some narrow ledge on which hardly any other quadruped could find a secure footing, or bounding, as if by magic, along the verge of the precipice.

At the foot of a ravine, or "kloef,"* as it is here called, at the base of the mountain which supplied it with water for irrigation, was the garden, wherein the brilliant green of the orange and lemon contrasted with the more sombre hue of the chestnut. Beyond the house, the valley, after forming several verdant peninsulas, bounded by the steep banks of the rivulet fringed with brushwood and jungle, suddenly contracted into a narrow gorge between the mountains and the high grass hills; and, winding round to the right, again expanded into a little meadow of exquisite beauty, part of which the proprietor had laid out in an orchard. Here he had erected a small cottage, which was occupied by an old dragoon soldier and his Hottentot wife, together with a whole troop of hangers-on.

Above the point where the steep ascents ap-

* Or cleft,—an expressive term, of local origin, to describe those deep ravines which appear to be formed by some convulsion of Nature.

proached the mountains, appeared high rounded hills, densely wooded to their summits; and far overtopping the woodlands in the blue distance rose a lofty mountain, the commencement of a new range, extending for nearly two hundred miles to the eastward in a parallel line to the sea-coast.

This estate my brother had purchased from a Dutch colonist for 8000 rix dollars, or 600*l*., when he first came to the colony. Besides an excellent orchard, there was an extensive vineyard, which yielded seven or eight leaguers of indifferent wine, and about a leaguer of tolerable brandy. The dwelling-house was nearly a hundred years old, though only constructed of clay,—in a manner that, I believe, is peculiar to the colony, and which I shall presently describe.

From the inequality of the ground whereon the building stood, its back wings consisted of only one story, while in front it was high enough to admit of a couple of store-rooms beneath the principal entrance, which was approached by a flight of steps from the road. At the top of the stairs, on a level with the

front-door, was a platform, or "stoep," as it is here called, with a bench at each end, where the Dutch delight to sit of an evening and smoke their pipes. A long hall occupied the centre of the dwelling, communicating directly with the bed-rooms on each side. The floors of this hall, and those of most of the bed-rooms, were made of clay, which is washed over from time to time with a mixture of cowdung and water, to prevent the dust from accumulating.

In a Cape farmer's house there is no privacy. The family sit at one end of their long halls, while the other is a kind of thoroughfare for the slaves and house-servants pursuing their culinary occupations, who overhear the conversation and know all the most private affairs of their master and mistress nearly as well as they do themselves. This did not suit my brother's habits; and he had therefore put up a partition in the middle of the hall, which precluded the objectionable intimacy, and at the same time shut out the view of the milk-churn, which the Dutch, who have always an eye to profit, never like to lose sight of for a moment. He had likewise, to the great astonishment of his neigh-

bours, introduced the novelty of a fireplace in his sitting-room. So obstinate is early habit, that though the winter nights are often very cold, these settlers scarcely ever have recourse to this simple contrivance. I have often seen them seriously inconvenienced for the want of this common comfort in their long airy halls, until, after becoming bankrupt with regard to animal heat, they have been fairly driven to bed with their jolly "frows" before eight o'clock in the evening.

These clay edifices, when the material is of the proper quality, are more durable than such as are built with the bricks of the country. They are constructed in the following manner: —A hole is made in the ground as near as possible to the intended site, and, after throwing the upper soil aside, a quantity of clay is mixed with water and well trodden by the feet of oxen until it is of the proper consistence; that is to say, as stiff as they can work it. When the foundation of the house is dug out,—for they do not generally build foundations in this dry country,—large square lumps of the wrought clay are laid along the ground exactly in the man-

ner of building sod walls. When the first layer is placed all round and levelled with a spade, and the clay dried sufficiently, (which is very soon the case in this climate,) a second layer is arranged in the same manner above it, and so on till the wall is a few feet in height; and then they dress and level it with a sharp spade. This process is continued until the whole wall is completed. They afterwards make the roof, and thatch it by sewing successive layers of reeds or rushes to the rafters. This will give a sufficient idea of the simple operation of erecting a clay dwelling; and it is sometimes useful for colonists to know how to house themselves without the assistance of a regular mason, who is not always to be had in an infant settlement.

It may not be uninteresting to the reader to give him a slight sketch of the part of the colony I at this time inhabited, which my long residence afforded me ample opportunity of describing. The want of this kind of knowledge, which travellers have rarely time to acquire, has often led new settlers into the most unlucky mistakes as to the capabilities of the situations

they have selected for the scene of their exertions.

The climate of this colony is so dissimilar to that of Great Britain, and other European countries, that the system of agriculture to be pursued in it requires a corresponding modification. The most striking characteristic of the settlement, throughout its whole extent, is its dryness: this, however, is subject to considerable variations, arising from situation and other circumstances.

The success of the emigrant, in any particular branch of agriculture he may prefer, must therefore greatly depend on his knowledge of the local causes which affect the qualities of the soil, whether as to moisture and aridity, or as to its other inherent capabilities of becoming productive when sufficient humidity is not wanting.

In Great Britain I believe there are no situations which cannot be made to yield the different kinds of grain usually cultivated, from want of moisture *alone*. In South Africa it is otherwise; for a very large proportion of the country, simply from want of moisture, is totally

incapable of producing any kind of grain: though when this defect is obviated by artificial irrigation, it becomes so fruitful as to yield from eighty to a hundred-fold of wheat. It generally happens where grain can be cultivated without the aid of artificial irrigation, that the soil yields smaller returns in proportion to the quantity of seed sown.

Taking, therefore, a general view of the Cape settlement in reference to its climate and its want of inland navigation, it is to be regarded as better adapted for the purposes of stock-farming than for the culture of grain. I do not, however, mean to say, that when the population of the country shall have increased, and labour become more abundant, it may not be in a condition to extend its cultivation to such a degree as to leave a large surplus for exportation; but this can only apply to a comparatively small portion of its superficial extent, and to such situations as are within a convenient distance of its different sea-ports.

If we cast a glance at the map of the world, we shall observe that almost all the countries

situated in a similar latitude to the Cape colony are remarkable for their aridity; and where this observation does not hold good, it will be found that the rivers of such countries take their rise either within the influence of the tropical rains, or in higher latitudes where the atmospherical moisture is more abundant. The only exceptions we find to this general rule will be, where the land has a large portion of its interior surface covered with lofty mountains which attract and retain the exhalations from the sea and the earth.

These facts account satisfactorily for the aridity of the southern extremity of Africa, for none of its rivers rise between the tropics; and though it possesses lofty and extensive chains of mountains, these do not occupy a great part of its surface, for, as I have formerly remarked, they only intersect the country in narrow ranges, with extensive plains between them, and are thus insufficient to produce permanent rivers. There are also other local causes that account for the aridity of a region derived from the nature of its stratification; and, without the aid of an extensive knowledge

of geology, we may be able, by a little observation, to arrive at many useful conclusions as to the adaptation of a country, or any part of it, to the different purposes of agriculture. After these preliminary observations, I shall endeavour to communicate an idea to the reader of the nature of that portion of South Africa which suggested them.

The lofty chain of mountains near Groot Vaders Bosch, which, judging from Table Mountain, I should conjecture to be at least four thousand feet high, run nearly parallel to the coast at the distance of about forty miles. They consist of a single range of hard white sandstone, rising abruptly on the side next the sea; but they are much lower on the inland side, from the sudden elevation that takes place in the general level of the interior of the country. The effect of this arrangement is, that while the southern face of the mountains detains the clouds and exhalations borne by the winds from the sea, which descend in frequent showers and fertilize the land near them, on the northern side rain sometimes does

not fall for ten or twelve months together, though only at the distance of twelve or fifteen miles.

A narrow tract, from a mile to a mile and a half in breadth, in which Groot Vaders Bosch is situated, extends along the southern base of the mountains, and is capable of producing all kinds of grain and pulse without artificial irrigation; but still a running stream is requisite for fruit-trees and many kinds of vegetables. The ground in this narrow valley is manured every second or third year, and yields from fifteen to twenty-five returns of wheat on an average.

An European farmer would like to know the produce per acre; but I conceive that the multiplying power of the soil forms a better criterion to judge of its natural fertility. Land is here of little value, and the keep of oxen is next to nothing; so that it is more to the interest of the agriculturist to cultivate a large extent of ground in a rough way, in a country where the climate does so much for him. The soil of this valley is generally of a sandy clay,

and, as in almost every part of the colony, becomes so hard in dry weather, that without moistening rains no plough can touch it.

Proceeding towards the coast, high, rounded, grassy hills succeed, intersected by long ravines, with small clumps of wood and jungle in the hollows. The soil is a clay lying on sandstone or clay-slate, in a very much inclined and often vertical position; and, as may be expected, there are no constant springs to be found, the inhabitants depending on natural ponds of water, remaining in the beds of the periodical streams, for supplying their flocks during the summer season.

Gradually, as we recede from the mountains, the crops become more uncertain, from the absence of the necessary humidity, so that at last every second or third crop is usually a failure. To make up for this in some degree, when the settler does get a crop of wheat, it yields from seventy to ninety-fold. It is, however, a good grazing district for sheep, horses, and horned cattle.

As we approach the coast, the country be-

comes flatter, until the clay-slate disappears, and we have extensive plains with scarcely any herbage, and the sandstone again showing itself through the scanty soil. There is a little more moisture, however, from the sea-dews and rain, and a few weak springs are to be found near the shore; so that here the crops are more certain than in the intermediate country.

It is a fact worthy of observation, that the land which in England would suffer most from drought is, at the Cape, most capable of enduring it: this is occasioned by the greater heat and dryness of the climate, which affect the soil to the depth of as many feet as in England it would to inches below the surface. Thus, if we suppose that the inclination of the earth's axis should be altered so that England would be removed to the latitude of the empire of Morocco, and the Cape of Good Hope proportionally to the southward of its present latitude, we should then find that—while a large portion of England would become extremely sterile, and its springs and rivers be dried up in the summer season—the extensive

arid plains of the interior of South Africa would abound in perennial streams, and their surface be covered with perpetual verdure.

We are so much accustomed to hear of the sands of Africa, that people unacquainted with the Cape generally suppose that the same characteristic applies to it as well as to the other parts of the continent; whereas, on the contrary, the soil of by far the larger portion of the colony is a rich clay. It would, indeed, be well for the country were sand more abundant on its surface; for experience proves, that wherever the soil is rather sandy, it is less dependant for its productiveness on natural or artificial irrigation.

The clay soils in most situations become so excessively dry and hard during the warm season, that the roots of the grain cannot penetrate them in search of moisture and nourishment; and even the natural grasses are burnt up to such a degree in dry seasons, that great numbers of horned cattle, and even sheep, perish for want of food. This remark is, however, particularly applicable to the more inland parts of the country; that is to say, to the northward

of the chains of mountains which traverse the whole extent of the eastern districts in a parallel line to the coast at the distance of from eight to fifty miles.

Where the land is more sandy and friable, the roots can spread themselves to procure nourishment, or descend in quest of moisture to a sufficient depth. In digging a well, I have sometimes found grass roots at the depth of nine or ten feet below the surface; and in searching for water in soils of this description, the verdure of the grass during the dry season of the year will be found an excellent criterion for judging of the probable chance of success in any particular situation. These observations naturally lead me to the subject of the agriculture of the Cape colony.

It has been too much the habit of my countrymen to indulge in an undue contempt of the mode of cultivation practised by the Dutch colonists, before they have been sufficiently acquainted with the peculiar circumstances of climate and situation by which their customs in this regard are regulated. Imperfect as the agriculture of the Dutch undoubtedly is, we

have generally in the course of our experience had reason to see our error, and to entertain more respect for the established usages of the country. The truth is, we have had a great deal to learn from the old colonists; and they also have had much to acquire from us. Nothing is more common in England than for farmers, when they remove to another county, to fall into a similar mistake, simply from not reflecting that the mode of cultivation must always vary according to local peculiarities. Settlers who are totally unacquainted with agriculture, for the most part are successful in the first instance, because they are compelled by necessity to rely implicitly on the instructions of the older inhabitants.

In speaking of agriculture, I may safely lay it down as an axiom, that that mode of cultivation is the best which yields the largest returns of profit with the least consumption of labour or capital; and he is unquestionably the best farmer who makes the greatest advantage from his land in the long-run. The agricultural implements of the Dutch require, indeed, much improvement; but they are made by

themselves, at times when they have no other profitable employment. The huge size of their ploughs, in particular, has been found fault with; and their construction is in some respects very objectionable, as they require so many more oxen to draw them than should be necessary. This, however, the farmers care little about, as they have plenty of these animals; and whether they yoke in twelve or sixteen at a time, is to them a subject of indifference, so that they get quickly through their work.

In this dry climate, it is a matter of great importance to seize the opportunity of ploughing when the ground has been softened by recent rains; for if the farmers lose these opportunities, it soon becomes too hard to be wrought. With this view, they make their ploughs very large, to enable them to take a wide furrow, and thus expedite their operations.

In populous countries it is desirable to procure as large a crop as possible from every acre under cultivation, so that no ground may be lost: but here, where the agriculturists have no rent to pay and have an unlimited extent of arable land, this becomes an inferior considera-

tion. It is true, that by working the ground better, it would yield more; yet the difference of the produce would by no means compensate for the increased expense of labour.

There being no frosts in this country to destroy the grass and weeds, the farmers effect this object by taking as broad a furrow as possible, and laying it flat over so as to cover them effectually. Another advantage of this method is, that it enables the ground the better to retain the moisture. The ploughs used by the Dutch are constructed on the same general principle as the wheel-ploughs used in Suffolk; but in the application of the principle to the different parts, they exhibit a great want of mechanical contrivance so far as the facility of draught and the ease of the oxen are concerned. The huge share is made to incline downwards into the ground, so that the point is lower than the sole of the plough; and the mould-board is quite flat. It is curious to observe the expedition with which the farmers get through the soil with this rude implement, with twelve or sixteen oxen before it, turning over a sod of fourteen inches in breadth. The harrow is made

of three rough logs formed into a triangle, with wooden teeth, and some thorn-bushes tied behind to make all smooth after them.

In ploughing, three people are requisite. The farmer holds the plough; a Hottentot walks beside the half-wild oxen, armed with a huge bamboo whip, lashing right and left to keep them in the furrow and quicken their pace; and a boy leads the foremost animals.

We had swing-ploughs constructed at Groot Vaders Bosch, on the principle of those commonly used in Scotland, but much larger and stronger, by which as much work could be done as by the Dutch implement, and without its disadvantages.

The method of preparing the grain for market in this country reminds one of the particulars mentioned in Scripture relating to the mode pursued in Palestine, which was doubtless very similar. A large circle is marked out on some elevated situation near the house, about fifteen or twenty paces in diameter; and posts are planted round the circumference, to which strong rails are tied. The sod within the circle is pared off with a spade, and the ground care-

fully levelled. It is then smeared over with a mixture of fresh cowdung and water, to lay the dust. As soon as the tramping-floor thus prepared is dry, the sheaves are laid regularly round the outer edge, and a number of horses, generally from fifteen to twenty, are turned into the circular enclosure. A Hottentot with a long whip next takes his station in the centre and drives them all round at a trot, occasionally shifting his position, in order that the grain may be all equally trodden. From time to time two or three people turn the grain over with forked sticks while the horses are resting. In an hour or two, according to the quantity on the floor, the grain is completely separated from the husk, and the straw broken into small pieces. The horses are now removed, and the workmen again enter with their forked sticks, and commence throwing up the straw and chaff in the air until the wind has blown all they can lift with their forks over the railing. The contents of the floor, which have been spread over it during the treading, are shovelled up to the outer edge of the circle, and the horses are again introduced to complete their part of the la-

bour. The men renew the operation of throwing up with shovels—for their forks are now useless—the mixed mass, until nothing remains on the floor but the grain, mingled with the joints of the straw, which are too heavy to be carried away by the wind. There is some dexterity requisite in throwing according to the strength of the wind, to prevent any waste, and in spreading the grain so that the chaff may be easily separated from it. The grain and chaff are gathered together in a heap on the leeward-side of the floor, and a couple of people recommence throwing it up to windward, so that another heap is gradually formed.

The *fan* is now required. This simple and primitive implement is constructed by tying a bundle of a peculiar kind of strong elastic rushes to the end of a light handle, ten feet in length, with the tops outwards, and spread out like a common fan, by sewing them to a thin piece of wood near the handle to keep them in their place. The implement thus formed is like the letter Y, the upper part being the rushes spread out, and the lower part of the letter the handle. This I believe to be the fan alluded to in St.

Matthew, chap. iii. ver. 12:—"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The fan is from time to time moved lightly from side to side over the surface of the newly-formed heap, and catches the joints of the straw which remain among the grain, and sweeps them to the outer edge; and the throwing and fanning are continued alternately until nothing remains among the grain but some small clods of clay, which are broken from the floor by the horses' feet. These clods are afterwards removed by the tedious process of picking with the hand; which operation I shortened by having the grain trodden in a large iron pot with the feet, to break the clods, and again winnowing it. Some individuals have introduced the threshing-machine; but they have found the common mode so much cheaper and more expeditious, that they have generally discontinued its use. There are, however, two things requisite for the advantageous adoption of the manner of preparing the grain which I have

described—a dry climate and a good clay for the floor.

From the sandy nature of the soil in the corn country near Cape Town, the bread is exceedingly gritty; which is very disagreeable to those unaccustomed to it.

Indian corn, or maize, which forms a considerable article of food in the colony, is either planted in rows three feet apart, or more commonly sown broad cast; and, to succeed well, it should be cleared from grass and weeds once or twice while it is growing. It is the surest grain for a first crop, when properly managed, as the roots do not strike deep. As soon as ripe, the heads are broken off and hung up in a loft. When it is required for use, the grains are rubbed off. After steeping them for some time in warm water, they are stamped in a wooden block to remove the husk, and are then first boiled for some time; when the water is dried up, milk is added, and the boiling continued until the milk also has evaporated. It is then ready for use, and is an excellent and substantial article of nourishment, though somewhat dif-

ficult of digestion; and is therefore peculiarly adapted for working people, who can undergo greater labour on this than on any other kind of vegetable food.

The stamping is so very laborious and troublesome, that I cannot help mentioning an easier method of removing the husk, with which I have been furnished by a very intelligent friend who has lived many years at Hudson's Bay, where it is generally adopted. This mode consists in simply steeping the Indian corn in a strong ley of fresh wood-ashes and warm water, which cracks the husk in a very short time, when it may be removed by rubbing the grain between the hands; it is then washed in clean water, and is ready to be cooked. I have no doubt this plan will be found useful to my friends at the Cape; and it gives me pleasure to have it in my power to communicate it to them—should this work have the good fortune to travel so far.

Pumpkins and sweet melons are planted in holes about two feet or two feet and a half wide, and six or nine inches deep, which are nearly filled up again with the loose earth mix-

ed with a spadeful of dung, and three or four paces asunder. The surface of the holes being lower than the level of the ground, the young plants are thus enabled to derive more moisture from the soil round them.

It is much to be regretted that some system is not adopted by Government, or individuals, to instruct the colonists in the American mode of cultivating and manufacturing tobacco, as many parts of the country, from the great fertility of the soil, seem peculiarly adapted to the growth of that plant. Tobacco is in general use among the inhabitants, and might become an important article of exportation, being a less bulky commodity, in proportion to its value, than wheat. The Cape tobacco is the same plant as that propagated in Virginia; but the flavour is peculiarly rank and disagreeable. This may probably be occasioned by growing it on spots where cattle have been folded, as we can hardly suppose that it can arise from the quality of the soil, which varies so much in different parts of the colony.

CHAPTER VI.

Interests of the Farmers.—Cultivation of Wheat.—Tea and Coffee Plants.—A Dutch Luxury.—Production of Silk.—General Scarcity of Water.—Extensive Grants of Land.—Rearing of Cattle recommended.—Grasses of the Country.—Pasture Lands.—Management of Milch Cows.——Profits of a Cattle Farm.—Strange Disease in Horses.—Mode of accounting for it.—Dutch Mode of breaking in a Colt.—Inferiority of the Cape Sheep.—Improved Wool.—Hints as to the Encouragement of Manufactures.

It is evidently the interest of farmers to give their attention to the cultivation of such articles as will best bear the expense of a long land-carriage and are raised with least labour. Wheat, where ground is abundant and there are no woods to clear, is certainly the article which can be produced with the least expense; but comparatively few situations in the colony are within a moderate distance of sea-ports, and it is too bulky to be brought from a great distance with advantage.

Mercantile people at the Cape are often led to suppose, from the cheapness of land-carriage, that it is only want of industry which prevents the farmers from extending their cultivation. The fact is, that the price they receive for their grain, when it is transported from a greater distance than sixty or seventy miles, if it defrays the expenses of cultivation, will not enable them to extend it. What the farmers earn in this case must rather be considered as merely paying them their wages as labourers, and not the profits of agriculturists. The grain and other produce brought to market from a greater distance than above mentioned by the Dutch are taken to reduce the expenses of the journey, when they go thither to procure such articles as their farms do not afford. Government might certainly do much to encourage the growth of articles that would bear the expense of transport, without incurring any considerable expense.

The tea and coffee plants and the olive-tree are all to be found either in the government-garden or in those of individuals at Cape Town. There can be no doubt that these are well adapted to the climate and soil of

various parts of the colony, more particularly the first and last mentioned. Now, if a small stock of these plants were kept for distribution in the government-garden, and a notice published in the newspapers offering them at certain moderate prices to the farmers, accompanied with a few simple instructions in Dutch and English—which might easily be done,—I have no hesitation in saying that many, in all parts of the colony, would gladly avail themselves of the facility thus offered.

From the economical habits of the Dutch, they would cheerfully bestow any labour in the cultivation of an article which would introduce the most trifling saving in their housekeeping. Tea is a favourite luxury with them, and they drink it at all hours of the day, when they are able to afford it; were the price more moderate, the consumption would be immensely increased. I have often talked on this subject with my Dutch neighbours, but found an idea prevalent among them that the culture of tea was contrary to law. The East India Company, not contented with the exorbitant prices they demand for their inferior

teas at the Cape, have lately even contested the right of the colonists to re-import the article from England; but their interest in a matter of such small consequence deserves but little consideration, in comparison with its great importance to a settlement like the Cape, which has so many natural disadvantages to contend with.

Of late years silk-worms have been introduced at Cape Town; and it is expected that the production of silk in so favourable a climate will afford a valuable source of employment, and, in time, supply the place of the cultivation of the vine, which has for several years, as I have already observed, been in a declining state. The scarcity of labour in the interior of the colony will, however, for a long period, prevent the colonists from availing themselves of this branch of industry; for the management of silk-worms requires both much manual labour and a minute attention, which the farmers of the interior cannot well spare from their other occupations.

On account of the general scarcity of water in the interior, the Government has found it necessary to allot the land to the farmers in

large quantities, in order that it might all be occupied; few of the places thus granted consisting of less than four thousand acres. This ample extent of pasturage, in a country where the cattle require no winter provision, affords the colonists great advantages, as stock-farmers.

In the present state of the population, the rearing of cattle, from the little labour required in herding and the cheapness of their transport, must necessarily be the most profitable pursuit. It is, in fact, from their stock that the agriculturists throughout the colony derive their chief profits.

Near the coast, a farm of four thousand acres will maintain from two to four hundred head of horned cattle, besides a few sheep and horses, and in some cases still more. The small number of cattle the pasture lands in this country will support, in proportion to their extent, is principally owing to the heat and dryness of the summer, during which the grass in most parts of the colony loses its nutriment, or is almost entirely burnt up. Yet, notwithstanding the deterioration of the pasture, Nature has furnished a variety of shrubs and succulent

plants in the most arid tracts in the interior, which afford great nourishment to the flocks during the driest seasons.

A stranger, in travelling through the most uninviting parts of the colony, where during the summer scarcely a blade of grass is to be seen, is often surprised at the fat and thriving appearance of the herds of cattle and sheep, and is at a loss to conceive how they obtain their sustenance, until he sees them browsing on the tender twigs and leaves of the bushes which in these arid tracts often cover the surface of the ground, while they neglect the withered tufts of grass which are scattered here and there around their roots.

Were we to judge by the appearance of the herbage, we should often be deceived as to the capability of the land for supporting or fattening cattle; for this depends much more on the quality than the quantity of grass or nutritive shrubs.

There are three gradations of quality into which the grasses of the country are usually divided—sweet, sour, and mixed; and a new settler would do well, before he fixes on any

spot in the way of purchase or otherwise, to ascertain from the experienced Dutch colonists to which of these general divisions the land may belong; for he will find that his previous knowledge of the European grasses will be of little use to him in this colony. Very few British settlers ever attain to the sagacity of the natives in judging of this most important consideration; for there are various kinds of sweet, sour, and mixed grasses, so that it is difficult, if not impossible, to lay down any general rule for their guidance.

One observation, however, I have always found to hold good,—that the quality of the same grasses, as well as the prevalence of the different kinds, is entirely dependant on the degree of fertility or poverty of the soils on which they grow; and if the colonist can obtain a correct knowledge of the latter particular, he cannot mistake much as to the former.

Excepting the more arid tracts of the interior, for the purposes of stock-farming it is always better to select a dry *sweet* place, in preference to a verdant spot where the pasture is *sour*. The pasture of mountain tracts is always sour,

and the land poor. The valleys at their base are of the intermediate kind in grass and soil; and the country towards the coast improves in these qualities. The deep valleys skirting the banks of the rivers in these less hilly parts, and a strip of country varying in breadth according to other circumstances, close along the sea-coast, are generally sweet.

It is difficult in this colony to find situations equally adapted for pasturage and cultivation; for in the greater portion of the best grazing districts the soil is so dry, and springs are so scarce, that the inhabitants can hardly obtain grain enough from their farms in dry seasons for their necessary consumption. In many cases they cannot even procure vegetables for their tables unless they purchase them of their more fortunate neighbours. This will not suit our European habits; and on this account I should recommend British settlers to establish themselves where they can obtain a moderate share of the different benefits as to pasturage and cultivation, and in this respect the country along the base of the mountains unites most advantages. I would further caution them

against overstocking their land; for certain tracts, more particularly in the districts near the Cape, are unhealthy for cattle, on account of the animals eating pernicious plants, which their instinct enables them to avoid when they have plenty of other pasturage.

The management of the milch cows is somewhat peculiar in this country. The cattle are a mixed breed, between the original African race and the European; and few of the cows will give their milk without allowing their calves to suck for some time. But as all the calves are reared to increase the stock, no inconvenience is felt from this circumstance.

An oblong enclosure is made with strong poles fixed in the ground, with a pen at one end to confine the calves until they are wanted. Into this pen the calves are driven before the cows come home from grazing in the evening. The cattle being never housed, become excessively wild; and to catch and tie a young cow to her post in the "kraal," is a matter of no small difficulty, and sometimes not free from danger. On the first attempt to take hold of the calf in the field, the enraged cow generally

runs furiously at the person who presumes to interfere in her family concerns, when he must take care to get out of her way with all convenient speed, or abide the consequences of a disagreeable collision with her horns.

If he can succeed in catching up the calf in his arms, he is then safe from injury, on account of his burthen; which he may forthwith proceed to deposit in the pen, unmindful of the menacing gestures of the angry mother. But the worst part of his task still remains to be achieved — to secure the cow; and this is as much as two or three people generally can manage. The moment the animal perceives that an attempt is made to convey a noose round her horns by means of a long stick, and the attempt fails, she becomes so impatient and shy that it is necessary to change the point of attack. One of the people now endeavours, by means of the stick, to get the noose round her hind leg when she lifts her foot from the ground, which operation requires much dexterity.

As soon as this end is effected, the thong used for the purpose is drawn tight by the assistants, and secured round one of the poles of the

"kraal;" when the animal becomes perfectly furious, bellowing, kicking, and plunging. Woe be to him that comes within the length of her tether! for, with inflamed eyes and tongue lolled out, she runs indiscriminately at everything that comes within her reach. But, taking advantage of her turnings, the people, who are secure from her rage behind the poles of the "kraal," gradually tighten the thong and confine her efforts until her leg is drawn up close to the pole, and they can venture to approach her head and fasten to her horns another thong, which is then conveyed round a pole on the opposite side of the "kraal." One thong is then slackened and the other tightened until the cow's head is secured to her post, where she is allowed to fume and bellow till she is tired and becomes more manageable. At the time of milking, a boy stands at the door of the pen, and lets the calves out as they are wanted, for they soon learn to answer to their names. After allowing the calf to suck for a few minutes, they proceed to milk all they can get from the cow, which generally retains enough for her young.

The quantity of milk the cows yield is in this part of the colony very inconsiderable. Twenty cows seldom give more than from twenty-four to thirty-six quarts at a milking; but it is generally very rich in quality.

It is remarkable, notwithstanding the intractability of the other cattle, that the bulls have none of the ferocity of those in England.

The profits of stock in this country are very great, for the small capital required in the first instance. From the mildness of the climate, the cattle require no provision to be made for their support in winter; and the only care they need is to bring them home at night to protect them from the hyænas, these animals never committing depredations in the day-time.

The price of cows varies according to the breed from 1*l.* 4*s.* to 2*l.* 5*s.* per head, and oxen from 1*l.* 18*s.* to 2*l.* 13*s.* On a good cattle-farm, and with proper management, from seventy to eighty calves may be expected as the yearly produce of a hundred cows, exclusive of what may be gained by the butter, which fetches from $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $6\frac{3}{4}d.$ per pound at the different markets. Twelve quarts of milk generally yield

about a pound of butter. The making of cheese is understood by very few of the Dutch, and it in consequence bears a higher value in proportion to butter than in England, the most common kinds selling for nearly the same per pound. There can be no doubt that, if cheese could be produced of a superior quality, it would fetch a very high price as an article of export to the Mauritius and India. To avoid tedious details, which would be uninteresting to the majority of persons, I merely mention a few simple facts, leaving the reader to make his own calculations if he thinks it worth his while.

The breeding of horses for the Cape Town market is a great source of profit to the farmers of the district of Swellendam, who have much improved the race by the introduction of English stallions: but here, as in the other parts of the colony, they are subject to a disease which carries off great numbers annually, and for which as yet, I believe, no effectual remedy has been found. This malady makes its appearance towards the latter end of summer, and continues until winter. In some few

places the animals are, however, exempted from it; and the mortality is in all places much diminished by keeping them in a close stable during the sickly season.

The disease commences with a running at the nose or foaming at the mouth; but in many cases the horses die without either of these symptoms. Various theories have been started to account for this singular malady; and even its nature is disputed among the medical people, though most of them conceive it to begin with inflammation of the lungs, if it be not altogether of a pulmonary nature. When the faculty disagree, and *post mortem* examinations fail in giving us any certain knowledge of a matter of so much importance to the farmer, an extended observation of the circumstances attending the disease may throw some light on the subject. In the first place, as I have already mentioned, the animals on some spots are exempted from it, and these situations are either on the summit of the mountains, or close to the coast: but the pasture of these places is generally of a diametrically opposite character —the one being very poor, and the other very

nutritive. The malady cannot, therefore, be occasioned by the grass. As far as I have had an opportunity of observing, this disease does not occur on very high and equal elevations.

It may be asked, how it happens that all parts of the coast are not free from it. This brings me to what I conceive to be the true solution of the question, viz. that the disease is simply inflammation of some kind or other, occasioned by sudden changes of temperature. I have uniformly remarked, that the places along the coast where the horses are exempt from it are always flat; which preserves them from the sudden alternations of heat and cold in passing from hills to deep valleys while they are grazing at large through the day. The season of the year at which the disease makes its appearance, when the nights are beginning to grow cold, and the valleys during the night and morning are filled with chilling fogs, seems further to confirm my theory. Notwithstanding the general uniformity in the temperature of the air in this country, many of the diseases of the inhabitants are occasioned by the same

transitions from heat to cold, arising from the inequalities of its surface.

I have dwelt longer on this subject, in consequence of the increasing importance of the trade in horses, which have for some time been exported in considerable numbers to the East Indies for the service of the cavalry, and the peculiar adaptation of the colony in general, and the district of Swellendam in particular, for this kind of stock.

With the exception of this malady, the horses of the colony are peculiarly healthy, and are capable of supporting great hardship and fatigue on very poor fare. No people, however, are more ignorant of the proper mode of training them, or preserving and perfecting these most valuable qualities, than the Dutch colonists. The animals are backed too early, and treated with indiscriminate harshness and cruelty: the consequence is, that they either lose their spirit and become hollow in the back, or grow vicious and unmanageable.

When a young horse is to be broken in, he is tied by the neck to a tame one. Two heavy

fellows mount them, and flog the poor animal unmercifully with their "shamboeks" until he goes forward, and continue this brutal treatment until he is docile enough to be ridden alone. The price of horses in this district varies much according to the breed.

Breeding mares* cost from 2*l.* 5*s.* to 4*l.* 10*s.* a head, and riding horses from 7*l.* 10*s.* to 15*l.* and upwards. Very high prices have been given for English stallions by some of the farmers. I have known of 300*l.* to 400*l.* being paid for some of those imported by the governor; but it must be remembered that the agriculturists generally expected certain favours in return, in the shape of grants of land, &c.

The Cape large-tailed sheep are well known to be of a very inferior kind, being small-bodied, and having hair instead of wool. Like the original breed of cattle, they have long legs, and go over a great deal of ground in grazing; which circumstance makes them well fitted for the scanty pasturage of the interior.

* To ride mares in this country is considered disgraceful; not on the score of humanity, but as being a mark of poverty, and only fit for a Hottentot or slave.

It is a common notion in England that the quality of the wool, or rather hair, is to be attributed to the climate or the nature of the pasture; whereas these sheep are an original race, little improved by crossing with other kinds. This is one of those easy ways by which people who do not think account for what they do not understand. If this prejudice should be once entertained by the colonists, it will have a direct tendency to prevent attempts at improvement by lessening their hopes of success.

We find that the wools of Australia, a similar climate, have, under the management of men of intelligence and capital, attained a great degree of fineness: and this fact, which should be an argument for the practicability of improvement in the wools of the Cape, has been unfairly urged against it, without considering the different circumstances of the two colonies.

Australia has had immense advantages over the Cape in this respect. Men of large capital have settled there as sheep-farmers, who have imported the best breeds from Europe, and have had an almost unlimited command of cheap labour. It may farther be remarked,

that in a country where the number of the sheep is limited, it is a much easier matter to improve them. It is only within these few years that the attention of the Cape sheep-farmers has been turned to this important object; and enough has already been effected by several individuals to show that the wools are susceptible of *some* improvement, but to what extent it may be carried they have not yet had time to determine. Suffice it to say, that a considerable quantity of wool has been exported at low prices; and it would be absurd, in the present state of the matter, to assert that the improvement may not be progressively continued.

Judging from the numerous flocks of healthy and thriving sheep of the common breed throughout the colony, and the dryness of the country, there cannot exist the smallest doubt that the colony is peculiarly adapted to the rearing of this kind of stock; and it is a matter of the utmost importance to its interests generally, and more particularly to the more remote parts of it, that, by improving the wool, the inhabitants may be furnished with a valuable

article of exportation to the mother-country. Unless some exportable produce of this kind be found, the stock-farmers of the interior must ultimately sink into a state but little removed from barbarism, and be compelled to subsist by their flocks and to clothe themselves in their skins.

Where the bulk of the population are producers, the consumption cannot keep pace with production. This is already beginning to be felt by the farmers of the interior in the diminished request for sheep and cattle, from the great increase of stock in the parts of the colony near Cape Town. Of late years, indeed, there has been some call for fat cattle, which are salted for exportation to the Mauritius: but what are the sheep-farmers of the interior to do when their flocks have increased beyond the demand? They must improve their wools, or they will in time sink to a level with the Kaffres.

It is not to be supposed that Government, in these enlightened times, could be so illiberal as to discountenance manufactures in this more than in her other colonies; but something more is

required. Manufactures should be encouraged, particularly where the colonists are not able to buy the articles of the mother-country. If this can be done at the Cape, a population of consumers will be created to supply the wants of the stock-farmers and receive their produce in exchange.

Were manufactures of coarse woollens, for instance, established, articles might be produced from the most inferior wools of the colony, which would find a ready sale at low prices, not only in all parts of the colony, but among the Kaffres and other barbarous tribes in the interior of Africa, in exchange for ivory and skins. By opening a commercial communication between the different native races, we should give them the strongest interest to maintain peaceful habits among themselves, as well as amicable dispositions towards the colony.

CHAPTER VII.

Novel Mode of Life.—Uniformity of the Dutch Character.—Mode of accounting for it.—Oppressive Government at the Cape.—Dutch Cunning and Roguery.—Friendly Offerings.—Female Influence.—Education of Children.—Early Vices.—African Scenery described.—A Monster of Obesity.—Melancholy Emblems.—A Ludicrous Scene.—Indifference to Death.—Religious Notions.—Passion of Love.—Marriage a matter of convenience.—Matrimonial Expedition.—National Pride of the Scotch.—Prejudices and Vices.—Hottentot Oppression.—A Love Affair.—Trial for Murder.

As may be supposed, amid scenes of such novelty and attraction to a young mind, many weeks elapsed before I felt much disposed to apply myself to any serious occupation. My brother, whose zest for the amusements of the country was renewed from sympathy, and not a little from the pleasure of showing his own proficiency in the language and manners of the

colony, cordially entered into my feelings, and scarcely a day passed that we did not ride out on some shooting excursion among the hills, or to visit our Dutch neighbours, who seemed as much amused with my un-African appearance as I was with their ultra-boorism.

I was much struck on these occasions with the singular uniformity of character that pervades the whole Dutch population of the country: they seem, indeed, to be all fashioned after one model; and few individual peculiarities are to be found in one character that may not be observed in a greater or smaller degree in another. This appears the more remarkable when we consider how thinly the inhabitants are scattered over the colony: but it must be recollected, that they are all intimately connected by intermarriage, and keep up a constant intercourse, employing much of their leisure time in riding out, and visiting each other.

Other circumstances are, however, necessary to account satisfactorily for so striking a feature in South African society. When we find a uniformity of character so general in the inhabitants of a country, we may infer from

thence the existence of some cause operating as universally. This may generally be found in the nature of the government under which they have lived. That of the Cape, at the time I allude to (1819–20), was oppressive in its original constitution, and still more so in its details; and to this we may attribute the deceitful, servile, and suspicious disposition of the colonists. Notwithstanding the intimate familiarity which subsisted among them, they were afraid to open their mouths on any subject connected in the most distant way with local politics, in the fear of their remarks being carried to the "Landdrost," or petty viceroy of the district. This officer held all the ministerial and judicial power in the part of the country where he presided. As might be expected, a character thus formed must soon extend itself to their transactions and general intercourse with their neighbours.

The Cape-Dutch character also presents a strange mixture of simplicity and petty roguery —bluntness and servility. "Seimmigheid," or cunning, is accounted among them the highest accomplishment and the most undoubted proof

of talent; and when they can obtain any petty advantage over a neighbour in a bargain, they do not scruple to boast of it in the most open manner, and rise in their own and their neighbours' estimation in proportion to their adroitness. No people can trick or lie with more apparent sincerity; their phlegmatic insensibility to shame and external simplicity of demeanour alike contributing to their success. Whenever they sell the most trifling article at the most exorbitant price, they try to persuade you that nothing but their personal friendship could induce them to part with it on such moderate terms. With all this cunning, there is a great want of talent and variety in the tricks they play off upon strangers; so that if a person can bring himself to the ungenerous conclusion that they are all rogues, he need not be often deceived by them.

We had many amusing instances of the petty cunning of the Dutch at Groot Vaders Bosch. Scarcely a day passed but some slave or Hottentot brought an epistle to my brother from one of the neighbouring "frows" or "boers," accompanied by some present of wild flowers,

or, perhaps, half a dozen of eggs; in return for which they humbly requested him to send some article by the bearer, which they well knew was five or six times the value of their "present," as they called it. At one time they wanted a few bottles of vinegar; at another, their "vriendlyk versack"* was, that he would send them a handkerchief of a pretty colour, or some tea and sugar. When they were successful in this advantageous interchange of friendship, they never failed to renew their applications as soon as an opportunity occurred.

The Dutch colonists, however, never felt thankful to my brother for his good-nature in complying with their "friendly requests;" but laughed at the simplicity of the "dom Engelsman," or stupid Englishmen, as they generally denominate our countrymen. If he ever happened to lend them anything, it was generally in vain to expect that it would be returned. There are few men without some kind of cant to answer their purposes—that of our Dutch neighbours was friendship. All their letters begin with "Good friend," and the word is never out of

* Friendly request.