can learn, better order is preserved there than at the seat of magistracy at Graham's Town."†

The facts of this case, and of the Hottentot history generally, furnish a lesson full of instruction to all whose hearts and understandings are not sealed up by the most vulgar prejudices of caste and colour. Here we behold a people, debased by oppression and contumely till they had sunk below the level even of the negro slaves, their brothers in misfortune; a people for generations made a by-word to the civilised world, for stupidity, indolence, improvidence, intemperance,—held forth to universal scorn as the most brutalised family of the human race, and utterly unfit to be intrusted with the common privileges of humanity. This nation of African Helots, to the number of 30,000 souls, have been raised from the dust, at once and without any preparation (except what a *few* had received at the missionary institutions), to the full rights of free men—placed by law in all respects upon a level with the white colonists—thrown upon their own resources, without even ordinary care being used to restrain disorders, or any adequate anxiety evinced (except by a few friends of the race) to guard them from evil or guide them to good. That some hundreds out of the mass should have become the victims of the habitual intemperance to which the white inhabitants of the district towns continually *tempted* them, by paying

* Graham's Town Journal, June, 1832. † Ibid, Jan. 31, 1833.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

them for labour with ardent spirits, (I state what I have with my own eyes a thousand times witnessed,) is surely no great marvel. But the quiet and orderly demeanour of the great body of this long-maltreated people—above all the astonishing progress of the colonists of the Kat River, during the five years that they have been placed on probation as free citizens*—the entire change of character in many formerly considered vagabonds, as soon as they were enabled to emerge from conscious degradation, and the door of manly ambition was flung open to them—their self-government, their docility, their singular temperance, their industry, their ardour for religious and general instruction, and their steady good conduct—are facts which speak volumes, and upon which, to intelligent readers, I need not add a single word of comment.

* After the preceding pages had been printed off, and when the conclusion of this chapter was just going to press, another authentic account has reached me of the state of things at the Kat River so late as the beginning of 1834. In all that relates to the conduct and progress of the people it is in the highest degree satisfactory. I can only however notice in the briefest terms the following facts. There is this season an increased quantity of land under cultivation. The Temperance Society has proved of very great utility. The number of its members on the whole of the locations is about 1600; and such is the influence of this Society that no ardent spirits whatever are known to be in use throughout the entire settlement. Many who were formerly notoriously addicted to intemperance, have become steadily sober, industrious, and religious. The people are generally exemplary for their regard to religion, and their anxiety to advance in knowledge and virtue. The schools continue to increase in extent and efficiency; and of these nine are taught by Hottentot schoolmasters, who are provided with food by the parents of the children, and whose salaries only amount to a few shillings per month. "The success of this settlement," says my valued correspondent, is "unquestionably owing in a pre-eminent degree to the zeal, judgment, and indefatigable labours of the Missionaries: and nothing more seems necessary for its permanent prosperity than the exercise of common honesty, justice, and discretion, on the part of the colonial government and its local functionaries."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Caffers: Their Name, Appearance, Mode of Life, &c.—Their First Intercourse with the Colonists—Conflicts with them in Bruintjes-hoogtè and the Zureveld—Settlement of the Eastern Boundary in* 1798—*Caffer War of* 1811—*Invasion of Cafferland in* 1818—*The Prophet Makanna—Attack on Graham's Town—Speech of Makanna's Pagati, and Fate of that Chief—Lord Charles Somerset's Frontier Policy, and Distribution of the Ceded Territory—The Commando System—Slaughter of Caffer Envoys in* 1824, *and of the Chief Seko and his Followers in* 1830—*Recent State of Affairs both on the Northern and Eastern Frontiers—Treatment of the Chief Makomo—Change of System proposed.*

My residence of nearly three years on the eastern frontier naturally led me to pay considerable attention to the character of our colonial relations with the Caffer tribes; and my intimacy with several intelligent officers who had had much intercourse with those tribes both in peace and war, as well as with missionaries long resident among them, having enabled me to acquire information on many points which my own limited opportunities of observation did not embrace, I shall endeavour to throw together in the present chapter a brief summary of my researches on this topic.

For ample details relative to the manners, customs, and internal polity of the Caffer tribes, I must refer to other writers—Barrow, Lichtenstein, Thompson, Kay. I offer the following few prefatory remarks for the sake merely of readers hitherto unacquainted with this subject.

The term *Caffer*, like that of *Hottentot*, is entirely unknown in the language of the people to whom it is applied. It was originally a term of contumely (being the Arabic word *Cafer* or *Kafir*, signifying *Infidel*) employed by the Moorish or Arabian inhabitants of the north-eastern coast to desig-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

nate the nations of South-eastern Africa who had not embraced the Mohammedan faith; and from them the term was adopted by the early European navigators. The appellation, though sometimes still applied in a more extensive sense, is generally used in the Cape Colony, to denote the three contiguous tribes of Amakosa, Amatembu, and Amaponda; of whom the last may be considered identical with the Mambo, or what used to be called the Mambookie, nation. These three tribes, though governed by several independent chiefs, are decidedly one people; their language, manners, customs, and polity being essentially the same. The Amakosa, whose territory borders with the colony from the Winterberg to the coast, is the tribe with whom our intercourse both in peace and war has been far the most frequent.

The Caffers are a tall, athletic, and handsome race of men, with features often approaching to the European or Asiatic model; and, excepting their woolly hair, exhibiting few of the peculiarities of the negro race. Their colour is a clear dark brown. Their address is frank, cheerful, and manly. Their government is patriarchal; and the privileges of rank are carefully maintained by the chieftains. Their principal wealth and means of subsistence consist in their numerous herds of cattle. The females also cultivate pretty extensively maize, millet, water-melons, and a few other esculents; but they are decidedly a nation of *herdsmen*—war, hunting, barter, and agriculture being only occasional occupations.

In their customs and traditions, there seem to be indications of their having sprung, at some remote period, from a people of much higher civilisation than is now exhibited by any of the tribes of Southern Africa; whilst the rite of circumcision, universally practised among them without any vestige of Islamism, and several other traditionary customs greatly resembling the Levitical rules of purification, would seem to indicate some former connection with a people of Arabian, Hebrew, or, perhaps, Abyssinian lineage. Nothing like a regular system of idolatry exists among them; but we find some traces of belief in

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

a Supreme Being, as well as in inferior spirits, and sundry superstitious usages that look like the shattered wrecks of ancient religious institutions. Of their superstitions, the belief in sorcery is far the most mischievous, leading, in the same way as among the negroes on the west coast, to many acts of revolting oppression and cruelty.

The clothing of both sexes consists entirely of the skins of animals, rendered soft and pliable by a sort of currying. Their arms are the assagai or javelin, a short club, and a large shield of bullock's or buffalo's hide. The wars between the contiguous tribes above-mentioned, or the several clans with each other, are seldom very bloody, generally arising from quarrels relating to their respective pasture-grounds or the stealing of cattle, and bearing little resemblance to the ferocious mode of warfare recently pursued with such destructive effect by the Zoola nations. The females are seldom harmed in their internal wars; and in their conflicts with the colonists, there are many well-known examples of their humanity towards females who had fallen into their hands. They are *barbarians;* but not *savages,* in the strict and proper sense of the term.

It is a curious and characteristic circumstance that the earliest notice upon record of intercourse between the Cape colonists and the Caffers, is an account of a marauding expedition by a party of the former against the latter. In 1701, a band of Cape-Dutch freebooters, under the name of traders or barterers, marched to the eastward, and after an absence of seven months returned with a large quantity of cattle and sheep, which they had obtained by plundering a nation called Cabuquas, or Great Caffers, (probably Tambuquas, *i. e. Amatembu*), together with two kraals of Hottentots. In the attacks made upon these then remote tribes, numbers of the natives had been slaughtered. The facts are stated in a despatch sent to Holland in 1702 by the Governor and Council of the Cape of Good Hope, who, while they deplore "the intolerable and continued excesses of some of the free inhabitants, in committing acts of violence, with robberies and murders, and by these abominable means depriving those poor people of their subsistence,"

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

declare at the same time their inability to punish the delinquents.*

The impunity thus enjoyed by the colonial freebooters (who consisted for the most part of the very refuse of Europe, disbanded soldiers from mercenary regiments in the Dutch service, and the like), led, as was to be expected, to the frequent renewal of similar marauding excursions. By this means, and by the gradual occupation of all the best parts of the country, the Hottentot race were, as we have seen, at length either extirpated, reduced to thraldom, or driven to the northern deserts. The Caffers, a more numerous and warlike people, and acting together in larger masses, were not so easily overwhelmed. They appear to have successfully resisted on many occasions the attacks of the colonists; but, having only their slender missiles to oppose to the musket, they also often suffered dreadfully from their aggressions.†

The Caffers had been for several generations gradually pressing upon the Hottentot race from the eastward. This is not only known from traditionary memorials, but is manifest from most of the names of the rivers west of the Kei being of Hottentot etymology. The Hottentot hordes do not appear to have been extirpated by them, but to have been partly pushed farther westward, and partly incorporated with their frontier clans. The Ghonaqua tribe, once numerous and powerful, consisted of a people of mixed Caffer and Hottentot lineage; and the dialect now spoken by the frontier Caffers partakes to a certain extent of the Hottentot *cluck*, a peculiarity not to be found among the tribes farther back.

The country between the Camtoos and Great Fish rivers was, up to 1778, partly occupied by the Ghonaqua tribe and other hordes of Hottentots still enjoying a precarious independence, partly by Caffer clans intermingled with the

* Bannister, p. cxv. Philip, vol. i. p. 36.

† Vaillant, vol. i. pp. 337, 352.—See also Capt. Stout's account of the Wreck of the Hercules, (English Abridgment), p. 80.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Ghonaquas, and partly by European colonists, who, in defiance of the colonial regulations, had taken possession of the choicest spots they could find beyond the nominal boundary—then Camtoos river. In 1778, the Governor, Van Plettenberg, having, in the course of an extensive tour which he made into the interior, visited Bruintjes-hoogtè, and finding a considerable number of colonists occupying tracts beyond the frontier, instead of recalling them within the legal limits, he extended the boundary (according to the ordinary practice of Cape Governors, before and since), adding, by a stroke of his pen, about 30,000 square miles to the colonial territory. It was at this period that the Great Fish River was first declared to be the colonial boundary on the east. The rights of the Ghonaquas and other independent Hottentot tribes within the extensive region thus acquired, do not appear to have occupied a single thought; the boors were left to deal with them as they had dealt with their brethren already extinct: but with the more formidable Caffers the *form* of an agreement was observed. Colonel Collins relates that Colonel Gordon was sent in search of Caffers as far as the Keiskamma, and that he conducted 'a few' to the Governor, who obtained their consent that the Great Fish River should thenceforth be considered the boundary between the two countries.*

Who were 'the few' that concurred in this agreement, it would be vain to inquire; but it is certain that the principal Caffer chiefs who had an interest in the affair refused to recognise it. Jalumba, then chief of the Amandanka clan of the Amakosa, endeavoured to maintain his ground in Bruintjes-hoogtè. "The *inhabitants*," says Colonel Collins, "reminded Jalumba (in 1781) of the recent treaty, and required his immediate departure. Their remonstrance having been disregarded, a commando assem-

* 'Supplement to the Relations of a Journey into the Countries of the Bosjesman and Caffer People.' By Lieutenant-Colonel Collins. 1809. MS.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

bled, by which the *intruders* were expelled with the loss of Jalumba and a great number of his followers. His son Dlodlo perished two years afterwards in a similar attempt.*" Such is the colonial account of the affair; but Colonel Collins, who derived his information entirely from the boors and local functionaries, has not mentioned that on this occasion the expedition (of which Adrian Van Jaarsveld was the leader) plundered the Caffers of 5200 head of cattle, which he divided "after consultation with the Veld-wagtmeester and corporals, amongst the commando.†" Nor was this the worst. We have got from Mr. Brownlee the Caffer account of the transaction, which is at least as much deserving of credit as the reports of the colonists who had enriched themselves by the spoils of the slaughtered Caffers; and from this it appears, that Jalumba and his clan were destroyed by a most infamous act of treachery and murder. The details may be found in the works both of Thompson‡ and Kay.§ Vaillant, who spent a considerable time in this part of the country in the following year (1782), gives an account of the spirit of the frontier boors, and of the oppressions perpetrated upon the Caffers, that but too well accords with the story told by Mr. Brownlee, from Caffer tradition, of the massacre of the Amandanka. "A Mulatto colonist," he says, "informed me that the report of this nation being barbarous and bloody was industriously circulated by the colonists, in order to justify the atrocious thefts they were daily guilty of towards them, and which they wished to have pass for reprisals. That they often formed pretences of losing cattle, purposely to make inroads into the Caffers' settlements, exterminating whole hordes without distinction of age or sex, carrying away

* Collins's MS. (Supplement.)

† Report of Field-Commandant Van Jaarsveld to the Landdrost and Heemraden of Stellenbosch, dated July 20, 1781. Inserted in *De Zuid-Afrikaansch Tydschrift*, No. 19. Cape Town, 1827.

‡ Thompson, vol. ii. p. 337. § Kay, p. 243.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their herds, and laying waste the country; this means of procuring cattle appearing much easier than the slow method of breeding them. In this manner, Hans assured me, twenty thousand head had been obtained the last year." After giving some details of particular atrocities reported to him, and making some very pertinent remarks upon the flagitious impunity enjoyed by these barbarous back-settlers, Vaillant states that when he expressed to one of them his surprise that the Governor did not send down a troop of soldiers to arrest those who committed such acts in defiance of all authority, the boor replied, that if such a thing were attempted, they would kill half the soldiers and send them back salted by those that were spared, as an earnest of what they would do to any authority that should dare to interfere with them!* Such were the men who rose in arms in 1796, and again in 1815, against the British Government, in order to vindicate their right to rob and murder the natives without control.

Nearly about the same period, Zaka, the head of the Gunuquebi clan, with some other bands of the Amakosa, had obtained possession of the Zureveld, by purchasing with a large number of cattle permission to settle there from Kohla (called by the Colonists Ruiter), who was then chief of the Ghonaqua Hottentots, the original possessors of the country. The colonists at the same time advanced into the Zureveld from the west. For a number of years the boors and the Caffers occupied that district together, with their habitations and herds amicably intermingled; until in 1786, some differences arising between them, the colonists called in the chief Islambi, the enemy of Zaka, to their assistance. The latter chief, being attacked simultaneously by the boors on one side and by Islambi with 3000 warriors on the other, was defeated and slain; and his tribe (the Gunuquebi) were plundered by the confederates of almost the whole of their cattle, and driven by necessity to plunder the

* Vaillant, vol. i. pp. 352, 361; vol. ii. p. 220.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

colonists for means of subsistence.* The boors, however, did not by this means accomplish their object. Kongo the son of Zaka, having been soon afterwards joined by Maloo, Toli, Etoni, and several other chiefs at enmity with Islambi and Gaika,† and by the remnant of the Amandanka under Olila the brother of Jalumba, the Gunuquebi, with their allies, re-established themselves in the Zureveld, in spite of the colonists, and plundered them in their turn of many cattle; and it is from the period of this struggle, and from the destruction of the Amandanka in Bruintjes-hoogtè, that the bitter animosity of the border tribes, formerly friendly, and their extensive depredations against the colonists, are to be dated.‡

In consequence of the representations of the colonists, a large commando of Burgher militia was collected in 1793, to chastise the Caffers. This force, under the command of Mr. Maynier, landdrost of Graaff-Reinèt, marched through the Zureveld, and penetrated into the Amakosa country four days' journey beyond the Great Fish River, driving the natives every where before them into the woods, and capturing some herds of cattle; but without obtaining any decided advantage over the enemy, who, as soon as the commando retreated, returned to their former position. A treaty was at length concluded, leaving things precisely as they were, and in which, as Colonel Collins remarks, nothing was mentioned about the retreat of the Caffers from the disputed territory. In a report made to Government by the landdrost Maynier, respecting the causes of this war, he observes, "that the excursions of the boors into Cafferland for the purpose of hunting, the trade carried on between them and the Caffers, and the improper treatment which the latter had experienced from the former

* Thompson (Brownlee's Notes), vol. ii. pp. 337, 339.—Collins's MS. (Supplement.)

† Barrow, vol. i. p. 122.—Collins's MS. (Supplement.)

‡ Thompson (Brownlee's Notes), vol. ii. 339.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

when in their service, were the principal occasions of the rupture."*

In 1795, the Colony was captured by the British arms; and the boors of the Graaff-Reinet district, having in the following year driven away their new magistrate, Mr. Bresler, the whole of the eastern province was thrown into a state of the utmost anarchy. Some of the Caffer chiefs were instigated by the colonists to attack the British troops who had been sent down by Sir James Craig to maintain order. Many of the Hottentots, availing themselves of the crisis, rose against their masters, and prevailed on the Caffer clans of the Zureveld to join them in plundering and driving out the frontier boors, who were thus caught in the net of mischief they had themselves spread; and devastation and bloodshed continued to prevail for several years, during which much misery and many barbarities were reciprocally inflicted by both parties.

Such was the state of affairs on the eastern frontier in 1797, when Earl Macartney assumed the Government, and Mr. Barrow was sent on a mission to Cafferland,

* Collins's MS. (Supplement.)—Mr. Maynier was alive in 1824, and, I believe, then furnished the Commissioners of Inquiry with some valuable information respecting the state of the frontier in former days. It is to this gentleman that Mr. Bigge refers in the following passage. "The habits of indiscriminate pursuit of the natives which the Dutch colonists of the frontier had contracted, and the interest which they all felt in the success of their expeditions, materially tended to weaken the efforts of the Government; and it is stated by a gentleman who filled the office of landdrost of the district of Graaff-Reynet, that the character of the veld-commandants, to whose discretion and guidance the expeditions of the armed boors were committed, necessarily rendered their power liable to much abuse. In his endeavours to substitute a more lenient system, this individual experienced great opposition; and it was the declared opinion of the colonists, that the establishment of peaceable relations with the native tribes was impossible."—*Report, dated January* 28, 1830, *p.* 3. *Parliamentary Papers for* 1830, *No.* 584.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of which he has given so interesting an account in his able work on the colony. The policy of the British Government towards the native tribes at this period was unquestionably characterised by a spirit of justice and benevolence. The firm repression by Sir James Craig of an audacious attempt by the boors of Bruintjes-hoogtè to obtain permanent possession of the country on the Kat and Koonap rivers;* the testimony of Mr. Barrow on that subject; and the tone of Lord Macartney's proclamation of July 14, 1798, in establishing a fixed boundary for the Colony,† afford satisfactory evidence of the enlightened sentiments by which those Governors were actuated. But some great and lamentable mistakes were also then committed. The unjust and mischievous policy was adopted of treating with *one* Caffer chief instead of those who were far more directly interested in the question of boundaries; and this, notwithstanding that Gaika, while he stated truly enough that he was the chief first in *rank* on the frontier (for he was secondary to Hinza in the Amakosa tribe), carefully informed Mr. Barrow at the same time that those who held possession of tracts of country west of the Great Fish River "were chiefs as well as himself, and entirely independent of him."‡ No consideration was had to the claims of the Caffer chiefs in the Zureveld, who absolutely refused to accede to the treaty with Gaika or to leave the country,§ which they considered, and not without good

* Barrow, vol. i. p. 123.

† "Whereas," &c. "several of the inhabitants in the more distant parts of this settlement, have united in injuring the peaceable possessors of those countries, and under pretence of bartering cattle with them, reduce the wretched natives to misery and want, which at length compels them to the cruel necessity of having recourse to robbing and various other irregularities, in order to support life," &c. See the whole proclamation, with some very excellent remarks, in Mr. Bannister's work, p. cxx.—See, also, Kay, p. 248.

‡ Barrow, vol. i. p. 146.

§ Burrow, vol. i. p. 404.—Collins's MS. *Supplement.*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

reason, as their own both by purchase and conquest. Still less consideration appears to have been given to the yet more indisputable rights of the aborigines of the soil, the Ghonaquas, and other Hottentot hordes, to whom had originally belonged the large tract of country usurped so unscrupulously by Governor Plettenberg in 1778. The limits then assigned to the Colony were now reclaimed, without qualification, by the proclamation of Earl Macartney.

For the details of the policy pursued towards the Caffers for the twelve years which followed Mr. Barrow's embassy to Gaika, I must refer to the works of that writer and of Lichtenstein, and to the more recent publications of Thompson,* Bannister,† and Kay.‡ The Gunuquebi clan, under Kongo, kept possession of the fastnesses of the Zureberg and the adjacent country to the mouths of the Bushman and Sunday rivers. Islambi, who was at war with Gaika, had also crossed the Great Fish River and fixed himself in the Zureveld. Their alliance with the insurgent Hottentots has been already mentioned. With the boors they were sometimes at war, and sometimes living in precarious truce.

At length in 1811, it was determined by the Colonial Government to drive the whole of the Caffers beyond the Great Fish River, and a large force of military and of burgher militia was assembled for that purpose, under the command of Colonel Graham. Some incidents of that campaign have been already related in the account of the slaughter of Landdrost Stockenstrom on the Zureberg. Mr. Brownlee mentions that the Caffers evinced extreme reluctance to leave a country which they had occupied the greater part of a century, and which they considered as by right their own. The hardship, also, of abandoning their crops of maize and millet, which were at the time nearly ripe, and the loss of which would subject them to a whole

* Vol. ii. p. 341.

† See Appendix, and Vanderkemp's Correspondence, *passim*.

‡ See pp. 249—253.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

year of famine, was urgently pleaded.* But all remonstrance was vain: not a day's delay was allowed them. They were driven out with considerable slaughter, and in a spirit of stern severity, which although partly attributable, no doubt, to the provocation given by the treacherous slaughter of Stockenstrom and his followers, admits but of partial palliation. I have now lying before me a journal, kept during that campaign by my friend Mr. Hart, who was then a lieutenant in the Cape Regiment. From this it appears that the Caffers were shot indiscriminately, women as well as men, wherever found, and even though they offered no resistance. It is true that Mr. Hart says the females were killed *unintentionally*, because the boors could not distinguish them from men among the bushes; and so, to make sure work, they shot *all* they could reach! But admitting the excuse alleged (though there are many cases recorded where it appears utterly inadmissible), what will the English reader think of the following entry.—"Sunday, January 12, 1812. At noon, Commandant Stollz went out with two companies, to look for Slambie (Islambi), but saw nothing of him: they met only with a few Caffers, men and women, the most of whom they shot. About sunset, five Caffers were seen at a distance, one of whom came to the camp with a message from Slambie's son, requesting permission to remain until the harvest was over, and that then he (if his father would not) would go over the Great Fish River quietly. This messenger would not give any information respecting Slambie, but said he did not know where he was. *However, after having been put in irons, and fastened to a wheel, with a riem* (leathern thong) *about his neck*, he said that if the commando went with him before daylight, he would bring them upon 200 Caffers all asleep."—Now what is to be thought of this attempt to force an envoy, for fear of his life, to betray his chief into the hands of his mortal enemies! What would be the outcry throughout all Europe, if any flag of truce

* Thompson (Brownlee's Notes), vol. ii. p. 341.—Kay, p. 253.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

were so treated between civilised nations? I cannot allow myself to believe that men of the high character of Colonel Graham, or Colonel (then Captain) Fraser, could be privy to such an execrable transaction. Yet we find Captain Fraser in command of the party ("303 boors, 27 free Hottentots, 4 subalterns, 5 serjeants, 6 bugles, and 120 rank and file of the Cape Regiment") sent out, with this Caffer envoy at two o'clock next morning, to search for Islambi. But it is a lamentable truth that in our treatment generally of savage nations, all respect for common honesty, justice, or humanity, appears to be often utterly forgotten, even by men otherwise generous, kind, and sensitively honourable.

The reader will not be sorry to learn that the native envoy did not betray his chief. After three days' search, the party returned without success, bringing back with them the Caffer captive, of whose fate I find no farther notice. Many details are given in this journal which illustrate in a very striking manner the misery inflicted by dispossessing these clans in the summary and violent mode pursued. Parties of troops were employed for several weeks in burning down the huts and hamlets of the natives, and in destroying their fields of maize and millet by trampling them down with large herds of cattle; and at length the Caffers were forced over the Great Fish River, to the number of 20,000 souls; leaving behind them a large portion of their cattle, captured by the troops, many of their comrades and females shot in the thickets, and not a few of the old and diseased, whom they were unable to carry along with them, to perish of hunger or become a prey to the hyænas. The chief Kongo, who was dying of a mortal disease, and unable to rise from his mat, was, as I have already mentioned, butchered by a party of boors, under circumstances of great barbarity.

The unhappy policy which induced the Colonial Government to adopt the harsh measure of forcibly and suddenly expelling the Caffers from the Zureveld, instead of taking means to effect the same object in a just and amicable

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

manner, or, better still, of pursuing some rational plan for their civilisation; the strange prejudices (to use a gentle term) which led successive Governors to prohibit, up to 1816, the missionaries from attempting their conversion to Christianity; and the generally mischievous and crooked course followed in regard to those tribes; are fairly and mildly stated by Mr. Bannister in his 'Humane Policy*.' Referring the reader to that work for many authentic details and appropriate observations upon these and other kindred topics, I shall merely observe that by the policy pursued the Gunuquebi and other clans, who might easily have been rendered peaceful friends (as they are *now*), and ere long valuable subjects, were rendered, by their cruel removal on the eve of harvest, and by the wanton slaughter of their dying chief, for many years our bitter foes, and a destructive scourge to our frontier.†

The attempt of the insurgent boors in 1815 to league themselves with the Caffers, opened the eyes of the Colonial Government in some measure to the error of the policy they had so long maintained; and, in 1816, Mr. Williams, a missionary sent out by the London Missionary Society, was allowed to proceed into Cafferland. He fixed his residence at the Kat River, in the territory of the chief Gaika, where he laboured with indefatigable zeal and with very encouraging success until his death in 1818. His valuable services, and the interesting circumstances attending his decease, have been recorded by Dr. Philip.‡

In 1817, Lord Charles Somerset held a conference with Gaika in the vicinity of Mr. Williams's residence, for the purpose of renewing former treaties, and fixing a mode of restraining or punishing Caffer depredations on the colony. The mistaken policy of treating Gaika as the king or sovereign of the Amakosa, and paying no regard to Islambi,

* Appendix, pp. ccxxi, ccxxvii.

† Thompson (Brownlee's Notes), vol. ii. p. 342.—Philip, vol. i. p. 254.—Kay, p. 255.

‡ Researches, vol. ii. p. 163.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

who was present, or to any other of the leading chiefs, who disclaimed allegiance to Gaika, was here again pursued, and contributed, there is little doubt, to increase the jealousies and heart-burnings that already existed among the frontier chiefs*.

The following year an internal war broke out among the Amakosa clans, and a powerful confederacy was formed against Gaika, whose natural arrogance appears to have been much increased by the exclusive distinction paid to him by the Colonial Government. He had given deadly offence, by various acts of tyranny and insult, to almost all the other principal chiefs of the tribe, and more especially by forcibly carrying off the wife of one of Islambi's principal counsellors. In the league against him were associated his uncles Islambi and Jaluhsa, Habanna, Makanna, young Konga, chief of the Gunuquebi, and Hinza, the principal chief of the Amakosa, to whom in rank Gaika was only secondary. In a battle which was fought near the river Debè, Gaika's party were totally routed; most of his old counsellors and principal captains were slain, and he was driven to the Koonap river, with the loss of a large number of cattle. The victors did not press him farther, nor was any aggression committed by them upon the colonial territory, of which the Great Fish River was then the fixed boundary. There was therefore not the slightest pretext for *our* interference; the quarrel being entirely upon matters proper to the politics of the tribe, with which the colony had no concern†.

But unhappily the Colonial Government thought otherwise. They had declared Gaika the paramount chief or king of Cafferland, and sovereign it was determined he should be. In pursuance of this extraordinary policy, Lieutenant-Colonel Brereton was directed to march into Cafferland in the close of 1818, with a powerful force of military and burgher militia. The associated chiefs, of whom Islambi was the

---

* Thompson, vol. ii. p. 343.—Philip, ii. 174.—Kay, pp. 153, 255.

† Thompson, vol. ii. p. 345.—Philip, vol. i. p. 257.—Kay. p. 257.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ostensible head, deprecated this unprovoked invasion, declaring they were anxious to remain at peace with the Colony, but at the same time refusing to submit to Gaika, whom they had conquered. The expedition, without any regard to this remonstrance, marched forward. The inhabitants were attacked in their hamlets, plundered of their cattle, and slaughtered or driven into the woods. I was assured by intelligent officers who served on this expedition, that not less than 23,000 head of cattle were carried off from the territories of the confederate clans*; of which 9,000 were allotted to Gaika to reimburse him for his losses, and the remainder were brought into the Colony, and partly distributed among the frontier boors, partly sold to defray the expenses of the expedition†.

The effects of this policy soon became apparent. The great majority of the Amakosa tribe had not only been wantonly exasperated by an unprovoked invasion, but were absolutely rendered desperate by thousands of them being deprived of their only means of subsistence. Under such circumstances it would have been very surprising if they had remained quiet. And accordingly, no sooner had the invading force retired, and the burgher militia been disbanded, than the Caffers began to pour themselves into the colony in numerous bands, eager for plunder and revenge. Retaliation was easy and immediate. The frontier districts, as far as the vicinity of Algoa Bay, were overrun. Several detached military posts were captured; Captain Gethin, Lieutenant Hunt, and numerous small parties and patrols of British troops were cut off. The boors were driven from the Zureveld. Theopolis was repeatedly attacked with great fury, and saved only by the bravery of the Hottentot

---

* This estimate does not include several thousand head captured by a commando the preceding year under Major Fraser; and which my Caffer friend, John Tzatzoe, says were taken by *mistake* from Gaika's subjects.

† Thompson, vol. ii. p. 345.—Kay, p. 258.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

inhabitants.* Enon was plundered and burned; and the cattle of the farmers along the Great Fish River and the adjoining districts were in many places carried off. "In these attacks," says Mr. Brownlee, "the Caffers showed a determined resolution to recover their cattle; yet, although they killed many of the soldiers and colonists, they did not evince that blood-thirsty disposition which is common to most barbarians. When they could get away the cattle without being opposed, they made no attempt on the lives of the inhabitants."†

The councils of the confederated Caffer chiefs were at this time directed by an extraordinary individual, generally known in the colony by the title of *Links* (or the Left-handed), but whose native name was Makanna. He had been originally a Caffer of common rank, and without any claim to alliance with the line of Toguh, which, with the exception of the Kongo family, constitutes the noble blood of the Amakosa tribe; but by his talents and address he had gradually raised himself to distinction. Before the present war broke out, he was in the habit of frequently visiting the British head-quarters at Graham's Town, and had evinced an insatiable curiosity and an acute intellect on such subjects as fell under his observation. With the military officers he talked of war, or of such of the mechanical arts as fell under his notice; but his great delight was to converse with Mr. Vanderlingen, the chaplain, to elicit information in regard to the doctrines of Christianity, and to puzzle him in return with metaphysical subtleties or mystical ravings.

Whether Makanna had acquired any correct views of the Christian system seems very doubtful: but of his knowledge, such as it was, he made an extraordinary use. Combining what he had learned respecting the creation, the fall of man, the atonement, the resurrection, and other Christian doctrines,

---

* Philip, vol. ii. p. 258.

† Thompson, vol. ii. p. 345.—Kay, p. 258.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

with some of the superstitious traditions of his countrymen and with his own wild fancies, he framed a sort of extravagant religious medley, and, like another Mohammed, boldly announced himself as a prophet and teacher directly inspired from Heaven. He endeavoured to throw around his obscure origin a cloud of religious mystery; and called himself 'the brother of Christ.' In his usual demeanour he assumed a reserved, solemn, and abstracted air, and kept himself aloof from observation; but in addressing the people, who flocked in multitudes to hear him, he appeared to pour forth his soul in a flow of affecting and impetuous eloquence. My friend Mr. Read, the missionary, who visited him in Cafferland in 1816, describes his appearance as exceedingly imposing, and his influence both over the chiefs and the common people as most extraordinary. He addressed the assembled multitudes repeatedly in Mr. Read's presence with great effect; inculcating a stricter morality, and boldly upbraiding the most powerful chiefs with their vices. At other times, instructing them in Scripture history, he adduced as a proof of the universal deluge, the existence of immense beds of sea-shells on the tops of the neighbouring mountains. To the Missionaries he was apparently friendly, and urged them to fix their residence in the country under his protection; yet they were puzzled by his mysterious demeanour, and shocked by his impious pretensions, and could only conclude that he was calculated to do much good or mischief, according as his influence might be ultimately employed.*

By degrees he gained a complete control over all the principal chiefs, with the exception of Gaika, who feared and hated him. He was consulted on every matter of consequence, received numerous gifts, collected a large body of retainers, and was acknowledged as a warrior-chief as well as a prophet. His ulterior objects were never fully

* See Missionary Transactions, vol. iv.; also Philip's Researches, vol. ii. p. 163.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

developed; but it seems not improbable that he contemplated raising himself to the sovereignty as well as to the priesthood of his nation; and proposed to himself the patriotic task (for, though a religious impostor, he certainly was not destitute of high aspirations,) to elevate by degrees his barbarous countrymen, both politically and intellectually, nearer to a level with the Europeans. But, whatever were Makanna's more peaceful projects, the unexpected invasion of the country by the English troops in 1818 diverted his enterprise into a new and more disastrous channel. The confederate chiefs, in turning their arms against Gaika, though roused by their own immediate wrongs, had acted at the same time under the prophet's directions; for it was one of his objects to humble, if not to crush entirely, that chief, who was the great obstacle to his public and, perhaps personal, views of aggrandisement. With the English authorities he had assiduously cultivated terms of friendship; and had not apparently anticipated any hostile collision with them on this occasion. But after Colonel Brereton's devastating inroad, by which Makanna's followers, in common with the other confederate clans, had suffered most cruelly, his whole soul seems to have been bent upon revenging the aggressions of the colonists, and emancipating his country from their domination. He saw that this was not to be effected by mere marauding incursions, such as had always hitherto characterised Caffer warfare. The great difficulty was to concentrate the energies of his countrymen, and bring them to attempt a decisive blow; and this he at length effected. By his spirit-rousing eloquence, his pretended revelations from Heaven, and his confident predictions of complete success, provided they implicitly followed his counsels, he persuaded the great majority of the Amakosa clans, including some of Hinza's captains, to unite their forces for a simultaneous attack upon Graham's Town, the head-quarters of the British troops. He told them that he was sent by Uhlanga, the Great Spirit, to avenge their wrongs; that he had power to call up from the grave the spirits of their ancestors to assist them in battle against the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

English (*Amanglézi*), whom they should drive, before they stopped, across the Zwartkops river and into the ocean; "and then," said the prophet, "we will sit down and eat honey!" Ignorant of our vast resources, Makanna probably conceived that, this once effected, the contest was over for ever with the usurping Europeans.

Having called out the warriors from the various clans, Makanna and Dushani the son of Islambi (the latter being, at least nominally, the chief captain of the host) mustered their army in the forests of the Great Fish River, and found themselves at the head of between nine and ten thousand men. They then sent (in conformity with a custom held in repute among Caffer heroes) a message of defiance to Colonel Willshire, the British commandant, announcing "that they would breakfast with him next morning."

At the first break of dawn the warriors were arrayed for battle on the mountains near Graham's Town; and before they were led on to the assault, were addressed by Makanna in an animating speech, in which he is said to have assured them of supernatural aid in the conflict with the English, which would turn the hail-storm of their fire-arms into water. Thus excited, they were led on by their various chiefs, but all under the general direction of the prophet himself, and the chief captain, Dushàni. The English were completely astonished and taken by surprise when they appeared, soon after sunrise, marching rapidly over the heights which environ Graham's Town; for Colonel Willshire had so entirely disregarded the message sent him, considering it a mere bravado, that he had taken no precautions whatever, and was himself very nearly captured by the enemy as he was taking a morning ride with some of his officers. One of those officers was Captain Harding, who communicated to me this and many other details relating to these campaigns. Had the Caffers advanced by night, they could not have failed of easily capturing the place.

All was now bustle and confusion in the little garrison, which consisted of only about three hundred and fifty European troops, and a small corps of disciplined Hottentots.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The place had no regular defence, and the few field-pieces which it possessed were not quite in readiness. The Caffers rushed on to the assault with their wild war-cries. They were gallantly encountered by the troops, who poured upon them, as they advanced in dense disorderly masses, a destructive fire of musketry, every shot of which was deadly, while their showers of assagais fell short or ineffective. Still, however, they advanced courageously, the chiefs cheering them on, almost to the muzzles of the British guns; and many of the foremost warriors were then seen breaking short their last assagai, to render it a stabbing weapon, in order to rush in upon the troops, according to Makanna's directions, and decide the battle in close combat. This was very different from their usual mode of bush-fighting, but the suggestion of it evinces Makanna's judgment; for if promptly and boldly acted upon, it could not have failed of success. The great bodily strength and agility of the Caffers, as well as their vast superiority in numbers, would have enabled them to overpower the feeble garrison in a few minutes.

At this critical moment, and while other columns of the Caffer army were pushing on to assail the place in flank and rear, the old Hottentot Captain Boezak, who happened that instant to arrive at Graham's Town with a party of his men, rushed intrepidly forward to meet the enemy. To old Boezak most of the Caffer chiefs and captains were personally known; and he was, also, familiar with their fierce appearance and furious shouts. Singling out the boldest of those who, now in advance, were encouraging their men to the final onset, Boezak and his followers, buffalo-hunters from Theopolis, and among the best marksmen in the colony, levelled in a few seconds a number of the most distinguished chiefs and warriors. Their onset was for a moment checked. The British troops cheered, and renewed with alacrity their firing. At the same instant the field-pieces, now brought to bear upon the thickest of the enemy, opened a most destructive fire of grape-shot. Some of the warriors rushed madly forward and hurled their spears at the artillerymen; but it was in vain. The front ranks

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

were mown down like grass. Those behind recoiled; wild panic and irretrievable rout ensued. Makanna, after vainly attempting to rally them, accompanied their flight. They were pursued but a short way; for the handful of cavalry durst not follow them into the broken ravines where they precipitated their flight. The slaughter was great for so brief a conflict. About fourteen hundred Caffer warriors strewed the field of battle; and many more perished of their wounds before they reached their own country.

This formidable attempt, altogether unprecedented in Caffer warfare, alarmed the Colonial Government, and awakened all its vengeance. The burgher militia throughout the whole extent of the colony, were called out, and marched to the eastern frontier, to assist in chastising the 'savages.' Colonel Willshire, collecting all the disposable British and Hottentot troops, advanced into the enemy's country in one direction, while Landdrost Stockenstrom, with a burgher commando of a thousand horsemen, swept it in another. The villages of the hostile clans were burnt, their cattle carried off, their fields of maize and millet trodden down, and the inhabitants of all classes, driven into the thickets, were there bombarded with grape-shot and congreve-rockets. Dispirited by their late failure, defeated in every attempt at resistance, their women and helpless old people often slaughtered indiscriminately with the armed men, their principal chiefs, Islambi, Kongo, Habanna,—above all, their prophet, Makanna,—denounced as 'outlaws,' and the inhabitants threatened with utter extermination if they did not deliver them up 'dead or alive;' the Caffer people yet remained faithful to their chiefs Among the multitudes now driven to despair, and perishing for want, not one was found willing to earn the high reward offered for their apprehension by the conquerors.

The course adopted by Makanna under these circumstances was remarkable, and gives a higher idea of his character than any other part of his history that has become known to us. He resolved to surrender himself as a hostage for his country; and I am fortunately enabled



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

to give the authentic particulars from notes taken at the time by Captain Stockenstrom, the officer into whose hands he delivered himself up.

Captain Stockenstrom was encamped with his division of the commando on the high ground east of Trumpeter's Drift, on the Great Fish River. The rain had continued to fall in torrents for several days; and the Caffers, availing themselves of weather unfavourable to fire-arms, had repeatedly shown themselves in great force, as if contemplating a desperate attack, and rushing forward with their usual war-shout; but on being received with a brisk fire, they had as quickly retired to the wooded ravines. In the afternoon of the 15th of August, 1819, two Ghonaqua women came to the camp, and, asking to speak with the commander, informed Captain Stockenstrom that they were sent by the chief Makanna to sue for peace; and that he would himself come and treat for terms, provided his life and liberty were guaranteed. Captain Stockenstrom replied that he would pledge his solemn word that the chief's life should be safe; but that he could offer no guarantee for his liberty, because one of the principal objects of the expedition, and a strict part of his own instructions, was to take Makanna and some others 'dead or alive.' The women departed with this message; and Captain Stockenstrom was disposed to ascribe their errand to purposes of espionage rather than to any serious intention on Makanna's part to surrender, when, to his surprise, that chief walked unattended into the camp next day, with an air of calm pride and self-possession which commanded involuntary respect. It appeared that the message sent by the women had been correctly delivered—'but,' said the African chief, with a magnanimity which would have done honour to a Greek or Roman patriot, 'people say that I have occasioned the war: let me see whether my delivering myself up to the conquerors will restore peace to my country.'—He appeared to be greatly disconcerted, however, when he found that he was not speaking to the 'principal man,' and that Captain Stockenstrom possessed no authority to settle terms of

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

peace. Next day Colonel Willshire, then holding the chief command, passed with the main body of the troops, and carried Makanna along with him. What follows is given from Captain Stockenstrom's notes, which he kindly placed in my possession in 1825.

"A few days afterwards, a small body of Caffers were seen at the edge of a thicket near Colonel Willshire's camp, who made signs that they desired a parley. The Colonel, attended by another officer and myself, having moved towards them unarmed, two Caffers approached, and proved to be, the one of them Islambi's, and the other Makanna's, chief councillors (*pagati*). They were, I think, as noble-looking men, and as dignified in their demeanour, as any I have ever beheld. After a few questions and answers relative to the disposal of Makanna, (who by this time had been sent into the Colony,) and as to the prospects of an accommodation, the friend of the captive chief delivered himself in the following terms—in so manly a manner, with so graceful an attitude, and with so much feeling and animation, that the bald translation which I am able to furnish from my hasty and imperfect notes, can afford but a very faint and inadequate idea of his eloquence.

"'The war,' said he, 'British chiefs, is an unjust one; for you are striving to extirpate a people whom you forced to take up arms. When our fathers, and the fathers of the Boors (*Amabúlu*) first settled in the Zureveld, they dwelt together in peace. Their flocks grazed on the same hills; their herdsmen smoked together out of the same pipes; they were brothers—until the herds of the Amakosa increased so as to make the hearts of the Boors sore. What those covetous men could not get from our fathers for old buttons, they took by force. Our fathers were MEN; they loved their cattle; their wives and children lived upon milk; they fought for their property. They began to hate the colonists, who coveted their all, and aimed at their destruction.

"'Now, their kraals and our fathers' kraals were separate. The boors made commandoes on our fathers. Our fathers



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

drove them out of the Zureveld; and we dwelt there, because we had conquered it. There we were circumcised; there we married wives; and there our children were born. The white men hated us, but could not drive us away. When there was war, we plundered you. When there was peace, some of our bad people stole; but our chiefs forbade it. Your treacherous friend, Gaika, always had peace with you; yet, when his people stole, he shared in the plunder. Have your patroles ever found cattle taken in time of peace, runaway slaves, or deserters, in the kraals of *our* chiefs? Have they ever gone into Gaika's country without finding such cattle, such slaves, such deserters, in Gaika's kraals? But he was your friend; and you wished to possess the Zureveld. You came at last like locusts.* We stood: we could do no more. You said, 'Go over the Fish River—that is all that we want.' We yielded, and came here.

"'We lived in peace. Some bad people stole, perhaps; but the nation was quiet—the chiefs were quiet. Gaika stole—his chiefs stole—his people stole. You sent him copper; you sent him beads; you sent him horses—on which he rode to steal more. To *us* you sent only commandoes!

"'We quarrelled with Gaika about grass—no business of yours. You sent a commando†—you took our last cow—you left only a few calves, which died for want, along with our children. You gave half the spoil to Gaika; half you kept yourselves. Without milk,—our corn destroyed,—we saw our wives and children perish—we saw that we must ourselves perish; we followed, therefore, the tracks of our cattle into the colony. We plundered, and we fought for our lives. We found you weak; we destroyed your soldiers. We saw that we were strong; we attacked your head-quarters: ‡—and if we had succeeded, our right was good, for you began the war. We failed—and you are here.

* Alluding to Colonel Graham's campaign in 1811—1812.

† Colonel's Brereton's Expedition in 1818.

‡ Graham's Town.—See Thompson, vol. i. p. 63.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

"'We wish for peace; we wish to rest in our huts; we wish to get milk for our children; our wives wish to till the land. But your troops cover the plains, and swarm in the thickets, where they cannot distinguish the man from the woman, and shoot all.*

"'You want us to submit to Gaika. That man's face is fair to you, but his heart is false. Leave him to himself. Make peace with us. Let him fight for himself—and *we* shall not call on you for help. Set Makanna at liberty; and Islambi, Dushani, Kongo, and the rest will come to make peace with you at any time you fix. But if you will still make war, you may indeed kill the last man of us—but Gaika shall not rule over the followers of those who think him a woman.'"

This manly remonstrance, which affected some of those who heard it even to tears, had no effect in altering the destination of Makanna, or in obtaining a reprieve for his countrymen, who were still sternly called upon to deliver up those who had been *outlawed* by the Cape Government. All efforts, however, to get possession of the persons of the other chiefs were unavailing: even treachery is said to have been tried in vain. After plundering the country, therefore, of all the cattle that could yet be found, and leaving devastation and misery behind them, our 'Christian commando' retired into the colony; without gaining the object for which the war was professedly commenced,—but with an additional spoil of about 30,000 head of cattle captured from the famishing and despairing natives.†

Meanwhile, the treatment and fate of Makanna were briefly as follows. By order of the Colonial Government, he was forwarded by sea from Algoa Bay to Cape Town; there confined as a prisoner in the common gaol; and finally, with others of his countrymen guilty of no other offence than fighting for their native land against its *civilised* invaders, he was condemned to be imprisoned for life on Robben Island—

---

* Thompson, vol. ii. p. 347. † Ib.—Kay, 266.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the Botany Bay of the Cape—a spot appropriated for the custody of convicted felons, rebellious slaves, and other malefactors, doomed to work in irons in the slate quarries. After remaining about a year in this wretched place, Makanna, with a few followers, Caffers and slaves, from among the inmates of that house of bondage, over whom he had acquired his characteristic ascendancy, rose upon the guard, overpowered and disarmed them; then, seizing a boat, he placed his adherents in it, and would, in all probability, have effected his escape with them, but by some mischance the overloaded pinnace, in which he was the last man to embark, was upset, in attempting to land on the iron-bound coast, and the unfortunate African chief was drowned. Several of his companions who escaped relate that Makanna clung for some time to a rock, and that his deep sonorous voice was heard loudly cheering on those who were struggling with the billows, until he was swept off and engulfed by the raging surf. *

Mr. Kay, who lately resided several years in Cafferland, states, in his recent work, that such was the universal belief in Makanna's preternatural powers and character among his countrymen, that many of them would give no credit to the accounts of his death, and still confidently expected his return among them.†

Upon the treatment of the Caffer people throughout the whole of these transactions, it would be difficult to comment

---

* The story of Makanna, originally published by me in the New Monthly Magazine for January, 1827, has furnished an anonymous writer with the subject of a romance, which has just appeared. The author displays considerable powers of imagination and command of language, but I am constrained by a regard for truth to add, that, independently of the strange absurdities of the plot, and of the liberties taken with history and geography, the descriptions of South-African scenery and manners given in this work do not bear even a remote resemblance to the reality.

† Researches in Caffraria, pp. 44, 265.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

in calm language: and any comments, indeed, would be superfluous. The *facts*, established beyond dispute by so many respectable witnesses, cannot fail to speak to the heart of every candid reader. As regards the chief Makanna, it is melancholy to reflect how valuable an instrument for promoting the civilisation of the Caffer tribes was apparently lost by the nefarious treatment and indirect destruction of that extraordinary barbarian, whom a wiser and more generous policy might have rendered a grateful ally to the colony, and a permanent benefactor to his own countrymen.

The war was finished by an act quite in character with the mode in which it had been conducted. It was commenced upon the pretext of supporting our *ally*, Gaika: it ended in a convention by which that chief was forced to surrender one of the finest provinces of the Amakosa territory. The Caffers, friends as well as foes, and even the remnant of the Ghonaqua tribe, who, after being driven over the Great Fish River in 1812, had settled in the country east of it, under Gaika's protection, were now forced once more to move, and to retire beyond the Keisi and Chumi rivers. By this iniquitous act nearly 3,000 square miles of country were added to the colonial territory, already far too extensive; while the native inhabitants were driven back upon a population for which, in their present pastoral state, the land is greatly too narrow. This convention was called a *treaty*, indeed, in the Cape Gazette; but it was such a treaty as takes place when the wolf and the lamb are the contracting parties. It was little wonder, therefore, that poor Gaika, when speaking to Mr. Brownlee of his obligations to the Colonial Government, should exclaim—"But when I look at the large extent of fine country that has been taken from me, I am compelled to say that, *though protected, I am rather oppressed by my protectors!*"* The country

* Thompson, vol. ii. p. 348. See also Rose's Four Years in Southern Africa, pp. 75, 81.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

thus acquired was at first termed 'the Neutral Ground.' Its subsequent appropriation we shall speedily advert to.

During the two following years, 1820 and 1821, the eastern frontier remained in a much more peaceful state than, under the circumstances, could reasonably have been expected. Several of the Caffer clans, who had been plundered of all, or nearly all, their cattle (more than 50,000 head having been taken from them during the two preceding years), were suffering all the severities of famine; yet they beheld their ancient domain of the Zureveld planted by a British population, and remained at peace. A few herds of cattle were stolen from the banks of the Great Fish River, by small parties of marauders, and in two or three instances the herdsmen who guarded them were slain. That was the amount of their cupidity and bloodthirstiness;* which, from men whose wives and children were starving for want of the milch cows which our commandoes had carried off, was surely not so very 'enormous' as some of the settlers have been prone to consider it.

The frontier policy, during Sir Rufane Donkin's administration, was maintained upon the old system which he found established; but, so far as was consistent with the irremediable defects of that system, it seems to have been practically conducted with tolerable efficiency, as regards the defence of the colony, and without any intentional injustice or wanton aggression towards the native tribes.

In the close of 1821, Lord Charles Somerset resumed the Government, and at once overturned, as has been already noticed, all Sir Rufane's arrangements in the eastern districts. The policy on the Caffer frontier speedily assumed the character of insolent and irritating tyranny towards the natives, while at the same time it left the British settlers

* See Commissioners' Report, dated Dec. 24, 1825.—Parl. Papers for 1827, No. 371, p. 92.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

almost without protection from the vengeful retaliation which it provoked.* In March, 1822, three months after Lord Charles s return, while the Caffers were in a state of perfect peace with the colony, the commanding officer on the frontier received orders to despatch a party to seize Gaika at his own residence, and bring him captive into the colony. This act of outrage fortunately failed in the execution; Gaika narrowly escaping by dressing himself in the mantle of one of his wives, and pretending to be engaged in some female occupation. But the perfidious attempt produced great excitement and suspicion of our designs; and, had it been successful, would almost inevitably have occasioned another Caffer war—which, indeed, appears to have been the result aimed at.†

Towards the close of the same year, his Lordship sent home a despatch to Earl Bathurst, representing that the

---

* See Memorial of the Albany Settlers to Earl Bathurst, dated March 10, 1823.—Parl. Papers for 1827, No. 444, p. 11.

† Such at least was the universal opinion on the frontier, where I was at that period residing. Lord Charles, when called upon by his Majesty's Commissioners to reply to the complaints of the Albany Settlers to Earl Bathurst, upon this, among many other injurious acts, peremptorily denied all knowledge of the transaction. "The seizing of Gaika," he says, "I never heard of until I read it in this tissue of falsehood." And in the same emphatic style did his Lordship condescend to meet the other grave complaints of that memorial: "Par. 4—This is a gratuitous falsehood;" "Par. 6—The 7th clause is a gratuitous falsehood;" and so on. But what shall be said of the *assertions* of Lord Charles Somerset, when I add, that when the Commissioners afterwards discovered the letter in his own hand-writing at Graham's Town, directing this attempt upon Gaika, he boldly defended the measure, and only expressed his regret that it had not succeeded! (See Parl. Papers for 1827, No. 371, pp. 39, 40, 43, 92; and No. 444, p. 13.) Colonel Bird has published extracts from other letters by his Lordship, proving that the whole affair was planned by himself: for which see Col. B.'s pamphlet already referred to, p. v.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

principal Caffer chiefs had entered into a combination to attack the colony, and were then making preparations for a formidable irruption. At the moment this statement was written, there were lying on the governor's table communications from Colonel Scott, the frontier commandant, and from Mr. Thomson, the Government agent in Cafferland, stating that the Caffer chiefs were perfectly tranquil, and that the rumour which had been industriously raised in Graham's Town respecting their hostile intentions was utterly groundless. Nevertheless, the governor sent home his deceptive and fallacious despatch, and gained his object too by it—namely, a large augmentation of the Colonial military force, and through that means the progressive steps of a majority, a lieutenant-colonelcy, and ultimately the chief command on the frontier for his son, then Captain Somerset.*

In the course of 1823, Lord Charles, by a variety of dextrous manœuvres, which it is not my present purpose to detail, had in a great measure accomplished his views in regard to the promotion of his sons, and Major Henry Somerset attained the chief command on the frontier. In the meanwhile his lordship's policy towards the Caffers had once more produced its inevitable effects. Provoked, goaded, plundered, often without cause, and the innocent punished for the guilty, they had renewed their retaliatory and predatory incursions.† This afforded a plausible pretext for a

---

* For the full details and *proofs* of these disreputable intrigues, I must refer to the pamphlet of Sir Rufane Donkin, already mentioned, pp. 80—83 (*second edition*); and to that of Colonel Bird, pp. 4—8. The unnecessary augmentation of force thus obtained, and for such objects, cost the Colony, as Colonel Bird states, from 3,000*l.* to 4,000*l.* per annum.

† "From causes that we have already had the honour to explain, the depredations by the Caffers were certainly much increased in the years 1822 and 1823; and we had equally to express our regret at the consequences of the irregular incursions of the boors into the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

fresh campaign by the young commandant. Accordingly, in the beginning of December, 1823, Major Somerset, with a strong force of military and burgher militia, suddenly attacked the kraal, or village, of Makomo, the son of Gaika, at the source of the Kat River; and after slaughtering as many of the natives as he judged fitting, carried of 7,000 head of cattle. No resistance appears to have been made; for the official account states that not a single man of the colonial force was hurt. I learned from other authentic sources, that a considerable number of women and children were also shot by the boors, notwithstanding the official orders to spare them, which Major Somerset (much to his credit, certainly) had issued on this occasion.*

---

Caffer country, and of the attempt that was made to seize the person of the chief Gaika." (*Report of Commiss. of Inq. to Earl Bathurst: Parl. Papers for* 1827, *No.* 371, *p.* 92.)—The Commissioners refer for their explanation of the 'causes' of these occurrences to another of their valuable Reports, dated May 25, 1825; a document, which, for the sake of historic truth, and of justice to all concerned, it is to be hoped his Majesty's Government will one day withdraw from its seclusion among the secret MS. archives of the Colonial Office.

* The following is a brief specimen of the official account, printed in the Cape Government Gazette of December 20, 1823, in which this affair is described as a very gallant and meritorious exploit:—"At day-break on the 5th, Major Somerset having here collected his force, passed with celerity along the ridge, and at daylight had the satisfaction of pouring into the centre of Makomo's kraal with a rapidity that at once astonished and completely overset the Caffers. A few assagais were thrown, but the attack was made with such vigour that *little resistance could be made. As many Caffers having been destroyed as it was thought would evince our superiority and power*, Major Somerset stopped the slaughter, and secured the cattle, to the amount of 7,000 head, and had them driven to Fort Beaufort, where kraals had been previously prepared for them."—After the frontier boors had received a liberal share of these cattle, as an indemnity for their real or pretended losses, the 'surplus' is stated by the Gazette to have been returned to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Similar attacks were made with similar success on several others of the frontier chiefs. Abundance of Caffer cattle were obtained, and liberally distributed among the border boors, among whom, consequently, the young commandant soon acquired a degree of popularity which threw that of all his predecessors into the shade. Some of the Caffer chiefs may probably have been guilty of encouraging or conniving at the recent depredations of their followers on the colonists; but, admitting this, it cannot be denied that the provocations they had received might have warranted far severer retaliation;* and, moreover, in the summary system of redress now pursued, the innocent were, for the most part, made to suffer for the guilty; while it is a well-known fact, that many unprincipled colonists obtained large herds of Caffer cattle, upon fabricated claims for indemnity on account of losses which they had never sustained.

The allotment among the frontier boors of a large portion of the territory wrested from the Caffers in 1819, is a transaction which must not be passed over in silence. This tract had been reluctantly ceded by Gaika (so far as he had power to cede it), under the stipulation "that the waters of the Koonap, the Kat, and the Keiskamma should thenceforth flow undisturbed into the ocean;" that is to say, that it should remain a Neutral Ground, unoccupied by either Caffers or Colonists. At a subsequent conference with Sir Rufane Donkin, however, Gaika (still treated as the *absolute sovereign* of the country) had given his consent that this territory should be permanently added to the colony, under the express condition (as I was informed by Mr. Brownlee, who assisted at that conference) that the land should *not* be occupied by Cape-Dutch boors, the heredi-

---

Makomo "to save the women and children of his people from want." But who was the arbiter as to the justice of the claims of the boors? —what was the 'surplus?'—and where was the court of equity or appeal for the Caffers?

* See remark of Commissioners, in the note at page 442.—See also Rose, p. 74.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tary foes of the Caffers, but by British settlers. And in accordance with this stipulation, the lands on the Kat and Koonap were surveyed, by order of Sir Rufane, for the reception of the expected Scottish emigrants (see page 138), while a settlement of British officers and soldiers was formed on the Beka and Golana, near the coast. The Scottish emigrants, however, never arrived; the Fredericksburg settlement was ruined by Lord Charles in 1822; and in 1824 and 1825, his lordship, setting at nought alike his own stipulations and those of Sir Rufane with the Caffers, thought fit to grant the best part of this fine country to the frontier boors. It is a characteristic feature of the colonial mode of dealing with the natives, that the treaties or conventions respecting this 'Neutral,' 'Ceded,' 'Debatable Land,' were all *verbal;* so that there was no document to appeal to when the conditions were broken, even if there had been any court of equity to which the natives could appeal. Moreover, it appears very questionable whether all points were ever clearly understood between the parties; and, finally, it is quite certain that the other principal chiefs who were not consulted, totally deny that Gaika possessed any title or authority whatever to make any such cession of the territory of the tribe.*

It is worthy of remark that the country thus granted by Lord Charles Somerset to the boors is the very same tract which the fathers of the same men had made an audacious attempt to obtain possession of thirty years before, but had been prevented by the manly firmness of Sir James Craig, as has been well recorded by Mr. Barrow.† Let us now examine what were the claims of the sons to obtain in 1824, what had been refused to their fathers in 1796.

Nine years before, these very men, merely because the

---

* See Thompson, vol. ii. p. 347; Kay, p. 266; Sir Rufane Donkin's Pamphlet (*second edition*), p. 118; and particularly Bannister, pp. 73—84; and Appendix, p. cclxxii.

† Travels in Southern Africa, vol. i. p. 123.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

sanctions of the law had been enforced against one of them in defence of the native race, had entered into a treasonable conspiracy against the Government, and had done their utmost to bring in the Caffers to destroy, not by open war, but by midnight massacre, the British troops stationed on the frontier; offering the possession of the Zureveld as a bait to the barbarians for their aid. Disappointed in this attempt, they had nevertheless rebelliously risen in arms against the British Government, and were only prevented by the activity of the local authorities from deluging the whole of the eastern districts with blood. This criminal attempt had been punished by the execution of five of the leaders, and by awarding to a few others, scarcely less guilty, milder punishments, which had been subsequently in almost every case remitted.*

Now, it may be urged in behalf of these men, that their conduct since they received this wholesome lesson had been quiet and submissive to the Government; and that, after a period of nine years' probation, it would have been alike ungenerous and impolitic to subject them to any unfavourable distinction. All this I most willingly admit; and having myself resided three years in the midst of them, and knowing most of them personally, I will, in justice, say, that they were inoffensive neighbours to my own party, and that a considerable number of them are (bating their prejudices in regard to the natives) really well-disposed men—although there are still too many unprincipled ruffians among them. But the real question at issue is, what claim had these men, as a body—not to a generous amnesty—not a just protection—but to the *peculiar favour*, to the *lavish munificence* of the British Government? What claim had they to rewards at the expense of the Caffer people, on whom they and their fathers had inflicted so many grievous wrongs, and in direct breach, moreover, of solemn stipulations agreed to with the Caffer chiefs? Finally, what

* See Chapter V.—Also, Thompson, Philip, Bannister, Kay.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

claims had the Bothmas, the Erasmuses, the Vandernests, the Prinsloes, the Kloppers, the De Klerks, the Bezuidenhouts, *et hoc genus omne*, the ringleaders of the rebel peasantry in 1815, to enormous grants of land from Government at the very moment when the Governor was refusing, and that with the most contumelious arrogance, sufficient land even for adequate subsistence to the heads of parties in Albany, to gentlemen of rank, education and integrity, who had expended very considerable capital in establishing a British settlement under the special patronage of the British Government, and several of whom, after spending the prime of their lives in the active service of their country, had sunk their whole substance in this enterprise?* What claims had the most respectable of the Dutch-African frontier boors, almost all of them already in possession of competent farms, some of enormous tracts,† to such testimonies of the Governor's special grace, while he was doing his utmost to crush, and to drive from the colony in disgust, the Pigots, the Campbells, the Moodies, the Whites,

* Sir Rufane Donkin saw the necessity of enlarging the too confined British locations, and in a few cases (among others in the case of my own party) had completed additional grants. To many other settlers he had given written or verbal promises, which he was preparing to carry into execution, when Lord Charles Somerset returned, and cancelled all such promises, except where they were already secured by legal documents; and to his extraordinary policy in this respect Lord Charles pertinaciously adhered, until he was forced to change his system in the beginning of 1825.—See page 346.

† For instance, Berand De Klerk, residing near Somerset, and then in possession of a tract of country extending by measurement to 21,374 acres, and the greater part of which consisted of previous grants from Government, was promised four additional places in the Ceded Territory for himself and family, amounting to 10,000 or 12,000 acres more. His brother, the heemraad De Klerk, already in possession of 6,000 acres, was promised about 12,000 acres of Ceded Territory; and Durand, another Somerset heemraad, already possessed of 12,648 acres, was promised new grants for himself and sons on the same munificent scale.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the Philippses, the Bowkers, and many other gentlemen who could easily be named, and the details of whose outrageous treatment are in my possession, and (if I am not greatly misinformed) also in the possession of his Majesty's Government?

I will state in plain terms what were the claims of these Border Boors. In 1824, when Lord Charles Somerset found that the complaints which had been forwarded to the Home Government against him had become too formidable to be treated any longer with the supercilious contempt with which he was at first disposed to treat them, he began to bestir himself to get up from different quarters laudatory addresses, with a view to counterbalance at home the effect of the numerous heavy accusations against his mal-administration. I have already noticed in another place, that the Court of Justice, the Burgher Senate, the Boards of Landdrosts and Heemraden, the civil servants (with a few honourable exceptions), only needed a nod from his lordship to pour in their obsequious and adulatory addresses; and the corn and wine boors near Cape Town, and the slaveholders generally (who were told that their only security against the Abolitionists depended on Lord Charles Somerset's continuance in the government) did not lag behind. But as the loudest complaints had come from the eastern frontier, it was particularly desirable to neutralise them by obtaining favourable addresses from the same quarter. There was, moreover, a double object here; for his lordship was then moving heaven and earth to obtain the permanent appointment of Frontier Commandant for his son. Accordingly, in August, 1824, a memorial, earnestly praying the Governor to use all his influence with the Home Government to obtain the continuance of Major Somerset in that charge, was prepared in Graham's Town (by persons whose names are known to me); and being intrusted to Hans and Lodewyk Bothma, two boors in the confidence of the Commandant, and to the field-cornets Erasmus and Vandernest, these men rode about day and night to procure the signatures of their compatriots, giving out promises of rich allotments of the Ceded Territory to all who would

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

sign the memorial. Vandernest boasted to an officer of my acquaintance that he expected two new places, or from 6000 to 8000 acres, in that territory, on account of his own services on this occasion. And their success was complete. Major Somerset was already highly popular (and, so far as regards *their* interests, deservedly popular) among this class of men. With a Pisgah glimpse of the 'promised land,' besides, they were ready to sign anything that he or his father could have asked. Such, indeed, was the fervour of their 'loyalty,' that had the object been to declare Lord Charles King of the Cape, few of them would have stickled at it—provided always there was no very imminent peril of being hanged. Accordingly, the memorial was sent in with a goodly array of signatures, and was graciously received by his Excellency, whose reply was triumphantly handed about among them; and on my return to the frontier a few months afterwards, I easily procured a copy of it.*

---

* This reply, written and signed by his Lordship's own hand, is dated "Government House, September 24, 1824," and is addressed "to C. F. Vandernest, Veld-cornet, and the respective Burghers of Baviaan's River." It expresses his Excellency's "great satisfaction that the military officer in whose hand he had placed that very important command, had conducted the duties of it *with such utility to the public service as to recommend himself to your* (*i. e.* the *Boors'*) *good opinion;*" and promises that his Excellency would not fail to give their "opinions and wishes all that weight with his Majesty's Government in England, which his situation enabled him to do."

In addition to the use made of this memorial at Downing-street and the Horse Guards, Lord Charles Somerset was infatuated enough to refer to it, in a paper addressed by him to the Commissioners of Inquiry on the 18th of September, 1824, in animadverting upon the Memorial of the Albany Settlers to Earl Bathurst. He there speaks of it as a document "signed by all the *respectable* boors on the Baviaan's River," and refers to it, and to other memorials of the same stamp addressed to the Commissioners themselves, as proofs of the excellence of his 'system' of frontier policy!—Parl. Papers for 1827, No. 371, p. 40.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Again, in 1825, when I was myself on the spot, and in the midst of these people, the same farce was in the act of being repeated, in the shape of addresses to Lord Charles, in praise of his 'beneficent, wise, and paternal government.' On this latter occasion, the lead in promoting the 'loyal addresses' was taken by Mr. Mackay, the landdrost of Somerset, by De Klerk and Durant, two of the heemraden, and by Erasmus, Vandernest, and other ultra 'loyal' field-cornets. Van Wyk, however, another heemraad, a man of independent spirit, and who, exclusive of his other merits, had, as field-commandant of the Tarka, a principal hand in suppressing the rebellion of 1815, refused to sign or promote an address which was sent him; *and he was forthwith dismissed from office.* But for the 'loyal and gallant burghers,' who signed freely, 'one hundred places' were now measured out and allotted over, in the Ceded Territory west of the Koonap River—amounting, at the very lowest calculation, to fully 200,000 acres.

I considered it my duty, during my residence on the frontier, in 1825, to draw up a very full statement of these bare-faced transactions, together with some others which I have yet to relate, and to transmit it to his Majesty's Commissioners; and it now appears that representations were made without delay to the Home Government by the Commissioners respecting these unwarrantable grants of land, as well as in regard to many other points of Lord Charles Somerset's frontier policy. It was subsequently reported that the grants to the boors had been rescinded by order of the Home Government, in consequence of the Commissioners' remonstrances. It is, however, a remarkable and melancholy fact, that Lord Charles Somerset had sufficient influence with Earl Bathurst to obtain the full confirmation of these grants when he came home to England in 1826; and this fine territory was accordingly secured for a possession to these men and their heirs for ever.*

* Under all the circumstances of this extraordinary case I con-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I shall now exhibit a few specimens of the conduct of those frontier colonists whom Lord Charles Somerset repre-

---

sider myself to be warranted, by a sense of what is yet due to the Cape colony, and still more to the Caffer people, to insert the following brief extract from a letter addressed to me by the Commissioners, dated October 20th, 1825, in reply to my Statement above referred to:—"With regard to the intended, and, we fear, actual, grants of land to the westward of the Koonap River, in favour of the Dutch Boors who have taken active part in the expeditions against the Caffers, we must for the present forbear to express an opinion, inasmuch as the facts stated by you, and which had previously come to our knowledge, have been already submitted to the notice of his Majesty's Government."

Again, in a Report to Earl Bathurst, dated December 24, 1825, the Commissioners make the following remarks:—"Although we think that the occupation of the lands between the Fish River and the Keiskamma may be desirably promoted, we consider it an object of great importance to establish in the neighbourhood of the Caffers a class of settlers who would not by their conduct provoke a renewal of the hostilities that already have entailed so much ruin upon the inhabitants of the frontier districts, and such expense and sacrifices to the colony at large; and with this view we should equally object to the settlement on those lands of the boors, on account of their hereditary prejudices, and to the soldiers of the African Corps."—(Parl. Papers for 1827, No. 371, p. 92.) And again, in their Report on the Trade of the Colony, dated October 3, 1828, the Commissioners observe—"The circumstances which we have detailed in our former Reports, and which are comprised in the period that has elapsed since the restoration of the colony to British authority, have had a direct tendency to keep alive in the breasts of the colonists a distrust and suspicion of the pacific intentions of the border tribes, and in the latter, a spirit of vengeance and retaliation for gradual encroachments upon their territory."—(Parl. Papers for 1829, No. 300, p. 14.)

Now, without any farther reference to the yet unpublished Reports of the Commissioners (evidently very important ones) is it not sufficiently clear, from the above observations, that the Home Government has been *fully informed* upon the 'frontier policy' of Lord Charles Somerset? And is it not equally plain that Lord Bathurst



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

sents as so 'respectable,' and whose 'opinions and wishes' he was so willing to convey, with all the weight of his influence, to his Majesty's Government in England.

having thought fit to sanction those scandalous grants of land to the boors, in direct opposition to the remonstrances of his Majesty's Commissioners, the Home Government has thereby taken upon itself the entire *responsibility* of those acts? To the Home Government alone, therefore, must the public and the friends of humanity look for redress, so far as redress is now attainable. And this consideration it is which has finally determined me to give publicity in the present work to these disgraceful details.

---

As some of the preceding statements involve serious accusations against the late Lord Charles Somerset, it may, perhaps, be asked why I did not bring them forward when the case of his Lordship was before the House of Commons? To which I reply, that although it was not my business to impeach Lord Charles Somerset's general administration—ruinous as it was to the colony; and although I did not consider my own personal case of sufficient importance to be made the subject of public discussion; yet it was not my fault that these frontier transactions at least, as well as his conduct in regard to the press, were not brought under parliamentary investigation. I placed detailed statements of those transactions in the hands of Mr. (now Sir John) Cam Hobhouse, and afterwards in the hands of Mr. Lombe, member for Arundel, who, in 1827, had given notice of a motion on the Cape Case. But Lord Charles Somerset having then resigned the Government of the colony, it seems to have been agreed that all parliamentary proceedings against him should be dropped. Whether that was the course which the Cape colony and the British nation had a right to expect, it is not for me, unacquainted with the secret springs of state affairs, to determine. If the public interests have not materially suffered by it, it may, for aught I know, have been the right course. My own humbler duty I have *endeavoured* faithfully to perform, with that boldness which is due to truth and justice, yet (*now* especially) with that calmness which is required by the candour of history. In 1827, while Lord Charles Somerset was yet alive, and had an opportunity of replying to, or otherwise noticing, my statements, I published a detailed account of the whole of these frontier transactions in a periodical work of extensive circulation, and which I know was brought under his lordship's personal notice.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

In the beginning of November, 1824, (not six weeks subsequent to the date of the Governor's gracious reply to these men,) nine calves had strayed, or been stolen, from one of the most zealous of Major Somerset's memorialists, a boor of the name of Louw (or Lodewyk) Bothma. There was not the slightest evidence that these calves had been taken by the Caffers: on the contrary, the natural presumption was, that they had been destroyed by the hyænas, having been allowed to roam at large among the bushes without a keeper; or that they had been driven off by some of the gangs of predatory Bushmen and Hottentot deserters, who at that time swarmed in the neighbouring forests (as has been mentioned at page 363). But as nothing was to be got by ascribing the loss to the Bushmen or the beasts of prey, honest Louw without hesitation laid the blame on the Caffers, and solicited the commandant to send a party to attack them. This application was instantly complied with; and the Honourable Captain Massey was despatched with a strong force of Cape cavalry and armed boors to plunder once more the kraal of Makomo. No traces whatever were discovered (as I was assured by missionaries resident in the vicinity) of the lost calves having been carried thither. Nevertheless, the commando, though not so fortunate as on a former occasion already described, when a spoil of seven thousand cattle was captured from

---

I now publish them once more, in order to exhibit clearly to the British nation and Government the flagitious injustice which has been done to the Native Tribes of South Africa, and to add my feeble voice to the far more powerful ones, which, I trust, will soon be raised, to claim for the injured African JUSTICE and REDRESS.

Readers who desire additional evidence of the principal facts here stated, ought to consult the following works, viz. the Printed Reports of his Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry—see Parl. Papers for 1827, Nos. 282, 371, 444, 300, and No. 534 for 1830; Sir Rufane Donkin's and Colonel Bird's Pamphlets on the Government of the Cape, published in 1827; the Oriental Herald for 1826, 1827, and 1828; and Mr. Bannister's 'Humane Policy' *passim*.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the same clan, did not return empty-handed. Four hundred and eleven head were brought off; of which a liberal share was allotted to Louw Bothma, and the rest were distributed among his compatriots who assisted in this expedition.

This was bad enough: but it was not all. Two days after this foray, three Caffers, bringing with them two oxen and a slave woman, came to the residence of the field-cornet Vandernest, at Glen-Lynden, with a message of peace from their chief Makomo; purporting that he desired most earnestly to live on amicable terms with the colonists; and that he had sent out two colonial oxen, which his people had captured from the vagabonds who lived in the woods (meaning the Bushmen and deserters), together with a slave woman who had absconded from the colony and whom the boors had recently requested him by a message to send out. This he had done in evidence of his desire to live in friendship; but on the other hand, he besought the field-cornet to use his influence with the commandant to have the cattle restored which the late commando had carried off from his people, without any just cause.

This reasonable appeal (which was delivered partly by one of the Caffer envoys who spoke Dutch, and partly through the medium of the slave woman who accompanied them), instead of meeting with a fair and friendly hearing from the field-cornet, and from the other boors who stood beside him at the conference in front of his house, seems to have awakened only their apprehensions and their animosity; to have alarmed their selfish avarice (for they had all shared in Makomo's plunder), and to have called up their hereditary rancour. Vandernest had at that time a patrol party of twelve armed boors stationed under his orders: they were now standing around him, and he hastily ordered them to bring out their guns. The Caffers hearing this, and judging from other indications that their message had given offence, became alarmed for their safety, and ran off with precipitation toward the forest. Vandernest called upon them to stop; but they were frightened,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

and continued their flight. He then ordered his men to fire upon them, and he was eagerly obeyed. One of the Caffers was shot dead on the spot; another, mortally wounded, crawled into the thicket, and was left there to perish; the third escaped, and related the transaction to his chief and his countrymen—among whom (as I afterwards learned from the missionaries and from the Caffers themselves) it excited for a time a general feeling of deep indignation.

Captain Massey, who was stationed at the nearest military post, on hearing of the occurrence, rode over and inquired into the details, and, I presume, reported them to the commandant. The affair was also made known to the landdrost of the district, Mr. Mackay; but I am not aware what course he took in regard to it. It is certain, however, that it was reported to the Governor; for Vandernest received soon afterwards a communication from his Excellency, commending highly his 'zeal,' but mildly blaming his precipitation, on this occasion, and cautioning him to be less hasty in firing upon the unoffending natives in future.

When I arrived at Glen-Lynden, in the April following, I went to Vandernest's residence (which stands on the Plora rivulet), and carefully investigated the case by examining several of the most respectable persons who had been present. I then communicated the details, of which the above is an accurate abstract, to his Majesty's Commissioners, who also, to my knowledge, instituted an immediate inquiry, and who, having collected all the evidence that was attainable, doubtless reported the case to the Home Government. But not the less did the perpetrators of this massacre share the bounty of the colonial Government, afterwards confirmed by Earl Bathurst; and up to this hour Vandernest remains field-cornet of Glen-Lynden. And while these men, thus stained with innocent blood, have been enriched with Caffer spoils, and with large grants of the Ceded Territory, the chief Makomo has never to this day received the slightest redress for the iniquitous

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

plundering of his kraals, and the unprovoked slaughter of his 'Messengers of Peace.'

Nevertheless, I would not willingly give the impression, that Cornelius Vandernest is a mere savage ruffian. On the contrary, he is really one of the most respectable of these frontier boors; and, apart from his hereditary prejudices in regard to the natives, is generally, and I believe justly, considered as a decent, good-natured, and well-disposed person. The fact is, that even the very best of these men have been trained from their childhood to regard Bushmen and Caffers with nearly the same feelings as they regard beasts of prey—only with far more rancorous animosity; so that they can scarcely be brought to view even the treacherous slaughter of them as a crime. But while this circumstance may be allowed to palliate the guilt of such untutored men, it casts a darker shade over the conduct of those in authority, who knowing well the habits and prejudices of those semi-barbarous back-settlers, yet intrust them with a perilous discretion towards the natives, which, from the very nature of things, cannot fail to be often grossly abused.

Nor would it be just to represent those feelings towards the natives as confined solely to the Dutch-African population. Some of the British settlers, I grieve and blush to say, and those not exclusively of the lower orders, appear to have imbibed, in their full extent, the same inhuman prejudices towards the natives of the soil, and have even had the hardihood to avow such sentiments in print. Some of the discharged soldiery who have settled on the eastern frontier have acquired a bad pre-eminence in this respect. One man of this class, who had married a sister of Vandernest's, had a prominent share in the slaughter of Makomo's envoys; and the following is another melancholy illustration of the prevalence of this spirit:—

A month or two previous to this affair at the Plora, a party of five Caffers, armed as usual with assagais, but one of them wearing as a badge of peace a white linen shirt, came over to the residence of my father at Glen-Lynden.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

My father, who had never before been visited by any armed Caffers, felt rather apprehensive of their intentions; but he suppressed his suspicions, determined not to be the aggressor, and to treat them in a friendly manner, unless they gave him cause to act otherwise. One of them, who spoke Dutch, said that they were messengers sent out by the chief Makomo to the field-cornet Steenkamp on the Tarka; and that they only requested a little food, and permission to remain for the night. They were accordingly presented with a sheep and an empty hut to sleep in; and they soon kindled a fire, and sat down with the utmost good humour and confidence to dress their supper and smoke their pipes. While they were thus employed, and quietly conversing with the Hottentot servants, one Hozie, a disbanded serjeant of the 72nd regiment, who then occupied a farm on the location belonging to Mr. Sydserff, came to the place in great haste with his gun. He informed my father that he had heard of the arrival of the strangers; and having been engaged in many commandoes, and consequently well acquainted with the 'nature' of the Caffers, (who, he said, 'were just the same as wolves, and very *treacherous*'); and as this party, he was sure, could only have come out for some wicked purpose, and might very probably murder all the family, and carry off the cattle in the night; he coolly proposed, as the best plan to prevent all this mischief, to surround the hut with their servants, while the Caffers were busy with their supper, *and shoot them all dead on the spot!* Happily not so 'experienced' as his martial countryman, my father rejected this proposal with horror and indignation! The poor Caffers were permitted to eat and sleep in peace; and next morning, before departing, they came and expressed, in affecting terms, their grateful acknowledgments for the hospitable treatment they had received. They parted in kindness. The Caffers proceeded on their journey, and returned by another way to their own country, without doing the slightest injury to any one whatever. One individual of this party (the man who spoke Dutch,) was the same person who afterwards

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

delivered his chief's message to Vandernest, and was then murdered by the boors, after escaping the projected treachery of the Scottish serjeant.

I should be very thankful if it were in my power to state that the conduct of the frontier colonists, or the system of policy pursued towards the Caffer tribes, had been materially improved since 1825. But it is a melancholy fact, that although the government of the colony since March, 1826, has been administered by individuals who cannot be suspected of any unworthy personal objects, and whose zeal for the public service no one has ever doubted; yet, through some unhappy fatality, the old wretched policy of military reprisals—the *commando system*—in spite of former exposures, in spite of all the remonstrances of his Majesty's Commissioners, has been allowed to continue, and, up to the latest hour that intelligence has reached England, is still carried on in all its pristine barbarity and injustice. I cannot possibly give the details of all the iniquitous cases which have reached me—and the recent publication of some of which by Mr. Bruce, a gentleman in the East India Company's civil service, has excited a very acrimonious newspaper controversy in the colony. I must restrict myself to a single additional case, the facts of which have not been derived from Mr. Bruce's letters, though also mentioned by him, but from a source which has never yet deceived me, and which, in the present instance, I can rely upon to the letter.

In June, 1830, a commando under the orders of Lieutenant-Colonel Somerset, Military Commandant on the frontier, and of the Hon. Captain Stockenstrom, Commissioner-General of the eastern province, entered Cafferland, to make reprisals for cattle stolen, or said to have been stolen, from the frontier boors. In regard to the proceedings of the two principal officers on this occasion I have no particular information, nor am I aware of any complaint of their conduct; but the following transaction took place under one of the subordinate functionaries:—

The field-cornet Erasmus was despatched with a party

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of boors to search for colonial cattle in the kraals of Seko, a chief of high rank, the brother of Islambi and Jaluhsa, and the uncle of Gaika. No colonial cattle were discovered in his possession, or in that of his followers: nevertheless Erasmus took possession of the whole herds belonging to the clan. On the chief inquiring what was the meaning of this, he was told that they were seized in reprisal for Caffer depredations on the colony. Seko then entreated that the milch cows, at least, might be left, to save the females and children from starvation; and asked leave to accompany the field-cornet and his party to Fort Willshire, in order to represent to the Commandant the hardship and injustice to himself and his people of being deprived of all their property on account of offences in which they at least had no share. Erasmus, after some demur, acceded to these requests. He gave back the milch cows, and he granted permission to Seko, and seven of his men, to accompany his party, upon condition that they left behind their arms (assagais), and assisted to drive the captured cattle.

Upon this amicable agreement, the Boors and Caffers left the place together; Seko and his men, with only sticks in their hands, driving on the herd. But they had not proceeded far, when some natives, at a distance, having given a whistle, the Caffer cattle, which are all trained to run by such signals, made a sort of rush, as if to escape; and the Boors instantly turning their guns on the *unarmed* men in the midst of them, although they had not shown the smallest disposition to encourage a rescue of the cattle, shot the chief and six of his men dead on the spot. When the party reached Fort Willshire, they had a story ready as usual: the Commandant was told of a desperate skirmish with Seko and his men, and that they had been forced to fire and kill some of the Caffers; and this report was as usual but too readily credited and received.

One of the Boors, however, afterwards blabbed the real facts of the transaction; and Capt. Stockenstrom, on hearing them, is said to have gone back into Cafferland, and to have investigated the case thoroughly, and reported the facts to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

the Colonial Government. Be that as it may, it is certain that the account I have now given of this affair was substantiated by the careful examination of eye witnesses on the spot; and it is equally certain that the Caffer people received no redress for the slaughter of this chief and his unarmed followers; and that Peter Erasmus, one of the principal leaders of the Rebel Boors in 1815—one of the principal sharers of the Ceded Territory in 1824 and 1825—and the commander in this base and cowardly massacre in 1830—is still a field-cornet, with undiminished favour, under the Colonial Government.

Of the *spirit* that still actuates the frontier Boors, the following is another recent and striking illustration. In December 1831, rumours were industriously propagated among these ignorant and prejudiced men, that the Hottentots of the Kat River, towards whom, as might be expected, they entertained the most envenomed jealousy, had laid a plot to attack them on New Year's day. The field-cornets, instead of reporting these absurd rumours to the civil authorities, called out their armed militia, and marched towards the Kat River to anticipate the pretended plot. The commandant, Colonel Somerset, had, however, got some intimation of their mischievous intentions, and hurried to Kat River before them. It was Sunday; and he found the Hottentots quietly congregated, unarmed, in their different places of worship. In one place there was a congregation of about 500 souls, 109 of whom had just taken the sacrament. He informed the unconscious people of the rumours that had been spread; and taking with him the three coloured field-cornets, Groepe, Valentyn, and Stoffels, he rode to meet the troop of colonial militia advancing from the Koonap. By energetic remonstrances he prevailed on these violent and vindictive men to return quietly to their homes; and on the 11th of January, 1832, a proclamation was issued by the Governor, reprehending, in the severest terms, the mischievous and irrational conduct of the colonists and their local officers. But for the fortunate accident of the designs of the boors

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

being thus discovered and prevented, this Hottentot settlement would, in all human probability, have been deluged with innocent blood, and a bitter feud begun between the white and coloured classes, which might have lasted for generations. I have abstracted this account from the Cape Gazette of January 11, 1832, which appears to have derived its information from Colonel Somerset's despatches.*

Although this last ebullition of the hereditary jealousy and animosity of the frontier boors towards the coloured race was not directed against the Caffers, it is not inappropriately noticed here, for it serves to show, in a very striking manner, how unfit this class of men were to be placed in the Ceded Territory, even had there existed no other objections to such a disposal of that tract of country; and it proves not less clearly their utter unfitness to be trusted, *as yet*, with any discretionary powers in regard to dealings with the native tribes. Yet in the face of this self-evident fact—in the face of his own proclamation of the 11th of January, 1832, just referred to, did the late governor, Sir Lowry Cole, almost as the last act of his authority, issue, on the 6th of June, 1833, an Ordinance (No. 99), reviving a proclamation of the first British Government in 1797, in support of commandoes; and strengthening it with additional clauses of his own, whereby every petty provincial functionary, being for that purpose invested with high discretionary powers, is not merely permitted, but strongly encouraged and enjoined, to call out the armed militia, and to proceed on commando against the natives, whensoever, whithersoever, and on whatsoever grounds it may appear to *such* functionary fitting so to do!—this perilous discretion not being limited, be it observed, to "any civil commissioner or justice of the peace," but equally extended to "every field-commandant, field-cornet, or provisional field-cornet," and among others, of course, to such ignorant, semi-savage peasants as Erasmus, Vandernest, and the Bushman-murderer mentioned at page 372.

* See also Mr. Kay's account of this affair, p. 491.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

And here I am constrained to remark, that wherever the fault may lie (and I am far from imputing unworthy motives), the 'frontier policy,' during the last few years, has been of a description, which, if not quite so disreputable as that of Lord Charles Somerset, has yet been marked in many instances with lamentable weakness, and with still more lamentable injustice. Its weakness has been especially evinced on the north-eastern frontier, where numbers of boors have been suffered to proceed beyond the boundary, and to take possession of an immense tract of country between the great branches of the Orange river: and there they are now located, and actively proceeding, like their ancestors of old, in oppressing, enslaving, and gradually extirpating the native tribes, without any efficient effort on the part of Government to restrain them;* while bands of native banditti, illicitly supplied with ammunition by these men, and by profligate traders, in exchange for their plunder, are spreading devastation among the Bechuana tribes, and not sparing even the outskirts of the colony.

Again, on the Caffer frontier, what has been the policy? The wretched and barbarous system of commandoes has been continued to the present hour, by which the quiet and well-disposed chiefs are continually punished and plundered on account of offences committed by individuals or bands of Caffer thieves whom they cannot controul, and from whose depredations they themselves continually suffer. By this policy, while the most respectable of the frontier chiefs are oppressed and ruined, the colonists are not protected, and none are gainers but the most profligate class of border boors, whose trade it is to promote disturbance and to enrich themselves by plunder.

While all this, and much more which I cannot even glance at, has been going on, there was in the colony an officer of distinguished activity and intelligence, the Commissioner-General of the Eastern Province, appointed (as

* Bannister, pp. 67—72. Kay, 502—506.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

it was understood) with a special view to the introduction of a more efficient and humane system of frontier policy. But this officer, for reasons only known to the Colonial, or perhaps to the Home, Government, was not permitted to proceed on the plan he had so successfully commenced at the Kat River; but, on the contrary, was for the most part detained at Cape Town, altogether unemployed, and absolutely kept in ignorance of the most important frontier transactions; while the old short-sighted and barbarous policy, which he is said to have discountenanced, has been kept in full play. Such at least, as I learn from my colonial correspondents, was the general opinion in Cape Town, at the moment when Captain Stockenstrom, the officer referred to, left the colony in disgust (as it was reported), with a view to resign into the hands of his Majesty's Government an honourable and important appointment, which had been thus rendered a useless and invidious sinecure.*

It would be easy to illustrate the *recent* 'frontier system' by numerous additional instances of colonial aggressions, and of individual oppressions and outrages; but there is no end to such details. I shall confine myself to a brief notice of the treatment of one chief. Makomo, the eldest son of Gaika, is one of the chiefs of highest rank on the frontier. He is not, according to the Amakosa usages, the principal heir to his father's hereditary honours; the legitimate successor being a youth named Sandili, a minor about twelve years of age, but of higher blood than Makomo by his mother (who is a sister of Powána, the Amatembu chief), and consequently recognised by all the tribe, and by his elder brothers, as the future head of the clan. But Makomo is next to him in power, and appears to share with the mother of Sandili the functions of regent. Makomo is acknowledged by all who have been personally acquainted with him, to be a man of superior

* Whatever truth there may be in these surmises, it is at least certain that Captain Stockenstrom *has* retired from office, and has some time ago proceeded to the north of Europe.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

sense, talent, and integrity.* Yet let the reader mark what has been the actual treatment of this chief up to the very latest accounts from the colony.

I have already mentioned the predatory attacks on Makomo in 1823 and 1824, and the unpunished slaughter of his envoys at Glen-Lynden. In 1828 and 1829, there was a feud between Makomo and Chellala, a neighbouring

---

* " Makomo is next in power to Sandili, who is yet a minor. The Caffers highly respect Makomo for his integrity ; and those who know him best speak highly of him."—*Graham's Town Journal, July* 18, 1833,

Mr. Bruce, a gentleman of high rank in the East India Company's Civil Service, who visited Makomo and other frontier chiefs in 1833, and published in the Cape Papers *their own account* of their treatment by the colonists, makes the following remarks :—" The minds of Makomo and Botma displayed great natural power and strength, and the most surprising knowledge of the natural principles of justice and equity. The Hottentots (of Kat River), the missionaries, Messrs. Read and Brownlee, with one voice declared them to be men of natural integrity and uprightness. Yet it has been the colonial policy to treat those chiefs as Caffer thieves and vagabonds, and to discard in its intercourse with them every principle of international law."—" Would that I could draw the smallest analogy between the colonial external policy towards these chiefs, and the external policy that is pursued towards the different native chiefs in British India ! Nothing can be more different."

" Botma spoke to this effect :—' There are three things I must ever regret. The first is, that I cannot speak in a language that we mutually understand, and tell you all the wrongs inflicted on my people by the colony. The second is, that I cannot write a book, and publish in it those wrongs. And the third and last is, that I cannot put myself on board a ship, and lay these wrongs before the King of England !' "—*South African Advertiser, Nov.* 7, 1832.

Botma made similar observations to the Rev. Dr. Wright in 1825 ; asking, tauntingly, if 'it was from the Bible that Englishmen learned to plunder the Caffers of their cattle ?' Five years afterwards Dr. Wright found this chief reduced to a state of great indigence, and almost destitute both of cattle and land.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

chief of the Amatembu; in the course of which the former is said to have invaded the *sanctity* of the Colonial territory by driving his enemy across the frontier, and by attacking and plundering some of his clan who took refuge in the Tarka district. Makomo has given an explanation of this transaction, in which he represents himself as the greatly injured party, and says that he was twice attacked by Colonel Somerset, at the instigation of his enemy Chellala, and forced to restore more than all the cattle he had taken from the Amatembu chief, although the latter had been actually guilty of the depredations on the colony of which he (Makomo) had been accused, and had, moreover, recently slain his relative and ally Powána, likewise a steady friend to the colony*. Whatever may have been the true merits of the case as regards these clannish feuds (with which one would suppose the colonists had little concern), it is certain that in May, 1829, Makomo and his clan were, by order of the Colonial Government, driven out of a large and fertile tract of country (now the Hottentot Location) on the sources of the Kat River, upon the pretexts that this tract was within the bounds of the Ceded Territory—that Makomo had been permitted to occupy it only by sufferance and during good behaviour—and that he had forfeited his claims to its possession, by his plundering of Chellala, by his crossing the frontier with an armed band, and by suffering his people to commit depredations on the colony. Makomo and all his people were expelled accordingly; and though no blood was shed on this occasion, and the removal was in other respects mildly executed, yet not only were the Caffer hamlets destroyed, but the missionary institution of Balfour, established under the protection of this chief, appears to have been thereby subverted.†

Makomo yielded on this occasion without resistance,

* Letter from Mr. Bruce, inserted in the South African Advertiser for Nov. 10, 1832.—See also Bannister, pp. 79, 93.

† Bannister, pp. 90—100.—Kay, p. 493.—Reports of the Glasgow Missionary Society for 1828, 1829, 1830.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

though not without strong remonstrance.* Many rumours were for some time afloat in the colony that he was actively engaged in organising a formidable league of the Caffer chiefs, to attempt by war to recover the extensive territory of which his nation has been during the last ten years so iniquitously dispossessed. But although it is sufficiently clear from the facts stated in this chapter, that if the Caffer chiefs had entered into such a league they would have had right and justice entirely on their side, yet no such combination, no hostile demonstration of any sort, did in reality take place. Whatever may have been their natural feelings of indignation and resentment, they smothered them, and remained at peace. They have been long fully convinced, indeed, that they are totally unable to resist our power; and such have been the frightful calamities suffered from our former invasions of their country, that nothing short of that pitch of oppression under which long-enduring patience gives way to the frenzy of despair will ever probably again drive them into a general war with the colony. But if we do drive them to that extremity, it will be indeed a *savage* war—a war of extermination!

It is acknowledged that Makomo has evinced the strongest disposition to cultivate peace with the colony, and has continued to reside quietly within the narrow tract of land on the Chumi, which the Commissioner-General Stockenstrom, and the Commandant Somerset left in his possession after his expulsion from the Kat River in 1829, and which appears to have been verbally guaranteed to him also by Sir Lowry Cole. He has uniformly protected the missionaries and traders, has readily punished any of his own people who committed depredations on the colonists, and on

* I am aware that Captain Stockenstrom, who had a principal hand in Makomo's expulsion from the Kat River, considers that step to have been both just and expedient. But with all my sincere respect for that gentleman's opinion, I cannot concur with him. I regard it, on the contrary, as a measure in itself alike iniquitous and impolitic, though, in one point of view, amply atoned for by the Hottentot settlement.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

many occasions has given compensation four or five-fold for stolen cattle driven through his territory by undiscovered thieves from other clans. Notwithstanding all this, however, and much more stated in his behalf in the Cape papers, colonial oppression continues to trample down this chief with a steady, firm, relentless foot. Having mentioned the severities of Colonel Somerset towards him at a former period, it is, however, but just to that officer to state that he is reported to have become subsequently friendly to Makomo, whose recent harsh treatment occurred chiefly during Colonel Somerset's absence in England.

On the 7th of October last, Makomo was invited by Mr. Read to attend the Anniversary Meeting of an Auxiliary Missionary Society at Philipton, Kat River. The chief went to the military officer commanding the nearest frontier post, and asked permission to attend; but was peremptorily refused. He ventured, nevertheless, to come by another way, with his ordinary retinue but altogether unarmed, and delivered, in his native language, a most eloquent speech at the meeting, in which he seconded a motion, proposed by the Rev. Mr. Thomson the established clergyman, for promoting the conversion of the Caffers. Alluding to the great number of traders residing in Caffer-land, contrasted with the rude prohibition given to his attending this Christian assembly, he said, in the forcible idiom of his country—"There are no Englishmen at Kat River; there are no Englishmen at Graham's Town: they are all in my country, with their wives and children in perfect safety; while I stand before you as a rogue and a vagabond, having been obliged to come by stealth.*" Then addressing his own followers, he said—"Ye sons of Káhabi, I have brought you here to behold what the Word of God

* A letter from a most respectable correspondent on the spot, written just after this meeting, states that there were about two hundred traders from the colony residing in Cafferland, many of them with their wives and children, at the moment Makomo was thus treated!



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

hath wrought. These Hottentots were but yesterday as much despised and oppressed as to-day are we—the Caffers. But see what the Great Word has done for them! They were dead; they are now alive; they are men once more. Go and tell my people what ye have seen and heard; for such things as we have here seen and heard, I hope ere long to witness in our own land. God is great who hath said it, and who will surely bring it to pass!"—In the midst of this exhilarating scene—the African chief recommending to his followers the adoption of that 'GREAT WORD' which brings with it at once social and spiritual regeneration—they were interrupted by the sudden appearance of a troop of dragoons, despatched from the military post to arrest Makomo for having crossed the frontier line without permission. This was effected in the most brutal and insulting manner possible, and not without considerable hazard to the chieftain's life from the ruffian-like conduct of a drunken serjeant, although not the slightest resistance was attempted. These facts have been published, with numerous other disgraceful details, in two Cape papers, without either contradiction or explanation being offered.*

* A writer in the South African Advertiser, who signs himself "A Trader," and who dates his letter from Graham's Town, makes the following, among other very pertinent remarks, respecting the mode of treating the Caffers: "I don't wish to lay all the blame on the authorities: it is the SYSTEM which is decidedly wrong. Governor after governor comes up and gallops about; but their whole thoughts are military; they are looking out for the best place for a Military Station, instead of thinking of Conciliation. They have been so accustomed to command that they expect implicit obedience even from those independent Chiefs who may have twenty thousand subjects, devoted to them from their birth and who would sacrifice their lives to support them. Menaces are held out to those Chiefs that they must act as they are ordered; and if they do not they are threatened with a commando. I have said I do not lay *all* the blame on our Authorities *here*,—but I must also say that their conduct is far from conciliatory." "There is a certain haughty manner universally displayed towards the Caffers, which may force them to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

But the worst act is yet to be mentioned. These last may have been the unauthorised proceedings of petulant subalterns: *this* is the deed of the acting Governor for the time being—of Lieutenant-Colonel Wade—who having been left to administer the government of the Colony for a month or two, between the departure of one Governor and the arrival of another, has thought fit to signalise his brief prefecture by cutting another slice from the Caffer territory —from that territory which even Lord Charles Somerset had relentingly spared to Gaika,* and which Sir Lowry Cole permitted his son Makomo to retain. The whole case is thus fairly and forcibly stated by Mr. Fairbairn :—

"Under the British Government, the Caffer territory has been very much reduced. They have been driven from the Zureveld; they have been expelled from the Neutral Territory: but still the actual boundary is sought for in vain. We do not affirm that the boundary was left doubtful, that occasion might never be wanting for extending our claims. We only say, that had such been the intention of the Colonial Government,—had they wished to keep the Caffers in a state of constant doubt and irritation,—had they resolved to keep all questions respecting boundaries open, for the purpose of seizing more and more of their neigh-

---

break out one time or other. I pray that the time may not be nearer than we expect."—*S. A. Advertiser, Nov.* 30, 1833.

Another writer on the spot says, "I consider the disrespect shown to the Chiefs very detrimental to the interests of the Colony. The first step to improve the Caffers is to improve the Chiefs: this must be done not by the sword, but by honest and good treatment. Treat them with some degree of deference; treat them as men."—*Graham's Town Journal, Dec.* 5, 1833.

* When Lord Charles Somerset '*finally* arranged' with Gaika the cession of the 'Neutral Ground,' in 1819, it is reported that Gaika saved the beautiful country from the Chumi to the head of the Keisi, by an affecting appeal to the White Men '*to spare him the place of his birth!*'—Bannister, p. 74.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

bours' lands, as they might find it convenient for public or private reasons,—had they determined at some future period to appropriate for their friends the whole of Caffraria,—they would have acted precisely as they have done, and are still doing."—"In the case of the Caffer Boundary, although one can scarcely find two people who agree as to the actual limit said to have been fixed by certain Governors and Chiefs, yet in every instance the Colonial Government has decided in its own favour, and treated the doubting or hesitating Chiefs as criminals.

"A few years ago, Makomo, the son of Gaika, was driven very unceremoniously from the Kat River, where he not only grazed his cattle but cultivated corn. Many of his people died among the mountains from cold and hunger. *He* obtained no *compensation*. The Missionary, Mr. Ross, who had formed a station and school in the midst of this tribe, laid his complaint and remonstrance before the Governor, and was grossly insulted for his pains. Why? Because the Kat River was part of the Neutral Territory; and to prove its neutrality, it was immediately granted to the natives of the colony. What did Makomo receive in exchange? Nothing. This happened about five years ago. And now, the storm being in some measure spent, Makomo in a moment of profound peace is ordered over the Chumi. Why? Because the land he at present occupies and cultivates is part of the Neutral Territory. And to prove its neutrality it is, we understand, on the point of being given away to fresh hands from the colony."*

---

* South African Advertiser for December 7, 1833.

In the same paper is inserted a letter from Makomo himself. That chief, like our European nobles in the olden times, does not use the pen with his own hand; but the letter was written down to his dictation, and is certified by two respectable individuals to be "a true copy, as interpreted to them."—"Though the tone is modest," says the editor, "the matter is such as excites in us, at least, very lively emotions."—I give the greater part of it—and add no comment.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The preceding remarks appeared in the South-African Advertiser during Colonel Wade's administration. The following forms part of the leading article in the first paper published after the arrival of the new Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban:—

"What will require the immediate exercise of the best principles and the highest abilities, is the formation and settlement of a just, humane, and honourable scheme of intercourse with the Native Tribes beyond the frontier. There is at present no system, or one that is good for

---

"As I and my people have been driven back over the Chumi River without being informed why, I should be glad to know from the Government *what evil we have done?* I was only told that we must retire over the Chumi, but for what reason I was not informed. Both Stockenstrom and Somerset agreed that I and my people should live west of the Chumi, as well as east of it, without being disturbed. When shall I and my people be able to get rest?

"When my father was living he reigned over the whole land, from the Fish River to the Kei;—*but since the day he refused to help the Boors against the English, he has lost more than the one-half of his country by them.* My father was always the best friend of the English Government, although he was a loser by them.

"My poor people feel much the loss not only of their grazing ground (without which we cannot live), but also of our corn land. Some of our corn is now of considerable height. All this we must abandon.

"I have lived peaceably with my people west of the Chumi River, ever since I have been allowed by Stockenstrom and Somerset to live there *in my own country.* When any of my people stole from the Colonists, I have returned what was stolen. I have even returned the cattle which the people of other kraals have stolen. Yet both I and my brother Tjali have almost no more country for our cattle to live in.—I am also much dissatisfied with the false charges sometimes spoken against me." "I do not know why so many Commandoes come into this country, and take away our cattle and kill our people, without sufficient reason. We do no injury to the colony, and yet I remain under the foot of the English.

"I would beg the favour of your inquiring at the Government for me the reason of all these things. "Your Friend,

"Makomo, the Chief."

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

nothing; and a cloud is gathering in that quarter, which, but for the speedy intervention of wisdom and prudence, will certainly descend in a shower of blood. On this point, above all others, we beg permission to assure his Excellency that he must rely upon the resources of his own understanding and heart."—"The barbarians or savages, as we are pleased to style them, understand the merits of a simple case as well as the most refined; and in most, if not all our disputes from the beginning, they would find it no difficult matter, before an impartial world, to obtain a verdict against us. As it is, a sense of injustice rankles in their minds, and the harshness with which unjustifiable orders have recently been executed has either reduced them to despair, or exasperated them to schemes of revenge. The haughtiness of the chief has been aggravated by the petulancy of the subordinate, and rendered intolerable by the brutality of the soldier.* We refer particularly to the case of the Caffer chief Makomo. In treating with such a man, we have nothing to do with the fact of his being black, or living chiefly on milk, or wrapping himself in an ox's hide. He is a man of ability and sound sense, and the undoubted legitimate Prince of a Nation. As such, he should be met and spoken with by the Governor of the colony, or his proper representatives, on a footing of perfect equality. Our superiority should be shown in superior gentleness and liberality—qualities which never fail to make a favourable and deep impression on the minds of men in his unfortunate circumstances, and to which we have occasion to know that this chief's heart is peculiarly open. He has just been stripped of the last shred of his territory, to which the wily interpretation of a most questionable verbal agreement gave the Colonial Government the slightest shadow of a claim. His Excellency will no doubt inquire into the grounds alleged for his sudden and summary expulsion, while his corn was in the blade, and his cattle dependent on the grass; and see whether the covetousness

* In allusion to the late arrest of Makomo at the Kat River.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of individuals had not more to do with this act than a pure zeal for the public service." *

Such was the state of affairs on the Caffer frontier within three months of the present date—(April 15th, 1834, when I wrote this chapter). We come now to the important practical question—*What is to be done?* I reply, without hesitation—'BE JUST—*and fear not.*' Captain Stockenstrom has briefly pointed out one sound remedy for the evils on the eastern frontier. The Kat River, he remarks, has now been rendered "by far the safest part of that frontier; and *the same plan followed up on a more extensive scale* would soon enable Government to withdraw the troops altogether."—(see p. 408). I cordially concur in the same opinion: but I venture to add, though as humble suggestions merely, the following additional hints:—

Restore to such of the frontier chiefs as have equitable claims upon it, all that is not irretrievably alienated of the Neutral or Ceded Territory. They will gratefully receive it on our own terms. † Give it back to them, to be held of the Colonial Government, and settled on a plan somewhat analogous to that of the Kat River; reserving, however, to the chiefs certain rights of seigniory over the respective domains allotted to their clans, such as would enable them to maintain their hereditary rank and influence, without having the power of oppressing their vassals. This would tend to preserve the native aristocracy of the country and the existing relations of society, and would greatly promote order and good government. These *Colonial* Chiefs might be appointed field-commandants over

* South African Advertiser for January 18, 1834.

† Since writing this paragraph, I have the satisfaction to find that my opinions on this subject coincide in a remarkable degree with those of the Rev. William Shaw, the respectable Wesleyan missionary, whose services in Cafferland have been alike meritorious and successful. —See some important remarks and suggestions on this subject in Mr. Bannister's *Humane Policy*, pp. 83, 103, 106.—See also Kay, pp. 497, 507.—And here follows the testimony of another important

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their respective clans; and the whole of the settlements, including the Kat River, might be placed under a magistrate carefully selected for that office, and who ought to be a person friendly to the native race, and well acquainted with their character, habits, and usages. These Caffer settlers, after a probationary period, might be entrusted with fire-arms, in the same manner as the Hottentots of the Kat River, and all the male adults might be embodied as a militia for the defence of the frontier. Place confidence in these people, and they will be loyal to the colony, as the Hottentots have been loyal. Missionaries should be liberally encouraged to settle among them, and schools founded and endowed in every village. Lastly, the colonial laws should be extended to a certain fixed and well-defined boundary—say the Keisi and Chumi rivers, and thence the summit of the mountain ridge to the Winterberg.

With respect to the tribes and clans beyond the colonial boundary, let a system of just and honourable dealing, upon terms of fair reciprocity, be established and strictly adhered to. Let a general Convention of all the chiefs west of the

---

witness:—"Makomo, Enno, and Kongo, are still on the Ceded Territory. They are most anxious to remain; and Botma is desirous, if it cannot be obtained otherwise, to purchase a piece of land on the said territory, as neither he nor these other chiefs have any land they can claim east of the Keiskamma. Makomo, particularly, is anxious for a spot for the residence of a missionary a little below the influx of the Chumi, where he has formed his plans for building, and for leading out the water for irrigation. Botma and Enno are also both eager to have missionaries."—"We are earnestly looking to the Home Government for some effectual measures being taken for the protection and improvement of the Caffer tribes. Their civilisation would be an exceeding blessing to the colony as well as to themselves. I think they are just ripe for a great change. They see that they cannot stand against the colony. They feel that they are at our mercy, and surely they ought to find it. A little sound policy and upright dealing with them would accomplish all that is required."—*Letter from the Rev. J. Read, Missionary, dated Oct.* 10, 1833.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Kei river be solemnly assembled; and let an equitable plan for the restoration of stolen cattle, for the redress of mutual grievances, and for the regulation of commerce, be proposed for their adoption. Such a Convention might perhaps be advantageously held at stated periods; and, without in any degree interfering with the hereditary precedence recognised among them as due to the respective Chiefs, it might form a sort of legislative and judicial council for maintaining peace and good order among the independent Caffer Tribes. Let one or more English residents be stationed in Cafferland, and let a Caffer envoy represent his nation in the colony.* Let a just and simple code of international law be drawn up and translated into the Amakosa

* The Commissioners of Inquiry have recommended that civil agents should be stationed among the Native Tribes; but their special report on this subject, which doubtless contains valuable suggestions, has not been published. In the concluding paragraph of their Report on the Finances of the Colony, the Commissioners make the following pregnant observation:—"We can only hope for a reduction of the heavy expense that is now incurred in maintaining it (the military defence of the frontier), by the progressive establishment of more amicable relations with the tribes on the frontier; and it is at once consolatory and satisfactory to reflect, that any measures which have a tendency to preserve the tranquillity of the frontier on the side of Caffraria, will in the same degree contribute to the prosperity and commercial enterprise of the Colony." (Parl. Papers for 1827, No. 282, p. 83.) In their Report on the Administration of the Government, also, they have strongly recommended that "no offensive hostilities whatever should be allowed to take place along the frontier of the Colony," except under certain prudent restrictions there specified. (*Ibid*, p. 17.) But it is a remarkable fact, and not very easy to be accounted for, that up to the present hour, the judicious and beneficent recommendations of his Majesty's Commissioners in regard to the Native Tribes appear to have been, in almost every essential point, totally neglected; and a natural query recurs, *How can the Home Government excuse itself for* PERMITTING *such criminal neglect?*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

language; and get the chiefs to affix their signatures to it, and to concur in giving to it prompt and firm execution. Insist on strict and speedy justice being executed on all convicted offenders; but cease to punish the innocent for the guilty. Let the Caffers see clearly that we are resolved henceforth neither to *do* nor to *endure* wrong; and I will venture to predict that we shall have all, except a few habitual rogues *on both sides* of the boundary, zealously devoted to the support of an equitable frontier system.*

* It is not a little satisfactory to me to find my sentiments on these points corroborated by all intelligent writers on the spot. Since the above remarks were put in type, a file of the Graham's Town Journal has reached me, in which I rejoice to observe a conciliatory system towards the Caffers strongly advocated, both by the editor himself and by many respectable and well-informed correspondents. This is the more gratifying, inasmuch as this journal has but too frequently manifested a very illiberal spirit in regard to Hottentot emancipation; and has, ever since its commencement, overflowed with abuse of Dr. Philip, Mr. Fairbairn, and the philanthropists in England. In regard to the Caffers, however, it seems now on the whole to see things in a just light, and to recommend a sound line of policy, though not perhaps on the highest grounds. "We are fully convinced," says the editor, "that the policy maintained with the Caffers—or rather for the protection of the frontier—*is founded on an erroneous principle*, and will never secure the property of the inhabitants against pillage, nor, which is of the next importance, promote the extension of our inland trade."

A correspondent, whom this editor recommends as 'well conversant with frontier affairs,' speaks more closely to the point. After exhibiting very strongly the injustice and inefficiency of the existing system, and the mode in which the exertions of the missionaries are counteracted by Europeans of unprincipled character residing in Cafferland, &c., the writer proceeds:—"Entertaining these opinions, I hope to see a governor of this colony convening a meeting of the chiefs; explaining to them the danger they and their people are exposed to for want of civil order, from their natural political weakness, and the consequences that would follow a series of provocations towards the colonists; and then contrasting the advantages of placing

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Nay more, however Utopian such 'visions' may appear to some people, I will venture to predict that if some such

---

themselves under the protection of the government, and thus coming under the shield of the laws of England. Encroachment on their lands might thus be guarded against; their own laws maintained and administered by Englishmen, as is done in India under similar circumstances; and some recompense given in lands to the chiefs for the loss of their rights and privileges. This measure would be such as a humane and enlightened policy dictates, and a precursor to the Caffers enjoying freedom, security, and justice on their own lands. But without the adoption of some such measure, Cafferland will be a prey to discord and avarice, and become the resort of colonial renegadoes and fugitives from justice." "If we act towards the Caffers on the Christian principle of doing as we would be done by, one of the most interesting countries of the world would become identified with Albany in all its hopes and prospects."—*Graham's Town Journal, Nov.* 21, 1833.

A file of the South African Advertiser, up to March 1, 1834, (which has just reached me as I am sending these, the last sheets of my volume, to press), likewise contains some excellent suggestions on the same subject, which I regret that I can only give in an abbreviated shape. The editor (Mr. Fairbairn) recommends, in singular accordance with the views I have expressed, that an Assembly should be forthwith convened of all the Amakosa Chiefs west of the Kei River (about ten in number), to meet the Governor, accompanied by such persons as he may deem most likely to aid him with their counsel on this occasion. That to this Assembly "the relative situation of the two countries should be fully laid open; the necessity of a final adjustment of all claims and points of dispute clearly stated; and the great advantages likely to arise from an amicable intercourse distinctly pointed out." That "the Chiefs should be requested to take the whole case into their immediate and most serious consideration:" and that "the Governor should not leave the frontier, nor suffer the design to cool, till some General Articles, embracing the main points of our future policy, have been confirmed by all, or at least a major part of the Chiefs." "These Articles," continues Mr. Fairbairn, "will of course be based on the common principles of international law. The boundaries will be defined and distinctly marked—the channels of communication between the Governor and the Chiefs specified—the mode to be fol-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

system (I speak of the *principle,* not of the *details*—which may perhaps require to be greatly altered from this rude outline) shall be now adopted, and judiciously and perseveringly carried into operation, we shall at no remote period see the tribes beyond the frontier earnestly soliciting to be received under the protection of the colony, or to be embraced within its limits and jurisdiction. At this mo-

---

lowed in demanding redress, and of enforcing it when necessary, clearly expressed: in short, a regular, formal treaty, such as we enter into with civilised nations, containing all that is necessary to be contained in such a document, should be drawn out, signed, and interchanged between the parties. This being arranged, a British Resident or Consul should be stationed at some convenient spot in Cafferland, to protect British interests, and keep open a constant communication between the Chiefs and the Colonial Government."

To enable the chiefs to maintain firmly their authority, to cement them in a regular confederacy, and to prevent "the farther breaking down of the Caffer nation into weak and mischievous fragments," Mr. Fairbairn proposes that "an annual salary, according to the extent of territory and number of people acknowledging his sway, should be granted to each chief." "The amount of such salaries," he observes, "need not be great. The largest might be £100 sterling, and the lowest £50. They should be paid at short intervals throughout the year; say in quarterly payments, that our influence over them might never be relaxed, and that their feelings of gratitude and dependence might be frequently renewed. The whole sum would probably fall within £800 per annum—a sum altogether insignificant when compared with the expenses of the present insufficient system, and still more insignificant when contrasted with the manifold advantages which could not fail to accrue to the colony from the final pacification of the frontier, and the civilisation of Cafferland."—*South African Advertiser*, *Feb.* 22, and *March* 1, 1834.

These suggestions, together with those of Mr. Bannister, Mr. Shaw, and others referred to, though they differ somewhat in *detail*, harmonise entirely in *principle;* namely, in recommending the substitution of a conciliatory, just, and *civilised* policy, for the *barbarous* one of brute force and arbitrary authority, which is now universally acknowledged to have miserably failed after thirty years' trial. Useful hints may perhaps be gleaned from all these various plans.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

ment, the Gunuquebi clan are anxious for such an incorporation. Their three chiefs, the sons of old Kongo, have already embraced Christianity, and proclaimed the due observance of the Christian Sabbath throughout their territory.* Enno, Botma, and above all Makomo, are earnestly disposed to follow the same example, and to found missionary institutions and schools in the midst of their people. The Native Tribes, in short, are ready to throw themselves into our arms. Let us open our arms cordially to embrace them as MEN and as BROTHERS. Let us enter upon a new and nobler career of conquest. Let us subdue savage Africa by JUSTICE, by KINDNESS, by the talisman

* The proclamation issued by these chiefs is altogether extremely interesting and curious, and I regret that I can only find room for one or two clauses of it:—"We, Pato, Kama, and Kongo, the chiefs of the Gunuquebi tribe, having taken into our serious consideration the state of our people, have come to the determination to issue general orders which shall henceforward be considered a law of our tribe, viz.—That from and after the date of this 29th day of October, 1833, all our people shall reverence and observe the Sabbath, by abstaining from all work on that day, except such as is considered absolutely necessary," &c.

"And be it also known, that we do also hereby prohibit all colonial traders from purchasing any hides, horns, ivory, cattle, or any other marketable article, except food for their own use, from any of our people on the Sabbath-day. And as we have several times had to reprimand some for thus breaking the Sabbath; and as we find our people plead the example of such men as justification of their own breach of that day; therefore we have, on further consideration, determined to levy a fine on all such colonial traders found purchasing anything on the Sabbath, besides food for their own use, which shall be as follows:—

For the first offence—One head of cattle.
For the second offence—Two head of cattle.
For the third offence—Three head of cattle.

And if any transgress beyond this number, then we will use our own discretion to levy such fine as we may think proper."—*Graham's Town Journal, Nov.* 14, 1833.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of CHRISTIAN TRUTH. Let us *thus* go forth, in the name and under the blessing of God, gradually to extend the moral influence, and, if it be thought desirable, the territorial boundary also of our Colony, until it shall become an Empire—embracing Southern Africa from the Keisi and the Gareep to Mozambique and Cape Negro—and to which, peradventure, in after days, even the equator shall prove no ultimate limit.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

## CHAPTER XV.

*Topics omitted — Progress of Christian Missions in South Africa — The Rev. Dr. Philip — Deplorable state of the Country beyond the Northern Frontier — Character and Influence of the Periodical Press — Mr. Fairbairn's Services in the Colony — Caffer Commando in December, 1825 — Anecdote of a Caffer Warrior — Conclusion of the Author's Personal Narrative, and his Return to England — Progress and Present State of the Glen-Lynden Settlement.*

INTIMATELY connected with the welfare of the colony generally, and more particularly with that of the coloured classes, are the following topics:—The present state of Colonial Law and Legislation; the constitution of the Courts of Justice, and the liability of the Judges and local Magistracy to be influenced by the prevailing feelings and prejudices of the dominant class;* the operation of Trial

* There is, perhaps, no point in regard to which the vigilant attention of the Home Government is more imperatively required than this. I have now before me a collection of facts which demonstrate that a vast deal yet remains to be done before the reforms, recommended by his Majesty's Commissioners in regard to the administration of justice, especially as respects the coloured classes, can be considered complete in spirit and substance. A glance at the second chapter of Mr. Bannister's Humane Policy will show the spirit of the inferior local courts at no distant period. When the verdicts of the Supreme and Circuit Courts, during the last five or six years (which will probably be moved for immediately by Mr. Buxton), are officially before the public, we shall be better able to estimate how far they are calculated, as at present constituted, to remedy the negligence and check the abuses of the provincial functionaries.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

by Jury in criminal cases, as respects the coloured population; the general state of Education and of Religious Instruction; the progress and prospects of Christian Missions; the spirit of the Periodical Press; the influence of Public Opinion; and the tone of Sentiment and standard of Morals among the several classes of the community.

On most of these topics, and on others connected with them, I had collected a good deal of information during my residence in the Colony; but several considerations have induced me to refrain from touching even cursorily upon more than one or two of the above points. In the first place, each of these subjects would require, in order to be properly elucidated, at least a separate chapter, which would have extended the book to two volumes: secondly, the length of time that has elapsed since my personal observations were made, and the continual state of change, both political and social, that has recently prevailed, would probably make my remarks in some respects appear obsolete: and, lastly, the abolition of slavery, and the arrangements now in progress for adapting the local government to an improved state of things, have placed the whole frame of colonial society, and its local institutions and usages, in such a state of rapid transition, that observations, perfectly applicable even at the present moment, might be rendered in a few months altogether irrelevant.

The progress and present state of Christian Missions in South Africa is a subject indeed to which these last remarks do not apply; for it is one which in every aspect and attitude must ever be deeply interesting—interesting to those even who merely regard Christianity as a means of civilisation—interesting above all to such as look seriously to the religious duty and the spiritual fruits of the conversion of the heathen. The historical details relating to the South African missions, from the time that George Schmidt first pitched his tent at Genadendal, and that Vanderkemp began his noble course, would constitute a narrative of exceeding interest. Much, it is true, has been already printed, partly in the transactions of the several missionary societies, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

partly in books published by individuals; but the facts of importance are scattered through a great variety of publications, and often mixed up with extraneous or temporary matter. To reduce the whole into a well-digested and lucid narrative would be a valuable service to the cause of religion and civilisation; but it is a task which, were I even far more confident than I am of my competency for it, neither my leisure nor limits would at present permit me to undertake. I had intended to devote a chapter to the subject of missionary labours; but, on looking more closely into it, I became convinced that a volume as large as the present would not afford more than sufficient space.

Constrained, therefore, to limit myself to a passing notice, I would remark, that in the course of the last ten or twelve years very extraordinary progress has been made in this quarter of the world by Protestant Missionaries of the Independent, Wesleyan, and Presbyterian denominations, in addition to the labours of the Moravians, who were first in possession of the field.

In 1819, when Dr. Philip arrived at the Cape, the institutions of the London Missionary Society, which he was appointed to superintend, were in a most languishing and unprogressive state; partly owing, no doubt, to want of energetic and systematic management on the part of the Society itself; but, in a far greater degree, to the continual discouragements and intolerable oppressions to which both the missionaries themselves, and their Hottentot disciples, were subjected by the Colonial Government and its local functionaries. For seven years longer, Dr. Philip had to struggle for free toleration—I might almost say for absolute existence. Every reader who wishes to form a just idea of the obstacles overcome, and the triumphs achieved, in this remote but important field of Christian philanthropy, ought to peruse Dr. Philip's 'Researches in South Africa;' a work which, though principally written to advocate a great immediate object—the emancipation of the Hottentot race—is replete with facts and reflections of deep and enduring interest. Without undervaluing the exertions



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of other missionaries of various denominations, whose services have been in an eminent degree meritorious and beneficial in those remote regions, I may justly call Dr. Philip the Las Casas of Southern Africa—and happier than Las Casas, in asmuch as in promoting at once the political and spiritual redemption of the Native Race, he has aided also in breaking the bonds of the Negro, and smoothed the way to the moral conquest of Africa. His indomitable determination and indefatigable perseverance in standing up for the trampled Hottentots, and for those missionary asylums which the enmity of colonial tyranny had nearly extinguished, rendered him, as was naturally to be expected, obnoxious in the very highest degree to Lord Charles Somerset, to the miserable politicians who formed his Lordship's secret council, and to the prejudiced provincial functionaries and white colonists generally. Nor has the persecution which was then so eagerly, though unavailingly, directed against this able and excellent man ever since wanted zealous abettors among a few persons of influential station and narrow intellect, upon whom a portion of the late unhappy governor's mantle seems to have descended. But Dr. Philip can afford to regard with calm commiseration the hostility of such persons, as well as the incessant abuse of a vulgar and profligate pro-slavery press, which still continues to pursue him with unappeasable malignity. He is only enduring the same ordeal which the friends of the oppressed in all ages—which, in our own day, his illustrious friends, Wilberforce, and Clarkson, and Stephen, and Buxton, and Macaulay, have endured. The creatures that have raised such a clamour around him are but the puny though noisome insects of the hour. Let them buzz their little hour—it is but a brief one. The work of God, the labour of justice and mercy, *must* go on and prosper; and is it not compensation enough for every contumely, to have had a share in that glorious work? *

* I ought here to notice, perhaps, the prosecution for libel, by which it was expected to crush Dr. Philip on his return to the Cape in 1829, on account of some information with which I had furnished him

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

Since the emancipation of the Hottentot race, the progress of the London Society's missions among that class of people has been exceedingly encouraging. At the Kat River it has been pre-eminently so; and to the labours of the missionaries there, and in an especial manner to those of Mr. Read, is unquestionably to be ascribed the astonishing success of an 'experiment,' the result of which has far outstripped the hopes of the friends of the native race, while it has absolutely shut the mouths of their bitterest enemies. Yet so blindly prejudiced was the Colonial Government, even under the straight-forward, kind-hearted Sir Lowry Cole, that it was not for want of their zealous endeavours, direct and indirect, that the missionaries of the London Society, and Mr. Read in particular, were not driven from their labours at the Kat River.*

Beyond the colonial boundaries, the London Society has one prosperous mission in Cafferland, under the charge of my friends Messrs. Brownlee and Tzatzoe, and several of great interest and progressive importance beyond the

---

respecting a case of oppression, communicated to me by my friend Mr. Hart, and the District Secretary of Somerset. But the discussion of that case, even had I room for it, is not now worth reviving, unless it were with a view to illustrate the melancholy extent to which violent pro-slavery prejudice then prevailed in the Colony—not merely among the inferior functionaries of Government, but still more outrageously in quarters where its indecent exhibition was alike disgraceful to the parties concerned and revolting to the feelings of all impartial men. But it is sufficient to add, that the religious public of England properly appreciated the character and objects of that prosecution, and came promptly forward to testify their opinion of it, by raising in a few weeks a subscription of nearly 2,000*l.*, to relieve Dr. Philip from the effects of the enormous costs and damages with which he had been overwhelmed by the issue of the trial.

* This fact, so discreditable to the recent Cape administration, is not given upon doubtful evidence. I state it openly: let them openly deny it, if they can.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

northern frontier, in the countries of the Bushmen, the Griquas, and the Bechuanas.*

* The chief obstacle to the progress of Chistian Missions in this direction appears now to be the ruinous devastations committed among the Bechuana tribes by hordes of banditti, composed partly of Coranna clans, partly of *Bergenaars* or *Bastaards*, i. e. Mulattoes of Colonial lineage, in league with Dutch-African Colonists. These miscreants, obtaining ready supplies of fire-arms, ammunition, and horses, from profligate colonial traders, and from the boors who have located themselves beyond the colonial boundaries, are proceeding with great rapidity in the depopulation of the Bechuana country, in a manner the most horrible and flagitious that can be conceived. Since the preceding sheets of my Narrative (see pp. 360, 462), in which I briefly adverted to this subject, have been printed off, I have received, by fresh arrivals from the Cape, the following additional details:—

"It is reported that a number of boors [in addition to those already beyond the boundary] with their families and slaves, and all their stock and moveable property, have advanced beyond the limits of the Colony on the northern frontier, *as emigrants*."—*South African Advertiser*, *Feb.* 8, 1834.

"A respectable Wesleyan Missionary recently informed me that during a journey he made some time ago to the country of the Bashutas, he accidentally met a Commando (i. e. armed party), who professed to be on a hunting expedition; and before he left the country, the Commando had laid waste two Bashuta villages, and taken from thence all the children they could find, after murdering nearly all the men and women. Many parts of the country are said to be white with human bones; and the inhabitants (the remaining few) principally reside on the very summits of the highest mountains, from which they seldom descend."—"Are the Corannas the only perpetrators of these barbarities? I must unhesitatingly answer, *No.* They, and those of the Bastaards who are associated with them, such as the Pinaars, &c., are undoubtedly principals." But "among the tribe of accessories are, first, many of the other Bastaards"; "secondly, those traders (colonists) who are in the constant habit of conveying ammunition and other contraband goods to the towns and villages of these depredators, from whence thousands of cattle have been taken by them to the various market-towns and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The Wesleyans have been eminently successful in Caffer-land, where they have now stations and schools estab-

---

trading villages of the colony; and, lastly, those farmers (boors) who, by their readiness to receive Bechuana children at the hands of the Corannas, furnish an irresistible impetus to the continuance of the inhuman practice of slavery."—*Letter signed 'Investigatus,' in Graham's Town Journal, Feb.* 6, 1834.

"Such has been the rapacity with which their object has been pursued, that in many parts of the country, once affording pasturage to numerous flocks, there is not a single head of any kind of cattle to be seen. The condition of the once extensive tribes of Bagoia (Lehoya ?) and Bashuta, affords incontrovertible evidence of their audacious villany." —"Men in the prime of life—women.....deliberately and barbarously butchered!"—"*For the children another fate is reserved: of late years they have found them to be a lucrative source of traffic among the border farmers, who, by their readiness to purchase the children thus violently taken from their country and home, give great encouragement to this disgraceful practice. Among the Bashutas cattle have become very scarce, and the commandoes* (marauding parties) *do not now as usual go out in search of them so much as of children, whom they carry off in great numbers, and dispose of to the farmers, who readily give a horse, or perhaps an inferior gun, for each.*"—*South African Advertiser, Feb.* 12, 1834.

Is this a shocking statement? What will the reader say then when I add that this system has been going on with entire impunity for these ten years and upwards, on the northern frontier of the Cape Colony. The traveller Thompson described it as in active operation in 1824, and called urgently on the Colonial Government to adopt some means for checking it. (See his *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 74.) Mr. Melvil, then Government Agent at Griqua Town, made a strong representation on the subject to the Colonial Government in 1824, but without avail: they refused to interfere. Dr. Philip gave a full exposure of it, as it was proceeding during his excursion to that quarter in 1825, with the full knowledge of the Colonial Government at that time. (See his *Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 79—93.) In 1829, Mr. Bannister, having received information that the same execrable system of massacre and slave-trading was still going briskly forward, addressed a letter to the Colonial Government on the subject, which only elicited a reply couched in terms of pettish in-

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

lished from the Keisi to the Umtata rivers, among the three great cognate tribes of the Amakosa, the Amatembu, and the Amaponda. For details, I must refer to the recent interesting work of Mr. Kay, which I have already so frequently quoted as an authority for historical facts. It is also through the meritorious labours of the Wesleyans, and especially of the Rev. Wm. Shaw, now in England, that the three chiefs of the Gunuquebi have embraced Christianity, and that there is every prospect of that clan being speedily brought entirely within the pale of civilisation.

The Glasgow Society also have several prosperous stations among the frontier Caffers, where their labours have been

credulity. The imbecile course (to use a mild expression) pursued by the Cape Authorities at that time, may be seen by reference to his book (See *Humane Policy*, pp. 67—72, 226—228). Again, Mr. Kay, in his volume published only a few months ago, has once more adverted to the subject, and to the culpable apathy of the local Government in regard to it. (See his *Caffrarian Researches*, pp. 502—507). But it is in vain that travellers, and missionaries, and philanthropists, have raised their voices in strong remonstrance. Not one energetic step has been taken by the Cape Government to prevent or check these enormities. Not one Colonist implicated in them has, so far as I have ever heard, been even called to account. Things are at this moment apparently far worse than ever; and abuses, which in 1824, 1825, or even in 1829, might have been checked with a moderate exertion of vigorous decision, are now perhaps altogether beyond hope of cure. Is it not a miserable reflection, too, that while all this has been going on, Commissioner-General Stockenstrom was detained in Cape-Town doing absolutely nothing; because, forsooth, (owing to some inexplicable cause, personal or political,) the Cape Government could *find nothing for him to do!* Looking at the deplorable results of such 'policy,' it is difficult to speak of it in calm language. It is something worse than deplorable. And is it possible that such men as the Earl of Ripon and Mr. Stanley can have been in any degree aware of these things? I believe from my soul that they have *not* been aware of them. But while information from such a variety of respectable sources is upon record, can British statesmen, however urgent their other avocations, be held entirely blameless, who leave such matters to the unquestioned discretion of Colonial functionaries?

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of great benefit; and the Moravians have recently established one at Siloa among the Amatembu. Of the interesting institutions of the latter within the colony, I have spoken elsewhere. (See above, pp. 210, 339.)

Next in importance to Missions has been the influence of the Press in South Africa during the last ten years. The South-African Advertiser, suppressed by Lord Charles Somerset in May, 1824, was re-established in August, 1825, by the return of Mr. Greig from England, with authority from the Home Government to recommence it upon the authority of a licence from the Governor in Council. Its footing was thus improved, though still far from being secure. No adequate compensation for the losses and injuries sustained was allowed: but a compromise was made with Mr. Greig, and some facilities were afforded for his return to the Cape, on condition that he should not bring the case before Parliament.

On the re-establishment of the paper, I was invited to resume my share in its management along with Mr. Fairbairn; but, being then at Glen-Lynden, I declined any other interest in it than that of a voluntary correspondent. I considered that one editor was fully sufficient for such a charge, both as regarded labour and emolument; and, besides, I then contemplated returning to England as soon as I could arrange matters to effect that purpose.

From August, 1825, to March, 1827, this journal was conducted by Mr. Fairbairn upon the same principles of *freedom*, *fairness*, and *forbearance*, which we had laid down for our guidance when we first undertook its superintendence. This did not save it, however, from a second and a still more cruel blow than the first. On the 10th of March, 1827, it was once more suppressed by a direct order sent out by Lord Bathurst. Its alleged crime, on this occasion, consisted in inserting a statement relative to an act of oppression committed by Lord Charles Somerset. The article in question had been copied from the London *Times* newspaper, where it originally appeared; and it was eventually proved by official documents to be not only a *true*,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

but an exceedingly *mild*, statement of the actual facts of the case. Nevertheless, Lord Charles Somerset, who was then in England, had influence enough with Earl Bathurst to obtain from him an imperative order to General Bourke to suppress, solely on this account, the South-African Advertiser, without admitting inquiry or remonstrance.

Mr. Fairbairn had no resource but to come to England, in order to plead his cause at Downing Street. Here he was detained until May, 1828, urging his claims for investigation, redress, and compensation, with successive Secretaries of State. At length, after many wearisome delays, Mr. Huskisson consented to restore the press; and it was eventually placed by Sir George Murray upon the safe and sound footing of *legal responsibility;* but no compensation whatever was allowed for the enormous losses sustained by the proprietors through this unwarrantable act of Earl Bathurst, and from the ruinous delays in granting redress by his successors in office.

Since the re-establishment of the press in 1828, upon the footing of legalised freedom, Mr. Fairbairn has continued his systematic course with an energy and efficacy of which, in such a community, it would be difficult to overrate the importance. I express not merely my own opinions (which in regard to an early friend and intimate associate may reasonably be suspected of some partiality), when I assert that in regard to enlarged and statesman-like views, in general talent and grasp of mind, and in force and felicity of expression, no colonial journal now existing throughout the British dominions can bear any comparison with that edited by Mr. Fairbairn. This opinion I have heard repeatedly expressed by the editors of some of the ablest journals in Europe; and after having had myself a very extensive acquaintance with colonial newspapers during the last seven years, I am perfectly satisfied of its entire justice. But to Mr. Fairbairn a still higher merit belongs. With a courageous consistency, a patient perseverance, a lofty disregard of temporary interests, far more rare and infinitely more admirable than talents even of the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

highest order, he has devoted the powers of his mind and the purpose of his life—not to the exclusive benefit of any faction or class of men, still less to aims of sordid ambition or selfish aggrandisement,—but to the unflinching advocacy of the great principles of Justice, of Freedom, of Christian Philanthropy, as paramount to all accidental or conventional distinctions of station, lineage, colour, or caste. He has kept steadily this high course in the midst of a slave-holding community, overflowing with all the prejudices, and agitated with all the passions, inseparable perhaps from their unhappy position,—and upon whose opinion he was moreover entirely dependent for the means of subsistence. Under such circumstances he has not fared worse than probably he himself anticipated. In 1828, such was his estimation among the wealthier class of that community, that in order to testify how highly they appreciated (as they expressed it) "the able, consistent, and independent manner in which, without regard to personal sacrifices and losses, and notwithstanding the most powerful opposition, he had constantly advocated and protected the best interests of the colony," and especially to evince their gratitude for procuring them "the blessings of a FREE PRESS," the inhabitants raised a liberal subscription, to present Mr. Fairbairn with a handsome piece of plate; two-thirds nearly of those grateful subscribers being Cape Dutch slave-holders.

But alas! the discussion of the Hottentot and the Slavery questions had then scarcely commenced in the Colony. Events soon rendered their discussion inevitable; and Mr. Fairbairn took that part in both which his principles and his position demanded. He advocated strenuously the unquestionable right of the Hottentot and the Slave to entire freedom; but, as respects the *latter* class, he at the same time maintained with equal vigour the claims of the master to adequate compensation from a nation which had sanctioned the wrong; demonstrating with irresistible force of argument the advantages to the community which would result from granting both. This course, however, did not suit people who, listening only to their frantic prejudices and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

their still blinder selfish fears, clung to the tottering fabric of Slavery as if it had been the altar of their tutelar deity. These people, many of whom a few months before, in their exultation for the important boon obtained for *themselves* by his exertions, had so zealously subscribed to do honour to Mr. Fairbairn, now eagerly combined to avail themselves of the very privilege thus acquired, by setting on foot a *pro-slavery* newspaper to oppose, to calumniate, to vilify, and, if possible, to ruin the very man so lately the object of their idolatry. But such is the venal and fickle thing called popular applause! Their new Journal, entitled *De Zuid Afrikaan*, was worthy of its vocation. It had been preceded by two or three ephemeral publications of the same stamp—the *Chronicle*, *De Verzaamelar*, &c. but all of them either so utterly worthless and base,—so full of slanderous and libellous blackguardism, that they had successively expired under the mere weight of public odium. The *Zuid Afrikaan*, scarcely less contemptible than the lowest of its predecessors in point of talent, has maintained its ground solely by pandering to the vilest prejudices and by exciting the preposterous terrors of the slave-holders—by encouraging them to outrageous and seditious opposition to the Orders in Council and to the Slavery Abolition Act—and by unceasing and unmeasured vituperation of Mr. Fairbairn, of Dr. Philip, and the other colonial friends of the coloured classes, and of the 'Saints and Philanthropists' in England. And such has been its *temporary* success, zealously supported as it has been by a strong coalition of influential subscribers, that it appears to have done no trifling mischief in the Colony. Now however that the exciting questions of Hottentot and Negro emancipation are finally set at rest, it is to be hoped that common sense will speedily resume its natural sway, and that the pro-slavery champion of the Cape, only to be matched in unblushing mendacity and seditious violence with the *Cerneen* of Mauritius, and the *Courant* of Jamaica, will speedily share the fate of the latter.

Meanwhile, during all this clamour and controversy, Mr. Fairbairn has calmly and resolutely continued his course;

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

seldom noticing his newspaper antagonists, except now and then to brush away with a resistless sweep of demonstration their cobwebs of sophistry and lies; vigorously supporting the Government when it urgently required support (as it more than once did on most critical occasions) against the machinations of seditious demagogues and their foolish and fuming disciples; animadverting at other times with frank yet temperate boldness on the errors of the administration; pointing out to the colonists new sources of successful industry, or the best means of fully improving those already existing; above all inculcating, with a vigilance that never slumbers and an energy that never slackens, the great principles of practical philosophy and practical philanthropy, to the diffusion of which in that remote and obscure corner of the globe he has devoted his remarkable talents. Nor has the seed thus sown altogether perished, though much of it may have fallen on stony places and among thorns, and although the enemy has been busily at work in sowing tares among the wheat. A goodly harvest of liberal principle, of generous sentiment, of humane feeling, of Christian good-will, is already vigorously springing up and will (under God's blessing) speedily begin to whiten in the long neglected fields of Southern Africa. And in preparing this glorious harvest, Mr. Fairbairn's labours (*unprofitable* in the *ordinary* acceptation of the term as they may have proved to himself) have been eminently influential.

What remains to be related of my own personal narrative may be compressed into brief space. In September and October 1825, I had a correspondence with the Commissioners of Inquiry on the subject of the complaints which I had preferred to Earl Bathurst against Lord Charles Somerset; and with the mode in which they conducted the investigation I had no reason to be dissatisfied. Lord Bathurst's decision upon my claims, I did not learn till I arrived in England.

To England, many considerations, with which I need not trouble the reader, combined at that period to urge my return; and some circumstances occurred which, with the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

kind aid of friends in Cape Town, enabled me so to arrange matters as to accomplish that purpose. I accordingly bade farewell to my friends at Glen-Lynden, and on the 19th of December once more turned my face towards Algoa Bay.

It was part of my plan to cross the eastern frontier on my route, and to spend a week or two in visiting the various Missionary stations, and some of the principal Chiefs in the Amakosa territory—an object I had long had in view. I travelled in an ox-wagon, accompanied by my wife, with our Hottentot servants, and three Caffers whom Mr. Brownlee had sent out to be our guides to his residence in Caffraria. Such was my perfect confidence in the friendly disposition of the natives that I desired no stronger escort. But just as we were about to cross the frontier I was forced to abandon my intention, in consequence of one of those execrable commandoes; Colonel Somerset, with 200 men of the Cape cavalry, and a party of boors, having made a sudden dash into Cafferland on the very day before that on which I meant to have crossed the border.

Among other exploits of this commando, it attacked a kraal belonging to the chief Botma, *by mistake*. Before the mistake was discovered, several women and children were shot by the boors, who fired indiscriminately among the naked and frightened natives; and the Chief himself had a very narrow escape. Luckily, however, Botma was recognised by some of the officers who knew him personally; the captured cattle were restored; an *apology* was made for the blunder; and the commando galloped on to another kraal. One of Gaika's villages was next attacked, which upon explanation (it is said) proved to be also *a mistake*. Amidst all this wretched blundering and murderous havoc, the real offender they were in pursuit of, one Neuka, a sort of Caffer Donald Bean Lean, escaped with his followers into the woods; while the unoffending population, throughout the whole frontier, were, for the sake of a few stolen horses, thrown into a state of the most violent alarm and exasperation. Upwards of 500 cattle were, however, obtained, two-thirds of which were delivered

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

over to the Field-Commandant Durant, to be distributed among the burghers of Bavian's River and Bruintjes-hoogtè. In justice to the Commandant, I must add that I was assured by an officer who was present, and with whom I conversed at Graham's Town two days afterwards, that, on this occasion, the boors fired upon the unresisting Caffers, in breach of express orders to the contrary. But I could not learn that any one was punished, or even deprived of his claim to a share of the captured cattle, on account of this barbarous breach of discipline. Two Europeans who straggled from the commando on its return, a soldier and a trader, were slaughtered by the enraged Caffers. Had I happened to have been a single day earlier on my route, this might have been my own fate; and who could have very severely blamed the maltreated natives, if on some such occasion they had massacred all the Europeans in their country? But it speaks volumes for their unvindictive disposition, that, during the inroads of all these barbarous commandoes, while much unmerited wrong has been inflicted, much innocent blood shed, and even some of their chiefs wantonly murdered, (as in the case of Seko and a son of Enno's,) yet not the hair of a missionary's, or a trader's, or a traveller's head has been touched by the *savage* Caffers, except in such cases as that above mentioned, where the parties were connected with the invading commando. At the time that Seko and his men were murdered by the boors in 1830, there were some dozen missionaries, with their wives and children, and upwards of a hundred colonial traders, at the mercy of the Caffers; yet not one of them was so much as placed in peril. Do such people deserve to be treated as *savages?* *

* An anecdote which I forgot to mention in its proper place, illustrates so strikingly the generosity of the Caffer character towards persons placing confidence in their protection, that I cannot forbear inserting it here.

Captain Stockenstrom, at the time of the commando against Makanna, had once the misfortune, while walking in the rear, to be

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

After once more visiting our friends on the route to Algoa Bay, we proceeded by sea to Cape Town. There we spent six weeks arranging our concerns; during which time I had some very satisfactory interviews with the Commissioners of Inquiry, and with General Bourke, who had succeeded Lord Charles Somerset in the administration of the colony.

We embarked for England on the 16th of April, and arrived in London on the 7th of July, 1826. As an appropriate sequel to my personal narrative, I may mention the result of my application to Earl Bathurst, for compensation on account of the persecution I had sustained from Lord Charles Somerset. My claims upon *that* ground were not admitted; but as a proof that my case was felt to be a strong one, and that nothing unfavourable could be alleged against my own conduct in the Colony, I subjoin the official letter which closed this correspondence with the Colonial Office, only adding that I lost about a thousand pounds at the Cape, and that I have never to this hour received from Government one shilling of indemnity.

---

taken suddenly ill. He was thus, unobserved of his men, left behind, unable to move and ignorant of the way. He expected that as soon as he was discovered by the enemy he would be instantly put to death. While in this anxious predicament, he observed a solitary Caffer approaching him, armed with a bundle of assagais. As soon as the Caffer (who was one of the enemy, a warrior of Islambi's) ascertained his case, without saying a word, he laid down his *ingubo* (mantle) and his arms at his feet, and darted off naked at full speed. Captain Stockenstrom could form no idea what was the man's intention, until, in about an hour, to his agreeable surprise, he saw him return, accompanied by a boor on horseback with a led horse. The Caffer having resumed his ingubo and assagais, suddenly disappeared in the jungle; and Captain S. rode to rejoin his party, to whom the magnanimous Caffer had thus given notice of their landdrost's situation. After peace was concluded, Captain S. made every exertion in his power to ascertain the name of his deliverer, but without effect; nor did he ever come forward to claim the reward that Captain S. publicly announced his desire to bestow for such noble conduct in an enemy.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

"Downing Street, 6th Nov. 1826.

"SIR,

"I have received and laid before Earl Bathurst your letter of the 23d ult., and I am desired to acquaint you in reply that his Lordship is not disposed to reject your application altogether, although he sees little or no prospect at present of being of service to you.

"You are aware that it was exclusively for your conduct as a settler that his Lordship felt inclined to hold out to you any encouragement; but as you have quitted the Cape, you have placed it out of his Lordship's power to assist your views in the manner that might have been done if you had remained in the colony.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"R. W. HAY."

"*Thomas Pringle, Esq.*"

---

A few words in conclusion about our settlement of Glen-Lynden. Under the blessing of Providence, its prosperity has been steadily progressive. The friends whom I left there, though they have not escaped some occasional trials and disappointments, such as all men are exposed to in this uncertain world, have yet enjoyed a goodly share of 'health, competence, and peace.' As regards the first of these blessings, one fact may suffice. Out of twenty-three souls who accompanied me to Glen-Lynden fourteen years ago, there had not, up to the 24th of January last, occurred (so far as I know) a single death—except one, namely, that of Mr. Peter Rennie, who was unfortunately killed by the bursting of a gun, in 1825. My father, at the patriarchal age of eighty years, enjoys the mild sunset of life in the midst of his children and grandchildren; the latter, of whom there is a large and rapidly increasing number, having been, with a few exceptions, all born in South Africa. The party have more than doubled their original numbers, by births alone, during the last twelve years. Several additional families of



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

relatives, and of old acquaintance, have also lately joined them.*

Without having any pretensions to wealth, and with very little *money* among them, the Glen-Lynden settlers (with some few exceptions) may be said to be in a thriving, and on the whole in a very enviable condition. They are no longer molested by either predatory Bushmen or Caffers; they have abundance of all that life requires for competence and for comfort; and they have few causes of anxiety about the future. Some of them who have now acquired considerable flocks of merino sheep, have even a fair prospect of attaining by degrees to moderate wealth. They have excellent means of education for their children; they have a well-selected subscription library of about four hundred volumes; and what is still more important, they have the public ordinances of religion duly and purely maintained among them: they have now a parish minister (the Rev. Alexander Welsh, a clergyman of the Scottish Church) established in the valley of Glen-Lynden, with a decent stipend from the Government, augmented by their own voluntary contributions.

On the whole, I have great cause to bless God, both as regards the prosperity of my father's house, and in many respects also as regards my own career in life (whatever may be my future worldly fortunes), that His good Providence directed our emigrant course fourteen years ago to the wilds of Southern Africa.

---

* Among the latter is my friend Mr. James Stewart, an able artist and an excellent man. He is well known as the engraver of many eminent works of art, and among others of several of Wilkie's finest pictures. The work on which he was last engaged in England was to engrave the Illustrations of this Volume. He sailed for Algoa Bay with his numerous family in February, 1834.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# NOTES TO THE POEMS.



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

# NOTES TO THE POEMS.

1.—*I'm in the world alone!*—P. 2, l. 2.

'*Ik ben alleenig in de waereld!*' was the touching expression of Marossi, the Bechuana orphan boy, in his broken Dutch, when he first fell accidentally under my protection, at Milk River in Camdeboo, in September 1825. He was then apparently about nine or ten years of age, and had been carried off from his native country by the Bergenaars. He was sold to a Boor (for an old jacket!), only a few months previously, when the kraal or hamlet of his tribe had been sacked by those banditti in the manner described in the text. The other incidents of the poem are also taken from his own simple narrative, with the exception of his flying to the desert with a tame springbok—a poetical licence suggested to me by seeing, a few days afterwards, a slave child playing with a springbok fawn at a boor's residence.

This little African accompanied my wife and me to England; and with the gradual development of his feelings and faculties he became interesting to us in no ordinary degree. He was indeed a remarkable child. With a great flow of animal spirits and natural hilarity, he was at the same time docile, observant, reflective, and always unselfishly considerate of others. He was of a singularly ingenuous and affectionate disposition; and, in proportion as his reason expanded, his heart became daily more thoroughly imbued with the genuine spirit of the gospel, insomuch that all who knew him involuntarily and with one consent applied to this African boy the benignant words of our Saviour—'Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' He was baptized in 1827, and took on himself (in conjunction with Mrs. P. and me) his baptismal vows, in the most devout and sensible manner. Shortly afterwards he died of a pulmonary complaint under which he had for many months suffered with exemplary meekness.

2.—*This desolate Karroo*—P. 2, l. 6.

For a description of the Great Karroo, see Narrative, p. 297.

3.—*The Bergenaars*—P. 2, l. 12.

See Narrative, p. 360.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

4.—*The broad Gareep*—P. 4, l. 1.

The Gareep is the native appellation of the Orange River.

5.—*Huge sea-cows*—P. 4, l. 3.

The Sea-cow, or *Zeekoe*, is the Hippopotamus.

6.—*Wolfish wild-dogs*—P. 6, l. 10.

The Wild-dog, or *Wilde-honde*, of South Africa, is the *Hyæna Venatica*. See Narrative, p. 269.

7.—*Good Utíko*—P. 6, l. 17.

Utíko, a term now in general use among many of the South African tribes for the Supreme Being, is derived from the Hottentot word '*Tíko*, which is said literally to signify 'The Beautiful.' It has been adopted by the missionaries to denote the true God.

8.—*By valleys remote where the oribi plays,*
*Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hartèbeest graze,*
*And the kùdù and eland unhunted recline*—P. 11, l. 9.

The *Oribi* is termed by Lichtenstein the *Antilope Pygmæa;* but it is not the same as the *Blauwbok* of the Colonists, or the *Iputi* of the Caffers, an animal from nine to twelve inches in height, which is, I believe, the true *Antilope Pygmæa*. *Oribi* is the Hottentot name of an antelope somewhat resembling the Steenbok (*A. Rupestris*), but rather larger, and of a darker brown colour.

For a notice of the *Gnu*, see Narrative, p. 273.

*Gazelle* is here used to denote the *Reebok*, or any other of the smaller antelopes.

The *Hartèbeest* (*Antilope Caama*) is one of the finest animals of the antelope family. It is fleet, and graceful in its gait. The male is about seven feet long and five feet high, with handsome recurvated horns growing from approximated bases; the female of a smaller size. The flesh is good, and bears a considerable resemblance to beef.

The *Kùdù*, or *Koodoo*, (*Antilope Strepsiceros,*) is also a very handsome antelope, in size somewhat smaller than the Hartèbeest, being about six feet in length by four feet ten inches in height. The male is ornamented with magnificent horns, which are twisted in a spiral form, and in the full grown animal, are frequently found fully four feet long. A black mane adorns the neck of the Kùdù.

The *Eland* (*Antilope Oreas*), called by the Hottentots *Kanna*, is the largest of the South African antelopes, being estimated, when full grown, to be usually larger than an ox with respect to the quantity of flesh. The male measures about six feet in height by seven feet nine inches in length; with straight spiral horns, inclined backwards, about two feet in length. Its flesh is more juicy than

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

that of most of the other antelopes. The name of *Eland*, i. e. *Elk*, has been applied to this animal by the Colonists, from some fancied resemblance to the elk of Europe, in the same mode as many other names of animals have been misapplied by them.—See Narrative, p. 273.

9.—*Forests overhung with wild vine*—P. 12, l. 8.

See Narrative, p. 218.

10.—*The timorous quagga's shrill whistling neigh*—P. 12, l. 1.

The cry of the *Quagga* (pronounced *quagha*, or *quacha*) is very different from that of either the horse or ass; and I have endeavoured to express its peculiar character in the above line.—See Narrative, p. 274.

11.—*The fleet-footed ostrich*, &c.—P. 12, l. 5—10.

See Narrative, p. 299—301.

12.—*Away, away, in the Wilderness vast*—P. 12, l. 13.

The Desert of Kalleghanny or Challahengah, north of the Orange River, and lying between the countries of the Bechuanas and Damaras, is said to be for the most part entirely destitute of water, so that the Bechuanas and Corannas in crossing it are forced to subsist on a species of wild water-melon, which grows abundantly on those arid plains.—See *Thompson's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 72; and *Philip's Researches*, vol. ii. p. 123.

13.—*The bitter-melon for food and drink*—P. 13, l. 1.

The wild water-melon of the Desert is a species of *Coloquintida*, and is bitter and pungent to the taste. I have seen on the skirts of the Karroo a species of prickly cucumber which is considered edible; and Mr. Burchell mentions having found in a similar situation the *Stapelia pilifera*, a fleshy plant, with a cool and watery taste, which is much used by the Hottentots for the purpose of quenching thirst. These and other plants of the same character appear to be designed, by a beneficent provision of Nature, to mitigate the defects of climate, being only found in hot and arid tracts of country.—See *Burchell*, vol i. p. 243.

14.—*The salt-lake's brink*—P. 13, l. 2.

In the midst of those desolate regions, large lakes or reservoirs of native salt are frequently found; formed apparently by the heavy rains, which falling once in two or three years, wash into hollow places the saline particles with which the neighbouring soil is impregnated. During the long droughts which ensue, the water is exhaled, and the dry crystallised salt remains, white as a frozen lake, in the bosom of the dry parched land.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

15.—*The Desert my domain*—P. 14, l. 4.

For notices of the Bushmen, see Nar., pp. 362—373.

16.—*The countless springboks, &c.*—P. 14, l. 10.

See Nar., p. 201.

17.—*The wild horse to my rein*—P. 14, l. 12.

The Zebra is commonly termed *Wilde-Paard*, or Wild-horse, by the Dutch-African Colonists. This animal is now scarce within the colony, but is still found in considerable herds in the northern wastes and mountains inhabited by the Bushmen.

18.—*For I make of them my bread*—P. 15, l. 8.

"The Bushmen," says Captain Stockenstrom, "consider the locusts a great luxury, consuming great quantities fresh, and drying abundance for future emergencies." Locusts are in like manner eaten by the Arabs of the Desert, and by other nomadic tribes in the East.—See Nar., p. 356.

19.—*The listless Coran, &c.*—P. 16, l. 2.

The Corannas, Koras, or Koraquas, are a tribe of independent Hottentots, inhabiting the banks of the Gareep, or Great Orange River. They are naturally a mild, indolent, pastoral people, subsisting chiefly on the milk of their goats and cows, and by occasional hunting.—(See Thompson.) From causes, however, very similar to those which have transformed the Bushmen into a race of desperate and vindictive savages, not a few of the Corannas have recently become bands of robbers; and in conjunction with Bergenaars and other banditti have committed many deplorable ravages upon the Bechuana tribes, and sometimes on the Colony.

20.—*The gorrah's humming reed*—P. 16, l. 4.

The Gorrah is one of the few rude musical instruments peculiar to the Hottentot race. It is not now very often to be met with in the Colony, where it is seldom well played upon except by old shepherds and herdsmen. I have frequently heard it played, but not by a first-rate *gorra-ist*. Mr. Burchell has given a minute description of this curious instrument, with the portrait of a Bushman playing on it, and the notes of the air, or piece of music, performed. "The gorrah," he observes, "as to its appearance and form, may be more aptly compared to the bow of a violin than to any other thing; but in its principle and use it is quite different, being in fact that of a stringed and a wind instrument combined; and thus it agrees with the Æolian harp. But with respect to the principle on which its different tones are produced, it may be classed with the trumpet, or French horn; while in the nature and quality of the

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

sound which it gives, at least in the hands of one who is master of it, this strange instrument approaches to the violin. It consists merely of a slender stick, or bow, on which a string of catgut is strained. But to the lower end of this string, a flat piece, of about an inch and a half long, of the quill of an ostrich, is attached, so as to constitute a part of the length of the string. This quill, being applied to the lips, is made to vibrate by strong inspirations and expirations of the breath; each of which ending with an increased degree of strength, has always the effect of forcing out the upper octave, exactly in the same way as produced on the flute."—*Travels in Southern Africa*, vol. i., p. 458.

Lichtenstein, who has also described this instrument, remarks that, "heard at a distance there is nothing unpleasant in it, but something plaintive and soothing. Although no more than six tones can be produced from it, which besides do not belong to our gamut, but form intervals quite foreign to it, yet the kind of vocal sound of these tones, the uncommon nature of the rhythm, and even the oddness, I may say wildness of the harmony, give to this music a charm peculiar to itself."—*Travels in Southern Africa*, (English translation) vol. ii., p. 232.

21.—*Tightening famine's girdle round*—P. 17, l. 2.

In seasons of long continued drought, the Corannas are occasionally reduced to extreme destitution; and are then forced, like the Bushmen, to subsist on wild roots, ants, and locusts. On such occasions, they are accustomed to wear a leathern band bound tightly round their middle, which they term 'the girdle of famine.' The Arabs of the Desert are said to employ a similar contrivance to alleviate the pangs of hunger, and call it 'the girdle of emptiness.'

22.—*The free-born Kosa*—P. 18, l. 1.

That tribe of Caffers whose territory is now divided from the colony by the river Keisi, or Keiskamma, are, in their own language, designated the *Amakósa*, and their country *Amakosîna*. These are collective terms, formed from the word *Kosa*, which denotes an individual of the tribe, by adding the prefix *ama*, according to the regular usage of their language. The Chumi, Debè, and Kalumna, are border streams in the Amakosa territory. —See Nar., p. 412.

23.—*With fragrant hoard of honey-bee*
*Rifled from the hollow tree*—P. 18, l. 12.

In the country of the Amakosa wild honey is found plentifully, and the natives very frequently avail themselves of the assistance of the Honey-bird, or Bee-cuckoo (*Cuculus Indicator*), in searching for it. This bird, which is of a cinereous colour, and

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

somewhat larger than the common sparrow, is well known in South Africa for its extraordinary faculty of discovering the hives or nests of the wild bees, which in that country are constructed either in hollow trees, in crevices of the rocks, or in holes in the ground. Being extremely fond of honey, and of the bees' eggs, or larvæ, and at the same time unable, without assistance, to obtain access to the bee-hives, nature has supplied the Indicator with the singular instinct of calling to its aid certain other animals, and especially man himself, to enable it to attain its object. This is a fact long ago established on the authority of Sparrman, Vaillant, and other scientific travellers in Southern Africa; and, in Father Lobo's Travels in Abyssinia, a similar account is given of the Moroc, a bird found in that country, of precisely the same habits, and apparently of the same family with the *Cuculus Indicator* of the Cape of Good Hope.

With the habits of this curious bird I was myself acquainted during my residence in the interior of the Cape colony, and have often partaken of wild honey procured by its guidance. It usually sits on a tree by the way side, and, when any passenger approaches, greets him with its peculiar cry of *cherr-a-cherr! cherr-a-cherr!* If he shows any disposition to attend to its call, it flies on before him, in short flights, from tree to tree, till it leads him to the spot where it knows a bee-hive to be concealed. It then sits still and silent till he has extracted the honeycomb, of which it expects a portion as its share of the spoil; and this share the natives who profit by its guidance never fail to leave it.

Sparrman states that the Ratel, or Honey-badger (*Gulo Mellivorus*), avails itself of the help of this bird to discover the retreat of those bees that build their nests in the ground, and shares with it the plunder of them. Some of the Hottentots assert, also, that to obtain access to the hives in hollow trees, the Honey-bird sometimes calls to its aid the Woodpecker, a bird which finds in the larvæ, or young bees, a treat as enticing to its taste as the honey is to that of its ingenious associate. I cannot vouch, on my own knowledge, for the truth of the latter statement; but as it seems quite in conformity with the general habits of this singular bird, it may, at all events, be admitted as sufficient *poetical* authority for the following little fable, which, though written only for juvenile readers, has a moral serious enough to entitle it to a place among these African notices:—

THE Honey-bird sat on the yellow-wood tree,
And aye he was singing—'*Cherr-cherr-a, cu-coo-la!*'
A-watching the hive of the blithe Honey-bee,
'*Cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a cu-coo-la!*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

The bee-hive was built in the hollow-tree bole,
' *Cher-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a cu-coo-la !* '
Without any entrance but one little hole,
' *Cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a cu-coo-la !* '

The Bees they flew in, and the Bees they flew out,
' *Boom-a-boo, foom-a-boo, boom-a-buzz-zoola !* '
And they seemed to buzz round with a jeer and a flout,
' *Boom-a-boo, foom-a-boo, boom-bom-a-boo-la !* '

But the Honey-bird swore by the Aasvogel's* bill,
' *Cherr-a-cherr, Aasvogel, gobb-a gob-oo-la !* '
Of their honey-comb he would soon gobble his fill,
' *Cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, gobble-a-goola !* '

So he flew to the Woodpecker—'Cousin,' quoth he,
' *Cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a cu-coo-la !* '
' Come, help me to harry the sly Honey-bee,
' *Cherr-a-cherr, Wood-peck-er, cherr-a chop-hoola !* '

Says the Woodpecker, gravely, 'To rob is a crime,
' *Tic-a-tac, tic-a-tac, chop-at-a-hoola—*
' Besides, I hate honey, and cannot spare time,
' *Tic-a-tac, tic-a-tac, snap-at-a-snoola !* '

Quoth the Honey-bird, 'Cousin, reflect, if you please,
' *Cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a cu-coo-la !*
' The honey-comb's half-full of juicy young bees,
'*Cherr-a-cherr, cherr-a-cherr, gobble-a-goola !* '

'Ha! ha!' cries the Woodpecker, 'that's a strong plea—
' *Tic-a-tac, tic-a-tac, tac-at-a-foola !*
' I now see the justice of robbing the Bee—
' *Tic-a-tac, tic-a-tac, snap-at-a-snoola !* '

' They're a *polypode* race, and have poisonous stings—
' *Tic-a-tac, tic-a-tac, chop-at-a-hoola !*
' And then they're but *insects*—and insects are *things*—
' *Tic-a-tac, tic-a-tac, snap-at-a-snoola !* '

So the bee-hive was harried; and, after their toil,
'*Cherr-a-cherr,*' '*tic-a-tac,*' '*snap-at-a-snoola !*'
The jolly birds jested while parting the spoil,
'*Cherr-a-cherr,*' '*tic-a-tac,*' '*gobble-a-goola !*'

---

* *Aasvogel*, the Vulture. One of the most common species in South Africa is the *Percnopterus*, the Sacred Vulture of the Egyptians.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

'Poor Pigeons may prate about Natural Rights,'
Quoth the Honey-bird, '*Coorr-a-moo, coorr-a-mur-roo-ra!*'—
'But the merry Owl mocks such Poetical Flights,'
Quoth the Woodpecker,—'*Hu-hu-hoo! tu-whit! tu-whoor-r-a!*'

While thus with pungent jibe and jest
The friends gave relish to their feast,
Suddenly burst on their ear
Sounds of tumult, fury, fear—
The rush of steeds, the musket's rattle,
The female shriek, the shout of battle,
The bellowing of captured cattle.
— Flew the startled birds on high,
Of this rout the cause to spy.
Perched upon the topmost bough,
Quoth Cuculus, 'I see it now:
'Those unfeathered bipeds, MEN,
'Are at their bloody work again;
'Dutch and British in a band
'Are come to rifle Cafferland.
'Lo, like bees around their hive,
'The dusky Amakosa strive;
'But they buzz and sting in vain,
'The honey-nest—the kraal is ta'en*:
'Young and old in death are lying,
'And the harried swarm are flying;

* The comparison of a Caffer kraal to a 'honey-nest' is borrowed from Colonial phraseology; and my friend John Tzatzoe, the Christian Caffer chief, gives the following illustration of its application:—In the close of 1816 or beginning of 1817, when the Colonial Government was in amity and alliance with Gaika, a commando was sent into Cafferland to attack Islambi. A letter was written to Mr. Williams the missionary, then settled under Gaika's protection at the Kat River, desiring him to apprise Gaika that the commando was entering the country, but that neither Gaika nor any of his adherents were the objects of it, but his enemy Islambi. The expedition accordingly marched in the direction of Islambi; but they found that chief so well prepared to give them a warm reception, that the boors, who formed a principal part of the commando, became frightened, and said to the commander, Major Fraser, "You should never attack a honey-nest behind, but always in front. If we go farther into Cafferland, Islambi may cut us off: let us attack Gaika in front." Major Fraser, says Tzatzoe, weakly allowed himself to be persuaded. The commando suddenly turned, and fell upon Gaika's kraals, along the Kat and Koonap rivers; killed one of Gaika's chiefs, and one chief and seven men of Enno's clan, and swept off an immense number of cattle.—*See South African Advertiser for November* 17, 1832, *and March* 10, 1833.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

'While around the cattle-pen
'Loudly laugh the 'Christian men'!
'How can Dutch or English care
'For Africans with woolly hair?
'What care they who dies or lives?
'They have got the bonny beeves.
'And, to hallow this day's work,
'They'll tithe the spoil to build a kirk! *
— 'Faugh! I hate that smell of blood,—
'Let us down into the wood—
'Let us back unto our feast—
' *We're* no hypocrites at least!'

24.—*The honey-mead, the millet-ale*—P. 19, l. 9.

A sort of mead, called honey-beer by the Hottentots, and *boialloa* by the Bechuanas, is used both by these tribes and the Caffers. Of millet beer or ale the Caffers have two kinds, the common sort termed *chaloa*, and the stronger *inguya*. The millet (*Sorghum*) is first carefully malted, afterwards boiled in large earthen pots, and then regularly fermented with the aid of a root, which appears greatly to increase the inebriating effects of the liquor. This native beverage is used on all festive occasions, when war-songs of the most exciting character, and recited with much gesticulation, form usually one of the chief entertainments.—(See Lichtenstein, vol. i. p. 271; Burchell, vol. ii. p. 552; Thompson, vol. ii. p. 260; Kay, p. 371, 375).

25.—*Stretched by his Gulúwi's side*—P. 20, l. 10.

*Gulúwi*, here used as a female proper name, signifies literally the *Loory* or *Touracoo* (*Corythaix*). It is customary with the Caffers to give the names of animals, flowers, and other natural objects to persons. *Moya*, the name of a Caffer female of rank (see p. 47), signifies literally the Wind.

26.—*The spekboom spreads its bowers*—P. 22, l. 9.

The *Spekboom* (*Portulacaria Afra*), a favourite food of the elephant, is a succulent arboreous evergreen, found in great abundance in many parts of the Colony, and, when profusely covered in summer with its lilac-like blossoms, has a very lively appearance.

27.—*The bright-blossomed bean-tree*—P. 22, l. 13.

The *Hottentot Bean-tree* is the *Guaiacum Afrum*, or *Schotia*

* Colonel Brereton's commando in 1818 plundered the Caffers of more than 23,000 head of cattle. A large number of these cattle were sold, and 3,000 rix-dollars of the proceeds were allotted to build a church at Uitenhage. This consecrated fund was, however, afterwards devoted by the local authorities to a different purpose.—(See page 427.)

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

*Speciosa*, of botanists. It grows abundantly in some parts of the Glen-Lynden valley; and its clusters of scarlet flowers, intermingled with the small and elegant dark green foliage, give it a remarkable pre-eminence among the trees of the cleughs, and the thick shrubbery on the lower declivities of the hills. The seeds of this leguminous plant are eaten by the natives,—whence its colonial name. The *Caffer Bean-tree* (*Erythrina Caffra*) is also a splendid flowering tree.—See Nar., p. 233.

Among several other beautiful flowering trees found in the forests of Glen-Lynden, the Koonap, and the Boschberg, one of the most remarkable is the *Sophora Sylvatica* (Burch.) This tree sometimes attains the height of thirty feet, and rivals our laburnum in a profusion of bunches of fine yellow blossoms. It produces flowers even in the deepest shade of the forest.

28.—*Brilliant as the glancing plumes*
*Of sugar-birds among its blooms*—P. 22, l, 15.

"The delicate humming-birds (*Trochili*) of South America," says Mr. Burchell, "are in Southern Africa represented by the *Nectariniæ*, here called by the Dutch Colonists *Suiker-vogels*, (sugar-birds,) from having been observed, at least in the neighbourhood of Cape Town, to feed principally on the honey of the flowers of the *Suiker-bosch* (*Protea mellifera*)." In the interior parts of the Colony, where this species of *protea* does not prevail, I have seen at certain seasons of the year several species of *Nectariniæ* or *Certhiæ*, sometimes so numerous as to seem almost like a hive of bees, fluttering about various flowery shrubs, and sucking with their long sickle-shaped bills the honied sweets. The iridescent and brilliant colours of these beautiful little birds, outrivalling the blossoms among which they feed and sport, render them very attractive; and one species (the *Chalybea*) has a clear melodious note, and sings delightfully.

29.—*The skipping reebok*—P. 22, l. 20.

The *Reebok* (*Antilope Capreolus* or *Villosa*), abounding in Glen-Lynden and the mountainous country around, is one of the smaller species of antelopes. These animals are generally found in pairs; and run with wonderful rapidity. The fur, which is of a cinereous colour, is of a soft, curly, and woolly texture.

30.—*The duiker*—P. 23, l. 7.

The *Duiker*, or Diver, (*Antilope Mergens*), is so named on account of its peculiar mode of plunging among the brushwood when startled or pursued. It inhabits bushy countries.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

31.—*The Bushman's Cave*—P. 23, l. 17.

We discovered among the rocks of Glen-Lynden two or three caves, or rather dens, which bore the obvious traces of having formerly afforded shelter or concealment to the Bushman race, by whom the whole of this district appears, at no very remote period, to have been inhabited. On the sides of those caverns or overhanging rocks many of the rude paintings of the Bushmen are still visible. They are executed chiefly with a sort of red ochre; and represent with considerable spirit herds of various wild animals, and the hunters in pursuit of them. The paintings of the Bushmen are well described in Mr. Barrow's Travels, vol. ii. p. 239.

32.—*The grim satyr-faced baboon*—P. 23, l. 19.

*Cercopithecus Ursinus.*—See Nar., p. 274.

33.—*The guana's glassy pool*—P. 24, l. 21.

The Cape Guana, or *Leguan*—See Nar., p. 286.

34.—*The palmite's leafy screen*—P. 25, l. 1.

The Palmite, *Acorus Palmita*, is a tall water plant.

35.—*Cradle-nests*—P. 25, l. 5.

See Narrative, p. 279.

36.—*The white man's servile thrall*—P. 26, l. 7. 8.

The Hottentot, in his state of debasement.—See Nar., p. 391.

37.—*A naked, homeless exile he*—P. 26, l. 17. 18.

The Bechuana Refugee.—See Nar., p. 360.

38.—*Adder coiled upon the path*—P. 27, l. 18.

The Night-adder is referred to.—See Nar. p. 280.

39.—*Call Arend and Ekhard and Groepe*—P. 28, l. 3.

Arend or Arendz, Ekhard, and Groepe, were three of the principal families of our Mulatto tenants.—See Nar., pp. 237, 255.

40.—*Muller and Coetzer and Lucas Van Vuur*—P. 28, l. 4.

The brothers Diederik and Christian Muller, two of our Dutch-African neighbours, then residing near the Zwart-Kei, were among the most intrepid lion-hunters in South Africa. They had between them killed upwards of thirty lions—not without some hair-breadth escapes. Diederik was deaf in one ear, from the effects of the clutch of a lion, which his brother shot while he was lying under it. Others of their adventures may be seen in the appendix to Thompson's Travels, vol. ii. p. 379. Diederik, who was a fine,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

frank, generous-hearted man, was quite a favourite with us all, and accompanied me on several of my excursions into the wild parts of the country. On my finally leaving Glen-Lynden, in order to testify his regard for me, he went out and shot a lion and sent me the skin and skull as a parting gift. He closed his earthly career two or three years afterwards, in a mode quite accordant with the habits and ruling passion of his life. He had been for some time confined at home by a pulmonary complaint; but, tiring of inactivity, he urged so strenuously his brothers and his friend Mr. George Rennie (who had become almost as fond of this perilous pastime as the Mullers) to accompany him on a hunting expedition into Caffer-land, that, in spite of their apprehensions for his health, they at length consented, and set out together with a Mr. Gisborne, an Englishman, like themselves an enthusiastic hunter. They had not been above a week or two in the woods, however, before poor Diederik became dangerously ill. His friends endeavoured to convey him to his brother's house on the frontier; but he did not live to reach it. He died where he had most delighted to live—in the wilderness.—See Nar., p. 262.

The Coetzer mentioned in the text was Arend, one of the sons of our neighbour old Winzel, of Eland's-drift.

Lucas Van Vuur (or Van Vuuren) was a tall, dark, muscular man, with a bushy, coal-black beard, and an eye like an eagle's. He was for some time one of our nearest neighbours at Glen-Lynden, where he occupied the farm of Lyndoch—Cleugh, the property of Mrs. Colonel Graham. He usually carried a huge elephant gun, as long and unwieldy as himself; but he had left it at home on the following occasion, when he had most special need of it. Lucas was riding across the open plains near the Little Fish River, one morning about day-break, when observing a lion at a distance, he endeavoured to avoid him by making a circuit. There were thousands of springboks scattered over the extensive flats; but the lion, from the open nature of the country, had probably been unsuccessful in hunting. Lucas soon perceived at least that he was not disposed to let *him* pass without further parlance, and that he was rapidly approaching to the encounter; and being without his *roer*, and consequently little inclined to any closer acquaintance, he turned off at right angles, laid the sjambok freely to his horse's flank, and galloped for life. But it was too late. The horse was fagged, and bore a heavy man on his back; the lion was fresh, and furious with hunger, and came down upon him like a thunder-bolt. In a few minutes he overtook Lucas, and, springing up behind, brought horse and man in an instant to the ground. Luckily the boor was unhurt, and the lion was too eager in worrying the horse to pay any immediate attention to the rider. Hardly knowing himself

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

how he escaped, he contrived to scramble out of the fray, and made a clean pair of heels of it till he reached the nearest house. Lucas, when he gave me the details of this adventure, made no observation on it as being any way remarkable, except in the circumstance of the lion's audacity in pursuing a 'Christian man,' (*Christen mensch*) without provocation, in open day. But what chiefly vexed him in the affair was the loss of the *saddle*. He returned next day with a party of friends to search for it, and take vengeance on his feline foe; but both the lion and saddle had disappeared, and nothing could be found but the horse's clean picked bones. Lucas said he could excuse the *schelm* for killing the horse, as he had allowed himself to get away, but the felonious abstraction of the saddle (for which, as he gravely observed, the lion could have no possible use) raised his spleen mightily, and called down a shower of curses whenever he told the story of this hair-breadth escape.

41.—*Slinger and Allie and Dikkop and Dugal*—P. 28, l. 6.

Slinger, Allie, and Dikkop, were Hottentot servants on the location. The first is mentioned at page 390 of Nar. Dugal was a Bushman lad, placed under my charge by Landdrost Stockenstrom in 1820. He was but partially *tamed*, poor fellow, and used to take himself off to the wilds, occasionally, for two or three days at a time; but always returned when he tired of the *veld-kost* (country food, *i. e.* wild roots). I named him Dugal after Sir Walter Scott's 'Son of the Mist' of that name.

42.—*We'll send to Sir Walter*—P. 31, l. 3.

See note at page 261 of Narrative.

43.—*The tall Giraffe*—P. 32, l. 12.

The sketch in the text was borrowed from an account given me by old Teysho, a Bechuana Chief, of the mode taken by the Lion to surprise the Giraffe or Camelopard, when that magnificent animal comes to drink at the fountains of the wilderness.

44.—*The vultures, wheeling overhead*—P. 34, l. 2.

There are several species of the vulture in South Africa, some of which, such as the black vulture of the Winterberg, are of very large size. One of the most common is the *vultur percnopterus*. These fowls divide with the hyænas the office of carrion-scavengers; and the promptitude with which they discover and devour every dead carcase is truly surprising. They also instinctively follow any band of hunters, or party of men travelling, especially in solitary places; wheeling in circles high in the air, ready to pounce down on any game that may be shot and not instantly secured, or on the carcase of any ox or other animal that may perish on the road. I have seen a large ox so dexterously handled by a flock of



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

these voracious fowls, that, in the course of three or four hours, not a morsel except the bones and the skin (which they had contrived to *disincarnate* entire) remained for the hyænas.

45.—*Eildon's pastures green*—P. 35, l. 2.

See Narrative, p. 239.

46.—*The Snowberg's wintry wind*—P. 35, l. 6.

The *Sneeuwbergen* (Snowy Mountains) lie north-west from Glen-Lynden, from which direction the wind blows sometimes very cold in winter.—See Nar. p. 293.

47.—*Beneath an umbra-tree*—P. 35, l. 10.

The tree to which I have given the above name, is termed by the Dutch-African Colonists the *witte-gat boom* (white-bark tree). It is an evergreen, with a small dark-green leaf and a light-coloured stem, rising generally to the height of ten or twelve feet, and then spreading out into an umbrella-shaped top, exactly as represented in the Vignette. One of these trees happened to grow close to the spot where I erected my bee-hive cabin, and offered its shade very commodiously for a summer seat.

I may add that the Vignette gives a very accurate representation, not only of our reed-cabin and the character of the scenery surrounding it, but also of the costume of the natives, namely, a Hottentot herdsman and boy, with their sheep-skin carosses, and a Caffer chief with his wife and attendants. The character and costume of the natives are also extremely well preserved in the Frontispiece.

48.—*I pictured you, sage Fairbairn, at my side*—P. 35, l. 13.

At the date of this 'Epistle,' Mr. Fairbairn was resident at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He is now Editor of the South African Advertiser at Cape Town. What he has done and suffered for South Africa may be partly estimated by referring to the Narrative.—See pp. 311, 332, 342, 489—493.

49.—*Vytjé Vaal*—P. 37, l. 5.

*Vytjé* is a Dutch diminutive for Sophia, and *Vaal* signifies a pale reddish colour, the hue of a faded leaf—which is precisely the colour of the Hottentot. The girl's real name, however, was Vytjè Dragoener. She was a native of Bethelsdorp, and was an extremely faithful, neat-handed, and respectable servant; and most affectionately attached to her Mistress.

50.—*Our broad-tailed mutton, small and fine*—P. 37, l. 8.

The broad-tailed sheep of Southern Africa is long-legged, small in the body, and has little fat except on its tail; but the flesh when young is very well flavoured, not unlike Welsh or Highland

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

mutton. Mr. Barrow has given a description and engraving of the Cape sheep. See his Travels, vol. i., p. 67.

51, 52.—*A paauw, which beats your Norfolk turkey hollow; Korhaan, and Guinea-fowl, and pheasant follow.* P. 37, l. 12, 13.

The *Wilde Paauw* (wild peacock) is a large species of *Otis*, about the size of the Norfolk bustard, and is esteemed the richest flavoured of all the African feathered game. The spread of its wings is about seven feet, and the whole length of the bird about three feet and a half. Two smaller species of bustard are known by the name of *Korhaans*.

The Guinea-fowl is plentiful in the valleys at certain seasons of the year. Partridges also, of several species, are abundant; but the bird called a *Pheasant* at the Cape is a sort of grouse, or rather a species intermediate between the grouse and the partridge.

All these, and other sorts of game, we had *occasionally;* but the reader must not suppose they were always so very plentiful, or so easily procured, that we could on any day of the year have thus feasted a chance visiter. But if I might *conjure* my guest from England, I might also *conjure* my game from the woods and hills.

53.—*Trees, grafts, and layers must have time to grow*—P. 38, l. 6.

See Narrative, pp. 166, 242.

54.—*Though it keeps the old Kaap smaak,*
*The wine is light and racy*—P. 39, l. 2.

Some of the lighter Cape wines are occasionally found of good quality and agreeable flavour, though seldom *altogether* free of the earthy taste, or *Kaap smaak*, which seems peculiar to the soil or climate.

55.—*Beside yon Kranz*—P. 43, l. 6.

*Kranz*, in colonial usage, signifies a steep cliff or overhanging rock, such as the Bushmen often select for depicting their rude sketches on. One of these is close to Craig-Rennie. See Note 31.

56.—*Captain Harding at Three Fountains*—P. 43, l. 17.

Captain Harding, now deceased, a very intelligent officer, who had seen much foreign service, was Deputy-Landdrost of Cradock at the time of our location, and for several years afterwards. We had frequent friendly intercourse with him and his family.—See Narrative, pp. 154, 163, 183, 237, 431.

57.—*Landdrost Stockenstrom at Graaff-Reinét*—P. 43, l. 21.

Captain Andrew Stockenstrom, a native of the Cape Colony, entirely educated in it, and who, until he came to Europe in 1833, was never in any other country than South Africa, is a man



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

of uncommon merit. I have had occasion so frequently to mention this gentleman in the course of my Narrative, that it is unnecessary here to add more than the mere references to the pages where his name occurs.—See Nar. pp. 163, 188, 189, 193, 194, 196, 201, 226, 227, 293, 356, 394, 401—409, 433, 434, 435, 458, 459, 463, 466, 470, 472, 495.

58.—*Hart, Devenish, Stretch*—P. 44, l. 9.

Half-pay officers, then employed in the superintendence of Somerset Farm, with all of whom and their families we had frequent intercourse.—See pp. 146, 147, 161, 162, 166, 185, 201, 222, 223, 230, 423.

59.—*Bird, Sanders, Morgan, Rogers, Pettingal*—P. 44, l. 12.

Officers stationed at the military posts of Roodewal and Kaha, or engaged in the government survey of the neighbouring country.

60.—*The gay-humoured Captain Fox*—P. 44, ll. 17, 24.

Captain (now Lieutenant-Col.) C. R. Fox paid me a visit in my bee-hive cabin in 1822; and I had the pleasure of introducing him to a couple of lion-hunters and a 'covey of elephants.' (See Nar., pp. 247—251). Six years afterwards we chanced to meet again in London, 'among books and men,' when he repaid me (how amply I need not add) by seating me at his English fireside with Sir James Mackintosh and the poet Rogers.

——— " The tale, brief though it be, as strange,
As full, methinks, of wild and wondrous change,
As any that the wandering tribes require,
Stretched in the desert round their evening fire."

---

" Hail, sweet Society! in crowds unknown,
Though the vain world would claim thee for its own.
Still where thy small and cheerful converse flows,
Be mine to enter ere the circle close.
Where in retreat ——— lays his thunder by,
And Wit and Taste their mingled charms supply;
* * * * * *
Where genius sheds its evening sunshine round,
Be mine to listen; pleased yet not elate,
Ever too modest or too proud to rate
Myself by my companions, self-compell'd
To earn the station that in life I held."

ROGERS'S POEMS.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

61.—*We welcome Smith or Brownlee, grave and good, Or fervid Read*—P. 45, l. 2.

I feel it to be truly an honour and a privilege to 'enter on my list of friends' these three excellent and meritorious men.

The Rev. Alexander Smith, district clergyman of Uitenhage, is a most exemplary Christian Pastor: nor know I how to express a higher eulogy. Of the Rev. John Brownlee, Missionary in Caffer-land, I shall only say, that I have endeavoured faithfully to pourtray his character in the sonnet entitled 'The Good Missionary.' (See page 108). His valuable Notes on the Caffers have been constantly referred to in my chapter upon that topic.

Mr. Read was the friend and fellow-labourer of Dr. Vanderkemp; and his services as a missionary among the Hottentot people have been inestimable. I have had occasion frequently to mention him in the Narrative. (See pp. 356, 382, 389, 406, 408, 429, 464, 467, 475). Mr. Read married a woman of the Hottentot race, and his family are consequently Mulattoes, a circumstance which in South Africa still involves a *social* proscription (though the 50th Ordinance has swept off all *legal* disabilities) only inferior to that existing in the United States: but now that the dragon Slavery is destroyed, its odious brood, the prejudices of caste and colour, must ere long also expire. Having on various occasions been a visiter for several days together in Mr. Read's house, I am enabled to add, that nothing can be more truly respectable and becoming than the whole demeanour of Mrs. Read and her well educated and intelligent family, all of whom are now most diligently and successfully occupied in conducting Infant and Sunday schools at the Kat River, among the rescued remnant of their long oppressed brethren.

62.—*Comes Philip with his apostolic tent*—P. 45, l. 6.

The Rev. Dr. Philip, Superintendent of the Missions of the London Missionary Society, and author of 'Researches in South Africa.' In his missionary journeys, Dr. Philip used to travel with a tent attached to the tilt of his waggon, to which the expression in the text refers, and in the shade of which, seated with him and the Missionaries Read and Brownlee, in the wilds of Bruintjes-hoogtè and Camdeboo, I learned much of the African race which it has been pleasant and profitable to remember. Of Dr. P.'s labours and merits I have spoken in the Narrative. See pp. 332, 334, 349, 356, 358, 366, 367, 368, 372, 392, 395, 400, 477, 483.

63.—*Ingenious Wright*—P. 45, l. 7.

The Rev. William Wright (now Dr. Wright), a gentleman of no ordinary acquirements in Biblical erudition, of which he has just given a valuable proof in his translation of Seiler's *Herme-*

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

*neutics*, or ' Art of Biblical Interpretation,' with notes. He resided for ten years at the Cape, in the service of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and was the only clergyman of the Church of England in the colony, during my residence there, who was friendly to the freedom, or active in promoting the improvement, of the coloured classes. He founded a school at Wynberg in 1821, and another at Cape Town in 1822, where free coloured and slave children were instructed; and he maintained the latter school entirely at his own expense until it was taken out of his hands by the colonial government in Oct. 1823, and exhibited to the Commissioners of Inquiry as an institution ' established by the government itself, for the instruction of slave children!' This, indeed, was only one scene of the extraordinary farce which was then performed, and in which several grave functionaries, lay and ecclesiastical, acted the degrading parts assigned them, with a view to *mystify* the Commissioners; but into the details of which (afterwards well known to the Commissioners themselves) I shall not here enter. Suffice it to say, that Dr. Wright, who was too honest and free of speech to be made a political tool in these disreputable transactions, and who, on the contrary, furnished much useful information to the Commissioners, became an object of bitter persecution. Injury and insult were heaped upon him in the colony, and he was moreover studiously calumniated to his own Society in England; by whom he was thereupon charged with having ' formed connexions with persons *ill-affected to the* CHURCH,' merely because he kept company and sat on Committees with such respectable individuals as Dr. Philip, Mr. Fairbairn, &c.! The Propagation Society, I am constrained to add, instead of affording due encouragement and support to their African Missionary, not only gave ready reception to these *secret* calumnious reports from the *most impure sources* (through whatever *channels* conveyed), but *acted* upon them in preference to the favourable statements of the upright General Bourke, who became the warm friend of Dr. Wright, and made ample and encouraging arrangements for the discharge of his duties on the frontier of the colony. The Propagation Society, however, not only discountenanced those arrangements in favour of their Missionary, after they had received the sanction of the Secretary of State, but treated Dr. Wright with such glaring and intolerable injustice, that, being at the same time assailed with violent popular prejudice in the colony on account of his opinions in favour of the coloured race, he found it necessary to return to England in 1830. Here, unable to obtain either redress or investigation, and treated in every respect by the managers of the Society with the most supercilious disregard, he had eventually no alternative but to

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

resign his colonial appointments. Having witnessed with disgust all this, and much more that I cannot here allude to, I print this notice expressly in the hope that it may meet the eyes of respectable and upright men connected with the Propagation Society, and lead to some scrutiny into this and such like cases.—See Nar. pp. 357, 358, 359, 394, 409, 464.

64.—*Or steadfast Rutherfoord*—P. 45, l. 7.

Mr. H. E. Rutherfoord, an English merchant of Cape Town.—See Nar. pp. 122, 330, 348, 349.

65.—*The Amatembu Chief*—P. 47, l. 1.

With Powána, and his clan of the Amatembu Caffers, we had friendly intercourse on several occasions; but the scene in the text is a poetical fiction.—See Nar. pp. 361, 465.

66.—*Amanglézi friends*—P. 47, l. 6.

*Amanglézi* is the plural of *Englézi*, i. e. *English*, according to Caffer pronunciation. In the same manner the word *Boor* is euphonically transformed into *Ibúlu*, of which the plural becomes *Amabúlu* by the usual prefix of *ama*.

67.—*Fair Hawthornden and homely Hyvotmill*—P. 49, l. 4.

Hyvotmill is a farm-house between Hawthornden and Edinburgh, the residence of Mr. Fairbairn's family relatives at the time of our first acquaintance.

68.—*The green-monkey gambols*, &c.—P. 50, l. 12.

The green-monkey (*Cercopithecus glaucus*) is a long-tailed ape, inhabiting the forests. Its Caffer name is *imkáo*.

69.—*And bids me speak his will*—P. 52, l. 8.

See Narrative, pp. 428, 429, 430, 438.

70.—*Sons of Káhabee*—P. 52, l. 10.

Káhabee, or Káhabi, the father of Islambi, Jalúhsa, Seko, &c. and grandfather of Gaika, is considered the patriarch of all the frontier clans, except the Amandanka and Gunuquebi, and his descendants and their vassals are to this day always addressed as 'Sons of Káhabi.' Hinza is the direct descendant from Galeka, the elder brother of Káhabi, and is, consequently, the chief highest in rank of the Amakosa tribe or nation.

71.—*Hark! 'tis Uhlanga's voice*—P. 53, l. 1.

The term *Uhlanga*, sometimes used by the frontier Caffers for the Supreme Being, is supposed by the Missionaries to be derived from *hlanganisa*, to join together. But from Mr. Kay's account of the Amakosa genealogy, it appears that *Uhlanga*, or *Thlanga*, is also the name of the oldest of their kings of whom there is any

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

tradition, and by whose name they always swore in former days. It seems to me, therefore, doubtful, whether the god Uhlanga be not merely a deified chief, or hero, like the Thor and Woden of our own Teutonic ancestors.

The names for the deity used more generally by the Caffer tribes are *Udali, Umdali,* or *Ulodali*, i. e. Former or Creator, from *dala*, to form or fashion, and *Umenzi*, i. e. Maker, from *enza*, to make; "and which," says Mr. Kay, "when used in a sacred sense, are fully understood as referring to that Being by whom the great works of nature were produced—the heavens, the earth, the sea," &c. The Hottentot word *Utíko* is now, however, used by all the frontier tribes to denote the Christian God.

72.—*Umláo's feeble sons*—P. 53, l. 7.

'Sons of Umláo' is the Caffer name for the Colonial Hottentots.

73.—*The wizard-wolves*, &c.—P. 54, l. 5.

One of the common superstitions of the Caffers is the belief that wolves or hyænas are employed by the sorcerers to commit ravages on those they dislike, and that sorcerers themselves sometimes assume the shape and habits of hyænas for destructive purposes. This superstition resembles in some respects that of the *loup-garou* of the dark ages.

74—*Half-way up Indóda, &c.*—P. 55, l. 1.

*Indôdo* or *Indôda Intába*, i. e., the Man Mountain, is a conical peaked hill in the Amakosa territory, so called from some resemblance it is supposed to bear to the human figure.

75.—*Jalúhsa's daughter*—P. 55, l. 11.

Jalúhsa, the brother of Islambi, was one of the principal chiefs arrayed against the English in 1819. But the description of his daughter as the widow of Makanna, and the whole scene of the incantation are fictions; though the latter is founded, in some measure, on native superstitions. Sacrifices are offered and invocations made on momentous occasions to the spirits of their ancestral chiefs (see Thompson, vol. ii., p. 352; Kay, p. 374); and the widows, during the period of mourning for their deceased husbands, cut and lacerate different parts of the body till the blood flows in streams. When Islambi died, his ten wives, according to the universal custom, were obliged to go into the wilderness, and to separate themselves by mourning, and fasting, &c., until the period of purification was over.

76.—Togu'h, *avenging king*—P. 56, l. 14.

Togúh, fourth in descent from Uhlanga, is one of the patriarch chiefs whose spirit is commonly invoked on great national occasions.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

77.—*'Tis our Caffer commando, &c.*—P. 58, l. 2.

*Commando* literally means a party *commanded*, or called out, for military purposes. In colonial phraseology, it is a term usually applied to any expedition against the natives.—See Narrative, pp. 368, 372, 416—458, 494, &c.

78.—*His tribe is extinct and their story forgot*—P. 58, l. 10.

The *Ghona* or *Ghonaqua* tribe is here referred to. This tribe, which formerly inhabited the country between the Keisi and Camtoos rivers, and of which so much has been written by former travellers, is now extinct. Of those who have survived the ravages of war and oppression, the greater part have become incorporated with the Gunuguebi clan of Caffers; and another remnant, formerly residing at the Kat River, under the ministry of the missionary Williams, have been partly re-assembled in that district with the other Hottentot settlers. Andrew Stoffels, one of the most intelligent men of that settlement, is a Ghona.—See Philip's Researches, vol. ii. p. 191.

79.—*With the Gunja and Ghona, &c.*—P. 58, l. 14.

The *Gunja* or *Gunjaman* tribe of Hottentots, was that which lived nearest the spot where Cape Town now stands, and who first ceded to the Dutch East India Company a tract of their country. Thunberg, who travelled in 1773, remarks that, in his time, this tribe was nearly extinct. At the present moment the work of extirpation is proceeding with accelerated rapidity in the regions beyond the Orange River.—See pp. 360, 372, 462, 486.

80.—*Dark Katta*—P. 59, l. 1.

The Katberg, or Kat Mountain.

81.—*The tiger-wolf*—P. 59, l. 5.

The colonial name for the *Hyæna Crocuta*.—See Nar. p. 267.

82.—*The klip-springer*—P. 65, l. 20.

The klip-springer, or rock-leaper (*Antilope oreotragus*), is so called from the amazing agility with which it springs from cliff to cliff among the crags and mountain rocks where it makes its abode. Its hoofs are adapted by a peculiar formation to enable it to traverse with security the giddy heights it delights to frequent.

83.—*The lone Macanzana*—P. 66, l. 1.

A branch of the Koonap river.—See Nar., p. 246.

84.—*The Dídima*—P. 68, l. 1.

A mountain between the sources of the Kat and Koonap.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

85.—*Green Camalú*—P. 70, l. 1.

Camalú, a glen at the source of the Kat River. The 'Captive of Camalú' is supposed to express the feelings of some of those Caffers and Ghonaquas converted by the missionary Williams, who, after the devastating wars of 1818, 1819, were forced to become bondmen among the Boors, or imprisoned in Robben Island.—See Philip's Researches, pp. 190—192.

86.—*The bounding bontèbok*—P. 70, l. 7.

*Antilope scripta.*

87.—*The umkóba tree*—P. 71, l. 5.

Caffer name for the yellow-wood tree.—See p. 219.

88.—*The prayer Jankanna taught*—P. 73, l. 17.

Jankanna was the name given to Dr. Vanderkemp by the Caffers. See Philip's Researches, vol. ii., p. 161.

89.—*Winterberg, stern giant, &c.*—P. 75, l. 2.

A lofty mountain on the frontier.—See Nar. pp. 244, 247.

90.—*Wizard Kat*—P. 75, l. 4.

The Kat River.—See Nar. p. 401.

91.—*To where Umtoka hies, &c.*—P. 75, l. 8.

Umtoka is a branch of the Kat.—See p. 401.

92, 93.—*Kùdù fawns, &c.*
*With harts, gazells, and roes, &c.*
—P. 76, ll. 5, 7.

By *harts* and *roes* are here meant *hartebeests* and *reeboks*; for *kùdù* and *gazelle*, see note 8.

94.—*The boschbok*—P. 76, l. 10.

*Antilope sylvatica.* This animal inhabits the thick forests; but at the dawn it leaves its sylvan retreats, and is to be seen feeding in the adjacent plains and valleys.

95.—*Rocky Katberg*—P. 76, l. 13.

A ridge of mountains bounding the Kat river on the east.

96.—*The elephant his shrill réveillé pealing*—P. 76, l. 19.

The voice of the elephant at a distance, and especially when heard at night among the mountains, bears a striking resemblance to the sound of a trumpet.—See Nar. p. 246.

97.—*Sicána's Hymn*—Pp. 77, 79.

Sicána, a secondary chief, or captain of a Caffer hamlet, at the Kat River, was one of the converts of the missionary Williams. This remarkable man composed the first Christian hymn, or sacred

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

song, ever expressed in his native tongue; and after the decease of his teacher, he continued to instruct his followers in the blessed truths he had learned, until his own death. See Philip's Researches, vol. ii., p. 186.

Sicána's Hymn, which I first heard sung to a plaintive native air, by some Christian Caffers who visited me at Glen-Lynden in 1825, was printed the following year in the New Monthly Magazine, from a copy with which I was furnished by Mr. Brownlee. It has been repeatedly reprinted since, as a curious specimen of a language remarkable for its euphonic rhythm, and for the peculiarities of its construction. Nor is it without great interest also in other respects. I now give it, with a literal translation, in which I have had the assistance of my ingenious and learned friend the Rev. Dr. Wright, who studied the language in the native hamlets of the Amakosa.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ulinguba Inkulu siambata tina,* | O thou Great Mantle which envelopes us, |
| *Ulodali bomi uadali pezula,* | Creator of the light which is formed in the heavens, |
| *Umdala, uadala, idala izula,* | Who framed and fashioned the heavens themselves, |
| *Yebinza inquinquis zixeliela;* | Who hurled forth the ever-twinkling stars; |
| *Utiko Umkulu gozizuline,* | O thou Mighty God of Heaven, |
| *Yebinza inquinquis, Nozilimele,* | Who whirlest round the stars—the Pleiades, |
| *Umzi uakonana subiziele,* | In thy dwelling place on thee we call, |
| *Umkokeli ua sikokeli tina,* | To be a leader and a guide to us, |
| *Uenze infama zenza ga bomi.* | O thou who to the blind givest light. |
| *Imali inkula, subiziele;* | Our great treasure, on thee we call; |
| *Wena wena q'aba inyaniza,* | For thou, O thou art the true rock; |
| *Wena wena kaka linyaniza,* | Thou, O thou art the true shield; |
| *Wena wena klati linyaniza.* | Thou, O thou art the true covert. |
| *Invena inh'inani sibiziele;* | On thee, O holy Lamb, we call, |
| *Ugaze laku ziman'heba wena,* | Whose blood for us was sprinkled forth, |
| *Usanhla zaku ziman'heba wena;* | Whose hands for us were pierced; |
| *Umkokeli ua, sikokeli tina,* | O be thou a leader and a guide to us, |
| *Ulodali bomi uadali pezula,* | Creator of the light which is formed in the heavens, |
| *Umdala, uadala, idala izula.* | Who framed and fashioned the heavens themselves. |

It is singular that the word *Nozilimé'lè*, or *Izilimélè*, the Pleiades, in the above hymn, signifies literally the *Cultivators;* because the Caffers begin to plant their millet at the season when this constellation assumes a certain position in the southern hemisphere. This reminds us of the expression in Job, "Canst thou bind *the sweet influences of Pleiades.*"

The tribes now *known* to speak, with but slight dialectic vriations, the language of which the above is a specimen, are computed to amount to at least 650,000 souls, besides innumerable hordes farther in the interior, who are supposed to speak the same tongue, but with whom Europeans have not yet come into contact. By the persevering labours of this missionaries, exerted in brotherly competition in this good work, nearly the whole of both the Old and New Testaments have now been translated into the Caffer tongue, together with a copious vocabulary, and some elementary school books and tracts. A complete grammar of this

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

language has also been just announced for publication at Graham's Town, by the Rev. Mr. Boyce, Wesleyan Missionary, by whom one of its remarkable peculiarities is thus described :—"With the exception of a change of termination in the ablative case of the noun, and five changes of which the verb is susceptible in its principal tenses, the whole business of declension, conjugation, &c., is carried on by prefixes, and by the changes which take place in the initial letters or syllables of words subject to grammatical government. As these changes, in addition to the precision they communicate to the language, promote its euphony, and cause the frequent repetition of the same letter as initial to many words in a sentence, this peculiarity, upon which the whole grammar of the language depends, has been termed the *Euphonic* or *Alliteral Concord*."

98.—*He loves the midnight thunder*—P. 80, l. 4.

Stormy nights are often selected by the Bushmen for making their predatory attacks. Sparrman states that they often rail at the thunder, and defy the lightning, with the exclamations *t'guzeri* and *t'gaunatzi*, which appear to be terms of sorcery or magical incantation. They make signals to each other, by night, by means of fires on elevated situations.

99.—*Luhéri high*—P. 80. l. 13.

Luhéri, sometimes called Gaika's hill, is an elevated peak of the ridge which overlooks the Kat River valley on the east.

100.—*The debt of malice*—P. 80, l. 20.

Alluding to the resentment of Makomo's clan, who had been driven out of the Kat River glen a few months before the settlement of the Hottentots.—See Nar. pp. 401, 403, 405, 407, 465.

101.—*The veld-kost*—P. 82, l. 4.

*Veld-kost*, literally *country-food*, is the term used for the wild roots and bulbs eaten by the Bushmen, and also by the Colonial Hottentots, on occasions of emergency. The edible bulbs, of which there are several kinds, are generally called *uyentjes* (onions) by the colonists. Among these *uyentjes* are the bulbs of the *iris edulis*, and of several other liliaceous plants, some of which, when roasted in the embers, have very much the flavour of a chestnut. The bulb of a species of *cyperus-grass*, about the size of a hazel nut, is a good deal used. What are called Hottentot-figs, or the fruit of many sorts of *mesembryanthemum*, are also considered *veld-kost*. —See Nar. p. 404.

102.—*To plant them in their ancient place*—P. 82, l. 8.

Many of the Ghonaqua Hottentots, as has been already noticed,

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

formerly resided on the Kat River, which belongs to the original territory of that tribe —See Note 79.

103.—*Brownlee and old Tsl.átshu side by side*—P. 84, l. 22.

The Caffer chief Tzatzoe (pronounced *Tsháts'hu*), who was formerly associated with Congo in the Zureveld, resided for some little time at Bethelsdorp with Dr. Vanderkemp, and left one of his sons to be educated by the missionaries. Young Tzatzoe, with whom I am personally acquainted, is now a well-informed and highly respectable man, and has become a most valuable missionary to his countrymen. In 1826 he accompanied Mr. Brownlee to the Buffalo River, in order to assist in establishing a missionary institution in the territory, and under the protection of his father, the aged chief. The poem entitled 'The Rock of Reconcilement' describes an *imaginary* scene; but yet drawn with a strict regard to truth, both as regards scenery and sentiment.—See Philip's Researches, vol. i. p. 102, and vol. ii., p. 197.

104.—*The Neutral Ground*—P. 85, l. 1.

See Narrative, pp. 244—246.

105.—*His horns were tearing my courser's flank*—P. 85, l. 8.

See Narrative, pp. 246, 269—272.

106.—*A Heemraad of Camdebóo*—P. 86, l. 9.

A Heemraad was a provincial functionary somewhat analogous to a justice of the peace, and was a member of the landdrost's board.

*Camdeboo*, a Hottentot word signifing *green elevations*, is a term applied to the projecting buttresses which support the Snowy Mountains, and which are mostly covered with verdure; and the adjacent district of country is called by that name.

107.—*From the black taint free*—P. 86, l. 15.

The prejudice of colour is so strong in the Cape colony, or at least was so a few years ago, that any white man who should *marry* a native or coloured female would be considered to have greatly degraded himself, if not to have altogether *lost caste*.—See Nar., p. 237; see also note 61.

108.—*The Bovenland*—P. 86, l. 17.

The term *Bovenland* (Upper-country) is used to signify those parts of the colony nearer to Cape Town, or Cape Town itself.

109.—*Long-barrelled roer*—P. 88, l. 2.

*Roer* signifies simply *gun*; but the term is more especially applied to the heavy long-barrelled guns used by the Boors for hunting elephants and other large game.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

110.—*Far o'er Bruintjes-hoogtè*—P. 88, l. 3.

*Bruintjes-hoogtè* (the Height of Bruintjè) is the appellation of a long ridge or elevation running out from the Boschberg, which bounds abruptly the arid plains of Camdeboo on the east.

111.—*Gauritz' fair glen.*—P. 88, l. 11.

The Gauritz river bounds the district of Swellendam on the east, and falls into the sea near Mossel bay.

112.—*Lone Zitzikamma*—P. 88, l. 12.

Zitzikamma is a wild tract of forest country, lying along the coast west of Camtoos river.—See Nar., p. 123.

113.—*The sons of the bond*—P. 90, l. 4.

By the Cape colonial laws, as by those of most other slave colonies, the children of a free man by a slave woman became legally the *property* of the *owner* of the female, unless where they could be proved to be that owner's own children. In this latter respect the Dutch colonial law was somewhat better than either the French or the English. But in the fictitious case given in the text, the children, as well as the mother, might be claimed as the property of the legal owner. The *story* of the poem is founded on facts, which occurred some years ago in a different quarter of the colony.

114.—*And dare not meet His eye*—P. 93, l. 16.

Long after the sketch entitled 'The Slave Dealer' was written, I found the following account of a case remarkably similar to the supposed one, related by the Rev. T. R. England at an Anti-slavery meeting at Cork, in September 1829:—

"One day I was sent for to visit a sailor who was approaching fast to his eternal account. On my speaking to him of repentance, he looked sullen and turned from me in the bed; of a great God, he was silent—of the mercy of that God, he burst into tears. 'Oh!' said he, 'I can never expect mercy from God. I was ten years on board a slave ship, and then superintended the cruel death of many slave. Many a time, amid the screams of kindred, has the sick mother, father, and newborn babe, been wound up in canvass and remorselessly thrown overboard. Now, their screams haunt me, night and day, and I have no peace and expect no mercy!'"

115.—*He has no gratitude*—P. 101, l. 14.

Such was the common allegation of the colonists respecting the Hottentots, and frequently have I heard it repeated. My own experience enables me totally to deny its truth. But as a body how could *gratitude* be *then* expected from them by the white men?—See their history in Nar., chap. xiii.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

116.—*The proud 'Christian men'*—P. 103, l. 14.

Christian men (*Christen menschen*) is the term always used by the Boors to distinguish themselves from the coloured races.

The Rev. Mr. Faure, formerly minister of Graaff-Reinét, mentioned to me, that having occasion in his clerical capacity to attend the execution of a Bushman malefactor, the savage fiercely interrupted his religious exhortation with the following exclamation:—"I knew you would kill me, you murderer! for my father always told me to beware of the White Men, because they would kill me, and I see he has spoken the truth."—See Nar., p. 366.

117.—*Franschehoek*—P. 105, l. 1.

The French Protestant refugees, who emigrated to the Cape of Good Hope on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, were settled by the Dutch government in the secluded valley of Franschehoek (or French Corner), so named from that circumstance. Here those meritorious men first introduced the cultivation of the vine, and other useful arts, which greatly tended to the improvement of the settlement.

118.—*Through lingering months*, &c.—P. 106, l. 14.

See Narrative, pp. 339—341.

119.—*Enon*—P. 107, l. 1.

See Narrative, pp. 208—221.

120.—*Hungry wolves from whom the prey was riven*—P. 109, l. 14.

See Narrative, pp. 392, 394, 483, &c.

121.—*I found a Nameless Stream among the hills*—P. 111, l. 1.

Having sent this Sonnet, written in a fit of despondency, to my friend Fairbairn, he kindly reproved the feeling I had indulged in it, by transmitting, by return of post, the following, in which, though tinged perhaps with a little mysticism, I 'owned the strain was of a higher mood:'

I found a Stream among the hills by night;
Its Source was hidden and its End unknown;
But Heaven was in its bosom, and the throne
Which there the Sun fills beautifully bright
Here held the lesser and the lovelier light;
Nor seemed the excelling beauty less alone
Because the Stars her handmaids round her shone,
And homelier Earth did with the throng unite.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026

I thought not of its Source nor of its Ending;
'Twas but the mirror of enchanting things,
Where Heaven and Earth, their softest graces blending,
Owned the new world which from their union springs.
Thus be my soul TRUTH's purified abode:
Whence, or for what, I am, is thine, O God!

I shall conclude my volume with another specimen of Mr. Fairbairn's poetry, which will probably cause the reader to share in the regret of his friends, that one who can write so well has written so little. It is entitled 'The Heart's Confessions:'—

HEART-wrung with grief and bitter care,
Thy wounds unsalved and bleeding still,
Who pierced thee thus, poor heart, declare?
—'Twas my own will.'

Thy will! What tempter, full of guile,
Could turn thee from thy hopes aside,
And life's young well with wrath defile?
—'Twas my own pride?'

Bad counsellor! When all around,
Great, Fair, and Good, conspired to move,
From humble joys what had thee bound?
—'Twas my self-love.'

Alas! the Charities were near,
The Duties too, an armed troop,
To guide, to fortify, to cheer—
—'I could not stoop.'

Faith stretched from heaven her golden key,
And Purity, twice born, before
The narrow portal beckoned thee.
—'I could not soar.'

Wretched! from earth and heaven returned
Empty, what findest thou within
To balance what thy madness spurned?
—'Error and sin!'

LONDON:
PRINTED BY BRADBURY AND EVANS, WHITEFRIARS.

Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026



Digitised by the Department of Library Services in support of open access to information, University of Pretoria, 2026