

and houses which the troops occupy on the rising ground at Wineberg. A circumstance of this kind occurred whilst I was there, and alarmed us very much. Wineberg is more a post of communication, and a salutary quarter for troops than a station for the purposes of defence; for there are no batteries here nor guns, except the field-pieces attached to the troops in the encampment. Yet it still presents several obstructions to an enemy on his march to attack Cape Town. The ground is broken, rugged, and uneven; hollow sandy defiles intermixed with small eminences lie continually in the way. These are thickly covered in particular spots with low shrubs and brush-wood, from whence troops might annoy an enemy with much advantage, and render his approach extremely difficult and dangerous. A strong force would be required to occupy this position, as the tract of country projecting from the hills parallel with Wineberg, and on to the back of Tiger and Table Hills, form a very extensive tongue of land, and all a flat. Troops may avoid Wineberg altogether by detouring to the right; and approaching Cape Town between Round-a-Bosch and the sea, skirting the shore towards the head of Table Bay, where the country is more bare and sandy, and affords less cover for the troops opposing the advancing army. To obviate this circumstance, there is a long chain of batteries and redoubts along the shore, upwards of a mile from Cape Town, and running crosswise to the foot of the Tiger Hill, which there comes closer to the sea, and renders the ground for the approach of an enemy narrower. From the

Military observations on the nature of this post.

vicinity of Wineberg commence the cultivated parts; a number of excellent houses and plantations belonging to the Dutch gentlemen and farmers, lie along on each side of the road, which begin now to be solid, even, and regularly made; for hitherto it was no more than a path through loose heavy sand.

The country now puts on a rich and verdant appearance; several very fertile fields appear, producing grapes, European wheat, barley, carrots, turnips, and many kinds of garden-stuffs and fruits, besides those natural to this country and climate. Game of various sorts is to be met with all the way from hence to the back of the hills. In my shooting excursions I have met with the steen bock, the spring bock, small antelope hares, the beautiful small deer called gazelle or mouse deer, not larger than the hare; the diving goat or dyker bock, so called from its jumping and diving amongst the bushes and sedgy grass, along side the marshy tracts, where it always keeps when pursued. Quails, partridges, Cape pheasants, Cape lowries, a kind of grouse, snipe, wild pigeons, and doves, are found here in abundance. Kingfishers, several birds of the crane kind, and the flamingo, are likewise seen, although this last bird is very scarce at this side the peninsula. There are also several beautiful birds of the thrush kind, of various colours, some black, others red, yellow, and green. The sugar bird appears here with a very long bill, and the tongue extending a great way out of its mouth, yet not thicker than a knitting needle. This instrument these birds thrust into the flowers,

Fertility of
the country
around.

Game in
great plenty.

and extract the sweets. They have two very long narrow feathers in their tails, and are of a beautiful greenish colour. Several other species of small birds are found here, particularly the humming birds and fly birds, remarkable for their diminutive size. There are also several species of bullfinches and sparrows with variegated and beautiful plumage. Some of those I brought home stuffed were highly valued on that account.

Land turtles are seen in great numbers crawling under the traveller's feet. I have met but few of the reptile kind, although there are some poisonous species, as the puff-adder, the spring-adder, which springs backwards, and is on that account exceedingly dangerous to strangers or people not acquainted with its mode of attack; also the frog-snake, and whip-snake, or long green snake. I never met with the covre capelle or hooded-snake, so common and so destructive in Asia, though I was informed that it is an inhabitant of this country.

For the last five miles the prospect presented on the road to Cape Town is highly delightful. The road itself is hard, smooth, and level; and a number of excellent houses belonging to the wealthy burghers and principal people of Cape Town, are thickly scattered on each side. You now proceed for a couple of miles along this shady road, passing the little village of Round-a-Bosch, or Round Wood, on your right. It is situated on the extensive and elevated plain, where the troops composing the garrison of Cape Town generally encamp during the dry season. This is a re-

Village of
Round-a-
Bosch.

markably healthy and convenient spot, as the troops have but a little way to march to their field-day exercise. There is no ground between Cape Town of sufficient extent for that purpose. General Dundas occupied a very elegant house here which he hired from a Dutchman.

After leaving Round-a-Bosch and proceeding two miles further, you find yourself on a line with the foot of Tiger or Devil Hill, which rises on your left hand; and on your right is the head of Table Bay, which with the town now opens to view. Here the stranger is greatly struck with the grand, beautiful, and variegated appearance of the prospect before him, and on each side of him; and his pleasure is still more heightened by the different appearance of the uncouth, barren, and sandy tract, which he has just traversed.

Nothing can exceed the general effect of this scenery. On your right hand appears the meadows and low lands, the batteries and redoubts stretching along the shore, the scattered ranges of store-houses, hospitals, arsenals, and guard-houses connected with those batteries, and with the different posts. The long sandy and circular beach, bordering the Table Bay, comes close up here and boldly sweeps round in the form of a crescent. The Table Bay presents itself full in view with the men of war, and various other vessels at anchor, while numerous ships are seen coming in and going out under full sail. The country beyond the bay to the right gradually ascends from the shore in small green sheep hills, while the high hills and mountains stretch along

Tiger Hill.

First view of
Cape Town.

Grand and
beautiful
view from
this side of
the town and
bay.

in one great unbroken range. On the left hand appears the Tiger Hill which you are immediately under; the redoubts and batteries regularly slope down its sides from near the summit to where you stand. The Table Mountain, so awfully grand, rises majestically above all the rest. The deep chasms in its sides are relieved by the Company's gardens at its foot, and the plantations and gardens which skirt the back of the town, while the groves of silver and other trees scattered in various places appear sprouting out of the rocky eminences. The Liewen's Koep or Lion's Head, so called by the Dutch, and by us commonly the Sugar Loaf, from its conic form, seems attached to the Table Mountain; and beyond the Lion's Head, the Liewen's Staart or Lion's Rump, extends like a half-moon till it comes opposite to where you stand, and terminates close to the shore of Table Bay a mile beyond the town in a sloping green point. Immediately opposite appears the town like an amphitheatre, large, regular, and well built. The houses are all well plastered and white-washed, and this adds considerably to the uncommon neatness of its appearance from a distance. Beyond the town the Amsterdam and Chevone batteries, near the edge of the bay and close to Green Point, complete this noble and grand view, which is scarcely equalled in any part of the world. Such is the delightful prospect presented to the traveller on his approach to Cape Town; nor is he less struck with the new appearances which present themselves when he comes more minutely to examine the place and its various inhabitants.

The Cape Town is pleasantly situated, nearly parallel to Cape Town. the upper end of Table Bay, on a sloping sandy or rather gravelly plain, which rises with an easy ascent to the foot of the three great hills, the Tiger Hill, the Table Mountain, and the Lion's Head. With the Lion's Head is connected the Lion's Rump, which defends Table Bay from the westerly winds, and skirting the shore forms a barrier to the town from that side. Two very strong batteries Chevone and Amsterdam batteries. are placed here facing the sea; that nearest the Green Point is called the Chevone. It has, level with the sea, one great tier of guns, and farther back, but more elevated, another range, with a flanking redoubt at each end, to enfilade both edges of the shore. This battery is capable of greatly annoying ships standing into the bay, immediately on their rounding Green Point. A quarter of a mile from this battery, and towards the town, is another strong battery called the Amsterdam, with a rampart round it, and bomb proof. There are casements and magazines inside, where prisoners of war are generally confined. It is capable of containing at least two hundred troops, in the ranges of barracks and store houses in the body of the work. The Amsterdam battery is well defended on the land side by several pieces of cannon, planted on the rampart, which is not the case with the Chevone; this last having only a range of guard houses for the troops on duty, and a small arsenal for military stores. Troops attacking this latter Author's remarks concerning their being attacked with success. post have to encounter little obstruction from the land side. The lower tier of guns could never be brought to

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

bear, except towards the sea, and a coup-de-main might easily carry the upper. I would not, however, lead my countrymen into an error, by representing the obstacles in their way as trifling, should it ever be their object to attack the Cape Town by sea from the Table Bay side. Having been several times on guard at the Chevone in the year 1796, I had an opportunity of minutely observing the several defences at this side of the town; and of considering the way most likely to succeed in making an attack from thence. Those two batteries, the Chevone and the Amsterdam, are certainly very terrific in their appearance, and might render it a hazardous business for ships to attempt an entrance into the bay; yet were the Chevone once mastered, and some ships drawn up abreast of the Amsterdam, it could not possibly long hold out, especially when attacked with that ardour and spirit which I have so often witnessed in our brave seamen.

It would be necessary at the same time, for the sake of co-operation, to land troops at the back of Green Point, where, though some parts are shoally, there are partial spots of sandy beach without much surf, and only a few small batteries or guns planted at intervals. Kickein de Potte, as the Dutch name a small battery here, could not make much resistance; and the distance from thence to the Chevone is very short. There is no good anchorage opposite the Chevone; a ship cannot anchor there, although she may near the Amsterdam. Still if it were found impossible to carry these batteries by assault, they might be

passed, and ships might keep at some distance towards the other side of the bay. After passing the Amsterdam, there are no batteries by the town towards the sea, except a small one at Raggou Bay; and the castle is too far off to do much injury to the ships at anchor; indeed they may anchor completely beyond its reach, at the distance of three or four miles from it. The wind to serve for an attack conducted in this manner, should be west, or west north west. These observations are merely thrown out as hints which may be improved upon by officers of maturer judgment and greater experience. The other side of the town is flanked by the Devil's Hill, which forms a ~~swamp~~, and shuts in the approaches from the Wineberg side, except a narrow space between it and Table Bay. This space is strongly fortified with lines, redoubts, and batteries, most of them added by the English; for the Cape on our first arrival was but in a poor state of defence, compared with that in which it was left by us. Close to the entrance of The castle. the town is the castle, which is a large and extensive building, of a pentagonal form, surrounded by a ditch, which was always dry during my stay there. The ramparts are strong, and built of large blocks, of a kind of reddish granite. A number of cannon are planted on the walls in every direction, so as to command the approach, as well as the town itself, and the part of Table Bay opposite. Inside the walls are two regular oblong squares, in the outer of which are barracks for a regiment of foot, with guard houses at each side of the gateway, and over them a hand-

some mess-room for the officers. In the inner-square are the quarters of the principal officers both civil and military. The governor has apartments in the castle, though he seldom uses them. All the public offices of government are in this square; all the papers of consequence are lodged, and all important business transacted in the castle.

Situation of
Cape Town.

The situation of Cape Town is singularly well chosen; and the Dutch certainly deserve great credit for the regularity and convenience with which it is laid out. It is divided by five streets, running in a parallel direction from the shores or edge of the bay towards the Table Mountain, with five other streets, intersected by lanes at regular intervals, which cross the larger streets at right angles, and run from one end of the town to the other, beginning from the street bordering the esplanade, and ending towards the Lion's Rump. The whole town is seen in one view, although very large. You can land from the shipping in the bay at any part of the beach, which is bordered by a very long street, extending quite from the castle to the Amsterdam battery, upwards of a mile in length. This proves a wonderful convenience to the trading ships, which can thus take in water from several streams which run down from the hills through the town in various parts of the beach. Most of the streets are wide, airy, and spacious, planted with oak trees entwined in each other, which shade the houses and take off the great glare occasioned by the reflection of the sun from the white houses, and from the Table Mountain. They also serve to break the violence of the south-

east winds, to which the town is much exposed. Several of the streets have small canals of water running through them, quayed and walled in, which, with the regular rows of trees, and the uniformity of the streets, have a very fine effect to the eye.

The officers and inhabitants frequently assemble to converse by the sides of those canals, and sit on the low walls under the shade of the trees planted at their edges.

The streets in general are kept in tolerably good order. A few of the principal ones are paved; the rest, though unpaved, are firm and hard from the nature of the soil, which is a solid bed of sandy clay, covered lightly with a reddish gravel. The dust here is extremely disagreeable, and flies about in astonishing quantities. When the south-east winds prevail with violence, one can scarcely see their way through the streets; indeed it is hardly possible to stir out of doors. As soon as the south-east wind makes its appearance in any great degree, every house is close shut up; yet still this subtle sand will enter and cover the table and provisions. There is scarcely a bit of bread fit at those periods to be eaten, it is so full of dust. Even the ships in the bay four or five miles from the shore, are not exempt from their share in this nuisance; the sand is soon perceived on the ropes, which acquire a harsh and gritty feel in pulling. The roads are at this season, as it may easily be imagined, in a still more disagreeable state. A Dutchman would think himself in danger of being destroyed if he travelled at that time. The inhabitants indeed seemed surprised at the

temerity and carelessness of our countrymen respecting those evils. It is a great pity the streets of Cape Town were not all paved and regularly swept; as by this means a great deal of this inconvenience might be remedied at a small expence.

Principal
squares.

There are three squares in the town. In the principal one are several very excellent houses and handsome public buildings. The Stadthouse is a large expensive structure, but very heavy. The vaults underneath are uncommonly spacious, and are generally rented from government at a great price, by the merchants, who store in them an immense quantity of wine. The high court of justice is held in the Stadthouse, and the burghers also assemble here to consider questions relative to the regulation of the town, at the order of the fiscal or mayor, who under the Dutch government has very great powers. In the second square are held the markets, where fruit, vegetables, and other articles are sold by the blacks and slaves for their masters. The third square, called the Hottentot-square, is principally the place where the Dutch boors and farmers resort to, and where the Hottentots, who are waggon-drivers, put up. All horses and cattle are bought and sold in this last square, which is indeed rather a broad irregular space, situated above the town near the foot of the Lion's Rump. Between the town and castle is another very large square, or more properly a green level plain divided and bounded by canals, which run down to the beach, and carry off the refuse of the sewers. This is the grand parade of the garrison, and may

be called the esplanade to the Castle. The barracks form one side of this parade, and the town bounds it on the other. The extreme street which runs quite from the edge of Raggou Bay up to the entrance of the Company's garden, a very long, handsome, and shady street, with a canal before it, fronts the parade, and has a very pretty effect. Table Bay and part of a new street by the water side, form the third side of this esplanade; and the castle closes in the fourth.

At this side is the place of execution used by the Dutch Place of execution. for the punishment of their slaves and black criminals. Upon a small inclosed eminence a rack and wheel, with a couple of gibbets, are erected, as terrible warnings of the cruelties ready to be exercised there. The barbarous mode of putting criminals to the torture was abolished by the English Governor immediately on his taking possession of the Cape; as a practice altogether incompatible with the feelings of our countrymen. The Dutch always put their malefactors to death by the severest torments, and generally executed them by torch light. General Craig changed the place of execution, and removed it to the Sandy Beach, near the head of Table Bay. Amongst the instruments of death employed by the Dutch, were found many disgraceful implements of torture, all of which were destroyed by our people, as a reproach to human nature.

The barracks are very extensive, well-built, and with great The barracks. regularity and neatness. They were originally intended for an hospital, but have latterly been much enlarged by the

Dutch, and two additional wings built to them at the angles. Those barracks are capable of containing three regiments, one of them cavalry; and also magazines for artillery, and stores for grain. At the back of one of the wings of this building is a long range of offices, where the government slaves are kept; and attached to it a house of correction for slaves and people of colour committing petty offences, who are taken out every morning to work at the government offices, the batteries, or military buildings, under the superintendance of the police officers. There are separate wards for the males and females confined here; and on certain days a party of them are sent about under a proper guard, to clean the streets of any dirt or nuisances. A certain quantity of victuals is allowed to them daily at the expense of government; for the Dutch owners who send refractory slaves, or those guilty of small petty offences, hither for punishment, which they are obliged to do instead of punishing them with their own hands, (a very salutary, useful, and proper regulation), do not support them whilst they are thus deprived of their labour. Those slaves are usually chained and coupled together, to prevent them making their escape, and, when let out to work, are very strictly and closely watched, till locked up again at night. The prison for debtors is near the beach of Raggou Bay, and here all criminal trials are held.

Churches. There are a Calvinist and a Lutheran church belonging to the town, both very handsome and spacious structures, particularly the former, where the Governor and military

go to hear divine service. The steeple of this church is thatched with reeds, on account of the violent winds, which would soon demolish any other species of covering.

There is an orphan-school in the town for children, belonging to the lower orders and to the soldiery. A certain number of these are annually received and educated at the expense of the government, till such time as they are fit to be put to trades, or placed in the regiments or public offices.

The English Governor established an hospital about a Hospital. mile from the town near the head of Table Bay. It consists of a long range of buildings fronting the sea, and great attention was paid to this department under our government. The number of our sick, while we retained Cape Town very healthy. possession of the Cape, was very few in proportion to the number of troops which composed the garrison. It has been often known that out of five thousand men quartered in the town, and encamped round it, scarcely forty were in the general hospital at one time, and very few of those on account of malignant disorders, or such as are incident to this climate. The English found the Cape to answer their constitutions and habits much better than the natural inhabitants of it, and were in general much more healthy than the Dutch, which must be principally attributed to their different habits of living. The Cape, with great justice, is esteemed the healthiest climate in the world. Our troops being daily used to moderate exercise in the performance of their military manœuvres, and having a suffi-

cient and comfortable meal of plain beef and mutton, with bread and vegetables, and a pint of Cape wine, continued strong and healthy. Their distempers here chiefly proceeded from a too free use of the common thin wine, which is procured at a very cheap rate, and sometimes causes bowel complaints. Consumptions and ulcers seemed the only distempers attended to any extent with fatal consequences to our countrymen. In some instances the smallest sore on a man's leg has caused the loss of the limb; and the great change from hot to cold at certain periods of the year, proves at times very destructive to consumptive habits. The Dutch from their lazy, listless, inactive habits of life, and excess in eating heavy gross food, are much more subject to diseases than our countrymen. Apoplexies, dropsies, liver complaints, and eruptions all over their bodies, are frequent among them. Of the meazles and small-pox they are dreadfully afraid; and by the laws of their government no person infected with those disorders can land in the colony. The instant a ship arrives in the Table Bay and anchors, the doctor or health master, is sent on board to inspect the state of the crew, and a report of their being in a healthy state must first be made to the Governor before any person is allowed to land. Nay it is necessary for each individual to certify his having had the small-pox in Europe, with all the symptoms he can recollect of the disease.

Regulations
of the Dutch
to prevent
infectious
disorders.

In different parts of the town are guard houses, and stations where troops are constantly on duty; in company

with the police officers they patrol the streets, and take up all disorderly persons, and prevent any assemblages of the slaves or black inhabitants, and drunken sailors.

The houses in Cape Town are large and spacious, and in general built with great regularity and uniformity, most of them three or four stories high. They are constructed of brick or a reddish granite stone, plastered and white-washed outside, and many highly stuccoed and painted within. The roofs are mostly flat with terraces, and are covered with square red tiles, large, firm, and well cemented together. This mode of roofing the houses is adopted to prevent damage from the very violent winds; and in the hot season it also affords a pleasant place to walk or sit in, and enjoy the prospect with the benefit of the sea breeze wafting over the houses.

Those houses which are conically or slauntingly roofed, The houses. are covered with thatch of reeds or straw of Indian corn, remarkably well bound; tiles, from the fury of the winds, would soon be torn away, and might severely wound or crush to death the passengers in the streets. This last manner of building the roofs of their houses is much discouraged, as accidents have in consequence frequently happened from fire. During my stay at Cape Town two or three alarming fires broke out, which were nearly being attended with very serious consequences; for the fire spreads here much more rapidly than in any town of Europe, owing to the nature of the materials used in building, which the dry hot weather renders quite combustible.

Many of the houses have pleasant gardens behind, and in front a neat porch or stoop as the Dutch call it, raised a few steps from the ground, and running the whole length of the house. They are enclosed with a parapet or wall three or four feet high, and have a seat or bench at each end, neatly flagged with red tiles highly polished, or blue flags brought from Roben Island, which lies at some distance out in the bay.

The houses are remarkably neat within; the rooms lofty and well furnished. Nothing can exceed the cleanliness of their floors; all the lower part of the house is laid with highly polished square red tiles, and the stair-cases and upper rooms and galleries with oak kept in as good order as our most valuable mahogany dining tables. To have the floors preserved in the most beautiful state seems to be the first care of the lady of the house. The houses are so well laid out as always to possess apartments which are cool and refreshing at every season. It is often remarked by Englishmen, that there are a greater number of well built houses for its size at the Cape than in any town in England. It seems crowded with inhabitants; although we saw it in its thinnest state, many of the Dutch citizens having retired into the country on the English coming before it.

Many new houses were erected by our countrymen, who came out to settle here on commercial business, or in the service of our government. Those houses are handsomely built after the English style of brick retaining the natural

colour, which is certainly much better on many accounts than having them whitened; a custom that in the hot season produces an insufferable glare.

Besides the offices attached to the back part of every house, there are separate ranges and yards set apart for the slaves, strongly palisadoed and barricaded to prevent any communication with the former. Here those slaves who are not highly in their confidence, or not bred up to household offices, are locked up every night. At the north end of the town, towards the Table mountain, are the Company's gardens, very extensive and elegantly laid out. At the entrance which faces one of the principal streets extending quite to the bay, is the town guard, where a captain, two subalterns, and one hundred men are daily on duty. The canal at this end is very deep, and shamefully out of repair, the parapet being every where broken down. This circumstance occasioned a melancholy accident to an officer, a passenger in the ship with me from India, on the first day of his landing. Lieutenant Hewey of the 77th, the gentleman I alluded to, having left the house where he dined after dark, tumbled headlong into the canal and was killed close by the guard. An officer of the navy broke his leg a short time before, but still it was allowed to remain in the same state, and probably still continues to do so. At the entrance of the garden is a pair of very handsome gates fronting the grand walk, which runs the whole length of the garden, and is as broad as the Bird Cage Walk in St. James's Park. It is neatly rolled and gra-

Company's
gardens.

velled; and each side is thickly planted with oak, low elms, myrtle, laurel, and geraniums. On the left side is a canal, which is always filled with water from the Table Mountain, and runs from the garden into the town. Through an arch at one side of the entrance, you cross this canal into the pleasure garden by a neat Chinese bridge. The whole of this extensive piece of ground contains about forty acres, regularly divided into four squares or quarters, by broad walks crossing each other at right angles, planted and bounded by thick hedges of those trees already mentioned, from six to twelve feet high, with large lofty and spreading trees, interspersed at intervals, and from their expanded branches shading nearly the whole walk. In the first division on your left hand is the governor's house, which is a very handsome and large building, having a great number of rooms. From its being so near the Table Mountain, and subject to the violent winds which rush directly down; the house is built only two story high. The offices attached to it are many and well laid out, in two separate ranges. One contains the kitchens, cellars, and offices for the governor's servants; the other is for the guards, slaves, stables, &c. In front of the house is a spot laid out as a pleasure garden or shrubbery, with a fountain or basin of water, in the midst of which are several spouts and water works. You step at once into this pleasant spot, from the grand walk by the Chinese bridge already mentioned. There is here a botanical garden, where a variety of curious exotics are reared; several from Europe,

Government
house and
offices.

many from India, Otaheite, and other parts of the world. Among others I have observed the tea plant, and bread fruit tree. The Dutch destroyed several of the bread fruit trees before they surrendered Cape Town to the English; and latterly they had neglected the botanic garden very much. When I first arrived at the Cape in 1796, it was in the worst possible order, General Craig not having then had leisure to attend to its improvement. When Lord Macartney came here as governor, he ordered it to be replanted and laid out, and procured a great number of very curious plants from Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America; most of which thrived very well. On my return in 1801 to the Cape, I observed with much pleasure the very great improvement made in this garden by the English, who were ever actuated by the most liberal spirit in every transaction which could benefit the Cape, and have made this garden of real use as well as ornament to the Town. The generosity of our countrymen in this excellent management and general improvement of the colony was the greater, as it was never supposed with any confidence that it would be retained by us as a permanent acquisition. Instead of confining their attentions to the fortifications and the military economy of the settlement, which might have been reckoned necessary for their own security, our governors and other officers here were of singular benefit to the colony in pointing out the way to farther cultivation, and commencing many valuable improvements.

The division opposite the botanical garden is well planted

with vegetables and garden stuffs of all kinds for the use of the government house and the principal officers. Above this is another larger space laid out in the same manner, to supply the troops and shipping. This division was originally laid out by the Dutch East India Company, for the purpose of supplying their shipping when they arrived, with vegetables, &c. an article so essentially necessary to the health of their people after a long voyage. Every ship got a certain quantity daily, free of expense. The garden was so large, and the attention paid to it so assiduous, that there was always enough to supply the shipping occasionally touching here, as well as the troops in garrison. For the last two or three years before the arrival of the English, the planting and dressing of this as well as the botanic garden were much neglected; the reason they assigned was, that on account of the war they could not procure the proper supply of seeds from Europe; and that those produced at the Cape soon degenerate, and require to be renewed with a fresh stock every three or four years. The sea-cole, and the nopal, or prickly pear, thrive here in great abundance, being the natural produce of the country, and an excellent substitute for cabbages and such like vegetables. Fruit trees are planted in the borders of the several divisions of the garden, and are surrounded by hedges of low oaks, elms, laurel intermixed with myrtle and other spreading trees of a thick foliage, to shelter them from the violent winds, and to cool the walks in the heat of the summer season. At the farther end of the garden is a place railed

in and palisadoed as a menagerie, where the Dutch government keep African wild beasts and animals of every description, as well as those they could procure from other parts of the world.

This menagerie was uncommonly well filled, and greatly superior to any thing of the kind known in this country. It is indeed difficult to say, whether the menagerie or the aviary was the most completely stocked with rare and curious animals. Previous to the arrival of the English, the Dutch Governor disposed of most of this collection, and very few of the rarer animals were left behind. I had an opportunity of seeing a large collection at the house of a Dutchman, Mynheer de Boers, at Cape Town, who had bought a number from government, and besides had collected others himself, and afterwards exposed them to public view for a dollar.

The ostriches were quite tame and domesticated; I frequently saw nine or ten grazing in the fields round the town, and in the streets, picking up any thing that came in their way. I have often seen them swallow stones, pieces of iron, and old nails. Those creatures were quite familiar, and allowed the little black boys to get on their backs and ride them about. Every evening these ostriches returned to their owner's house, as cows would to their milking place.

That beautiful animal, of the horse species, called zebra, I have also seen quietly grazing in the fields above the town, It is asserted by naturalists, that the zebra could

never be tamed or brought to a docile and tractable state ; yet I have myself witnessed the contrary ; and can contradict the accounts of this animal's untameable disposition, from having seen him, with my own eye, as gentle and as inoffensive as the patient ass, picking up thistles by the side of the road.

At the upper end of the garden stands a wine-house, or tavern, with a billiard-table and skittle-ground ; where the inhabitants amuse themselves, and the officers from the ships frequently go to dine.

CHAPTER VIII.

*Description of Table Bay—Best Season for anchoring there—
Subject to violent North-West Winds in the Winter Season
—Loss of the Sceptre Man of War—Hills about Cape
Town—Appearance of Table Mountain—Remarkable Clouds
over it, prognosticating the Weather—The different Climates
at the Cape—Difference between the Effects of each Season.*

TABLE Bay, which takes its name from the high land Table Bay. immediately over Cape Town, is a very large commodious harbour, washing and bordering the north-west shore of this peninsula, as False Bay does the south-east. It lies in Its situation. 33° 55' south latitude, and 18° 30' east longitude. In the Proper season for anchoring there. summer season, from September till May, Table Bay is a safe and secure harbour, as the wind is generally from the south-east quarter during that period, and blows out of the bay. At that season, a ship if she parts from her anchors has nothing to do but to stand out to sea, and wait till the violence of the south-east wind is over. The north- Subject to violent north-west winds in winter. west winds that blow full into the bay, are attended with the utmost danger, and cannot be avoided, as they find the vessels on a lee shore. They rarely indeed rise to any degree of violence except in the winter season, at which period ships on that account never remain here; nor are they suffered by government to remain here till September; for fear of being surprized by these winds, which has sometimes

been the case; and if in that event they part with their anchors, they must be unavoidably lost. A melancholy instance of this occurred in the loss of the *Sceptre* man of war a few years ago. A violent and unexpected north-west wind coming on, she parted from her anchors and drove on shore, where she was in a very short time knocked to pieces and most of her officers and crew lost. It is a very great disadvantage to this bay, and all others at the Cape, that shipping cannot be hove down and repaired thoroughly, owing to the nature of the shores of this peninsula, and the violent winds which suddenly spring up, and would prove inevitable destruction to a vessel if caught by them while refitting. Our fleets have felt this inconvenience very much whilst on this station. The only instance known of refitting a vessel here was that which I have already mentioned, by orders of Admiral Elphinstone, which was fortunately attended with success.

From the shore to the foot of Table Mountain, there is about a mile and a half rising on a gentle slope. The effect which the town and mountains have on the eye, from a vessel at anchor in the bay, is uncommonly striking.

Table Hill. The back of Cape Town is bounded by a long range of mountains extending in the form of a crescent, and bounding it from both sides. The Table Hill, which lies nearly in the centre of the range, is calculated to be four thousand feet above the level of the sea. It derives its name from the level surface of its summit. Its north front directly faces the town, and rises in a bold perpendicular

form, having one great chasm in its middle, and divided by another from the two great hills called the Tiger Mountain and the Lion's Head, which form wings to the Table Mountain. On the left is the Tiger Hill, at the entrance Tiger Hill. to the town from Wineberg; it is called Tiger Hill, from its being formerly much infested with those animals. On the right of the Table, is the Lion's head, commonly Lion's Head. called by our people the Sugar Loaf Hill, from its conical summit. Those three hills, extending six miles in length, may be looked upon as having originally formed one mountain; for they seem to have been separated by some subsequent convulsion of nature. The Sugar Loaf Hill is lower and steeper than the Table, being almost quite perpendicular. General Craig ordered a gun to be planted on the top of it, to give signals of the approach of shipping. It was dragged up by the English sailors and soldiers with great difficulty and labour, by means of ropes and pulleys. A signal post and flags were placed here to denote the number and appearance of the shipping in sight, and a guard-house for a few men on duty.—[The Dutch had signals to denote if any of the different bays were possessed by an enemy, by means of different coloured flags, changed monthly, and known only to the Governor and the Captains of ships, so that the latter might not run into any of the bays and be taken in the net.]—Adjoining the Sugar Loaf, is the Lion's Rump. Liewers Starrt, or Lion's Rump, so called from the resemblance it bears to a lion in a couching posture. This hill is neither so high nor so steep as the former. There are

also guns and posts erected all along this hill; which receives the alarm from the former, and communicates it to the town and castle in a few moments. The whole surface of the Lion's Rump has a pleasant, fresh and green appearance. Houses and plantations are scattered on the declivity, and towards the extremity of it, which extends quite to the bay and incloses the town, as I before mentioned, at Green Point. The ride is beautiful, from the extensive view it commands, as you pass along the slope of the hill, and ascend towards the top. The English officers marked out a race ground near it, where they were accustomed to have during their stay here, some races every month, and a grand match once a year, which lasted for some days. This has been attended with one very beneficial effect to the colony, that since racing commenced at the Cape, the breed of horses has been considerably improved.

The Table Mountain and the Lion's Head are but indifferently covered with verdure; indeed I may say, they are almost completely bare, and even the very few trees and bushes which grow up and down are withered and stunted with the violent south-east winds, and have a pale and blighted appearance. Few of them grow to more than six feet in height, and those few are generally found sheltered by the cliffs, and watered by rills of water gushing from the rocks, which preserve them in the dry season, and render them healthy and vigorous. The Table Mountain is a very great object of curiosity. No stranger who visits the Cape should let slip the opportunity of visiting it and gaining

its summit from whence he will be highly gratified by one of the noblest prospects in the universe. Indeed every person who has strength sufficient to undergo the fatigue of ascending, eagerly seizes the opportunity of enjoying this gratification. It is, however, a work of some difficulty, and even danger, to arrive at the top; and requires the assistance of skilful guides to point out the easiest paths, and how to avoid the chasms and rocks which so frequently intercept the ascent of the traveller. The mountain is also much infested with runaway slaves, belonging to the Dutch inhabitants of the Cape Town, who lurk about in the caverns and recesses of the mountain, and sometimes attack travellers who are not sufficiently protected by numbers. Though few instances have occurred of murder being committed by those people, yet they are very apt to rob and plunder. It has been found a very difficult attempt to root out those depredators, as they have so many hiding places, and are so well acquainted with every corner of the mountain. At night those unfortunate creatures who fly hither from the cruel usage of their masters, and who have not an opportunity of relieving their wants by plunder, steal into the skirts of the town to obtain a supply of provisions from some of their old comrades and brother slaves, with whom they keep up a correspondence.

But the risk you run of meeting with any of those runaway slaves is by no means equal to the danger of being overtaken with those thick and fleecy clouds which so fre-

quently envelope the mountain. Before you venture to explore the Table Hill, it is highly necessary, if you are not perfectly acquainted with the climate of the Cape yourself, to ask the opinion and advice of an experienced inhabitant of the town; for the mountain is often suddenly covered with thick clouds, which would prevent a traveller from finding his way back for two or three days. On this account it is necessary to wait till certain appearances of the weather indicate that no immediate danger from those clouds is to be expected. The inhabitants of the Cape, from long observation, are well acquainted with all the symptoms of the approaching weather. The appearance of two remarkable clouds over the summit of the mountain enables them, with a great degree of certainty, to prognosticate what weather will follow. From the quarter whence they proceed, their first formation, colour, and the manner in which they bend their course, a Dutchman will tell with little danger of ever being deceived, what will be the consequence. He will be able to inform you of an approaching south-east wind, and whether it will be violent and lasting, or light and passing. Those fleecy clouds which envelope the mountain, and are generally the forerunner of a violent south-east wind, are really singular and curious in their appearances, as well as extraordinary in their effects, which depend very much upon their manner of formation. On the first appearance of those clouds they are small, of a dark bluish colour, and are seen coming over the summit of Table Hill from the south, and passing on

towards the Tiger Hill in a slow progressive manner, gradually increasing into one vast cloud which covers the mountain; when a terrible south-east wind immediately ensues. Sometimes these clouds last for several days together; though it often happens that the violence of the south-east wind lasts a long time after they disappear. When this immense body of clouds is formed, it is seen descending and rolling furiously down the mountain towards the town, which a stranger would imagine it was about to enter; and the threatening appearance of these volumes might seem to portend some alarming consequences to the health of the inhabitants; but on being arrived better than half way down this phenomenon vanishes; for it never comes within a certain distance of the foot of Table Hill. As those clouds are always the forerunners of an approaching south-east wind, it is a common observation with the Dutch to say when they see their first formation, "that the Devil is going to dinner, and that he has laid the cloth on Table Mountain." They then shut up their windows and doors, and keep in their houses till the storm is over.

During the time I was at the Cape I made several excursions to the Table Mountain, and succeeded in arriving at the summit three times; those clouds having in my other attempts prevented me from prosecuting my journey the whole way. Each time I went up by a different route, and found them all extremely difficult and fatiguing. The most convenient and least intricate was from Wine-

berg by the back of the mountain, but this way was much less interesting than from the sides in view of Cape Town; and I had little more gratification in the journey than the prospect from the top. Though the passage up from Wineberg is much easier, yet being at so great a distance from Cape Town, it is only used by those officers quartered here, and their occasional visitors.

The general way by which travellers residing at Cape Town ascend, is by the north-side of the mountain immediately facing the town. On taking this route you proceed through the Company's gardens, at the upper end of which is a gate that brings you quite beyond the outskirts. From this you proceed for nearly a mile by a gradual ascent, the way very rough, rocky, and uneven; after which you come to a most awful and grand chasm, that seems to divide the table into two parts, and extends to within a short distance of the summit. On my arrival at this immense cleft I found the benefit of an experienced guide. The chasm is seen to some distance at sea, and there are besides several smaller ones on its north-side. The great chasm is upwards of seventy yards in breadth, and slightly covered here and there with small trees, and shrubs sprouting out of the rocks. The echo which reverberates here is tremendous, and the sensations of the stranger who ascends are intermingled with astonishment, anxiety, and apprehension. After getting out of the chasm you have to get over the rugged paths intercepted by projecting rocks and cliffs, which renders the journey very tiresome and difficult. After surmounting these

obstacles I at last arrived at the summit, which forms a level plain, interspersed with a few small ponds of water. I found the air here colder than in Cape Town by at least 15 degrees; although in several parts of the journey up, the heat was very distressing.

The prospect from the top of Table Hill, however, amply recompensed the toils of attaining it. It was extensive, almost beyond any idea my imagination had formed: the height from the summit to the level of the sea being reckoned about 4000 feet, and from the outskirts of the town near 3600. The ocean was extended all around as far as the eye could reach; except where the horizon was terminated by the distant mountains of Hottentot Holland and Caffree land. Every part of the colony, its mountains, its shores, its bays, and its plains were extended beneath my feet; yet my eye after throwing around on these objects a look of admiration, returned with a degree of more eager interest to observe the appearances of the beautiful cultivated spot which I had just left. The height at which I was now placed above Cape Town was infinitely greater than the top of St. Paul's, from which I had viewed London; and I amused myself with comparing the appearances which the two cities presented. At my present elevation above Cape Town, it was with difficulty I could see the waggons moving in the streets, while the people who were passing to and fro could only be distinguished as little black spots. The town itself, with the regular streets crossing each other at right angles, seemed

like a little plain intersected with lines. The shipping in the bay looked like small boats, and the contrast between the villages and green plantations surrounding the beach with the rocks, lands, and mountains, which filled out the prospect, produced a most pleasing effect on my mind. On the top of the mountain grew some few shrubs near the water; and amongst the rocks towards the verge of the summit, heaths bearing small flowers of a white, red, and violet colour, were the most predominant plants. Several shrubs, rare in other parts, are also found here. The Tiger hill on the one side, and the Lion's Head or Devil Hill on the other, as I have already observed, are only separated from Table Mountain by great chasms. They are evidently all three composed of the same materials, and it seemed therefore natural to suppose that they were rent asunder by some violent convulsion of nature. Huge masses of rock rising amidst the rents, and heaped one on the other, often nearly join them. Those vast rocks are composed of a species of granite, and are in some places only strewed with a scanty covering of earth. The predominant colour of those masses is a grey tinged with a blueish cast. In some places are incorporated small pieces of a whitish shining stone, and a reddish granulated substance. In the excursion I made to the top of Table Mountain from the south-west part of Tiger Hill, the appearances of nature were the same; this way I found extremely difficult, and was more than once on the point of giving it up, having to climb from one rock to another, and to let my-

self down from one precipice, and ascend another with great danger. At last after much time and trouble I succeeded in arriving at the summit of the Table. In my way down, one of those clouds suddenly came on, which for near an hour obliged me to remain in the recess of a huge projecting rock. This fleecy cloud was evidently full of saline particles. My clothes and hair were wet through, and on my skin and face was left a kind of incrustation such as is caused by the spray arising from salt water, which confirmed me in the opinion of those clouds being originally composed of water taken up from the sea. In my way up several baboons and monkeys made their appearance, some of them we disturbed out of their hiding places in the rocks and clefts. One of the guides suddenly crossed the place where a hyena was sitting; his fright was greater than that of the animal, which went off very angry at being discomposed by his unexpected appearance. Fortunately we were not close to him, and he made no attempt to attack any of our party. I returned from my journey in the evening extremely tired, and having informed my Dutch host of the route I pursued, he was very angry with his slave for attempting so dangerous a way, till I assured him he only acted by my particular orders; and that having already gone by the usual road, I wished to try that by the Tiger Hill.

The climate of the Cape is reckoned one of the most salubrious in the world, a point of infinite importance to the possessors of the colony. It differs considerably from

Climate at
the Cape.

any of those known in Europe or Asia; and yet is found
 Remarkably
 healthy. to agree remarkably with strangers. Our countrymen have
 during their residence here proved its salutary effects on their
 constitutions, few or none of them being attacked with any
 disease which could be said to be peculiarly incident to the
 climate of the Cape. The weather like the year is nearly
 The different
 seasons. equally divided into two seasons, the wet and the dry.
 The former is from March to September, so that the summer
 commences at the Cape when it ends with us in
 England. The spring months are from about the latter
 end of September to the middle of December; the hottest
 weather is in January and February. The autumn com-
 mences about the latter end of March, and the winter months
 are June, July, and August. The chief inconveniences of
 the winter arise from the heavy fogs, misty rains, and strong
 north-west winds which prevail during that season. In the
 summer, the great heat, the dry parching south-east winds,
 and a long want of those refreshing showers which so often
 fall in Europe during our warm months, produce many
 disagreeable circumstances to the inhabitants. The spring
 months are by far the most agreeable and temperate, being
 equally free from the damp fogs of winter, and the parching
 and oppressive heat of the summer season. During this
 agreeable period, which continues nearly four months, the
 Dutch undertake their journeys to their settlements in the
 interior, to superintend the planting and dressing their farms,
 or to indulge themselves in excursions of pleasure. The
 summer brings with it the various productions of the earth

in the greatest profusion. The beginning of autumn is as mild and delightful as the spring; indeed it continues nearly the same throughout, except that the latter end of the autumn is more subject to rain. The prevailing weather of the winter is stormy, rainy, and cold, yet far less so than the winters of Europe. A deluge of rain not unfrequently happens during the winter, and water spouts are often seen on shore as well as in the bay. The torrents of rain more than once alarmed the inhabitants during our stay in the settlement, for the safety of the lower part of the town towards the sea. During the inundation that took place in 1799, the water suddenly rushed from the hills over the town at the left extremity of the Table Mountain, or between it and the Tiger Hill, supposed to be caused by the bursting of a cloud or a water spout; and a great deal of mischief ensued. It took the direction of the castle, which presently had six feet of water in the yard, and about the works. The great body of the current being resisted in its course and turned aside by the castle walls, rushed furiously down towards the sea on both sides of this building, meeting in its way with the artillery barracks and store houses, which composed a range of building between the castle and the sea, but standing much lower than the former. The officers mess room was so instantaneously filled, that they who then happened to be at dinner, could scarcely save themselves from being drowned, by making their way to the higher story. The apartments of this range, which were on the ground floor, were instantly

filled with water. One or two of the privates were unfortunately lost in the flood, besides several black people, who were at work, or passing that way by accident. Fortunately few objects lay in its course; and the descent was so great, that it immediately reached to the sea. Had this deluge happened somewhat higher up towards the town, or run through it, the damage and loss of lives might have been very great.

Winter.

The approach of winter at the Cape is made known to the inhabitants by the appearances on the Table Mountain. The south-east wind blows less frequently and less violently, and that fleecy cloud, which I mentioned above, seldom appears along with it. The wind changes by degrees to north-west, and at first blows gently; but at length increases to the highest pitch of violence. Heavy rains now begin to descend, accompanied with thunder and lightning, which rarely happen at any other period of the year. This weather and the north-west winds set in strongly about the end of May, and continue with a few intermissions till the middle of August, when the rain completely disappears, except now and then a few wettish, or rather misty days. Although it never freezes about Cape Town, snow is seen on the tops of the mountains of Hottentot Holland, and the interior of the southern part: even the Table Mountain has on its summit a slight quantity, although so near the sea. The thermometer is very variable at this season; in one part of the day it is often as low as 40 degrees; and at another will ascend to 65 or

70, making a variation of 25 or 30 degrees during the sun's course.

The summer is ushered in by a clear and bright appearance of the firmament, a serene and light clear blue sky, and the clouds, if there are any to be seen, steady and immoveable, arrested in their course. The wind now varies from the north-west to the south-east point, first beginning gently, and at every return increasing in strength. It is now also accompanied with the appearance of the fleecy cloud on Table Hill. The thermometer generally rises from 70 to 80, 83, and 84 degrees; and it has been known even to exceed this considerably. I have seen it more than once at 100, and instances of its being up to 104, have occurred. Yet the constant circulation of air renders this climate far more endurable than that of most parts of the East Indies. The heat in summer is not so oppressive as in Ceylon and the southern parts of India at the coldest season. I was the better able to judge of this, as I left Madras in the cool season, and came from thence directly to the Cape, where it was then the middle of summer; and although the heat seemed to oppress many of the inhabitants, I felt not in the slightest degree incommoded by it. The greatest inconvenience I felt during my stay here was from the glare, and reflected heat of the houses and the dust flying in clouds about the streets. The mornings are more sultry in general at the Cape than the heat of the day; for the south-east winds generally springing up about noon, last till night. A temporary inconve-

nience is indeed occasioned even by those relieving south-east winds, for they carry a great quantity of heat in themselves, and blow the dust furiously about; yet the inhabitants look upon their blowing as a fortunate circumstance, for the air is thus kept in constant circulation during the hot months, when no rain almost ever falls to refresh the atmosphere. The stagnant heat reflected from the houses and the surrounding mountains, would also greatly overbalance the inconveniences attending the south-east winds. Another effect of these breezes, from which great benefit is derived to health, is, that those great masses of seaweeds and other nuisances, brought into the bay and thrown on the shore bordering the town, where they are left by the influx of the tide, to corrupt and putrify, causing a disagreeable smell, are, by the agitation caused by the violence of the south-east winds, removed and driven back out of the bay into the ocean. The nights in the heat of summer are always cool and refreshing. Thunder and lightning happen but seldom in the course of a year, and never in that severe manner we experience in India, and in all the tropical climates. Water hardly ever freezes at the Cape in the coldest season, and when it does it dissolves again immediately.

Many officers and gentlemen who from a long residence in India contract disorders incident to that climate, and have their constitutions debilitated and broken, come to the Cape on account of its salubrious air and mild temperature. There they soon recover the vigour of their con-

stitutions, and shake off many of the Indian complaints, particularly bilious habits and diseases of the liver. This I experienced in a very high degree in my own case, being greatly restored during my stay at the Cape. Even in regard to the climate alone, the Cape is of singular and great advantage to be retained in our possession, from the vast numbers of our countrymen in the Asiatic world, and the great force necessary to be kept up there in the defence and security of our possessions. Those regiments who have been first retained for a couple of years at the Cape, before they were sent on to India, were much better able to endure that climate than those who were sent out immediately. The 84th, 86th, and the other corps who had been on the Cape establishment and duty for four or five years, lost very few men on their arrival in India. Many of the invalids, who contract their disorders and debilitated state of health from the length of time they have resided in Asia, prefer the climate of the Cape to that of Europe, as much more temperate and better adapted to restore their constitutions. It is, in particular, not subject to the great cold and damps we experience in our winters; and the heat of the summer season at the Cape is not so oppressive or inconvenient to those long living within a few degrees of the equinoctial line; few also of those malignant disorders which attack us in Europe, are known here.

CHAPTER IX.

Country about Cape Town—Productions natural to this Part of Africa—Vegetables, Fruit, Plants—Silver Tree described—Fuel scarce at the Cape—Grain—Metallic Ores—Coal Mine—Minerals—Warm Baths at Stelembosch and Hottentot Island.

The country
around Cape
Town. **T**HE country in the neighbourhood of the Cape contains a great variety and contrast of scenery and soil; villages and cultivated plantations are every where interspersed with sandy hills and low barren tracts. There is much arable land as yet uncultivated, and many marshy spots which have a deep and fertile soil, watered by rivulets and streams, and capable of bringing forth the most valuable productions. For some distance there is no river of any consequence on this side the peninsula, though canals and communications by water might be made in several parts, and plentifully supplied by those rivulets which rush down from the surrounding hills. On a line with Wineberg, at a distance of seven miles south from the Cape Town, begin the houses and plantations of the principal Dutchmen. Some of these colonists have residences in town, and live here merely to enjoy the ease and retirement of a country life; whilst others are altogether farmers, and attend to the planting of vines, and the rearing of vegetables, fruit, and grain, with which they supply the town. Those plantations

and residences of the Dutch from the great number of offices attached to them, look like so many little distinct villages, and are indeed called so, where two or three of those residences stand close together.

From the south part of Table Mountain, which nearly extends to Wineberg, the land spreads into an irregular stripe, stretching quite to the shores of Table Bay. This irregular belt of flat land properly commences from the pass of Musenberg, where it opens into an extensive plain, bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by hills of various appearances, some sandy, others rocky, and a few capable of cultivation. Some of these hills have a light soil and a scanty coat of green verdure; but on all of them there is little or no wood to be seen. From Musenberg to Wineberg this flat tract of land is wild, uncultivated and waste, that side nearest the sea has a loose white sandy surface, interspersed with small trees of the shrub kind, and a few plants natural to this sandy soil. On the other side, towards the hills, it has a greener and fresher appearance, many kinds of heath, shrubs, and low trees grow spontaneously quite to the hills, and far up their sides. Before you come to Wineberg there is a range of very pleasant green hills, which run in a direction parallel to the south side or back of Table Mountain, about the distance of three miles from the road leading to Cape Town. Here is situated the delightful vine plantations and village of Constantia, nearly at the foot of one of the pleasantest of those hills which shelters it from the violence of the south-east winds.

Appearance
of the coun-
try.

To add to the beauty of this place there are groves of the silver-tree planted all round, and on the sides of the hill where the vine plantations are reared. Beyond Constantia, and nearly on a line with Wineberg, is another little village called Witte Boem, in English White Wood, from a number of trees whose body and bark have a white appearance, as also the number of silver-trees growing here whose leaves are of the colour of that metal, and are as rich as satin to the touch. They may indeed be said to be every way similar to a grayish or bluish pearl-coloured plush velvet. Witte Boem lies up near the south end of Table Land. It includes a very handsome house belonging to a Dutch gentleman, but occupied, whilst I was at the Cape, by Mr. Pringle, the East-India Company's Agent.

From this all the way to the Cape Town the houses and gardens are very numerous, and not unhandsomely laid out. The verdant appearance of those plantations and spots of cultivated land around you make a beautiful appearance, which is heightened by being contrasted with the African wilds that surround them, and the awfully grand summit of the Table Mountain, and the hills of Hottentot Holland. The natural historian of every description has here indeed an ample field for his investigations. The animal and vegetable productions of the Cape are very numerous. Some of the most prominent of them I shall describe in plain language, leaving more regular descriptions to men of science. Their vegetables are mostly of the same kind with those we have in Europe. The nopal or prickly pear,

Productions
natural to
this part of
Africa.

Vegetables.

which feeds the cochineal insect, is in abundance; as also bringalls and different kinds of cole and cabbages. The cabbage-tree here grows very tall without branches, except a bunch at top; the thick soft stalk when boiled resembles our cabbages in taste. Fruit is in great abundance, and Fruits. uncommonly cheap. It is reckoned here extremely wholesome, and the free use of it is recommended particularly to those who come from India for the recovery of their health. The oranges are large and well flavoured. There are abundance of plantains, guavoes, pumpkins, melons, squashes, or water-melons, strawberries, cherries, figs, and pomegranates. There are also peaches, apricots, and nectarines, which, though in great plenty, are not so large or well-flavoured as those of Europe. Neither are the apples and pears, although reared in great quantities, either so various in kind or of such a good quality as ours. Grapes of different kinds are employed both for making wine and for drying and curing as raisins. Chesnuts, walnuts, and almonds, grow here equal if not superior to those of other countries. There are also bilimbies, tamarinds, and several other fruits of an acid quality so common in India. Potatoes are produced at the Cape, but of a kind much inferior to ours, though nearly the same in taste and appearance, but smaller and more insipid. The Dutch seem not to esteem this valuable root much, and the quantity raised is very trifling. They think the potatoe requires too much trouble to rear, and that the soil here is not adapted to it, which is a very erroneous opinion, as I have met many

spots uncommonly well calculated to produce this root; but the Dutch are unconquerably obstinate in their prejudices, and never wish to be taught by their neighbours. I have eat excellent potatoes planted by an English gentleman, who shewed me two or three different kinds of soil where they were reared, and which he had planted on purpose to find out that best adapted here for them; his experiments proved that they grew in all the different soils here by draining the marshy spots, and bringing the marl or rich sediment, and mixing it with the gravelly surface on the higher grounds: by this means he had an excellent crop. I have been a good deal surprised to see the backwardness of the Dutch in the culture of this excellent vegetable, which they might have in abundance; and though not partial to it themselves as part of their food, might turn it to good account by supplying the ships which touch here, and which are always very anxious to obtain a supply of such vegetables. They might also afford a cheap and easily procured food for hogs and poultry. The Dutch attend very little to the breeding of hogs and rearing domestic fowls, such as turkeys, capons, &c. they in general detest the hog, and do not chuse to go to the expense of feeding it. Many of our countrymen attempted to introduce some improvements in these objects, and in particular to persuade the Dutch of the utility of planting potatoes in large quantities, as it has ever been so much an object for ships to procure a stock of them at whatever port they touch. The inhabitants of St. Helena are aware of

the advantage and profit derived from potatoes, which are in that island excellent. I have eat them there as good as any in England, and indeed tolerably cheap considering the enormous price of every other article. The soil of St. Helena is similar to that of many parts of the Cape; the earth is very thin, and lightly covers a rocky or gravelly stratum; yet notwithstanding it produces this vegetable abundantly. At the Cape the Dutch plant large fields of carrots to feed their sheep and horses; a bunch or two of carrots is reckoned equal to a feed of corn with us; and in many places their horses get nothing else during the day, but a few bunches of this vegetable. No hay is to be had near Cape Town; nor are there any inclosed fields or paddocks of grass for them to be turned into. Sometimes the slaves are sent out to some distance to procure grass, and long heath from the wet marshy spots, for their horses. The trees and plants of the shrub kind are more numerous and varied here than in any part of the world. Myrtle grows to a great height; all the gardens and plantations are bounded and fenced in with thick hedges of it, as ours are with white and black thorn. Laurels, laurestinas, geraniums, jessamines, albuscas, and hyacinths, also form part of their fences, growing spontaneously in most places. The protea argentic, or silver-tree, rises in pleasant groves and clusters round the Dutch gentlemen's country houses, and is very common on this side the peninsula; it strikes the eye immediately from the richness and colour of its leaves. The tree itself is about the size and thickness of our small

The Dutch
feed horses
on carrots.

Trees, plants,
and shrubs.

poplar or pine, but the branches are more spreading and grow near the top; there being a long space between the root and branch. The seed is like our acorn or fir-cone in shape, but smaller than the last, and parts of it are eaten by the slaves and cattle when green, and newly fallen from the tree. The wood is only fit for fuel.

Bulbous rooted plants, and flowers of almost every description, meet the eye here wherever it turns, even in parts the most sandy and otherwise barren. Daisies grow as numerous here as in England, and of a great variety of species. The blood-flower takes its name from an opinion that it stops the bleeding on being applied to the wounded part; but the efficacy of this prescription I have not ascertained. The everlasting-flower, which grows here in abundance, derives its name from appearing as fresh and in as high preservation after being seven years pulled, as the day when it was first torn from the stalk. It is of the form of the daisy, and as large as our marygold. Some of this species are white; others of a purple and sea green colour. When first plucked, it feels like an artificial flower of painted paper; indeed it is much more like an artificial than a natural one. I brought different kinds of these everlasting-flowers to Europe, and though a considerable time had elapsed since their having been plucked at the Cape, they continued in the same fresh state till they were accidentally destroyed by a careless servant.

The Arabian jessamine, or nycanthis scambac, which I have so often met at Ceylon, is also an inhabitant here, its

odour is most exquisite. A species of indigo grows wild; the cotton tree is to be found in some parts; the prickly pear which feeds the cochineal is in abundance; the tea plant has even been introduced, but never attended to; and the coffee tree and the sugar cane are to be met with. The Cape olive is very good in its kind. There is also a very useful plant from which wax is procured. But most of these valuable productions, for which the Cape is so much indebted to nature, though many of them of the greatest utility, were still much neglected by the Dutch, and little benefit has been derived in this instance from the bounty of Providence. I have observed but few forest or timber trees in the southern peninsula of the Cape. The principal ones which I noticed were the oak and elm, both diminutive, and never growing either to the height or bulk which they attain in Europe. Pines and poplars are sometimes found in plantations, mixed with the silver tree. Most species of timber trees, I should suppose, would flourish here if properly planted and attended to, which the Dutch never did to any extent. This negligence is now sensibly felt at the Cape; as fuel is become enormously dear and very difficult to be obtained, owing to the scarcity of extensive plantations. The tract about Wineberg and Musenberg is now nearly the only place where it can be procured all around the Cape Town; but even this last resource, from the constant consumption, is also nearly exhausted, and presents in most places but a waste sand almost totally deprived of its thin clothing. The scarcity and dearness of fuel makes

Fuel scarce
at the Cape.

many parts of accommodation, and washing in particular, come very high. The inhabitants of Cape Town are obliged to send their slaves many miles into the country to look for fuel for their daily purposes. Lord Macartney took this circumstance into serious consideration, but his stay here was too short to allow him to remedy the inconvenience. His intention was to have stimulated the colonists to plant the tracts contiguous to the town, and thus provide an inexhaustible supply; but nothing has since been done for this purpose.

The woods of the interior are in many places very large; and in many parts to the eastward of False Bay large forests stretch down to the very coast, and might easily be transported by sea carriage to the Cape. In these oak grows in many parts equal in size to any in Europe. Of the species peculiar to this country I have particularly observed the geel hout: it grows to a very large size; the branches are situated near the top, and spread much; the wood is of a bright yellow colour, and much used for furniture.

The iron wood, or yezer hout, is very common, and grows very high. The wood is hard, heavy, and of a dark brown colour.

The hasagay wood is much used for waggon wheels, rafters for houses, and knees for large boats. It resembles mahogany, and the planks make excellent flooring for houses. The stink hout, or stinking wood, is so called from its offensive smell when cut green; but when well seasoned is

reckoned the best for building at the Cape. It resembles the oak, and usually goes by the name of the Cape Oak.

The rearing barley, wheat, rye, and oats, and all branches ^{Grain.} of agriculture, are carried to a higher degree in the interior of the colony, than the parts immediately in the vicinity of Cape Town. The latter, where they present a soil fit for vegetation and the culture of grain, are chiefly converted into gardens for raising such kitchen-stuffs as I have already described. Any fields, dedicated to the purposes of husbandry here, are planted with pease, beans, kidney-beans, carrots, turnips, grapes, hemp, and flax of a coarse quality for sail cloth, &c. The hemp plant here is diffe- ^{Hemp.} rent from that of Europe. It grows like a shrub, throwing out a number of branches. There are various species of this plant cultivated here; and all are found extremely well fitted for making cordage, fishing-nets, cloth for the slaves, and gunny cloth or coarse bags to hold corn. The slaves and Hottentots dry and twist up the leaves of one or two kinds of this hemp, plant and chew or smoke it for tobacco. The tobacco-plant itself grows here also, but is not cultivated to any extent. Whether the Cape produces ^{Ores.} lead, iron, or copper, at least to any great extent, has not been accurately ascertained. It is indeed imagined that to ascertain this would be well worth investigation, and many accounts are current of its containing those valuable substances in its bowels. No attempts of any consequence have been made by the Dutch to ascertain how prolific