

was then, as now, remarkable; and evidently the guiding and restraining influence of these simple ordinances and teachings of the gospel, during all the years, have done much to prevent the nomadic classes from lapsing utterly into the heathenism of the native tribes with which they have ever been in contact. Even now, in those who lead a migratory life, such as the greater number of their fathers were wont to lead,

“While on from plain to plain they led their flocks,
In search of clearer springs and fresher field,”

both the spirit and the forms of religion are everywhere far from rare. They hold the Calvinistic doctrines, and, in many respects, are not unlike the sturdy Scotch of three centuries ago. Rough and uncouth as the “trek Boers” (nomadic farmers) often are, they have, at least many of them, a habit of saluting their Maker at break of day with supplication and song. Nor is it any uncommon thing for the patriarch of the family to bring his household together, morning and evening, read a chapter from the well-worn family Bible and offer prayer. They still retain that resolute, republican spirit of freedom for which their ancestors were distinguished in the Netherlands many generations ago. From their religion and their politics together, it is easy to see how they should be often thought a stubborn, sometimes a bigoted, if not also a proud race, of an independent spirit, a positive purpose, and ever ready to fight and die for their rights and their liberties.

In their general appearance, domestic life and common pursuits, the Boers are tall, stout, strong, hospitable and kind, frank and courteous, sometimes surly and phlegmatic. Their farms and their families are large, the former numbering from six to ten thousand acres of land, the latter from six to a dozen children, to say nothing of servants. Their wealth consists of their lands, cattle, sheep and horses. Where they have been able to settle down to live undisturbed for a few generations, they are not unlike the average New England farmer in the general ordering of their affairs. When they are given or driven to constant change, the wide open field is their home, and the large tented wagon, usually drawn by twelve or fourteen oxen, is their house, where they sleep at night, and in which the women and children ride by day, while the men, in their saddles, are out with their rifles for the game they need for the larder. If one thinks his stay in a place may be for a few months or years, he builds a cheap “wattle and dab” house and covers it with thatch for himself and family, a hovel for his horses, and a pen for his cattle; encloses a few acres of land for a garden, and plants out a few fruit trees, and, eventually, if not too much annoyed by the natives, or forcibly ousted by the English, he comes to find he has a permanent home.

But the civil and political career and experiences of the Boers have