

TRAVELS
IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA.

CHAP. I.

Statistical Sketch of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

IF from the southern point of the Cape peninsula, which, however, is not the southernmost point of Africa, a straight line be drawn in the direction of east by north, it will cut the mouth of the Great Fish River, the *Rio d' Infantè* of the Portuguese, which is now considered as the eastern boundary of the colony. The length of this line is about five hundred and eighty miles.

If from the same point a straight line be drawn in the direction of north, with a little inclination westerly, it will fall in with the mouth of the River *Koussie*, the northern boundary of the colony, at the distance of about three hundred and fifteen miles from that point.

And, if from the mouth of the Great Fish River a line be drawn in the direction of north-north-west, to the distance of two hundred and twenty-five miles, to a point behind the Snowy mountains called *Plettenberg's Landmark*; and from thence be continued in a circular sweep inwards to the mouth of the River *Koussie*, upwards of five hundred miles; these lines will circumscribe the tract of country which constitutes the colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

By reducing this irregular figure to a parallelogram, it will be found to comprehend an area of at least one hundred and twenty thousand square miles. And as it appears that the whole population of whites, blacks, and Hottentots, within this area, amounts only to about sixty thousand souls, though it cannot boast that

“ Every rood of ground maintains its man,”

yet every two square miles may be said to have at least *one* human creature allotted to it. If, therefore, the Dutch at home occupy one of the most populous countries in Europe, they possess abroad the most desert colony that is certainly to be met with upon the face of the globe. But as this is less owing to the natural defects of the country, than to the regulations under which it has been governed, the comparative population with the extent of surface ought not to be taken as the test of the intrinsic value of the settlement, as the population of any country, under a moderate climate, will, in the natural course of things, always rise to a level with the means of subsistence. A very great portion, however, of this

settlement may be considered as an unprofitable waste, unfit for any sort of culture, or even to be employed as pasture for the support of cattle. Level plains, consisting of a hard impenetrable surface of clay, thinly sprinkled over with crystallized sand, condemned to perpetual drought, and producing only a few straggling tufts of acrid, saline, and succulent plants, and chains of vast mountains that are either totally naked, or clothed in parts with sour grasses only, or such plants as are noxious to animal life, compose at least one half of the colony of the Cape. These chains of mountains and the interjacent plains are extended generally in the direction of east and west, except indeed that particular range which, beginning at False Bay, opposite to the Cape Point, stretches to the northward along the western coast as far as the mouth of Olifant's river, which is about 210 miles.

The first great chain of mountains that runs east and west encloses, between it and the southern coast, an irregular belt of land from twenty to sixty miles in width, indented by several bays, covered with a deep and fertile soil, intersected by numerous streamlets, well clothed with grass and small arboreous or frutescent plants, well wooded in many parts with forest-trees, supplied with frequent rains, and enjoying, on account of its proximity to the sea, a more mild and equable temperature than the more remote and interior parts of the colony.

The next great chain is the *Zwarte Berg* or *Black Mountain*. This is considerably more lofty and rugged than the first, and

consists in many places of double and sometimes treble ranges. The belt enclosed between it and the first chain is about the mean width of that between the first and the sea ; of a surface very varied, composed in some parts of barren hills, in others of naked arid plains of clay, known to the natives, and also to the colonists, by the name of *Karoo* ; and in others of choice patches of well watered and fertile grounds. The general surface of this belt has a considerable elevation above that of the first ; the temperature is less uniform ; and from the nature of the soil, as well as the difficulty of access over the mountains, which are passable only in few places, this district may be considered as much less valuable than the other.

The third range of mountains is the Nieuwveldt's Gebergte, which, with the second, grasps the Great Karroo or arid desert, which is uninhabited by a human creature. This desert, making the third step or terrace of Southern Africa, is greatly elevated above the second ; is near 300 miles in length from east to west, and eighty in breadth ; is scarcely ever moistened by a shower of rain ; exhibits a surface of clay, thinly sprinkled over with sand, out of which a few shrivelled and parched plants here and there meet the eye, faintly extending their half withered fibres along the ground, and struggling, as it were, to preserve their existence against the excessive heat of one season of the year and the severe frosts of the other.

The country likewise ascends from the western coast towards the interior in successive terraces, of which the most elevated, called the Roggeveld, falls in with the last-mentioned chain of mountains, the Nieuwveldt. The whole tract of country to

the northward is much more sandy, barren, and thinly inhabited, than to the eastward, in which direction it seems to increase in beauty and fertility with the distance from the Cape.

None of the mountains of the Cape settlement possess much of the sublime or the beautiful, but the approach to the bases in some parts, and the entrance of the Kloofs, are awfully grand and terrific ; sometimes their naked points of solid rock rise almost perpendicularly, like a wall of masonry, to the height of three, four, and even five thousand feet, generally in the same form as the Table Mountain on the Cape peninsula ; sometimes the inclination of the strata is so great that the whole mass of mountain appears to have its centre of gravity falling without the base, and as if it momentarily threatened to strew the plain with its venerable ruins ; in other places where the lower fragments have given way, they are irregularly peaked and broken into a variety of fantastic shapes. Such is the general outline of the territory that is comprehended under the name of the Cape of Good Hope.

As the best soil for vegetable growth is unquestionably produced from a decomposition of vegetable matter, it amounts to a pleonasm to say, that the richest soil will invariably be found where vegetation is most abundant and most luxuriant ; the soil and the plant acting reciprocally as cause and effect. Hence, if climate were entirely out of the question, we should have an infallible criterion for determining the quality of soil in any country by the abundance or scarcity, the luxuriance or poverty, of the native plants. Measuring the soil of the

Cape settlement by this scale, it would be pronounced among the poorest in the known world ; for I may safely venture to say, that seven parts in ten of the above mentioned surface are, for the greater part of the year, and some of them at all times, destitute of the least appearance of verdure. The upper regions of all the chains of mountains are naked masses of sandstone ; the valleys at their feet are clothed with grass, with thickets, and sometimes with impenetrable forests. The inferior hills or knolls, whose surfaces are generally composed of loose fragments of sandstone, as well as the wide sandy plains that connect them, are thinly strewed over with heaths and other shrubby plants, exhibiting to the eye an uniform and dreary appearance. In the lowest parts of these plains, where the waters subside and, filtering through the sand, break out in springs upon the surface, vegetation is somewhat more luxuriant. In such situations the farm-houses are generally placed ; and the patches of cultivated ground contiguous to them, like the *Oases* in the sandy deserts, may be considered as so many verdant islands in the midst of a boundless waste ; serving to make the surrounding wilderness more dreary by comparison. Of such plains and knolls is the belt of land composed that lies between the first chain of mountains and the sea-coasts.

The soils, in general, on this tract of country, are either of stiff clay, into which there is no possibility of entering with a plough till well soaked by heavy rains, or of a light and sandy nature, commonly of a reddish tinge, and abounding with small round quartzose pebbles. Seldom any free black vegetable mould appears, except in the small patches of garden ground,

vineyards, and orchards, that surround the habitations, where long culture, manure, and the fertilizing influence of springs, or a permanent rill of water, have so far mellowed the soil as to admit the spade at all seasons of the year.

But those vast plains, which are known in the colony by the Hottentot name of *Karoo*, and which are interposed between the great chains of mountains, wear a still more dismal appearance than the lower plains that are chequered with patches of cultivated ground. Out of their impenetrable surfaces of clay, glistening with small crystals of quartz, and condemned to perpetual drought and aridity, not a blade of grass, and scarcely a verdant twig, occurs to break the barren uniformity. The hills, by which the surface of these plains is sometimes broken, are chiefly composed of fragments of blue slate, or masses of felt-spar, and argillaceous ironstone; and the surfaces of these are equally denuded of plants as those of the plains.

Yet, as I have already observed, wherever the Karroo plains are tinged with iron, and where water can be brought upon them, the soil is found to be extremely productive. The same effect is observable in the neighbourhood of the Cape, where the soil is coloured with iron; or when masses of a brown ochraceous stone (the oxyd of iron combined with clay) lie just below the surface, where they are sometimes found in extensive strata. In such situations the best grapes, and the best of every sort of fruit are produced; which may be owing, probably, to the manganese that this kind of dark brown ironstone generally contains, and which modern discoveries in che-

mistry have ascertained to be particularly favourable to the health and vigour of plants.

There is neither a volcano nor a volcanic product in the southern extremity of Africa, at least in any of those parts where I have been, nor any substances that seem to have undergone the action of fire, except masses of iron-stone found generally among the boggy earth in the neighbourhood of some of the hot springs, and which appear like the scoriae of furnaces. Pieces of pumice-stone have been picked up on the shore of Robben Island, and on the coast near Algoa Bay, which must have been wafted thither by the waves, as the whole basis of this island is a hard and compact blue schistus, with veins of quartz running through it, and that of the eastern coast iron-stone and granite.

The climate of the Cape may be considered as not unfriendly to vegetation ; but by reason of its situation, within the influence of a kind of Monsoon or periodical winds, the rains are very unequal, descending in torrents during the cold season, whilst scarcely a shower falls to refresh the earth in the hot summer months, when the dry south-east winds prevail. These winds blast the foliage, blossom, and fruit, of all those trees that are not well sheltered from their baneful gusts, which, for about six months, almost constantly blow from that quarter. Nor is the human constitution better protected against the painful sensation of the south-east winds of the Cape than the plants. Like the south-east Sirocco of Naples they relax and fatigue both the body and mind, rendering them utterly incapable of activity or energy. During their

continuance the town appears to be deserted. Every door and window is closed to keep out the dust and the heat, both of which diminish with the continuance of the gale ; the air gradually cools, and every small pebble and particle of dust in the course of four-and-twenty hours is carried into the sea.

The necessity of protecting the fruit groves, vineyards, and gardens from these winds, has led those colonists who dwell on the nearer side of the first chain of mountains, for they are not much felt beyond them, to divide that portion of their grounds, so employed, by oak skreens, a plant that grows here much more rapidly than in Europe ; but their corn-lands are entirely open. A Cape boer bestows no more labor on his farm than is unavoidable ; and as grain is mostly reaped before the south-east winds are fairly set in, the enclosure of the arable land did not appear to be necessary, and was consequently omitted.

The climate of the Cape is remarkably affected by local circumstances. In the summer months there are at least from 6 to 10 degrees of Fahrenheit's scale in the difference of temperature between Cape Town and Wynberg, whose distance is only about seven or eight miles, owing to the latter being on the windward side of the Table Mountain, and the former to leeward of it ; from whence, also, the rays of the meridian sun are thrown back upon the town, as from the surface of a concave mirror. The variation of climate, to which the Table Valley is subject, led one of the British officers to observe that those who lived in it were either in an oven, or at the

funnel of a pair of bellows, or under a water-spout. On the Cape side of the mountains the thermometer rarely descends below 40° ; but on the elevated Karroo plains, within the mountains, it is generally, in the winter months, below the freezing point by night, and from 70 to 80 in the middle of the day.

I think this intense cold of the Karroo plains, beyond what might be expected from their parallel of latitude or elevation, may satisfactorily be accounted for from the ingenious experiments of Mr. Von Humboldt, on the chemical decomposition of the atmospherical air. He proves that fat and clayey earths are strongly disposed to attract the oxygen from the atmosphere, by which the azotic gas is let loose; and this gas, entering again into combination with the fresh oxygen of the superincumbent stratum, in an increased proportion, forms nitric acid, from which saltpetre is generated. That saltpetre is abundantly formed on those plains is an indisputable fact, as I have fully shewn in the first chapter of the first volume; and the consequence of such formation must necessarily be a great diminution of temperature in those places where the operation is most powerfully carrying on. Hence perhaps may be explained those columns of cold air through which one frequently passes upon the Karroo plains.

The north-west winds of winter have a moist and cold feel even in Cape Town, where, though the thermometer seldom descends below 40° , and then only about an hour before sunrise, all the English inhabitants were glad to keep constant

fires during the months of July, August, and September. Even in October it is not unusual to observe the summits of the mountains to the eastward of the Cape isthmus buried in snow.

Though it has been usual to consider the year at the Cape as consisting of two periods, called the good and the bad monsoon, yet, as these are neither regular in their returns, nor certain in their continuance, the division into four seasons, as in Europe, would appear to be much more proper. The spring, reckoned from the beginning of September to that of December, is the most agreeable season. The summer, from December to March, is the hottest. The autumn, from March to June, is variable weather, generally fine, and the latter part very pleasant. And the winter, from June to September, though in general pleasant, is frequently very stormy, rainy, and cold. The two most powerful winds are the north-west and south-east. The first generally commences towards the end of May, and blows occasionally till the end of August, and sometimes through the month of September. The south-east predominates the rest of the year, and, when the cloud shews itself on the mountain, blows in squalls with great violence. In the midst of one of these storms the appearance of the heavenly bodies, as observed by the Abbé de la Caille, is strange and terrible: "The stars look larger, and seem to dance; the moon has an undulating tremor; and the planets have a sort of beard like comets." Effects such as these are not confined to the Cape alone, but are, in many parts of the world, among the terrific accompaniments of a storm, and are probably occasioned by looking at the objects

through a medium that is loaded with vapor, and moving along with great velocity.

The approach of winter is first observed by the south-east winds becoming less frequent, less violent, and blowing *clear*, or without the fleecy cloud upon the mountain. Dews then begin to fall very heavy, and thick fogs hang in the mornings about the hills. The north-west winds feel raw and cold, and increase at length to a storm, with heavy rain, thunder, and lightning, continuing generally for two or three days. When the weather brightens up, the mountains on the continent appear with their tops buried in snow: the Table has also a sprinkling of snow or hail about the summit. At such times the thermometer, about sun-rise, stands in the town at 40°, and will probably ascend, towards the middle of the day, to 70°, making a variation in temperature of 30 degrees in the course of five or six hours. The general standard, however, for the three winter months may be reckoned from 50° at sun-rise to 60° at noon; and in the very middle of summer it varies from 70° to 90°, but generally rests for days together at 83° or 84°. It has been known to exceed 100° in Cape Town; but instances of so high a degree of temperature have been very rare. The heat of summer is seldom oppressive. The mornings are sometimes close and sultry, but the nights are always cool. The south-east breeze usually springs up towards the middle of the day, and dies away in the evening. When these winds blow with violence, and the cloud appears on the mountain, their greatest strength is when the sun has passed the meridian

about 30 degrees, and they continue in squalls till midnight. From November to April a shower of rain scarcely ever falls.

The barometer stands higher in the clear cold days of winter than in the settled serene weather of summer. The height of the column of mercury varies, in the former season, from 29.46 to 30.35 inches, one point indicating a storm with rain, thunder, and lightning; and the other, settled fair weather. The changeable point is about 29.95 or 30 inches. The greatest range being only 89 hundred parts of an inch, the slightest alteration in the state of the barometer is sure to indicate a change of weather. The range of the mercury, in the summer season, is still less, being scarcely ever above 30.10, or below 29.74 inches. The south-east gales of wind seldom occasion a change of more than 15 hundred parts of an inch. Happy for the inhabitants of Cape Town that by these winds a constant circulation of the air is kept up during the summer months, without which, notwithstanding the languor they occasion, the reflected heat from the naked front of the Table mountain would make the town insupportable.

Most of the fatal diseases that prevail among the natives would appear to proceed rather from their habits of life than from any real unhealthiness in the climate. Nothing could afford a stronger proof of this conclusion than the circumstance of there not having been one sick man in the general military hospital for several months, and not more than a hundred in the regimental hospitals out of five thousand troops ;

and these, according to the reports of the surgeons, were complaints generally brought on by too free an use of the wines and spirituous liquors of the country, of which their pay enabled them to procure an excess. The sudden change of temperature, especially from heat to cold, may perhaps be one of the causes of consumptive complaints which are very frequent in all classes and ages. But the common disease to which those of the middle age are subject, is the dropsy. A confined and sedentary life; eating to excess, twice and commonly thrice a-day, of animal food swimming in fat, or made up into high-seasoned dishes; drinking raw ardent spirits; smoking tobacco; and, when satiated with indulging the sensual appetite, retiring in the middle of the day to sleep; seldom using any kind of exercise, and never such as might require bodily exertion,—are the usual habits in which a native of the Cape is educated. An apoplexy or a schirrous liver are the consequences of such intemperance. The former is seldom attended with immediate dissolution on account of the languid state of the constitution; but it generally terminates in a dropsy, which shortly proves fatal. The diseases to which children are most subject are eruptions of different kinds, and sore throats. Neither the small-pox nor the measles are endemic; the former has made its appearance but twice or thrice since the establishment of the Colony, but the latter has found its way much more frequently. Great caution has always been used by the government against their being introduced by foreign ships calling at the Cape. Instances of longevity are very rare, few exceeding the period of sixty years. The mortality in Cape Town, taken on the average in the last eight years, has been about two and a

half in a hundred among the white inhabitants, and under three in a hundred among the slaves. Those in the latter condition, who live in the town, are in general well fed, well clothed, not much exposed to the weather, nor put to hard labor. Others in the country, whose principal food consists of black sandy bread, and the offals of butchers' meat, who labor from morning to night in the field, and those also who follow the arduous and daily task of gathering wood on the exposed sides of the mountains, or in the hot sands, are subject to bilious fevers of which they seldom recover.

The scarcity of water in summer is much more unfavorable to an extended cultivation than either the soil or climate. The torrents of rain that descend for about four months in the year, deluging the whole country, disappear suddenly, leaving the deep sunken beds of the rivers nearly dry, or so far exhausted as to be rendered incapable of supplying the purposes of irrigation. The periodical rivulets, and the streams that issue from the mountain springs, are either absorbed or evaporated before they arrive at any great distance from their sources. In the whole compass of this extensive colony, one can scarcely say that there is a single navigable river. The beds indeed of all the rivers in the colony are sunk, in a remarkable manner, to a very great depth below the general surface of the country; so that whenever the heavy rains descend, the waters subside into these deep channels, which, on account of their narrowness, almost instantaneously become filled to the very brink. The impetuosity with which such torrents rush towards the sea is irresistible.

Whether the deep excavations, that form the beds of these rivers, may be satisfactorily explained by supposing the texture of the adjacent materials to have been of a loose and incoherent nature; or, whether a greater antiquity than to many parts of the globe may not be assigned to the continent of South Africa, on the whole surface of which there appears to be a remarkable similarity, is a question on the merits of which one would hesitate to give a prompt decision. But, on comparing the great quantity of rain that annually falls at the Cape, a quantity far exceeding that in most parts of Europe, with the general scarcity of springs, the invention is naturally exercised in endeavouring to account for a phenomenon so unusual. The following observations may perhaps assist in explaining it.

All the continued chains of mountains in Southern Africa are composed of sandstone resting upon a base of granite. This granite base is sometimes elevated considerably above the general surface of the country, and sometimes its upper part is sunk as far beneath it. In situations where the former happens to be the case, numerous springs are sure to be found, as in the instance of Table mountain, where, on every side, copious streams of pure limpid water, filtered through the immense mass of superincumbent sandstone, glide over the impenetrable surface of granite, furnishing an ample supply to the whole town, the gardens, and the adjacent farms. But in all those places where the sandstone continues to descend below the surface, and the upper part of the granite base is sunk beneath the general level of the country, the springs that make their appearance are few and scanty.

The reasoning that suggests itself on these facts will lead to the following conclusion:—that the cisterns or cavities in the sandstone mountains, being corroded and fretted away, in the lapse of ages, to a greater depth than the openings or conduits which might, perhaps, at one time, have given their waters vent, the springs can no longer find their way upon the surface, but, oozing imperceptibly between the granite and the sandstone, below the general level of the country, glide in subterraneous streams to the sea.

I am the more inclined to this opinion from the experience of several facts. When Admiral Sir Roger Curtis directed a space of ground, between the Admiralty-house and the shore of Table Bay, to be enclosed as a naval yard, the workmen met with great impediment from the copious springs of pure fresh water that rushed out of the holes, which they found necessary to sink in the sand, for receiving the upright posts. It is a well known fact, that on almost every part of the isthmus that connects the mountainous peninsula of the Cape to the continent, fresh water may be procured at the depth of ten or twelve feet below the sandy surface. Even in the side of the Tyger Hills, at an elevation of twenty feet, at least, above the general surface of the isthmus, when the workmen were driving a level in search of coal, a copious stream of water was collected within it, in the month of February, which is the very dryest season of the year. And on boring, for the same purpose, on Wynberg, they came to a rill of water at the depth of twenty feet below the surface.

I have already noticed, in my journey to the Namaaqua country, that clear subterraneous streams were every where to be found, in that district, under the sandy beds of the rivers. Water in abundance has always been found by digging wells in Cape Town. Indeed it would be an absurdity to suppose that, in a country where mountains abound, and those mountains for more than two-thirds of the year hid in dense clouds, there could be any scarcity of water. Peculiar circumstances, relating to situation or surface, may conceal that water, but it will always be discovered at or near the sea-coast.

When the late Admiral Sir Hugh Christian ordered a well to be sunk at Saldanha Bay, by directing his attention rather to the convenience of conveying the water to the shipping, than to the certainty of obtaining it, he was led into an error in fixing upon the spot for the experiment, which was so high above the level of the bay, and where the ground was one solid mass of compact granite, that, after boring and blowing up with gunpowder, for several months, with little or no prospect of success, the operation was obliged to be abandoned. On the opposite side of the bay, where the shore is little elevated above the high water mark, several springs have spontaneously burst out of the earth; but for want of being properly opened, so that the water may run off freely, they are suffered to stagnate, and become, as might be expected from the soil and climate, a little brackish. All circumstances here are fully as favorable as at Madras, where the purest and best water is found close to the sea shore.

These considerations are so obvious, that I should have thought it unnecessary to have dwelt a moment upon the subject, were I not persuaded that a very general opinion prevails with regard to the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of supplying the several bays of the colony with fresh water. I shall only suggest, as another conclusion that may be drawn from what has been said, that the great depth of the commencement of the granite base below the surface may, perhaps, better account for the most considerable rivers of Northern Africa losing themselves in the sand, before they reach the sea, than by supposing the interior parts of this continent to be lower than the level of the ocean; a conjecture that has been held, but which strongly militates against the general order observed throughout the universe.

The two principal rivers, on the western coast, are the *Berg* or Mountain river, which takes its rise in the mountains that enclose the Vale of Drakenstein, and falls into Saint Helena Bay; and the *Oliphant* or Elephant's River, which, after collecting the streamlets of the first chain of mountains in its northerly course along their feet, empties itself into the Southern Atlantic in $31^{\circ} 30'$ south. Though both these rivers have permanent streams of water, sufficiently deep to be navigable by small craft, to the distance of about twenty miles up the country, yet the mouth of the former is choaked up with a bed of sand, and across the latter is a reef of rocks.

On the south coast of the colony the permanent rivers of any magnitude are, the *Broad* River, the *Gauritz* River, the

Knysna, the *Keurboom* River, the *Camtoos* River, the *Zwartkops* River, the *Sunday* River, and the *Great Fish* River; the last of which terminates the colony to the eastward.

The Broad River is discharged into Saint Sebastian's Bay, which the Dutch consider as a dangerous navigation, though there have been instances of their ships taking shelter there in the north-west monsoon at no great distance from the mouth of the river, which is here a sheet of water more than a mile in width; but, like every other river on this coast, except the *Knysna*, it is crossed by a bar of sand. Within this bar it might be navigated by small craft about thirty miles up the country; an extent, however, in which there are scarcely half a dozen farm-houses.

The Gauritz River is a collection of water from the Great Karroo plains, the Black Mountains, and the chain that runs parallel, and nearest, to the sea-coast. The branches to the northward of this chain are periodical, but it flows, to the southward, throughout the year, though, in the summer months, with a very weak current. In the rainy season it is considered as the most rapid and dangerous river in the whole colony. Its mouth opens into the sea, where the coast is straight, and it is crossed by a bar of sand which, in summer, is generally dry.

The *Knysna*, being altogether different from the other rivers in the colony, will be particularly noticed, and a sketch of it given, in a future chapter, to which I must beg leave to refer the reader.

The Keurboom River, like the Knysna, runs up into the midst of tall forests, and might be navigated by boats to a considerable distance, but its mouth, in Plettenberg's Bay, is completely sanded up by the almost perpetual rolling swell of the sea, from the south-eastward upon the sandy beach.

The Camtoos River is a collection of waters from the same parts of the country as, but more easterly than, the Gauritz River. It falls into a wide bay of the same name, in which the only secure anchorage is opposite the mouth of a small stream called the *Kromme* or Crooked River. Though Camtoos River, just within the mouth, is a wide bason deep enough to float a ship of the line, yet the bar of sand across the mouth is fordable upon the beach at high water, and frequently dry at low water.

The Zwart Kops River is a clear permanent stream of water flowing down one of the most beautiful and fertile valleys in the colony; and is among the very few of those that, by damming, may be turned upon the contiguous grounds. Lieutenant Rice, whom I have had occasion to mention, succeeded by a great deal of perseverance in getting a boat over the bar, and sailed about eight miles up this valley, to which distance only the tide flows. The whole country in the vicinity of the river, and the bay of the same name, into which it falls, is among the most fertile parts of the colony.

The Sunday River, likewise, falls into Algoa or Zwart Kops Bay, opposite to the islands of Saint Croix. It rises in the

midst of the Snowy Mountains, and continues a permanently flowing stream, broad and shallow in the middle part of its course, and narrow and deep towards the mouth, which, like the rest, is choaked with a bed of sand.

The Great Fish River takes its rise beyond the Snowy Mountains, and, in its long course, collects a multitude of streamlets, most of which are constantly supplied with water. On each side of its mouth is a wild, rocky, and open shore, but the projecting cheeks form a small cove or creek, which, it seems, was frequented by the Portugueze shortly after their discovery of the Cape; though, from the boisterous appearance of the sea, upon the bar that evidently crosses the entrance of the river, it is difficult to conceive how they dared to trust their ships in such an exposed situation, unless, indeed, they were so small as to be able, at high water, to cross the bar, in which case they might lie, at all seasons, in perfect security.

All these rivers are well stocked with perch, eels, and small turtle, and, to a certain distance from the sea-coast, they abound with almost every kind of sea-fish peculiar to this part of the world.

Beside the rivers here enumerated, the whole slip of land, stretching along the sea-coast, between the entrance of False Bay and the Great Fish river, is intersected by streamlets whose waters are neither absorbed nor evaporated; but they generally run in such deep chasms as to be of little use towards the promotion of agriculture by the aid of irrigation.

DIVISION, POPULATION, AND PRODUCE.

When the Dutch East India Company perceived their settlement extending far beyond the bounds they had originally prescribed, they found it expedient to divide the country into districts, and to place over each a civil magistrate with the title of *Landrost*, who, with his council called *Hem-raaden*, was authorized to settle petty disputes among the farmers, or between them and the native Hottentots, levy fines within a certain sum, collect and apply the parochial assessments, and enforce the orders and regulations of Government. His district was distributed into a number of subdivisions, over each of which was appointed a *Feldtwagt-meester* or country overseer, whose duty was to take cognizance of any abuses committed within his division, and report the same to the Landrost, to adjust disputes about springs or water-courses, and to forward the orders of Government.

Little as the authority was which Government had thus delegated to the Landrost and his assistants, that little was subject sometimes to abuse, sometimes to neglect, and very often to contempt.

In fact, all systems of provincial judicature seem liable to the same objections. If too much power be confided in the hands of the magistrates, the temptation to corruption is proportionally great, and to attempt to execute the law without the power would seem a mockery of justice. The

latter was very much the case in the distant parts of the Cape colony.

For want of such a power the laws have certainly, in most cases, proved unavailing. The Landrost had only the shadow of authority. The council and the country overseers were composed of farmers, who were always more ready to skreen and protect their brother boors, accused of crimes, than to assist in bringing them to justice. The poor Hottentot had little chance of obtaining redress for the wrongs he suffered from the boors. However willing the Landrost might be to receive his complaints, he possessed not the means of removing the grievance. To espouse the cause of the Hottentot was a sure way to lose his popularity. And the distance from the capital was a sufficient obstacle to the preferring of complaints before the Court of Justice at the Cape. Whenever this has happened, the orders of the Court of Justice met with as little respect, at the distance of five or six hundred miles, as the orders of the Landrost and his council. If a man, after being summoned, did not chuse to appear, there was no force in the country to compel him; and they knew it would be fruitless to dispatch such a force from the Cape. Hence murders and the most atrocious crimes were committed with impunity; and the only punishment was a sentence of outlawry for contempt of Court; a sentence that was attended with little inconvenience to the criminal, who still continued to maintain his ground in society, as if no such sentence was hanging over him. It debarred him, it is true, from making his usual visits to the capital, but he found no difficulty in getting his business done by proxy.

Numberless instances of this kind occurred, yet the system remained the same. Perhaps, indeed, it would be difficult to suggest a better, till a greater degree of population shall compel the inhabitants to dwell in villages, or the limits of the colony be contracted into a narrower compass.

This extensive settlement, whose dimensions have been given above, is divided into four districts, namely,

1. The district of the Cape.
2. ————— of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein.
3. ————— of Zwellendam.
4. ————— of Graaff Reynet.

CAPE DISTRICT.

Of these the Cape district is by much the smallest, but the most populous. It may be considered as divided into two parts; one consisting of the peninsula on which the Town is situated, the other of the slip of land extending from the shore of Table Bay to the mouth of the Berg River in Saint Helena Bay, and separated from Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, on the east, by the Little Salt River, Deep River, and Mossel Bank River, being about eighty miles from north to south, and twenty-five from east to west; containing, therefore, about two thousand square miles. The Cape peninsula is about thirty miles in length and eight in breadth, or two hundred and forty square miles. According to an account of the stock, produce, and land under cultivation, which every man is obliged annually

to give in to the police officers, and which is called the *Op-gauff* list, it appears that, notwithstanding the comparative short distance of every part of the Cape district from a market, not one fifteenth part of the surface is under any kind of tillage. As by the Cape of Good Hope is usually meant the Southern peninsula of South Africa, on which Cape Town is situated, I shall be more particular in the description of this district than of the rest.

Cape Town is built with great regularity, the streets being all laid out with a line. It is the only assemblage of houses in the Colony that deserves the name of a town; they are generally white-washed, and the doors and windows painted green; are mostly two stories in height, flat-roofed, with an ornament in the centre of the front, or a kind of pediment; a raised platform before the door with a seat at each end. It consists of 1145 dwelling-houses, inhabited by about five thousand five hundred whites and people of color, and ten thousand blacks. It is surrounded with remarkable mountains on every side, except the North, on which it is washed by a spacious bay.

Many of the streets are open and airy, with canals of water running through them, walled in, and planted on each side with oaks; others are narrow and ill paved. Three or four squares give an openness to the town. In one is held the public market; another is the common resort of the peasantry with their waggons from the remote districts of the colony; and a third, near the shore of the bay, and between the town

and the castle, serves as a parade for exercising the troops. This is an open, airy, and extensive plain, perfectly level, composed of a bed of firm clay, covered with small hard gravel. It is surrounded by canals, or ditches, that receive the waters of the town and convey them into the bay. Two of its sides are completely built up with large and handsome houses. The barracks, originally intended for an hospital, for corn magazines, and wine cellars, is a large, well-designed, regular building, which, with its two wings, occupies part of one of the sides of the great square. The upper part of this building is sufficiently spacious to contain three or four thousand men. The castle affords barracks for 1000 men, and lodgings sufficient for all the officers of a complete regiment ; magazines for artillery stores and ammunition ; and most of the public offices of government are within its walls. The other public buildings are a Calvinist and a Lutheran church : a guard-house, in which the Burgher Senate, or the council of burghers, meet for transacting business relative to the interior police of the town, a large building, in which the government slaves, to the number of 330, are lodged : the court of justice, where civil and criminal causes are heard and determined : the Lombard bank, and the Chamber of Orphans, both of which are within the walls of the Castle.

Between the town and Table Mountain are scattered over the plain a number of neat houses surrounded by plantations and gardens. Of these the largest and nearest to the town is that in which the government house is erected. It is in length near 1000 yards, and contains about forty acres of rich

land divided into almost as many squares by oak hedges. The public walk runs up the middle, is well shaded by an avenue of oak trees, and enclosed on each side by a hedge of cut myrtles. The Dutch of late years had entirely neglected this excellent piece of ground; but the spirit of improvement that has always actuated the minds of the English in all their possessions abroad, will no doubt shew itself at this place, and convert the public garden into a place not only ornamental to the town but useful to the country. A part of it, in fact, has already been appropriated, by order of the Earl of Macartney, for the reception of scarce and curious native plants, and for the trial of such Asiatic and European productions as may seem most likely to be cultivated with benefit to the colony.

Of native plants, that which is the most cultivated, in the vicinity of the town, is the *Protea argentea*, the *Witteboom*, or silver tree of the Dutch. Whole woods of it stretch along the feet of the eastern side of the Table Mountain, planted solely for fuel. The *Conocarpa*, another species of *Protea*, the *Kréupel boom* of the Dutch, is also planted along the sides of the hills: its bark is employed in tanning leather, and the branches for fire wood. The *grandiflora*, *speciosa et mellifera*, different species of the same genus, grow every where in wild luxuriance, and are collected for fuel, as are also the larger kinds of *Ericas* or heaths, *phyllicas*, *Brunias*, *polygalas*, the *Olea Capensis*, *Euclea racemosa*, *Sophora*, and many other arboreous plants that grow in great abundance both on the hills of the peninsula, and on the

sandy isthmus that connects it with the continent. The article of fuel is so scarce that a small cart load of these plants brought to the town costs from five to seven dollars, or twenty to eight-and-twenty shillings. In most families a slave is kept expressly for collecting fire wood. He goes out in the morning, ascends the steep mountains of the peninsula, where waggons cannot approach, and returns at night with two small bundles of faggots, the produce of six or eight hours hard labor, swinging at the two ends of a bamboo carried across the shoulder. Some families have two and even three slaves, whose sole employment consists in climbing the mountains in search of fuel. The expence of a few faggots, whether thus collected or purchased by the load, for preparing victuals only, as the kitchen alone has any fire place, amounts, in a moderate family, to forty or fifty pounds a-year.

The addition to the inhabitants of five thousand troops, and a large fleet stationed at the Cape, has increased the demand for fuel to such a degree, that serious apprehensions have been entertained of some deficiency shortly happening in the supply of this necessary article. Under this idea the attention of the English was particularly directed towards finding out a substitute for wood. The appearance of all the mountains in Southern Africa, being particularly favorable to the supposition that fossil coal might be found in the bowels of most of those inferior hills connected with, and interposed between, them and the sea, His Excellency the Earl of Maccartney, well knowing how valuable an acquisition such a discovery would prove to the colony, directed a search to be made. Boring rods were prepared, and men from the regi-

ments, who had laboured in the collieries of England, were selected to make the experiment. *Wynberg*, a tongue of land projecting from the Table Mountain, was the spot fixed on, and the rods were put down there through hard clay, pipe-clay, iron-stone, and sand-stone, in successive strata, to the depth of twenty-three feet. The operation of boring was then discontinued by the discovery of actual coal coming out, as miners express it, to day, along the banks of a deep rivulet flowing out of the Tygerberg, a hill that terminates the isthmus to the eastward. The stratum of coaly matter appeared to lie nearly horizontal. Immediately above it were pipe-clay and white sand-stone; and it rested on a bed of indurated clay. It ran from ten inches to two feet in thickness; differed in its nature in different parts: in some places were dug out large ligneous blocks, in which the traces of the bark, knots and grain were distinctly visible; and in the very middle of these were imbedded pieces of iron pyrites, running through them in crooked veins, or lying in irregular lumps. Other parts of the stratum consisted of laminated coal of the nature of turf, such as by naturalists would be called *Lithanthrax*, and pieces occurred that seemed to differ in nothing from that species known in England by the name of Bovey coal. The ligneous part burned with a clear flame, without much smell, and left a residuum of light white ashes like those of dried wood. The more compact earthy and stoney parts burned less clear, gave out a sulphureous smell, and left behind a slaty caulk, that soon contracted on the surface a deep brown ochraceous crust. The borer being put down in several places in hopes of meeting with the main bed of coal, the general result was as follows:

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

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In the bed of the rivulet :

	Feet.
Coal	2
Blue soapy rock	5
White soapy rock	22
Grey sand-stone with clay	21
Sand-stone of chocolate brown	14
Bluish soapy clay	31
Striated sand, red and white, containing clay	33
	128

Here the operation was discontinued for the present.

Most of the European, and several of the tropical, fruits have already been introduced into the colony, and cultivated with success. In every month of the year the table may be supplied with at least ten different sorts of fruit, green and dry. Oranges of two kinds, the common China and the small Mandarin; figs, grapes, and guavas, are all very good; peaches and apricots not bad. These, when in season, are sold at the rate of one shilling the hundred. Apples, pears, pomegranates, quinces, and medlars, thrive well and bear plentifully, but are not very good. Few indeed are at the pains even of grafting the trees, but suffer them to grow up from the seed. The plums and cherries that are produced in the colony are of an indifferent quality. Gooseberries and currants are said to have been tried, but without success. The nectarine has not yet been introduced. Raspberries are tolerably good, but scarce; and strawberries are brought to market every month of the year. There are no filberts nor common hazel nuts,

but almonds, walnuts, and chesnuts, all of good quality, are plentiful, as are also mulberries of a large size and excellent flavor.

The market is likewise tolerably well supplied with most of the European vegetables for the table, from the farms that lie scattered along the eastern side of the peninsula, in number about forty or fifty. On some of these farms are vineyards also of considerable extent, producing, besides a supply for the market of green and ripe grapes and prepared raisins, about seven hundred leaguers or pipes of wine a-year, each containing 154 gallons. Of these from fifty to a hundred consist of a sweet luscious wine, well known in England by the name of Constantia, the produce of two farms lying close under the mountains about mid-way between the two bays. The grape is the Muscatel, and the rich quality of the wine is in part owing to the situation and soil, and partly to the care taken in the manufacture. No fruit but such as is full ripe, no stalks are suffered to go under the press, precautions that are rarely taken by the other farmers of the Cape.

The vineyards, gardens, and fruiteries are divided into small squares, and inclosed by cut hedges of oaks, quince trees, or myrtles, to break off the south-east winds of summer, which, from their strength and dryness, are found to be deleterious to vegetation ; but the grain is raised on open grounds. The produce of this article on the peninsula is confined chiefly to barley, which, in this country, is preferred to oats for the feeding of horses. None of the common flat-cared barley has yet been introduced, but that hexangular kind only is known, which in some parts of England is called *beer*, and in others *big*. Corn

is generally cultivated beyond the isthmus and along the western coast, within the great north and south chain of mountains. The remote districts beyond these furnish a supply of horses, sheep, and horned cattle.

The natural productions of the Cape Peninsula, in the vegetable kingdom, are perhaps more numerous, varied, and elegant, than on any other spot of equal extent in the whole world. Of these, by the indefatigable labors of Mr. Masson, his Majesty's botanic garden at Kew exhibits a choice collection; but many are still wanting to complete it. Few countries can boast of so great a variety of the bulbous rooted plants as Southern Africa. In the month of September, at the close of the rainy season, the plains at the feet of the Table Mountain and on the west shore of Table Bay, called now the Green Point, exhibit a beautiful appearance. As in England the humble daisy, in the spring of the year, decorates the green sod, so at the Cape, in the same season, the whole surface is enlivened with the large *Othonna*, so like the daisy as to be distinguished only by a Botanist, springing up in myriads out of a verdant carpet, not however of grass, but composed generally of the low creeping *Trifolium melilotos*. The *Oxalis cernua*, and others of the same genus, varying through every tint of color from brilliant red, purple, violet, yellow, down to snowy whiteness, and the *Hypoxis stellata* or star flower with its regular radiated corolla, some of golden yellow, some of a clear unsullied white, and others containing in each flower, white, violet, and deep green, are equally numerous, and infinitely more beautiful. Whilst these are involving the petals of their shewy flowrets at the setting of the

sun, the modest *Ixia Cinnamomea*, of which are two varieties, one called here the Cinnamon, and the other the evening, flower, that has remained closed up in its brown calyx, and invisible during the day, now expands its small white blossoms, and scents the air, throughout the night, with its fragrant odour. The tribe of *Ixias* are numerous and extremely elegant; but none more singular than that species which bears a long upright spike of pale green flowers. The *Iris*, the *Moræa*, *Antholiza*, and *Gladiolus*, each furnish a great variety of species not less elegant nor graceful than the *Ixia*. That species of *Gladiolus*, which is here called *Africaner*, is uncommonly beautiful with its tall waving spike of striped flowers, and has also a fragrant smell; that species of a deep crimson is still more elegant. A small yellow *Iris* furnishes a root for the table, in size and taste not unlike a chesnut. These small roots are called *Uyntjes* by the colonists, and that of the *Apo-negeton distachion*, which is also eaten, *water uyntjes*. Of those genera which botanists have distinguished by the name of the liliaceous class, many are exceedingly grand and beautiful, particularly the *Amaryllis*, of which there are several species. The sides of the hills are finely scented with the family of *geraniums*; the different species of which, exhibiting such variety of foliage, once started an idea that this tribe of plants alone might imitate in their leaves every genus of the vegetable world.

The frutescent, or shrubby plants, that grow in wild luxuriance, some on the hills, others in the deep chasms of the mountains, and others on the sandy isthmus, furnish an endless variety for the labors of the botanist. Of the numbers of this

class of naturalists, who have visited the Cape, none have returned to Europe without having added to his collection plants that were neither described nor known. The eye of a stranger is immediately caught by the extensive plantations of the *Protea Argentea*, whose silver colored leaves, of the soft texture of satin, give it a distinguished appearance among the deep foliage of the oak, and still deeper hue of the stone pine. It is singular enough that although the numerous species of *Protea* be indiscriminately produced on almost every hill of the colony, the silver tree should be confined to the feet of the Table Mountain alone, a circumstance that led to the supposition of its not being indigenous to the Cape; it has never yet, however, been discovered in any other part of the world. The tribe of heaths are uncommonly elegant and beautiful: they are met with equally numerous and flourishing on the stony hills and sandy plains; yet, unless raised from seed, are with difficulty transplanted into gardens. Doctor Ronburgh found at least 130 distinct species between the Cape and the first range of mountains. Little inferior to the heaths are the several species of the genera to which botanists have given the names of *Polygala*, *Brunia*, *Diosma*, *Borbonia*, *Cliffortia*, and *Asparagus*; to which might be added a vast variety of others, to be enumerated only in a work professedly written on the subject.

The peninsula of the Cape affords but a narrow field for the inquiries of the Zoologist. The wooded kloofs or clefts in the mountains still give shelter to the few remaining troops of wolves and hyenas that not many years ago were very troublesome to the town. The latter, indeed, generally shuns the habitations of men; but the former, even yet, sometimes ex-

tends his nightly prowl to the very skirts of the town, enticed by the dead cattle and offals from slaughter-houses that are shamefully suffered to be left or thrown even at the sides of the public roads. In the caverns of the Table Mountain, and indeed in almost every mountain of the colony, is found in considerable number a small dusky-colored animal about the size of a rabbit, with short ears and no tail, called here the Das, and described in the *Systema Naturæ* of *Linnaeus* under the name of *Hyrax Capensis*, and by Pennant under that of Cape Cavy. The flesh is used for the table, but is black, dry, and of an indifferent flavor. The *Steenbok*, once the most numerous of the antelope tribe that inhabited the peninsula, is now nearly exterminated out of this part of Africa, though equally abundant with the other two beyond the isthmus. This animal is the *Antelope Grimmea* of Pallas, and the Guinea antelope of Pennant. The horses of the Cape are not indigenous, but were first introduced from Java, and since that, at various times, from different parts of the world. The grizzled and the black Spaniard first brought hither, about twenty years ago, from South America, where the breed now runs wild over that extensive country, are the horses that are most esteemed for their beauty, their gentleness, and service. Though small, and often very ill-fed, they are capable of sustaining a great degree of hard labor. Heavy waggons, however, are chiefly drawn by oxen. These are all indigenous, except the breed from a few European cattle that have lately been introduced. The Cape ox is distinguished by its long legs, high shoulders, and large horns.

The larger kinds of birds that hover round the summit of the Table Mountain are vultures, eagles, kites, and crows,

that assist the wolves in cleansing the outskirts of the town of a nuisance that is tacitly permitted by the police. Ducks, teals, and snipes, are met with in the winter season about the pools and periodical lakes on the isthmus. Turtle doves, a thrush called the Sprew, and the Fiscal bird, the *Lanius Col-laris*, frequent the gardens near the town.

The market is constantly supplied with a variety of sea-fish that are caught in the bay, and every where along the coast. The *Roman*, a deep rose-colored perch, is considered as the best fish in the colony, but is never caught except in False-bay, and on the coast to the eastward of it. It has one back fin with twelve spines, and divided tail; a silver band along each side of the back fin, turning down to the belly, and a blue arched line over the upper mandible connecting the two eyes. Next to the Roman are the red and the white *Steen-brassems*, or Stone-breems, two species, or perhaps varieties only, of perches. They are caught from one to thirty pounds in weight. Of the same genus there are several other species, and all of them tolerably good. One of these called the Cabeljau, with the root of the pectoral fins black, tail undivided, and one back fin, grows to the weight of forty pounds: another, called the Hottentot's fish, from its dirty brown color, with one back fin, and tail bifid, commonly runs about four pounds: another perch, called the Silver-fish, has one back fin, and tail bifid; ground of a rose-colored tinge, with five longitudinal silver bands on each side, described probably as the *perca striata*: and a fourth species, called the *Stompneus*, with one back fin and tail bifid, is distinguished by six transverse bands of black and white spots down each

side. The *Harder*, a species of *Clupea*, not unlike the common herring, is considered as a good fish; and the *Klip* or rock-fish, the *Blennius viviparus*, makes no bad fry. Another Blennius, called the King Rock-fish, is sometimes caught with the former, to which, from its shape and resemblance to the *Muræna* of the ancients, naturalists have given the specific name of *Murænoides*. The *Elft*, the *Scomber trachurus*, schad or horse mackerel, has a good flavor, but is reckoned to be unwholesome food, and on that account seldom eaten. The *Scomber Scomber*, common mackerel, sometimes makes its appearance after bad weather in large shoals in the bay. The *Springer* is esteemed for the thick fat coating that lines the cavity of the abdomen. The *Speering*, a species of *Antherina*, is a small transparent fish with a broad band, resembling a plate of silver, on each side. The *Knorhaen*, a species of *Trigla*, or Gurnard, with two strong spines on the fore part of each eye, and two on the cover of the gills, is not a bad fish; nor is the common Sole inferior here to that in Europe. Dolphins are sometimes caught in the bay after a gale of wind. That singular species of Ray fish, the electrical torpedo, is well known to the fishermen by the frequent strokes they receive from treading on the small young ones that are often thrown upon the beach in the winter season. Another species is used for the table and eaten by the English under the name of Skate. There is also in some of the rivers of the country an electrical *Silurus*, but it is not eaten; and the *Bagre*, a second species of *Silurus*, commonly caught in the bay, is considered as poisonous. The *Scorpæna Capensis*, called here *Jacob Evertson*, is a firm, dry fish, but not very commonly used. A species of cray-fish and different sorts of crabs are

plentiful and tolerably good. Muscles of various kinds, and oysters, abound on the sea-coast ; the former of a high, strong flavor, but the latter fully as good as those of Europe ; they are, however, not to be procured in quantities near the Cape. A species of *Asterias* or Star-fish, and the paper *Nautilus*, are sometimes sent from hence to Europe to be placed in the cabinets of the curious ; as is also that singular little animal called by naturalists the *Syngnathus Hippocampus*, and sometimes sea-horse.

Few shells or marine productions are met with on this part of the coast of Africa that would be considered as rare by the naturalist. Small corallines, madrepores, sponges, and other productions of marine animals, are frequently thrown up on the shores of the bays, but such only as are commonly known. The shells that mostly abound are of the univalve tribe. The *patella* genus is the most plentiful ; and that large, beautiful, pearly shell, the *Haliotis Midæ*, is very common. *Cypræa*, *Volutes*, and *Cones*, are also abundant. All these are collected on the coast near the Cape, and burnt into lime, there being no limestone on the whole peninsula, and none worth the labor of getting, and the expenditure of fuel necessary for burning it, in any part of the colony.

During the winter season whales are very plentiful in all the bays of Southern Africa, and give to the fishermen a much easier opportunity of taking them than in the open sea. They are smaller and less valuable than those of the same kind in the northern seas, but sufficiently so to have engaged the attention of a Company lately established here for carry-

ing on a fishery in Table Bay. They run in general from fifty to sixty feet in length, and produce from six to ten tons of oil each. The bone of such small fish is not very valuable. It is remarked that all those which have yet been caught were females; and it is supposed that they resort to the bays as places of shelter to deposit their young. Seals were once plentiful on the rocky islands of False bay, as is still that curious animal the penguin, forming the link of connection between the feathered and the finny tribe.

Insects of almost every description abound in the summer months, and particularly a species of locust which infests the gardens, devouring, if not kept under, every green thing that comes in its way. Mosquitoes are less troublesome here than in most warm climates, nor does their bite cause much inflammation; but a small sand fly, so minute as scarcely to be visible, is a great torment to those who may have occasion to cross among the shrubbery of the sandy isthmus. Lizards of various kinds, among which is the cameleon, are very abundant; and small land-turtles are every where crawling about in the high roads and on the naked plains. Scorpions, scolopendras, and large black spiders, are among the noxious insects of the Cape; and almost all the snakes of the country are venomous.

The first appearance of so stupendous a mass of naked rock as the Table Mountain cannot fail to arrest, for a time, the attention of the most indifferent observer of nature from all inferior objects, and must particularly interest that of the mineralogist. As a description of this mountain will,

with few variations, answer to that of almost all the great ranges in Southern Africa, I may not perhaps be thought too tedious in entering into a detail of its form, dimensions, and constituent parts.

The name of *Table Land* is given by seamen to every hill or mountain whose summit presents to the eye of the observer a line parallel to the horizon. The north front of the Table Mountain, directly facing the town, is a horizontal line, or very nearly so, of about two miles in length. The bold face, that rises almost at right angles to meet this line, is supported, as it were, by a number of projecting buttresses that rise out of the plain, and fall in with the front a little higher than midway from the base. These, with the division of the front, by two great chasms, into three parts, a curtain flanked by two bastions, the first retiring and the others projecting, give to it the appearance of the ruined walls of some gigantic fortress. These walls rise above the level of Table Bay to the height of 3582 feet, as determined by Captain Bridges of the royal engineers, from a measured base and angles taken with a good theodolite. The east side, which runs off at right angles to the front, is still bolder, and has one point higher by several feet. The west side, along the sea-shore, is rent into deep chasms, and worn away into a number of pointed masses. In advancing to the southward about four miles, the mountain descends in steps or terraces, the lowest of which communicates by gorges with the chain that extends the whole length of the peninsula. The two wings of the front, one the Devil's Mountain, and the other the Lion's Head, make in fact, with the Table, but one mountain. The

depredations of time and the force of torrents having carried away the looser and less compact parts, have disunited their summits, but they are still joined at a very considerable elevation above the common base. The height of the first is 3315, and of the latter 2160 feet. The Devil's Mountain is broken into irregular points; but the upper part of the Lion's Head is a solid mass of stone, rounded and fashioned like a work of art, and resembling very much, from some points of view, the dome of St. Paul's placed upon a high cone-shaped hill.

These three mountains are composed of a multitude of rocky strata piled on each other in large tabular masses. Their exact horizontal position denotes the origin of the mass to be neptunian and not volcanic; and that since its first formation no convulsion of the earth has happened in this part of Africa sufficient to have disturbed the nice arrangement of its parts. The strata of these postdiluvian ruins, not being placed in the order of their specific gravity, might lead to the conclusion that they were deposited in successive periods of time, were it not for the circumstance of their lying close upon each other without any intermediate veins of earthy or other extraneous materials. The stratification of the Cape peninsula, and indeed of the whole colony, is arranged in the following order:

The shores of Table Bay, and the substratum of the plain on which the town is built, compose a bed of a blue compact schistus, generally placed in parallel ridges in the direction of north-west and south-east, but frequently interrupted by large

masses of a hard flinty rock of the same color, belonging to that class of aggregated stones proposed by Mr. Kirwan to be called granitelles. Fine blue flags, with whitish streaks, are procured from Robben Island, in the mouth of Table Bay, which are used for steps, and for paving the terraces in front of most of the houses.

Upon the Schistus lies a body of strong clay colored with iron from a pale yellow to deep red, and abounding with brown foliated mica. Embedded in the clay are immense blocks of granite, the component parts of which are so loosely cemented together as easily to be separated by the hand. The mica, the sand, and indeed the whole bed of clay, seem to have been formed from the decomposition of the granite. Between the Lion's Head and the sea are vast masses of these aggregated stones entirely exposed. Most of them are rent and falling asunder by their own weight: others are completely hollowed out so as to be nothing more than a crust or shell; and they have almost invariably a small aperture on that side of the stone which faces the bottom of the hill or the sea-shore. Such excavated blocks of coarse granite are very common on the hills of Africa, and are frequently inhabited by runaway slaves.

Resting on the granite and clay is the first horizontal stratum of the Table Mountain, commencing at about five hundred feet above the level of the sea. It is siliceous sand-stone of a dirty yellow color. Above this is a deep brown sand-stone, containing calciform ores of iron, and veins of hematite

running through the solid rock. Upon this rests a mass, of about a thousand feet in height, of a whitish-grey shining granular quartz, mouldering away in many places by exposure to the weather, and in others passing into sand-stone. The summit of the mountain has entirely undergone the transition into sand-stone; and the skeletons of the rocks, that have hitherto resisted the ravages of time, are surrounded by myriads of oval-shaped and rounded pebbles of semitransparent quartz that were once embedded in them. Those pebbles having acquired their rounded form by friction when the matrix, in which they are still found buried, had not assumed the form and consistence of stone; and the situation of this stratified matrix on blocks of primæval granite, clearly point out a grand revolution to have taken place on the surface of the globe we inhabit. No organized remains, however, of the Old World, such as shells buried in the rock, petrifications of fishes, or impressions of plants, appear on that side of the Table Mountain next the Town; but I have seen some few arborizations in the Schistus on the south side of the Mountain.

To those whom mere curiosity, or the more laudable desire of acquiring information, may tempt to make a visit to the summit of the Table Mountain, the best and readiest access will be found directly up the face next to the town. The ascent lies through a deep chasm that divides the curtain from the left bastion. The length of this ravine is about three-fourths of a mile; the perpendicular cheeks at the foot more than a thousand feet high, and the angle of ascent about forty-

five degrees. The entrance into this deep chasm is grand and awful. The two sides, distant at the lower part about eighty yards from each other, converge to the width of a few feet only at the portal, which opens upon the summit, forming two lines of natural perspective. On passing this portal, a plain of very considerable extent spreads out, exhibiting a dreary waste and an insipid tameness, after quitting the bold and romantic scenery of the chasm. And the adventurer may perhaps feel strongly disposed to ask himself if such be all the gratification he is to receive for having undergone so great a fatigue in the ascent? The mind, however, will soon be relieved at the recollection of the great command given by the elevation; and the eye, leaving the immediate scenery, will wander with delight round the whole circumference of the horizon. On approaching the verge of the mountain—

“ How fearful
 “ And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
 * * * * *
 “ The fishermen that walk upon the beach
 “ Appear like mice; and yon tall anchoring bark
 “ Diminish'd to her cock. * * *
 * * * * * “ The murmuring surge
 “ That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
 “ Cannot be heard so high.”

All the objects on the plain below are, in fact, dwindled away to the eye of the spectator into littleness and insignificance. The flat-roofed houses of Cape Town, disposed into formal clumps, appear like those paper fabrics which chil-

dren are accustomed to make with cards. The shrubbery on the sandy isthmus looks like dots, and the farms and their enclosures as so many lines, and the more-finished parts of a plan drawn on paper.

On the swampy parts of the flat summit, between the masses of rock, are growing several sorts of handsome shrubs. The *Penæa mucronata*, a tall, elegant, frutescent plant, is peculiar to this situation ; as is also that species of heath called the *Physodes*, which, with its clusters of white flowers glazed with a glutinous coating, exhibits in the sunshine a very beautiful appearance. Many other heaths, common also on the plains, seemed to thrive equally well on this elevated situation as in a milder temperature. The air on the summit, in the clear weather of winter, and in the shade, is generally about fifteen degrees of Fahrenheit's scale lower than in Cape Town. In the summer season the difference is much greater, when that well-known appearance of the fleecy cloud, not inaptly called the *Table Cloth*, envelopes the summit of the mountain.

A single glance at the topography of the Cape and the adjacent country will be sufficient to explain the cause of this phenomenon which has so much the appearance of singularity. The mountainous peninsula is connected with a still more mountainous continent, on which the great ranges run parallel to, and at no great distance from, the sea-coast. In the heat of the summer season, when the south-east moonsoon blows strong at sea, the water taken up by evaporation is borne in

the air to the continental mountains, where, being condensed, it rests on their summits in the form of a thick cloud. This cloud, and a low dense bank of fog on the sea, are the precursors of a similar, but lighter, fleece on the Table Mountain, and of a strong gale of wind in Cape Town from the south-east. These effects may be thus accounted for: The condensed air on the summit of the mountains of the continent rushes, by its superior gravity, towards the more rarified atmosphere over the isthmus, and the vapor it contains is there taken up and held invisible or in transparent solution. From hence it is carried by the south-east wind towards the Table and its neighbouring mountains, where, by condensation from decreased temperature and concussion, the air is no longer capable of holding the vapor with which it was loaded, but is obliged to let it go. The atmosphere on the summit of the mountain becomes turbid, the cloud is shortly formed, and, hurried by the wind over the verge of the precipice in large fleecy volumes, rolls down the steep sides towards the plain, threatening momentarily to deluge the town. No sooner, however, does it arrive, in its descent, at the point of temperature equal to that of the atmosphere in which it has floated over the isthmus, than it is once more taken up and “vanishes into air—to thin air.” Every other part of the hemisphere shews a clear blue sky undisturbed by a single vapor.

The produce of the Cape peninsula is grapes, with all the European and many of the tropical fruits, vegetables of every description, barley for the use of horses, and a small quantity

of choice wine. Of the other parts of the Cape district, wheat, barley, pulse, and wine.

By a regulation of the Dutch Government, every householder was obliged annually to give in the number of his family, the amount of his live stock, and the produce of his farm. As this had been done in a loose and slovenly manner, and as the augmentation of ten thousand souls to its former population rendered it important to ascertain the means afforded by the colony for their subsistence, Lord Macartney required that, for the future, every man should give in his statement upon oath. When this new regulation was made, the *Opgaaff*, for that year, had already been taken in the usual way, but, on being repeated, the numbers, in some articles, were found to exceed those in the former account in a threefold proportion.

The following is an abstract of the *Opgaaff* for the Cape district in the year 1797, when it was first required to be given in on oath.

<i>Population.</i>			
Men	-	-	1566
Women	-	-	1354
Sons	-	-	1451
Daughters	-	-	1658
Servants	-	-	232
			—Christians 6261

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

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	Brought forward,	Christians	6261
Men slaves	- -	6673	
Women slaves	-	2660	
Slave children	-	2558	
	—Slaves	11,891	
Total population of the Cape district			18,152

Of the above number of Christians or free people, 718 are persons of color, and one thousand, nearly, are Europeans.

Stock and Produce.

Horses (his Majesty's cavalry not included)	8334
Horned cattle - - - -	20,957
Sheep and goats - - - -	61,575
Hogs - - - -	758
Vine plants - - - -	1,560,109
Leggers of wine made (each 160 gallons)	786½
Muids of wheat sown in 1796, 3464—	
reaped - - - -	32,962
Muids of barley sown in 1796, 887—	
reaped - - - -	18,819
Muids of rye sown in 1796, 39—	
reaped - - - -	529
Quantity of land employed in	
vineyards and gardens -	580 morgen
In grain - - - -	3089 ditto
Total	3669 morgen or 7338 acres.