

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

**A Voyage Round The World, In His Britannic Majesty's
Sloop, Resolution, commanded by Capt. James Cook,
during the Years 1772, 3, 4, and 5. By George Forster, ...
In Two Volumes**

Forster, George

London, 1777

Chap. III. Stay at the Cape of Good Hope. - Account of that Settlement.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1277

1772.
OCTOBER.

C H A P. III.

Stay at the Cape of Good Hope.—Account of that Settlement.

WE were no sooner landed than we all went to wait upon the governor, baron Joachim van Plettenberg, a man of a very liberal education, and extensive knowledge, whose politeness and affability immediately gave us a good opinion of him. From him we proceeded to the other members of the council, and at last retired to take up our lodgings at Mr. Brand's, now commander at False bay, whose house at the Cape town is commonly frequented by the English captains who happen to touch there. Almost every inferior officer of the Dutch Company's government, the members of the council excepted, let their supernumerary apartments to the officers and passengers in the various English, French, Danish, and Swedish ships, which annually put in here, either on their voyage from or back to Europe.

We were not a little pleased with the contrast between this colony, and the Portuguese island of St. Jago. There

we



we had taken notice of a tropical country, with a tolerable appearance, and capable of improvement, but utterly neglected by its lazy and oppressed inhabitants; here, on the contrary, we saw a neat well-built town, all white, rising in the midst of a desert, surrounded by broken masses of black and dreary mountains; or in other words, the picture of successful industry. Its appearance towards the sea-side, is not quite so picturesque as that of Funchal. The store-houses of the Dutch East-India company, are all situated nearest the water, and the private buildings lie beyond them on a gentle ascent. The fort which commands the road, is on the east side of the town, but seems not to be of great strength; besides which, there are several batteries on both sides. The streets in the town are broad, and regular; all the principal ones are planted with oaks, and some have in their middle a canal of running water, which on account of its small quantity, they are obliged to husband by sluices, so that parts of it are sometimes entirely drained, and occasion no very pleasant smell. The national character of the Dutch strongly manifests itself in this particular; their settlements being always supplied with canals, though reason and common sense evidently prove their noxious influence on the health of the inhabitants, especially at Batavia.

1772.
OCTOBER.

1772.
OCTOBER.

Quanto præstantius esset
——viridi si margine clauderet undas
Herba, nec ingenuum violarent marmora tophum !

JUVENAL.

The houses are built of brick, and many of them are white washed on the outside. The rooms are in general lofty and spacious, and very airy, which the hot climate requires. There is but one church in the whole town, and that is extremely plain, and seems to be rather too small for the congregation. That spirit of toleration, which has been so beneficial to the Dutch government at home, is not to be met with in their colonies. It is but very lately that they have suffered even the Lutherans, to build churches at Batavia, and at this place; and at the present time, a clergyman of that persuasion is not tolerated at the Cape, but the inhabitants are obliged to content themselves with the chaplains of Danish and Swedish East-India-men, who give them a sermon, and administer the sacrament once or twice a year, and are very handsomely rewarded. The government, and the inhabitants do not give themselves the trouble to attend to a circumstance of so little consequence in their eyes, as the religion of their slaves, who in general seem to have none at all. A few of them follow the Mahomedan rite, and weekly meet in a private house belonging to a free Mahomedan, in order to read, or rather chaunt several prayers, and



and chapters of the Koran. As they have no priest among them, they cannot partake of any other acts of worship*.

1772.
OCTOBER.

The slaves belonging to the company, who amount to several hundreds, are lodged and boarded in a spacious house erected for that purpose, where they are likewise kept at work. Another great building serves as an hospital for the sailors belonging to the Dutch East-India ships, which touch here, and commonly have prodigious numbers of sick on board, on their voyage from Europe towards India. The vast number of men, sometimes six, seven, or eight hundred, which these ships carry out to supply the military in India, the small room to which they are confined, and the short allowance of water and salt provision, they receive on a long voyage through the torrid zone, generally make considerable havock among them: it is therefore no uncommon circumstance at the Cape, that a ship on her passage thither from Europe, loses eighty or a hundred men, and sends between two

* We would not be understood to throw an odium on the Dutch in particular, when it is well known that the negroes, who wear the chains of the English and French, are equally neglected: it was only intended to awaken a fellow-feeling towards an unhappy race of MEN, among the colonists of all nations; and to remind them whilst they enjoy, or *strive* to enjoy the inestimable blessing of liberty, to exert themselves in acts of humanity and kindness, towards those from whom they with-hold it, perhaps, without remorse,

and



1772.
OCTOBER.

and three hundred others dangerously ill to the hospital. A fact no less deplorable than certain, is, that the small expence and facility with which the *ziel-verkoopers* actually carry on their infamous trade of supplying the India company with recruits, makes them less attentive to the preservation of health among these poor people. Nothing is more common, in this and other Dutch colonies, than to meet with soldiers in the company's service who, upon enquiry, acknowledge they have been kidnapped in Holland. There is an apothecary's shop belonging to the hospital, where the most necessary remedies are prepared, but no expensive drug is to be found in it, and the method of administering to all the patients indiscriminately out of two or three huge bottles, full of different preparations, suffice to convince us, that the fresh air of the land, and fresh provisions here, contribute much more to the recovery of the sick, than the skill of their physicians. Patients who are able to walk, are ordered to go up and down the streets every fair morning; and all kinds of greens, pot-herbs, fallads, and antiscorbutics are raised for their use in an adjacent garden belonging to the company. Travellers have sometimes praised and sometimes depreciated this garden, according to the different points of view in which it has been considered. It is true, a few regular walks of indifferent oaks, encompassed with elm and myrtle hedges, are not objects engaging enough
to



to those who are used to admire the perfection of gardening in England, or who contemplate in Holland and France cypress, box, and yew trees cut out into vases, statues, and pyramids, or *charmilles* turned into pieces of architecture! But considering that the trees were planted in the beginning of this century, more for use than ornament; that they shelter the kitchen-herbs for the hospital, against the destructive violence of storms; and that they form the only shady and airy walks, comfortable to voyagers and sick persons in this hot climate, I cannot wonder that some should extoll as "a delightful spot*," what others contemptuously call "a friar's garden †."

1772.
NOVEMBER.

The day after our arrival, the astronomers of both ships, Mr. Wales and Mr. Baily, fixed their instruments ashore, within a few yards of the identical spot where Messrs. Mason and Dixon had formerly made their astronomical observations. The same day we began our botanical excursions in the country about the town. The ground gradually rises on all sides towards the three mountains which lie round the bottom of the bay, keeping low and level only near the sea-side, and growing somewhat marshy in the isthmus between the False and Table bays, where a salt rivulet falls into the latter. The

Saturday 11.

* Commodore (now admiral) BYRON. See Hawkesworth's compilation, vol I.
† M. de Bougainville. See his Voyage round the World.

marshy



1773.
NOVEMBER.

marshy part has some verdure, but is intermixed with a great deal of sand. The higher grounds, which from the sea side have a parched and dreary appearance, are however covered with an immense variety of plants, amongst which are a prodigious number of shrubs, but scarce one or two species that deserve the name of trees. There are also a few small plantations wherever a little run of water moistens the ground. Abundance of insects of every sort, several species of lizards, land-tortoises, and serpents frequent the dry shrubbery, together with a great variety of small birds. We daily brought home ample collections of vegetables and animals, and were much surpris'd to find a great number, especially among the latter, entirely unknown to natural historians, though gathered in fields adjacent to a town, from whence the cabinets and repositories of all Europe have been repeatedly supplied with numerous and valuable acquisitions to the science.

One of our excursions was directed to the Table mountain. The ascent was very steep, fatiguing, and difficult, on account of the number of loose stones which rolled away under our feet. About the middle of the mountain we entered a bold grand chasm, whose walls are perpendicular and often impending rocks, piled up in strata. Small rills of water oozed out of crevices, or fell from precipices in drops, giving life to hundreds of plants and low shrubs in the chasm. Another kind of vegetables,
growing



growing on a drier soil, that seemed to concentrate their juices, spread a fine aromatic scent, which a gentle breeze wafted towards us from the chasm. At last, after three hours walk, we reached the summit of the mountain. It was nearly level, very barren, and bare of soil; several cavities were however replete with rain-water, or contained a little vegetable earth, from whence a few odoriferous plants drew their nourishment. Some antelopes, howling baboons, solitary vultures, and toads are sometimes to be met with on the mountain. The view from thence is very extensive and picturesque. The bay seemed a small pond or basin, and the ships in it dwindled to little boats: the town under our feet, and the regular compartments of its gardens, looked like the work of children. The Lion's Rump now seemed an inconsiderable ridge; we looked down on the spiry Lion's Head, and only Charles' Mount rose as it were in competition with the Table. To the northward, Robben island, the Blue hills, the Tyger hills, and beyond them a noble chain of mountains, loftier than that on which we stood, bounded our view. A group of broken rocky masses inclosed Hout baay (Wood bay) to the west, and continuing to the southward formed one side of the Table bay, and terminated in the famous *stormy* cape which King MANOEL of Portugal named the Cape of GOOD HOPE. To the south-east our view extended across the low isthmus between the two bays; beyond it we

1772.
NOVEMBER.

1772.
NOVEMBER.

discerned the colony of Hottentot Holland, and the mountains about Stellenbosch; and on this side we were delighted with a number of plantations insulated by the vast heath, and finely contrasting their verdure with the rest of the country: Among them we distinguished Constantia, famous in the annals of modern epicures. After a stay of two hours, finding the air very cold and sharp on the mountain, we descended, very well pleased with our excursion, and amply rewarded for the toilsome part of it, by the beauty and extent of the prospect.

The country on the S. E. side of the Table mountain attracted our particular attention, on account of the number of plantations on the sloping grounds, and the variety of plants which that part produced. Its appearance, especially near the hills, is the pleasantest on this side of the isthmus. By the side of every little rivulet a plantation is situated, consisting of vineyards, corn-fields, and gardens, and commonly surrounded with oaks from ten to twenty feet high, which enliven the country, and afford shelter against storms. The late governor Tulbagh, who is looked upon as a father to this colony, rebuilt several houses and gardens here, for the use of the governors, at Rondebosch and Nieuw-land. They are plain, and have nothing particular to recommend them, but that they are kept in the best order, consist of shady walks, and are well supplied with water. The company's granges or sheds are also



also erected hereabouts; and a little farther on there is a brewery, belonging to a private man, who has the exclusive privilege of brewing beer for the Cape. In a fine valley, on the side of the mountain, lies the plantation called Paradise, remarkable for its delightful grove, and for producing several fruits, especially such as belong to tropical climates, which come to great perfection there. Alphen, the seat of Mr. Kerste, (at that time commander in False bay) was the boundary of our excursions on this side. We were here received with real hospitality, which our worthy host had brought from Germany, his native country. During a few days it was the centre of our botanical rambles, which always furnished us with an abundant harvest, and gave us the greatest apprehensions that with all our efforts, we alone would be unequal to the task of collecting, describing, drawing, and preserving (all at the same time) such multitudes of species, in countries where every one we gathered would in all probability be a nondescript. It was therefore of the utmost importance, if we meant not to neglect any branch of natural knowledge, to endeavour to find an assistant well qualified to go hand and hand with us in our undertakings. We were fortunate enough to meet with a man of science, Dr. Sparrman, at this place, who after studying under the father of botany, the great Sir Charles Linné, had made a voyage to China, and another to the Cape in pursuit of knowledge.

1772.
NOVEMBER.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

The idea of gathering the treasures of nature in countries hitherto unknown to Europe, filled his mind so entirely, that he immediately engaged to accompany us on our circumnavigation ; in the course of which, I am proud to say, we have found him an enthusiast in his science, well versed in medical knowledge, and endowed with a heart capable of the warmest feelings, and worthy of a philosopher. But far from meeting with such great discoveries in natural history, as had been made in Lieut. Cook's first voyage on a new continent *, we were obliged to content ourselves with the produce of a few small islands, which we could imperfectly investigate in the short spaces of sometimes a few hours, or a few days, or to the utmost of a few weeks, in unfavourable seasons.

During our stay at the Cape, the people on board our ship set up the rigging, scrubbed and payed the sides, and took in store some brandy and other necessary articles of provision for the crew, together with several sheep for the captains and officers. Several rams and ewes were likewise brought aboard, intended as presents to the natives of the South-Sea ; but the length of the voyage, and our run to the frozen zone, reduced them so much, that this useful purpose was entirely defeated. In order to pursue our researches after natural knowledge, with greater cer-

* New Holland.

tainty



tainty of success, we likewise bought a water-spaniel here, in hopes that this animal would prove useful in fetching any game which fell out of our reach. It was with great difficulty we could meet with one, and we were obliged to pay an exorbitant price for it; though it afterwards proved of little service. It may seem superfluous to mention so trifling an occurrence as this, but I believe it is hardly imagined, how great a number of little objects are to be attended to among many weightier concerns, by a traveller who means to improve his time to the utmost advantage.

1772.
NOVEMBER.

On the 22d we brought all our baggage on board, and the same day we sailed from Table bay. Previous to the mention of farther occurrences, I shall here endeavour to give a succinct account of the state of this Dutch colony, which it is hoped will afford satisfactory instruction to my readers.

The southernmost extremity of Africa, circumnavigated so early as the times of the Egyptian king Necho, and again in the reign of Ptolemæus Lathyrus*, was once more

* The proofs of this assertion are enumerated in Schmidt Opusc. diss. iv. de commerc. & navigation. *Ægyptior.* p. 160. and more fully in Schlözer Handlungs-Geschichte (or History of Commerce) p. 300. Herodotus expressly says, that Africa is surrounded by the sea, and that this was found out by some Phœnician mariners sent out for that purpose by Pharaoh Necho from the Red Sea, who returned by the Mediterranean, lib. iv. cap. 42. Strabo, lib. ii. also mentions the expedition of one Eudoxus round Africa, in the reign of Ptolemy Lathyrus; and according to Pliny, the Carthaginians likewise have explored the



1772.
NOVEMBER.

discovered in later times, by Bartolomeo Diaz, a Portuguese navigator, in the year 1487. Vasco de Gama was the first who made a voyage to India round it in 1497, which was looked upon as a kind of prodigy. It remained however useless to Europeans till the year 1650, when Van-Riebeck, a Dutch surgeon, first saw the advantage that would accrue to the East-India Company in Holland, from a settlement at so convenient a distance both from home and from India. The colony which he founded, has ever since continued in the hands of the Dutch, and increased in value for a considerable time after his decease.

The governor depends immediately upon the East-India Company, and has the rank of an *Edele Heer*, the title given to the members of the supreme council of Batavia. He presides here over a council consisting of the second, or deputy governor, the fiscal, the major (who commands the fort), the secretary, the treasurer, the comptroller of provisions, the comptroller of liquors, and the book-keeper; each of which has a branch of the Company's commerce assigned to his care. This council has the whole management of the civil and military departments, but the deputy-governor presides over another, named the court of

the coast of that continent. *Hist. Nat. lib. ii. cap. 67. Et Hanno, Carthaginiis potentia florente, circumvectus a Gadibus ad finem Arabiae, navigationem eam prodidit scripto.*

justice,



justice, which tries all offences and crimes, and consists of some of the members of the former ; but no two relations can sit and have vote in the same council, to prevent the influence of parties.

1773.
NOVEMBER.

The income of the governor is very considerable, for besides a fixed appointment, and the use of houses, gardens, proper furniture, and every thing that belongs to his table, he receives about ten dollars for every leagre of wine which the Company buy of the farmer, in order to be exported to Batavia. The company allows the sum of forty dollars for each leagre, of which the farmer receives but twenty-four ; what remains is shared between the governor, and second or deputy, the former taking two thirds, which sometimes are said to amount to 4000 dollars per annum. The second governor has the direction of the company's whole commerce here, and signs all orders to the different departments under him, as well as the governor to others. He and the fiscal have the rank of *upper koopman*. The fiscal is at the head of the police, and sees the penal laws put in execution ; his income consists of fines, and of the duties laid on certain articles of commerce, but if he be strict in exacting them, he is universally detested. The sound policy of the Dutch have likewise found it necessary to place the fiscal as a check, to over-awe the other officers of the company, that they may not counteract the interests of their masters, or infringe the laws.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

laws of the mother country. He is to that end, commonly well versed in juridical affairs, and depends solely upon the mother country. The major (at present Mr. Von Prehn, who received us with great politeness) has the rank of *koopman* or merchant: this circumstance surprises a stranger, who in all other European states, is used to see military honours confer distinction and precedence, and appears still more singular to one who knows the contrast in this particular between Holland and Russia, where the idea of military rank is annexed to every place, even that of a professor at the university. The number of regular soldiers at this colony amounts to about 700, of which 400 form the garrison of the fort, near the Cape town. The inhabitants capable of bearing arms form a militia of 4000 men, of whom a considerable part may be assembled in a few hours, by means of signals made from alarm places in different parts of the country. We may from hence make some estimate of the number of white people in this colony, which is at present so extensive, that the distant settlements are above a month's journey from the Cape; but these remote parts lie sometimes more than a day's journey from each other, are surrounded by various nations of Hottentots, and too frequently feel the want of protection from their own government at that distance. The slaves in the colony are at least in the proportion of five or more, to one white person. The principal inhabitants



rants at the Cape have sometimes from 20 to 30 slaves, which are in general treated with great lenity, and sometimes become favourites with their masters, who give them very good cloathing, but oblige them to wear neither shoes nor stockings, reserving these articles to themselves. The slaves are chiefly brought from Madagascar, and a little vessel annually goes from the Cape thither on that trade; there are however, besides them, a number of Malays and Bengalese, and some negroes. The colonists themselves are for the greatest part Germans, with some families of Dutch, and some of French protestants. The character of the inhabitants of the town is mixed. They are industrious, but fond of good living, hospitable, and sociable; though accustomed to hire their apartments to strangers*, for the time they touch at this settlement, and used to be complimented with rich presents of stuffs, &c. by the officers of merchant ships. They have no great opportunities of acquiring knowledge, there being no public schools of note at the Cape; their young men are therefore commonly sent to Holland for improvement, and their female education is too much neglected. A kind of dislike to reading, and the want of public amusements, make their conversation uninteresting and too frequently

1772.
NOVEMBER.

* The terms are mentioned in Lieut. Cook's Voyage. See Hawkesworth's compilation, vol. III. p. 788. The members of the council are an exception in this respect.



1772:
NOVEMBER.

turn it upon scandal, which is commonly carried to a degree of inveteracy peculiar to little towns. The French, English, Portuguese, and Malay languages are very commonly spoken, and many of the ladies have acquired them. This circumstance, together with the accomplishments of singing, dancing, and playing a tune on the lute, frequently united in an agreeable person, make amends for the want of refined manners and delicacy of sentiment. There are however among the principal inhabitants, persons of both sexes, whose whole deportment, extensive reading, and well-cultivated understanding would be admired and distinguished even in Europe*. Their circumstances are in general easy, and often very affluent, on account of the cheap rate at which the necessaries of life are to be procured; but they seldom amass such prodigious riches here as at Batavia, and I was told the greatest private fortune at the Cape did not exceed one

* Among them we cannot in justice avoid mentioning the governor, Baron Joachim von Plettenberg, a gentleman whose hospitality and affability do great honour to him and his nation; Mr. Hemmy, second governor, and his family; Mr. Von Prehn, the major; Mr. Bergh the secretary, a man of science, of a noble, philosophic turn of mind, with a family who distinguish themselves in every mental and bodily accomplishment, above the whole rising generation of the Cape; Mr. Kerste, Mr. de Wit, and our worthy host Mr. Christophel Brand, commander of the Post at False Bay, with all their families. It is a real satisfaction to perpetuate the memory of valuable members of society, and friends to mankind.

hundred



hundred thousand dollars, or about twenty-two thousand five hundred pounds sterling.

1772.
NOVEMBER.

The farmers in the country are very plain hospitable people; but those who dwell in the remotest settlements seldom come to town, and are said to be very ignorant; this may easily be conceived, because they have no better company than Hottentots, their dwellings being often several days journey asunder, which must in a great measure preclude all intercourse. The vine is cultivated in plantations within the compass of a few days journey from the town; which were established by the first colonists, and of which the ground was given in perpetual property to them and their heirs. The company at present never part with the property of the ground, but let the surface to the farmer for an annual rent, which, though extremely moderate, being only twenty-five dollars for sixty acres*, yet does not give sufficient encouragement to plant vineyards. The distant settlements therefore chiefly raise corn and rear cattle; nay many of the settlers entirely follow the latter branch of rustick employment, and some have very numerous flocks. We were told there were two farmers who had each fifteen thousand sheep, and oxen in proportion; and several who possessed

* Each acre of six hundred and sixty-six square Rhymland roods, the rood of twelve feet. The proportion of the Rhymland foot to the English is about one hundred and sixteen to one hundred and twenty.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

fix or eight thousand sheep, of which they drive great droves to town every year; but lions and buffaloes, and the fatigue of the journey, destroy numbers of their cattle before they can bring them so far. They commonly take their families with them in large waggons covered with linen or leather, spread over hoops, and drawn by eight, ten, and sometimes twelve pair of oxen. They bring butter, mutton-tallow, the flesh and skins of sea-cows (hippopotamus), together with lion and rhinoceros' skins, to sell. They have several slaves, and commonly engage in their service several Hottentots of the poorer sort, and (as we were told) of the tribe called Boschemans or Bushmen, who have no cattle of their own, but commonly subsist by hunting or by committing depredations on their neighbours. The opulent farmers set up a young beginner by intrusting to his care a flock of four or five hundred sheep, which he leads to a distant spot, where he finds plenty of good grass and water; the one half of all the lambs which are yeaned fall to his share, by which means he soon becomes as rich as his benefactor.

Though the Dutch company seem evidently to discourage all new settlers, by granting no lands in private property, yet the products of the country have of late years sufficed not only to supply the Isles of France and Bourbon with corn, but likewise to furnish the mother country with several ship loads. These exports would certainly be made

at



at an easier rate than at present, if the settlements did not extend so far into the country, from whence the products must be brought to the Table bay by land carriage, on roads which are almost impassable. The intermediate spaces of uncultivated land between the different settlements are very extensive, and contain many spots fit for agriculture; but one of the chief reasons why the colonists are so much divided and scattered throughout the country, is to be met with in another regulation of the company, which forbids every new settler to establish himself within a mile of another. It is evident that if this settlement were in the hands of the commonwealth, it would have attained to a great population, and a degree of opulence and splendor, of which it has not the least hopes at present: But a private company of East-India merchants find their account much better in keeping all the landed property to themselves, and tying down the colonist, lest he should become too great and powerful.

The wines made at the Cape are of the greatest variety possible. The best, which is made at M. Vander Spy's plantation of Constantia, is spoken of in Europe, more by report than from real knowledge; thirty leagres* at the utmost are annually raised of this kind, and each leagre sells for about fifty pounds on the spot. The vines from which it is made were originally brought from

* A leagre contains about one hundred and eight gallons, or a pipe.

Shiraz:

1772:
NOVEMBER.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

Shiraz in Persia. Several other sorts grow in the neighbourhood of that plantation, which produce a sweet rich wine, that generally passes for genuine Constantia in Europe. French plants of burgundy, muscade, and frontignan have likewise been tried, and have succeeded extremely well, sometimes producing wines superior to those of the original soil. An excellent dry wine, which has a slight agreeable tartness, is commonly drank in the principal families, and is made of Madeira vines transplanted to the Cape. Several low sorts, not entirely disagreeable, are raised in great plenty, and sold at a very cheap rate, so that the sailors of the East-India ships commonly indulge themselves very plentifully in them whenever they come ashore.

The products of the country supply with provisions the ships of all nations which touch at the Cape. Corn, flour, biscuit, salted beef, brandy, and wine are to be had in abundance, and at moderate prices; and their fresh greens, fine fruits*, good mutton and beef, are excellent restoratives to seamen who have made a long voyage. The climate is likewise so healthy, that the inhabitants are rarely troubled with complaints, and strangers soon recover of the scurvy and other distempers. The winters at the Cape are so mild that they hardly ever have ice about the town: but on the mountains, and especially those far in

* Their grapes and oranges are some of the best in the world.

the



the country, they have hard frosts with snow and hail storms; nay a strong south-easterly storm sometimes brings on a frost during night even in the month of November, which is their spring. The only inconvenience which they frequently suffer are colds, brought on by the frequent change of air from strong winds, to which the Cape is subject at all seasons. But notwithstanding the heat, which is sometimes excessive, the inhabitants of Dutch origin seem to have preserved their native habit of body, and both sexes are remarkably corpulent, to which their good living may greatly contribute.

1775.
NOVEMBER.

The Hottentots or aboriginal inhabitants of this country, have retired into the interior parts, and their nearest *kraal* or village, is about a hundred miles from the Cape town. From thence they sometimes come down with their own cattle, or attend the Dutch farmers who conduct their flocks to town for sale. We had no opportunity to make new observations upon them, as we only saw a few individuals, in whom we could not discern any peculiarities but such as have already been described by Peter Kolben, in his Present State of the Cape of Good Hope, &c. The circumstantial accounts given by this intelligent man, have been confirmed to us by the principal inhabitants of the Cape town. It is true, that he has been misinformed in regard to some circumstances; and that others, chiefly relative to the colony, have at present another appearance.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

pearance than in his time: but he still remains the best author that can be consulted on the subject, and as such we will venture to refer our readers to him.

We have had an occasion to observe several facts alleged in Kolben, and we likewise find them mentioned in Lieutenant Cook's voyage. See Hawkesworth's compilation Vol. III. p. 789, &c. The Abbé de la Caille, an astronomer, in the account of his voyage, which was published soon after his death, has endeavoured to ruin the credit of Kolben's book, without giving us any thing better in its stead. We should not have ventured to mention so superficial a performance, as that of the Abbé, were it not necessary to vindicate from his aspersions, the character of Kolben, as a faithful and accurate observer. The Abbé lived with a family at the Cape, who were of a party directly opposite to that which had supported Kolben. He daily heard invectives against him, and never failed to write them down, in order to give himself importance at the expence of the other.

Nul n'aura d'esprit
Hors nous et nos amis.

BOILEAU.

The extremity of Africa towards the south is a mass of high mountains, of which the outermost are black, craggy, and barren, consisting of a coarse granite, which contains no heterogeneous parts, such as petrified shells, &c. nor any



any volcanic productions. The cultivated spots which we saw had a stiff clay mixed with a little sand and small pieces of stone; but the plantations towards False bay are almost entirely on a sandy soil. The colony of Stellenbosch is said to have the most fertile soil of all at the Cape, and the different plantations thrive there incomparably better than any where else, particularly the European oaks, which are said to have attained a considerable height and flourishing appearance, whilst they do not seem to succeed near the town, where the tallest we saw was not above thirty feet high. The interior mountains are certainly metallic, and contain iron and copper; specimens of ores of both kinds were shewn to us by Mr. Hemmy, and some tribes of Hottentots melt both these metals; from whence we may conclude, that the ores they employ must be rich and easy of fusion. Hot springs are likewise found at several places in the interior country; and the inhabitants of the Cape Town resort to one of them at the distance of about three days journey, which is famous for curing cutaneous and other distempers, and is probably of a sulphureous nature.

The variety of plants in this country is surprising. In the little time we staid there, we observed several new species growing in the environs of the town, where we should least have expected them. And though the collections of former botanists from hence are very ample, yet Dr.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

SPARRMAN and the learned Dr. THUNBERG * have gathered above a thousand species entirely unknown before. The animal kingdom is proportionably rich in the variety of its productions. The greatest quadrupeds, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the giraffe or camelopard, inhabit this extremity of Africa; the two first were formerly found within fifty miles of the Cape, but have been so much pursued and hunted, that they are rarely seen at present within many days journey. The rhinoceros particularly is so scarce, that the government have issued an order to prevent its being entirely extirpated. The hippopotamus, there called a sea-cow, which formerly used to come as far as Saldanha bay, is likewise so seldom seen at present, that none must be killed within a considerable distance of the Cape. Its meat is eaten here, and reckoned a great dainty: the taste in my opinion is that of coarse beef, but the fat rather resembles marrow. This animal feeds entirely on vegetables, and we were told can only dive a

* An eminent disciple of Linné, who after arranging and classing Dr. Burmann's herbals at Leyden, studied botany during three years at the Cape, and having made immense acquisitions to science, was sent to Batavia, at the expence of the Dutch East-India company, in order to proceed to Japan in 1775. The same gentleman was so obliging, at Dr. Sparrman's request, to take with him, on one of his excursions, Francis Masson, employed in the Royal garden at Kew, who had been sent to the Cape on board the Resolution, in order to collect live plants and seeds for the botanical garden. Under Dr. Thunberg's kind guidance, who pointed out to him what was worthy of notice, he has made and brought home an ample collection.

short



short space, not exceeding thirty yards. The wild buffalo is another huge quadruped, which now inhabits the more remote settlements of the Cape, and is said to have prodigious strength and ferocity. Its horns resembles those of the American wild ox (*bison*), and are represented in the ixth vol. of M. de Buffon's Natural History. They often attack the farmers travelling in the country, and kill many of their cattle, which they trample upon with their feet. Dr. Thunberg lost his horses in one of these encounters, and his fellow-traveller, the Dutch company's gardener, narrowly escaped between two trees. A young one, about three years old, belonging to the second governor, was put before a waggon, with six tame oxen, but his strength was such that they could not move him out of his place*. Besides this there is another species of wild ox, called by the natives *gnoo*, which has slender horns, a mane, and brushes of hair on the nose and wattles, and in the slender make of its limbs seems to resemble an horse or an antelope, more than its cogeneric animals. This species we have drawn and described, and it has been brought over to the menagerie of the Prince of Orange. Africa has always been known as the country of

1772.
NOVEMBER.

* We should have gone into the country to see this animal, but we only heard of it the day before our departure. This seems to be the animal mentioned by de Manet, Nouvelle Histoire de l'Afrique Française, tome ii. p. 129.



1772.
NOVEMBER.

the beautiful genus of gazelles or antelopes*, and the different names which have been improperly given to its species, have hitherto not a little contributed to obscure our knowledge of them. A number of the fiercest beasts of prey likewise infest the Cape, and the colonists can never be at sufficient pains to extirpate them. Lions, leopards, tyger-cats, striped and spotted hyænas, (Pennant's Syn. of Quadr.) jackals, and several others, live on the numerous

* We can only except a few species found in India, and other parts of Asia, and one in Europe. The different species at the Cape are remarkable, some for the elegance of their shape, some for their colours, their horns, or their size. The Coodoo, or Kolben's *bock ohne namen* (goat without a name), from whence the name of M. de Buffon's Condoma is probably derived, is the strepsiceros of Linné and Pallas, and its height is that of a horse. Its leaps are said to be of an astonishing height. The Cape elk of Kolben, Pallas's *antelope oryx*, is about the size of a stag. The *bonte bock* is the *A. scripta* of Dr. Pallas. The antelope which they improperly call a hart or stag at the Cape, is the *A. bubalis* of Pallas. The Egyptian antelope, Linné's and Pallas's *gazella*, and M. de Buffon's *pasan*, is here called gems-bock or chamois, which it does not in the least resemble. The blue antelope, (*blauwe bock*) is really of a blueish colour, but when killed soon loses the velvet-like appearance of its fur. The *spring-bock*, a beautiful species, named *A. pygargus* by Pallas, live in vast herds in the interior parts of Africa, and travel to the southward in the summer season, in search of food, attended by many lions, panthers, hyænas, and jackals, which prey upon them. Of this species we had the honour to present one to Her Majesty alive. Two small species, with several varieties not hitherto noticed, supply the principal inhabitants with venison of a fine flavour. Their size is that of a fawn of the fallow-deer. The *duyker*, or diving antelope, so called from hiding itself among the bushes when pursued, and only emerging from time to time, is not yet sufficiently known, and the animal named a roebuck here, likewise deserves the farther attention of travellers.

species



species of antelopes, on hares, jerbuas, caviæ, and many lesser quadrupeds with which the country abounds. The number of birds is likewise very great, and among them many are arrayed in the brightest colours. I cannot help mentioning, in confirmation of Kolben's accounts, that we have seen two species of swallows at the Cape, though the Abbé de la Caille censures him for speaking of them, because they did not occur to himself. The Abbé also commits a mistake with regard to the knorhan, which is not a gelinote or grous, as he calls it, but the African bustard. Upon the whole, it would be easy to refute almost every criticism which the Abbé has passed on Kolben, if a work of so little merit deserved so much attention. Reptiles of all kinds, serpents, (among which are many whose bite is mortal,) and a variety of insects swarm about the Cape; and its shores likewise abound in well-tasted fishes, many of which are not yet known to the naturalist. In short, notwithstanding the many spoils of the vegetable and animal kingdom, which have been brought from Africa, its immense interior countries remain almost entirely unknown to the present time, and still contain great treasures of natural knowledge, which wait the future investigation of another THUNBERG or another BRUCE.

1772.
NOVEMBER.

CHAP.

