

to leave the colony; and I was told it was necessary to pay a tax to take a bath.

The whole revenue raised amounts to 130,000*l.*, and the expenditures do not exceed 125,000*l.*

In order to lessen the weight of the taxation, it was in agitation at the time of our visit to increase the duties on imports, which are about three per cent. ad valorem, on English articles, and ten per cent. on foreign goods.

The circulation is a paper one of the denomination of six-dollars, valued at one shilling and six-pence. There are no notes less than twelve six-dollars, equal to a pound. The monetary concerns of the colony have undergone many vicissitudes, and numerous experiments have been made, all tending to produce a want of confidence. Government, until within a few years, had the entire control of the discount banks, and through them possessed a full knowledge of the affairs of men in business, and it is said did not fail to use it in an arbitrary manner, producing revulsions in the monetary affairs of the colony that were highly prejudicial to the commercial community, causing much distress, and in some cases ruin, of which many feel the effects to this day.

This state of things gave rise to the establishment of banks exclusively under the control of private individuals: there are two of these corporations, bearing the title of the "Cape of Good Hope Bank," with a capital of 70,000*l.*, and the "South African Bank," whose capital amounts to 100,000*l.*; the capital of each is all paid in, and no part of it can be withdrawn. The latter is not a bank of issue. A general statement of their affairs is annually made to the proprietors. Interest is paid on deposits remaining longer than a certain specified time. Inviolable secrecy is observed with regard to individual accounts, and each person connected with the institution signs a promise to that effect. These banks afford every facility within the bounds of prudence to those dealing with them, even carrying the spirit of accommodation so far as to keep early hours for the benefit of the agriculturists who frequent the market.

This new system is found to work admirably, and pays handsome dividends to the proprietors. It gratified me to learn that the public of Cape Town is chiefly indebted to Isaac Chase, Esq., the United States consul, for the adoption of this banking system. I had many interesting conversations with him on the subject, and also conversed with others, inhabitants of the colony, who expressed themselves highly pleased with the success of these institutions, while at the same time they acknowledged their obligations to our commercial agent.

Wine is the great staple of the colony; but many of the vine-growers have been ruined, in consequence of the vacillating policy pursued by the home government, with regard to this branch of industry. Trusting to the promises made by the government, a vast amount of capital was invested in the business, and the annual production was in a short time tripled. This state of things continued for about ten years; but in the year 1825 a change of policy took place, and the protection was diminished more than one-half; and at the same time a further reduction was proposed in the bounty. As a natural consequence, a depreciation in all the wine estates took place, and the loss of much property ensued. This was made

more unpleasant to the Cape colonists by a proposition to put a duty on Cape wines, that would have the effect of placing them at a higher duty than those of foreign wines. The colonists are still very sensitive upon the subject of wine, and the treatment they have received; not only have they to complain of bad faith on the part of the government, but the constant efforts of others to decry their wines, some of which are produced of as fine a quality as those in any other part of the world; but there is some foundation for the disparaging reports that have been circulated, for quantities have certainly been sent abroad that had been very much adulterated.

The Cape colony, both as to soil and climate, is well adapted to the raising of all descriptions of wines, from the light German and French, to those of Madeira and Sherry.

In consequence of the reverses the colonists have met with in the wine trade, they have begun to turn their attention to the rising of sheep; the colony has been found to be well adapted to those producing fine wool, and the investments that have been made in them bid fair to be profitable.

Wheat and maize are also cultivated, particularly on the mountains near the Cape, where these grains grow in great perfection, and are raised in sufficient quantities to meet the consumption of the colony, and to be exported in considerable quantity to the Mauritius. The wheat now used is of a hard and flinty kind, and effectually resists the attacks of insects, as well as the rust, which were formerly troublesome.

The other chief productions are fruit, oil, and provisions.

One great obstacle is opposed to this colony ever becoming a great producer of wool, and that is the immense distances and the almost total want of communications. So bad are the roads and so great the hindrances, that the wonder is, not that there is so little internal trade, but how transportation is effected at all. Were it not for the energy and perseverance of the early colonists, and the hardy breed of cattle that they possess, communication between distant parts of the colony would be nearly impossible. Some opinion may be formed of the state of the roads and the difficulties to surmount, by the fact that fourteen pair of oxen are frequently attached to a small wagon.

The ox used in Africa seems to me to be of an entirely different breed from the animal we are accustomed to see in our country. Their legs are much longer in proportion to their bodies, lank and bare bones, with immense horns; and their gait, instead of a slow walk, is often a trot.

The whole of the foreign trade of the colony passes through Cape Town. The value of imports is estimated at one and a half million sterling, and that of exports amounts to upwards of a million. The vessels engaged in this trade number about six hundred, whose tonnage amounts to one hundred and eighty thousand tons. The total revenue from customs, in the year 1840, was forty-two thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven pounds. The exports consist of wine, wool, ivory, whale-oil, hides, tallow, and aloes. These are either brought to Cape Town from the interior in wagons, or in small vessels