

THEY PLANTED THE CAPE — II

IV

When Van Goens sailed for St. Helena in the homeward-bound fleet on 10th May 1655 Van Riebeeck sent Verburgh in the "Tulp" with the fleet. He was to retrieve two horses and half-a-dozen saddles carried past the Cape, and to catch horses running wild, if he could, and some young pigs. Equally important were as many apple and orange saplings as the skipper could find room for. The gardener had told Van Riebeeck that "hundreds of trees might be brought in tubs with the roots carefully covered with earth, and placed in the hold to be protected from salt spray."

Meantime, Van Riebeeck applied himself with his customary industry to the expansion of the gardens. The ordinary kitchen-garden crops were already established, although legumes, necessarily staked well above ground, suffered from wind. The gardens now covered over 12 morgen, and he had bordered them with ditches 8 feet wide, and hedged them with wild thorn and a tall type of indigenous tree, in order to provide shelter from the wind for the young fruit trees. Orchard trees and vines were to be the highlight of his endeavour from then onwards.

Verburgh returned on 8th July with two horses (more eluded the chase), and the saddles. He also brought the fruit trees, and one of the ships had given him some hazel nuts. On the 22nd July the yacht "Leeuwinne" brought from the Chamber of Delft three boxes of plants: one of vines, one of currants, and one of gooseberries, and a basket containing 46 bags "great and small" of garden seed. During this month Van Riebeeck was away for a few days, sailing to Robben and Dassen Islands to inspect the work there. He took the Hottentot Herry with him and two of Herry's friends. He found Robben Island "beautifully green with vegetation", but the grain unsatisfactory. The stockmen neglected it. Herry pointed out a large number of herbs, which, he said, increased cows' milk. "Thousands of cattle and sheep", recorded Van Riebeeck, "might graze here." Herry asked if he might build a hut and live on the island with his family. Van Riebeeck could think of nothing more convenient to himself, but the nearest to its fulfilment occurred later, when he banished Herry to the island, and from which the Hottentot managed to escape.

He found Dassen Island "very barren". Nothing to show, apparently for Woutersen's original enthusiasm. He found only a "fair number of seals" largely new-born that disported themselves with their parents. He thought it would be wise to proclaim a close season until November or December. This was probably as well. There is a record that in two visits at the end of the previous January "Tulp" had brought from Dassen Island down to Table Bay a total of 7,800 seal skins, which sounds like an approach to extermination.

While Van Riebeeck was away he left in charge at the Cape "an elderly, trustworthy man named Tijmon Egbertssen, the station's pilot. He had also, Van Riebeeck tells us, "an expert knowledge of boat-building,

and at the time was engaged in building the first sea-going craft built at the Cape, a little sloop. This was the "Robbejacht", and she was built, as her name indicates, to serve the sealing industry. She was launched on the 11th September, and unfortunately was lost at sea in February 1658, when she accompanied the Company's slaver "Maria" to Angola. She was discovered not to be as expertly built as Van Riebeeck supposed.

Early in August he sent Verburgh off to Mauritius and Madagascar in the "Tulp" to trade again, and to examine thoroughly "all the rivers and inlets" along the coast of Madagascar in order to find out where the French traded for rice. For this purpose he was to request the Commander of Mauritius to lend him a vessel to accompany him. It was to prove a disastrous adventure.

At the end of October the galiot "Nachtglass" anchored, sent out by the Seventeen to serve the Cape station, especially in whaling. In November Van Riebeeck sent her to examine the isles of Tristan da Cunha, in accordance with earlier orders. (She got back at the end of the following January with the report that the isles would not suit the Company's purpose.)

During the Spring we find Van Riebeeck more than once toiling out, miles from the fort, to find fuel for the cooks, and young trees as wind-breaks for his fruit trees. He sought, indeed, more accessible timber in general. People at present had to fetch it from high up Table Mountain. In his despatch of October to the Seventeen he asks again for Norwegian deals. He needs transport — more horses — oxen are slow work; collecting timber over such distances and at such heights took up too much time. (The Seventeen were not to encourage this view. Timber took up too much space in the ships.) Earlier in the year he had examined the forest down by the Liesbeek River. In those days it reached densely down to the river, and the river itself was half choked with growth, defeating Van Riebeeck's vision of its being made navigable. "It is the finest possible valley," he wrote, "with beautiful streams." Pity, he reflects, that he has not enough labour to cultivate it, except that cultivation would have to be protected from the Hottentots. He might try eight to ten men here as cultivators.

With the outward-bound fleet of March 1656 came the reply of the Seventeen to Van Riebeeck's despatch of the 28th April 1655 on the subject of the freemen. They are pleased with his assurance of "abundant supplies for the ships", and that "agriculture is so successful". He is to extend agriculture to the utmost of his power. Both he and the Company should weigh the benefit of breeding stock, and every means should be adopted to relieve the Company of expense. They had decided to authorise him to release men to become freemen, if they apply to do so, and are in a position to support themselves without the Company's assistance, and have the requisite knowledge of cattle breeding and of the resources of the country. They would be obliged, as Van Riebeeck had suggested, to contract to remain in residence for ten years and their wives and children

for twenty. Slaves are obviously needed at the Cape. They will consider the matter.

They also warned Van Riebeeck that a French fleet of four ships was about to sail for Madagascar to establish a settlement there, and might call at the Cape. He is to "avoid giving offence". It anchored on the heels of the despatch. Two of the outward-bound ships were still in the bay, and six of the return fleet, which had arrived on the 15th March,



commanded by Councillor Extraordinary Jasper van den Boogaerd. Van Riebeeck took every precaution, landing twenty soldiers from the outward-bound ships to strengthen the garrison, and sending "Nachtglas" to warn four approaching laggards of the return fleet. However, all was well. The French Admiral called upon Van den Boogaerd, and upon Van Riebeeck at the fort, and presented each of them with a cask of canary wine and other delicacies, and in return was "festively received". Van den Boogaerd sailed on the 28th. On the 29th the French Admiral called again upon Van Riebeeck where again he was "festively and politely received", and where he informed Van Riebeeck with every courtesy that

if he did not supply him with stock for his fleet, now on the point of sailing, he would be obliged to send inland to the Hottentots himself. The rule was that foreign ships were not to be supplied with provisions but only with water. Van Riebeeck, mindful of his instructions to be civil, and no match for four heavily armed French ships of the Line, handed over eight head of cattle and ten sheep.

When the rains came in May, his orders to release freemen in mind, he went out behind the mountain to a site he named Ronde Doorn Bosjen, because it was marked by a clump of tall wild thorn bush. He chose about half an acre of land to plough and sow as an experiment, and put in grain and rice. Towards the end of July he was out there again, and ordered the two men in charge to prepare another patch for planting tobacco.

The outward-bound ships had brought him vines, currants, raspberries, strawberries, walnuts, chestnuts, cherries, plums and pears. Of forest trees in this consignment arrived acorns, alder and willow seed. Later he reports that only two of the vines survived, only one pear, four "wild" specimens of cherry, and from seed two willows grew and an alder. Strawberry plants all failed, and the chestnuts.

He wrote that in some of the private gardens of the Company's servants grafted specimens of fruit trees were growing, and he thought that they succeeded best, and would prefer grafted specimens in future consignments. He asks for mulberries. He might try to produce silk in the Tonkin fashion. He had found that the indigenous thorn is better than the one imported, so that he will need no more thorn seed. He would like some more alder seed. "Sow the seed," he suggests, "in cases with a few plants. Plants and seeds should arrive by outward-bound ships which arrive in March or April. Thus the seed will be newly gathered in the fatherland, and arrive beautifully fresh at the most suitable season for putting into the earth. All that is sent at other times of the year we find to be wasted money and trouble."

Sometimes the Seventeen got a fad into their heads. Horse-radish, for instance. They wrote in their despatch of May 1656 that in every ship of the outward-bound fleet would be shipped in future two bags of horse-radish seed. "You are to do your best," run the instructions, "to raise a large quantity of this vegetable for the ships, as it is beneficial for the health of the crews . . . Sow it in moist and shady places." One day later on the gardener brought in a radish weighing 6½ lbs. (We feel we should add *sic* to that statement.) Crews were unimpressed. It was all Van Riebeeck could do to get the ships to take the stuff, and probably it went overboard. The first consignment of radish plants arrived rotten. Van Riebeeck reports that they were packed in closed sacks. They should have been shipped in tubs or cases, packed in sand and exposed to the air.

Van Riebeeck had sent "Nachtglass" to St. Helena in the wake of Van den Boogaerd with a despatch to report to him laggard return ships on the way. In July she brought back about 300 young apple and lemon

trees. A little later an outward-bound ship brought a case of French vines, and another on the 6th August brought three more tubs of vines; a case of currant plants, and nearly 60 lbs. of Brabant clover seed (6 lbs. of which was white clover "growing short and near the ground"); and three bags of buckwheat — "all preserved in bladders and packed in baskets covered with sail". More currant plants came by the same ship, and some plants of what the Seventeen called "spar" trees. (Timber for ship repairs.) "When they have been growing well for a few years," read the instructions, "slips may be cut and planted."

When Van Riebeeck was out again at this time searching for young trees suitable for wind-breaks, he found "a sort of pine" 6 feet high. It sounds like the Cape Sapreehout (Mountain Cypress), which will grow to some 30 feet. He planted some of these in the fort garden, and laid down some cuttings. With the next outward-bound fleet the Seventeen sent a cask of fir-cones. "To get the seeds out of the cones," they directed, "lay them in the sun. This opens them, just as fire does the pineapple. The seed can then be shaken out."

In a despatch brought by one of these vessels the Seventeen instruct him not to engage himself in too many projects. It appeared later that to send twenty-five men with Verburgh to Madagascar when they might have been cultivating the soil, was a mistake. "Cultivate the soil," he is urged, "and breed cattle; this should be your chief care." Vines and fruit-trees and asses (as an improvement on draught-oxen), they tell him, are to be had at St. Vincent (Brazil). Ships will be given instructions to call. There have been complaints to the Seventeen that the drinking water is muddied. The stream has been diverted, they hear, to run round the garden to irrigate it. Van Riebeeck retorted to this accusation that the stream was not polluted in the garden, but above the pumps where people would persist in washing their clothes and themselves. He issued a proclamation on the subject. Offenders in future would be fined.

They were mowing hay at Rondebosch in October. He went out to inspect. Clover was knee high, Beans from Holland, Mauritius and Rouen were going into the ground, and the first tobacco — from locally won seed garnered from the fort plot, and sweet potatoes. The wind, he wrote, became weaker and weaker as his party proceeded along the flat behind Table Mountain. There could be no doubt that here was the place to grow grain. Grainland in the Table valley could be turned over to pasture again. What pasture remains is so poor that the cattle look miserable.

In November he went to examine land "behind the Lion Mountain" (Signal Hill) and had holes dug and tests made of the soil. He found it "fairly good", at any rate worth planting grain there next season. His impression was that the wind was also less violent.

When next he rode out to Rondebosch, bent upon his usual round of inspection, "and to encourage the labourers to be zealous in their work", he planned a picnic. He thought it would cheer the handful of women in

the settlement to see things growing at Rondebosch "as well as they do in the Fatherland". So he chartered a waggon and carried them all out with him. Probably, too, with the prospect of freemen farming, he had thoughts of engaging their interest and co-operation.

Reaping was completed by the end of December, and in the fort garden he put the men to manuring and preparing the harvested plots in order to plant cabbages for the fleets. The last of the vegetables went in at Rondebosch too.

The Hottentots had been camping in sight of operations at Rondebosch, and when they broke camp they burnt all the manure remaining on their pasture land. Herry had observed that whenever he broke camp the white intruders came and gathered it up.

V

We read in the journal of February 5th 1657 that it was a fine, sunny morning, and that during the day a north-west breeze sprang up which brought safely to anchor the flute "Hilversum". The record of ships' sailings tells us that she left Vlei on October 19th, and thus had made the passage in fifteen weeks and four days. Everyone of the 54 on board was well, and none lost during the passage. A lucky little vessel.

She brought a despatch from the Seventeen dated 12th October 1656 which repeated most of what they had to say about agriculture in their last despatch. What was important was a contract with Van Riebeeck for a further three years. This was the reply to his plea to be transferred. He is to remain at the Cape. They raise his salary to f.130 a month. "For reasons which guided them", as they put it, they are not prepared to raise him in rank. It is serviceable to the Company, they explain, now that new ventures are on the way, to retain his services at the Cape. They will keep his interests in mind. They have commissioned the Hon. Rijckloff van Goens, in command of the outward-bound fleet, to make every examination necessary to the settlement of freemen on the land, or to take up other trades and occupations. The fleet will number 10 ships, 4 flutes; its muster 3,600 men. They gather that there is no great enthusiasm among the garrison men about turning farmer, so that they apparently retreat from their original demand that applicants for free papers must be knowledgeable and able to support themselves, for Van Riebeeck is now ordered to help them. The Company will take everything off their hands at a reasonable price. A slave vessel is in preparation to serve the Cape station. She can do a little privateering on the side — "look out for prizes off Mozambique". Van Riebeeck is to give up sealing. His seal-skins were not fetching much. Turn the sealers over to agriculture.

A group of nine men expressed their desire to try their hand at farming. Van Riebeeck now paid several visits to the Rondebosch lands, to determine upon what land to offer them; to choose a site for a redoubt to protect them — it was to be called *Coorenhoop* (Hope of Corn); to clear out the centre of the group of thorn bushes to serve as a cattle pen;

and to arrange for an elaborate bird-trap to be set up in the mustard patch. He took the men themselves out to the lands on the 19th and 20th February to arrange their grants. There were five Dutchmen, three Germans and a Fleming. Here, though no such momentous concept was at the moment in mind, were the founders of the Cape Colony.

They decided to run two farms, five in partnership on one of them, and four on the other. The partnership of five was headed by a vigorous German coppersmith named Herman Remajenne, and came to be called Herman's Colony or the Groeneveld (Green fields). These men intended to concentrate their best efforts on growing corn. The land lay on the far side of the Liesbeek River. The partnership of four, took land on the other side of the river near the spot chosen for the redoubt *Coornhooop*. They called their property *Hollandse Tuin* (or the Dutch garden). They were to devote themselves to garden produce and the cultivation of tobacco. The leader of the partnership was Steven Janz, or Janssen, who had been serving as a sailor, but he understood tobacco. Van Riebeeck included in this grant the plot he had already planted with tobacco. Both farms were to breed pigs and poultry.

None of these men had a penny. Van Riebeeck made an agreement whereby their land was mortgaged to the Company, and their crops were to stand security until they could pay off their debts for tools, draught-oxen, stock, and rations. Seed, this first year, was distributed to them for nothing. They were not to barter with the Hottentots for stock, but were to buy it from the Company. They were to possess as much land within a certain radius as they could cultivate in three years, and for that period would be free of taxation. The one party would receive on credit a plough, a harrow, spades, and twelve trained draught-oxen. As there was only one plough to spare, the men of the other partners were compensated — on credit — with a wagon and six oxen to carry manure. These oxen they would have to train themselves. They must get on as best they can without a plough until one could be imported.

Meanwhile, these bustling visitations to the countryside had been anxiously observed by the local Hottentots, the redoubtable Herry amongst them. They had done little damage since the unfortunate killing of the herd, and Herry had been coming about the fort again of late, willing to act as interpreter, but they saw only too clearly through Van Riebeeck's plan to render them powerless by acquiring all their stock, and forcing them into labour. Presently, they brought their cattle to graze "within cannon-shot of the fort", and were warned to clear out. Van Riebeeck fell into a sharp argument with Herry who declared that the country was theirs. Van Riebeeck retorted that unless they sell their cattle they could not be allowed pasture. "Our chief object," he declared, "is to obtain cattle." Nor would the Company entertain the claim that the land belonged to Herry's clan. The Company "had taken possession of it for its own purposes". The Hottentots moved away hardly comforted.

The freemen no sooner settled upon their lands than Hottentots stole 100 lbs.' weight of tobacco plants from the beds. Lest worse befall, Van Riebeeck ordered that there was to be no retaliation. "Rather await a convenient time to pay them out." The Hottentots fled, but two of them ventured to visit the fort that night. They were received in friendly fashion, and told to keep the peace.

The freemen were busy building their dwellings of plaited withies daubed with clay when on March 16th the outward-bound fleet came to anchor, bringing the commissioner the Hon. Rijkloff van Goens. His first act was to order seamen ashore to drag timber from the forest to lengthen the jetty. Men were standing up to their necks in water to water their ships. He then proceeded to visit "most of the valleys and mountains and corners of the whole Cape, measuring and charting, accompanied by a not altogether competent surveyor. He spent a night in a tent at Hout Bay, and on another found a bed in Herman's Colony. In the midst of all his activity the same French Admiral who had called during the previous year dropped anchor in Table Bay with a single ship, "La Maréshale", homeward-bound from Madagascar. He related that his fleet had lost 400 men, and the crews of the other three ships of his fleet were too weakened to sail. He also brought in his ship three of the crew of the "Tulp", with the heavy tidings that she had dragged her anchors in a hurricane at Colamboela and had been flung ashore. No lives were lost in this calamity, and merchandise had been salvaged, and the natives had treated the crew kindly, but disease had broken out. Thirteen of them had died, including Verbergh. Six remained behind to guard the salvaged goods and awaited release.

The Admiral sailed for home on the 14th April, carrying a despatch from Van Goens to Holland. He gave Van Riebeeck as a parting gift a couple of Abyssinian slaves. Van Riebeeck also possessed at this time three Bengalese slaves, and a Madagascan mother and child whom Verburgh had brought him on his first voyage. Van Goens ordered him to lend one of his slaves to Verburgh's widow, and another to the sick-comforter's wife who had just had another baby. Since the earliest days Mrs. van Riebeeck had brought up an intelligent little Hottentot girl, Herry's niece, whom she called Eva. Now the girl was older she acted as interpreter on occasion.

Van Goens sailed on the 19th April. He took two Hottentots with him. One of them was an intelligent Caapman named Doman who was also about the fort acting as interpreter. He left his formal instructions for Van Riebeeck, and prepared his report for the Directorate. To Van Riebeeck he granted as his private property the land behind the Lion's Rump in which Van Riebeeck was interested, subject to confirmation by the Directorate. He also granted land to two more freemen.

His instructions ordered Van Riebeeck to be more generous to the freemen than their actual contracts indicated. When slaves arrive the freemen are to be the first served. He is to find draught-oxen for them all on the farms, even if it means that the Company's waggons come to a

standstill. He is to protect them if the Hottentots annoy them. He thinks that as many as fifteen watch-houses and redoubts may have to be erected to protect the settlement. The wealthier Hottentots northward and eastward must be sought out. Rewards may be offered to volunteers willing to undertake such expeditions. Too many men are sent to sea — the twenty-five men, for instance, in the "Tulp". Better enlarge the field of trade by land than by sea. Above all, wheat is to be cultivated. "We cannot become noblemen," he concludes, "before we have been good farmers."

His report states that "the work here has already been brought into good order", and that the Commander is "zealous and sufficiently vigilant in the Company's service"; he leads a well-conducted life, but he is apt to allow his ideas to run away with him. Therefore a Secunde has been appointed in place of the deceased Verburgh who had acted as such; a necessary appointment also in case of Van Riebeeck's death or removal. He cut down the garrison to 100. When the freemen have increased in number to two hundred the garrison may safely be reduced to 50. The freemen will then man the redoubts built to guard their lands. He had been unable to persuade the first two groups of freemen to contract to remain in the country longer than twelve years, but the two later men have accepted a condition to remain for twenty years. He thought it would be unwise to grant further land to unmarried men.

Only 150 morgen, he continues, have been ploughed this year, and of that only 28 have been sown for want of seed. He estimates that some 4,000 morgen of arable land is available. 1,000 may be for rice, 50 for pasture. He thinks that there is room for 250 farmers to make a living. He has prohibited tobacco growing for the present. If the Hottentots get hold of the seed they will not exchange stock for the Company's tobacco. The Cape has still to be provisioned from overseas, but there are hopes that next year it will provide for itself. Ships also will have to be supplied with Netherlands provisions. He lists the livestock in hand — little enough. (But after entertaining the fleets, vast breeding operations recede from the picture.) Attempts to brew beer are fairly successful. He has licensed the sergeant (Herwerden) to brew beer. Herwerden wished to become a freeman, but is too useful a man to lose. He has raised his salary, and entitled him "Superintendent of Works".

Van Goens tackled the question of private gardens cultivated by Company's servants, and forbade them to sell produce. Let them become freemen, he advises, if they wish to turn farmer. There were to be arguments about these gardens; orders and counter orders for and against, and never to the end of the Company's rule would the farmer be relieved of amateur competition in their limited market. Van Goens, however, came down upon Boom, the Company's head gardener, discovered in selling his own stuff as the Company's and awarding the proceeds to himself. Van Riebeeck begged him off any penalty, and he became a freeman at the end of the year.

The fleet had brought from the Seventeen a barley mill which Van Riebeeck had asked for, a mill which eventually came into the charge of a freeman, Wouter Mostert, whose name as mill-owner survives to this day, though the mill that bears his name was not his. The fleet also brought two rams and six ewes "of the best Dutch breeding", and the grafted fruit plants Van Riebeeck had asked for, with the promise of more next year. A cask of all sorts of seeds came too, and among the bags, tulip bulbs. Fruit itself, sent with the purpose of planting the pips, all arrived rotten and nothing came of them. The Directorate sent Van Riebeeck instructions about grafting: "In order to have domesticated fruit you need only cut off a twig from a wild tree and graft it either upon the same tree or another." Chestnut trees, they tell him, are not grafted in Holland; grow them from the chestnuts sent. He is reminded to pay particular care in the planting of things sent to him as "collecting entails heavy expense".

In acknowledging the bag of tulip bulbs Van Riebeeck remarks in his despatch of May 1657: "Flowers are only for pleasure. Every energy should be applied to agriculture, that we may be able to feed ourselves, and fill the stomachs of the men." However, we find him later in the year awaiting rose trees, sweet briar and lavender. It is surprising that he never remarks in his tramps abroad on the extent and beauty of the Cape wild flowers.

There was some interest in herbs, and no wonder, because for two years, as Van Riebeeck complained, no medicine reached the Cape. He had written at the beginning of the year for rose-water for sore eyes. Woutersen from Dassen Island had been asking for it. When Van Riebeeck had gone out with the first freemen to choose their land they had come across a Hottentot who had been bitten by a snake. The Hottentots had their own cure, ligaturing the area, sucking out the poison "with all the eagerness of a child at the breast", and applying fresh cow-dung. Like all primitive races the Hottentots had many admirable herbal remedies.

In July Van Riebeeck went out to Rondebosch to choose a site for a barn — the forerunner of *Groote Schuur* to become famous in later days. He took the carpenters off the jetty to get the barn up, and to build the little redoubt *Corenhoop*, "which," he says, "did not involve much". Even so the work went slowly, and in October he made a bargain with them to finish the barn in four and a half months — in time for the harvest. If they took less time they would profit by the same pay. If they took more they would forfeit pay for the delay. We find him on the following 25th of January searching for thatching reeds, so perhaps the carpenters met the time-limit.

VI

Van Riebeeck's report to the Seventeen on the freemen's first harvest was not encouraging. Seven farms were in being by the middle of February 1658 when the annual roll-call was compiled. They were run

by fifteen owners and twelve *knechts* — hands hired from the garrison. Only 27-28 morgen had been sown with grain. There was not seed for more. Only one farm produced as much as $3\frac{1}{2}$ bags. None brought grain to the Company's depôt in payment of debt. For want of rice they boiled and ate what grain they did not save for seed. Nor was enough seed saved, and seed had again to be distributed to them for the next season.

Van Riebeeck complains that the lack of seed and cart-horses is a continual hindrance. In August he is writing to Batavia for 50-60 lasts of rice, "to save the wheat being used as food".

Of his tree-planting he reports that of all the pips he planted from rotten fruits "hardly one in a thousand came up". He has started a "Dutch" orchard at Rondebosch. Walnut and chestnut trees are growing, and he placed the fir cones, as instructed, in the sun and planted the pits. The "earth nuts" (pea-nuts) sent in baskets arrived in good condition, and he has planted them throughout the Company's corn lands, mixing the nut seed with the grain, so that he has "no doubt of success". In September he sent ten bags of garden seed to Batavia.

About slaving vessels the Company was better than its promise, and sent two, "Maria" and "Hasselt". "Maria", the smaller, arrived on the 18th July, and "Hasselt" on the 16th August. They sailed for Angola and Guinea on the 10th September. There was to be a wait of six to seven months before slaves arrived.

The commissioner to report upon Cape affairs in 1658 was Joan Cuneus. The section of his report dealing with agriculture can be described as hopeful, but reserved. His impressions were not improved by the ravages of drought and the presence of a plague of caterpillars in the Company's garden. He heard, too, all about the freemen's bad harvest, and he advised that no more men should be released to farm until enough grain was being produced to provide for them. He agreed with Van Riebeeck that until slaves arrived, and could relieve the garrison of agricultural labour, 120 men should remain. He had some talk with the freemen, and relaxed an order or two of Van Goens's. For instance, they were all to be allowed to keep dairy cattle, a privilege hitherto granted only to one of them. He agreed with Van Riebeeck that it was a strain on the Company's garden to have to supply resident Company's servants out of it. Provided that they worked on their plots out of hours, and that the plots reverted to the Company without compensation when they left, no harm could come of their gardening. Indeed, plots cultivated by former Company's servants round the fort had already been absorbed into the Company's garden, so that it profited by this cultivation.

He thought that Van Goens's idea of encircling the settlement with fifteen redoubts as a means of keeping out the Hottentots, was extravagant. "Better encourage them," he said, "to approach by friendly advances", as had occurred during his own visit. He had brought back Doman from Batavia. (His companion Hottentot had died.) He thought that Doman should be kept at the fort as interpreter, as Herry was so erratic in his

attachment. Van Riebeeck had a way of scribbling his own comments in the margin of official memoranda, and here his opinion of Doman could not have been more caustic. He was worse than Herry had ever been, shewing no inclination to sing hymns nor to adopt European apparel. Doman had "learned too much" in Batavia.

The action which was to prove the most significant on Cuneus's part was to present Van Riebeeck with a fine piece of land on the slopes of the *Bosheuvel* (wooded hill), the crest of which overlooked on the one side the Liesbeek lands of the farmers, and on the other side the lovely valley, the upper part of which in 1685 was to become the property of Commander Simon van der Stel. *Bosheuvel* was to be in exchange for the property *Uijtwijk*, which, Van Riebeeck explained, was needed as pasturage for the Company's cattle. Actually, he continued to work both properties with a foreman on each of them. Two years later, he grew his first crop of barley at *Uijtwijk*. *Bosheuvel* was to become an embryo show place, principally concerned with viticulture and orcharding.

Cuneus had nothing further to contribute to local affairs. Van Goens, he reported, had covered the ground very thoroughly. He commended Van Riebeeck for his "careful zeal"; he had only to carry on in the same spirit.

Van Riebeeck's optimistic marginal note to this statement ran: "Agriculture is carried on before everything else according to this order, and those of the Company. Already it has been finely developed; in fact, so much so that we shall henceforth be able to feed ourselves, that is to say, from the various grains and everything connected with them."

The Seventeen had promised to include in ships' personnel men of agricultural experience, that Van Riebeeck might retain them at the Cape. With the outward-bound fleet of 1658 Jan Bundervoet arrived, an expert in tree-planting and grafting. He proved to be of "extraordinary diligence", and in September he was promoted to Boom's position. Alas, he died in the following December. He was succeeded by Martin Jacobs who had none of his competence. "The rest," mourned Van Riebeeck, "are all lazy, and out of a hundred it would be difficult to find two like the deceased". For a time the Company had another orchard specialist in Cornelis Luijt who arrived with the outward-bound fleet in the following year, 1659, but he stowed away in April 1660. With the same fleet at Luijt arrived Michiel Duran whom the Seventeen commended as "well versed in viticulture and wine-making".

With every ship of Cuneus's return fleet Van Riebeeck shipped a keg of tobacco for each Chamber of the Company. The comment of the Amsterdam Chamber dated May 1659, lacked enthusiasm. The sample was bad. The keg had weighed 87 lbs. It has cost the Chamber f.26-1 (R8-30), and had fetched f.5-10 (92 cents). The Company would not require any more. Perhaps, the Seventeen suggested, when the farmers are growing a large amount of grain they may be allowed to grow tobacco and sell it to the crews of the ships.

Four days after the departure of the return fleet there anchored a laggard of the outward-bound fleet, "Amersvoort", bringing 170 slaves, survivors of 250 which she had taken from a Portuguese prize off the coast of Brazil. They were mostly children. On the 6th May the Company's slaver "Hasselt" came to anchor with 228 male and female survivors of 271 which her skipper had shipped on the coast of Dahomey, and for whom he had paid approximately nine rands' worth of merchandise per head. Some of the slaves were ill, and unfortunately the disease spread, and many died. A third vessel on the 28th brought in another 30 Angolese, also taken off a prize. (Incidentally, "Hasselt" also brought maize seed which she had shipped at Guinea.)

Instructions from the Seventeen had been to send the youngest and strongest slaves on to Batavia. Among them, it was said by mistake, sailed Van Riebeeck's Madagascan woman. He forwarded to the Batavian Council by one of these ships eight tubs, each containing a plant of rosemary and a plant of carnation: "Sixteen of each," he wrote, "to ornament your garden." Two young ostriches accompanied this offering. They died on the way.

After the ships left, a sale took place of the remaining slaves not reserved for the Company's use. Van Riebeeck bought fourteen; the free-men averaged three to four apiece, bought on credit. When the ploughing season began in May Van Riebeeck had twenty labourers at *Bosheuvel*, headed by his European foreman and several knechts, hard at it preparing the land for vineyard and orchard. In January 1659 the yacht "Mária" on her way back from the west coast had picked up at St. Helena nine hundred apple and orange seedlings. These were now to go in at *Bosheuvel* and into the Company's orchard. Bundervoet had brought grafted plants of pear, cherry, plum, peach, quince, and medlar. Twelve to thirteen hundred vines went in at *Bosheuvel*, among them plants from the Company's garden, which had started to bear here and there during last season. Van Riebeeck also put in at *Bosheuvel* a couple of olive trees which he set great store by, because the Seventeen had mentioned the olive as deserving attention. One prospered, one died.

It is interesting to read Van Riebeeck's instructions to a skipper on the transport of plants from St. Helena: "You should remove the dead ones, and provide those still alive with new earth, and add to them as many St. Helena trees with their own soil as can be accommodated in the cases or tubs, in whose bottoms holes are bored in order to draw off the water. At sea they are to be daily refreshed with water, and placed below, away from the air. This we found to be the best course. As many as 1,000 trees (seedlings) could be put into one tub and, covered with earth, brought over safely according to experiments already made."

In June he wrote to Batavia on the subject of shipping "tree bamboo": "to be brought over in tubs or cases and kept away from sea air. This has been found the best method". (Bamboo was used for building and thatching.) He wants Batavia to send him orange, apple, and grape-fruit

plants, in the same way. He expects them to thrive as well as the St. Helena oranges do.

Among the farmers Van Riebeeck could arouse little interest in viticulture or orchard fruits. They had no money for investment in long delayed results. They were living from hand to mouth, seeking to produce what would give them a turn-over within the current season — grain, vegetables, curiosities from the Hottentots, and, under the rose, bartering with the Hottentots for the odd beast or two. Van Riebeeck had distributed vine shoots to them, but they had planted, as he said: “only one or two perhaps against the walls of their houses, merely for ornaments”. In February 1659 a miserable proclamation appeared which forbade the farmers “in order to obtain ready money” to mix wheat with their sweepings, and to sell them for fowl or pig food.

The attempts to produce rice left the farmers cold. Van Riebeeck wrote at this time that “rice had been tried in several places without success, but that now a considerable quantity” which he had sown in water, “was growing finely”. It failed, however. He writes after this experiment: “Rice will not grow at all, in spite of every effort made; and of sugar-cane, too, which Batavia had sent: “only three or four stools showed a green head”. Pineapples and cocoanuts still sent hopefully to him by the Batavia Council, also came to a bad end.

As the second year of freeman farming went on, Van Riebeeck had to contend with rising dissatisfaction among the farmers and among the Hottentots. This time the Hottentots were quieted, but the farmer discontent at the end of the year came to a head and they demanded satisfaction. They had not yet been informed what the Company would pay them for their grain they had been forbidden to barter with the Hottentots, which in the beginning Van Goens had allowed them to do; they were forbidden to invite them into their dwellings, where, indeed, they got all sorts of little services out of them. Van Riebeeck was anxious to check interference with the Company's trading, and to avoid the possibility of disputes, which might inconvenience the Company. It is quite a long story, and we cannot repeat it here. The immediate trouble blew over, because the Seventeen could not have agreed more with Van Riebeeck that here was open rebellion against the Company, and dire threats of confiscation of lands made the men more circumspect about revealing their operations.

What must have greatly contributed to the farmers' indiscipline was the unnatural domestic life they led. Only three of the farmers had wives. This circumstance must in part have accounted for the bad start, for, with the exception of one or two, the farmers did make a bad start. We can imagine their comfortless existence, and the lack of restraint which domesticity would have helped to sober. Far from bringing Van Riebeeck the relief he had looked forward to, far from the prospect of pleasant lands and cheerful little homesteads, which doubtless the Seventeen had envisaged, there was to be an increase of discontent, poverty, and even outright rebellion against Van Riebeeck.

M. Whiting Spillhaus.