

when in the afternoon of the 4th of January 1806, the whole expedition anchored off Table Bay, just beyond the range of the batteries which protect it.

The weather was at that time extremely favourable, and the troops both eager and ready to land immediately. It appeared however to General Baird that the day was too far advanced to make it possible to get them all on shore before night set in; the evening was, therefore, employed in the duty of taking soundings along the coast, and in reconnoitring the different defences of the town.

After a careful investigation upon these points, it was determined that the most favourable and accessible place for effecting the landing would be Lospard's Bay, a small indent of the sea within Table Bay, and about sixteen miles to the eastward and northward of the town. As soon as this was finally settled, the ships proceeded to take their stations accordingly, and the men-of-war were placed in such a position as to cover the landing in case any opposition should be offered.

In the morning at daybreak the men were all in readiness to step into the boats, when it was discovered that the surf had so considerably increased during the night, as to render it impossible for them to reach the shore at the proposed point. General Baird and Sir Home Popham then deliberated whether it would not be preferable at once to proceed to Saldanah Bay, where the fleet would be in perfect safety, and where disembarkation might at all times be effected.

Yet notwithstanding these two advantageous circumstances, there were several powerful objections against adopting the expedient. The distance of Saldanah Bay from Cape Town would render it difficult to carry forward the necessary supplies, while as the army advanced, the communication between it and the fleet, upon which it must necessarily depend for the means of subsistence, would be rendered more difficult, and as the distance between them increased, the men would be subject to harassing attacks from the enemy throughout a march of seventy English miles, principally through heavy sand, for the greatest part destitute of water in the hottest season of the year.*

These, it must be confessed, were objections too powerful to be easily overcome, and they had their due weight with the Commander-in-chief; but the uncertainty of a favourable change in the weather at a time of year when strong winds are generally prevalent, added to a consciousness of the exposed situation of the fleet at its present anchorage, at length induced General Baird to detach Brigadier-General Beresford to Saldanah Bay; and accordingly that officer left Table Bay in the evening of the 5th, with the 20th light dragoons and the 38th regiment, and it was at the time of his departure

* "Saldanah Bay entrance lies in latitude 33° 6' S., sixteen or seventeen leagues to the N.N.W. of Table Bay, having at its mouth the two islands of Jutten and Malagsen, lying north and south of each other, between which is the proper passage."—*Horsburgh*, vol. i. p. 71.

intended that the rest of the armament should follow in the morning.

This arrangement had been submitted to with considerable reluctance by General Baird, but he found himself unable to withstand the reasonings of those to whose judgment upon this and several other occasions he deferred; and even after General Beresford's departure, his mind still dwelt upon the superior advantages of effecting the landing if it were possible, at the place he had originally fixed upon.

The morning of the 6th had scarcely dawned, when the General was himself aloft in the main-top of the head-quarter ship, with his glass in hand, making his own observations on the appearance of the coast; and perceiving that the surf in Lospard's Bay had very much subsided, he immediately communicated that fact to Sir Home Popham, and not an hour had elapsed before the troops were all ready for landing, and the three regiments, the 71st, 72nd, and 93rd, forming the Highland brigade, under Brigadier-General Fergusson, were successively put into the boats, and pulled towards the shore.

The bay had previously been examined by General Fergusson, and a safe channel had been buoyed off by the naval officers; yet notwithstanding these precautions, such was yet the violence of the surf, that a boat containing part of the 93rd regiment, was unfortunately upset, and thirty-five men of that corps were drowned.

This was the principal loss which attended the operation. The enemy had thrown some light troops

along the sand-hills and in the brushwood which adjoin the place of landing; but these were speedily driven off by the light infantry, under Major Graham, of the 93rd, and the embarkation proceeded without further molestation.

By the morning of the 8th, the whole of the troops, with four six-pounders and two howitzers, having been brought on shore, Sir David Baird commenced his march on the road, or rather pathway, which leads towards Cape Town, the guns being dragged through the heavy sands by seamen from the fleet. No enemy appeared until the troops approached the Bleuberg, which forms part of an elevated ridge or chain of hills, intersecting the line of road nearly at a right angle, at the distance of about four miles from Lospard's Bay, where parties of the Burgher cavalry were seen on the heights in front, and it was soon ascertained that General Janssen was in force on the opposite side of the hill with the design of disputing our further progress. The British were immediately formed into two parallel columns of brigades. The right brigade, or column, consisting of the 24th, 59th, and 83rd regiments, under Lieutenant-Colonel Baird, of the 83rd regiment, who commanded it in the absence of Brigadier-General Beresford; and the left column of the 71st, 72nd, and 93rd Highland regiments, under Brigadier-General Fergusson.*

* Lieutenant-Colonel, afterwards Major-General Baird, was brother to the distinguished subject of these memoirs. He was an excellent man and a brave officer. He married the Ho-

In this order they advanced, and on crowning the heights of Bleuberg, the whole Batavian force was discovered in the plain below ; their infantry formed in two lines, supported by a large body of burgher cavalry and twenty-five pieces of cannon, which immediately opened their fire, whilst the cavalry, extending themselves to the left of the infantry, and bringing forward their left, showed an intention of turning the right of the British.

General Baird having observed this movement, immediately deployed his columns into line, and whilst the right brigade inclined towards its right and skirmished with the enemy's cavalry and kept it in check, the left brigade advanced rapidly under a heavy fire of cannon and musketry from their lines of infantry, which broke at the moment the British were preparing to charge, and the whole fled, leaving a very considerable number of killed and wounded on the field.

The British must have suffered severely, had the enemy's artillery (to whose fire they were unavoidably much exposed) been better directed. One captain and fourteen rank and file were killed ; and three field officers, one captain, five subalterns, seven serjeants, three drummers, and one hundred and seventy rank and file were wounded. The want of cavalry prevented any pursuit, and enabled the enemy to withdraw their guns.

nourable Esther Caroline Tonson, sister to the present Lord Riversdale, and died at the Cape of Good Hope, where he was second in command, in the year 1816.

After halting a short time on the field they had so gallantly won, the British troops were again put in motion. During the advance, it was ascertained that General Janssens, quitting the road to Cape Town, had taken an easterly direction towards Hottentots Holland and the interior of the colony, with a view to the system of defence already explained. To follow him in the line of retreat he had chosen was out of the question, not only because, without a superior force of cavalry, it would have been impossible to procure supplies, and it was hopeless to expect to bring him again to action; but because it was more desirable to gain possession of Cape Town as speedily as possible, in order to provide for the security of the fleet, which was lying at an exposed and insecure anchorage, as well as to open a communication with the ships, and to obtain thence the means of equipping the troops for the field, should the further proceedings of General Janssens render such a measure necessary.

The men suffered severely during the advance, not only from the difficulties which the nature of the country presented, the extreme heat of the weather, and a total want of water on the road, but from the circumstance of their long previous confinement on shipboard, which made them doubly sensible of the fatigue they had to undergo. It was therefore late before they reached Reit Valley, a Dutch farming establishment belonging to the Government, where they bivouacked for the night.

To this place some casks of salt provisions which

had been floated through the surf from the fleet had been conveyed, and Sir Home Popham himself, who had landed with a party of marines, also arrived there. A scanty supply of water was obtained from the springs which furnish the farm, very inadequate however to the wants of the men, who in their anxiety to assuage the thirst by which they were so grievously tormented, were only prevented by the personal exertions of Sir David Baird himself, from destroying the sources whence they procured the refreshment they so ardently coveted.

Although success had hitherto attended his operations, the situation in which Sir David Baird found himself on his arrival at Reit Valley, was little calculated to relieve his mind of anxiety for the ultimate issue of the expedition. He had, it is true, defeated his enemy with little comparative loss, but a very incorrect estimate of the nature of war, is to be formed by judging of the difficulties of an enterprise, solely by the casualties which occur in the field; and this observation, although generally true, applies with peculiar force to conjunct expeditions, where an army possesses no other base for its operations than the fleet from which it has been landed; to which it must look entirely for its supplies, and on which its movements must consequently entirely depend.

Another march would bring the British in front of the enemy's lines. These were well known to the Commander of the Forces, who during his residence and command in the colony had made him-

self perfectly master of their strength, but he had no positive information as to the amount of the force by which they were defended. General Janssens, although severely checked, had hitherto shown no disposition to submit, and was indeed more formidable, whilst he kept the field, even after defeat, than he would have been had he waited the approach of the enemy within the town, and limited his power of resistance to the defence of its works. In that case the country would have been open to the English, and would have supplied their wants; while on the other hand, famine must at no great distance of time, have compelled *him* to surrender. By keeping the field, he preserved that moral influence over the minds of the inhabitants which is always attached to an established Government, and might by means of his light troops cut off the opposing army from all communications with the interior; reducing it to a state of absolute dependence on the ships, with which its intercourse was liable to be interrupted by every change in the wind or weather. These were subjects for deep and anxious reflection, and Sir David Baird has frequently declared that the night he passed at Reit Valley was one of the most anxious of his life.

The defences which cover Cape Town on the side the British were approaching, consist of a chain of redoubts connected by a parapet with banquettes and a dry ditch, extending from the lofty mountain called the Devil's Berg to the sea, whence it is distant about eight or nine hundred yards. Along the

face of the mountain which advances into the plain, various enclosed works and open batteries had been constructed to flank the approach. The whole of these, as well as the redoubts on the lines, were mounted with a powerful force of artillery, consisting of upwards of one hundred and fifty pieces of heavy cannon and howitzers. Troops advancing to attack the lines, must therefore expose their left flank to the fire from the heights, which from the scarp nature of the mountains, are nearly inaccessible. The principal part of these works had been either constructed or greatly improved by the English during the time they formerly held the colony. One battery with its protecting blockhouse is placed on a shoulder of the mountain about one thousand three hundred feet above the level of the plain.

Behind the lines, at the distance of about a mile, and immediately at the entrance of the town, is seated the Castle of Good Hope, a regular pentagon with outworks sufficiently respectable to make it necessary to break ground and approach it regularly. The side of the town towards the Bay is covered by heavy batteries, which, with the fire of the castle, effectually protect it from insult by land.

To attack works of the formidable character here described with a small corps of infantry and a few pieces of light artillery only, seemed to be an enterprise of equal boldness and uncertainty. The force originally landed did not exceed four thousand rank and file, and these had been sensibly diminished by casualties, and the fatigues the men had undergone.

Still the situation in which the British were placed appeared to admit of no alternative, as delay might prove altogether fatal to the success of the whole affair. Sir David Baird, therefore, on the 9th, took up a position in the neighbourhood of the Salt River, a narrow lake or inlet of the sea a short distance from the lines, which afforded at its entrance a favourable point for communicating with the fleet; and here he determined to disembark some additional guns, with such a re-inforcement of seamen and marines as the navy might be able to furnish for the intended attack.

The enemy, however, were little disposed to bring matters to so serious an issue. Shortly after the British had reached their ground, a flag of truce arrived at head quarters from the Commandant of Cape Town, to propose an armistice for forty-eight hours, to give time to negotiate a capitulation. As every moment was of importance on account of the uncertainty of our communication with the fleet, Sir David Baird immediately despatched Brigadier-General Fergusson and Lieutenant-Colonel Brownrigg (Deputy-Quarter-Master-General), to the town with a reply to this overture; requiring possession of the lines within six hours, and granting thirty-six hours further suspension of arms to arrange the conditions of a capitulation. These proposals having been acceded to within the stipulated time, Fort Krocke, the principal work on the lines, was immediately occupied by the 59th regiment.

In the mean time, Sir Home Popham visited Sir

David Baird, and after a consultation between the two Commanders, and various communications with the Dutch authorities, the terms were finally agreed on, which placed the British once more in possession of Cape Town and its defences.

We here subjoin a copy of the despatch addressed by Sir David Baird to Lord Castlereagh, which contains the official details of these proceedings.

Cape Town, January 12, 1806.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to announce to you the capitulation of the town and garrison of Good Hope to His Majesty's arms.

In my despatch of the 24th ultimo from St. Salvador, I had the honour to apprise your Lordship of the measures adopted to refresh the forces under my command, and having with much difficulty procured about sixty or seventy horses for the cavalry, and the sick being recruited, the expedition sailed on the 26th of that month, and we had the good fortune to reach Table Bay on the 4th instant.

It had been intended to disembark the army immediately, and with a view of covering our design, before entering the bay the 24th regiment, under the command of the Honourable Lieut.-Colonel Macdonald, was detached under the charge of the *Leda* frigate, to make a demonstration of landing in Camps Bay, but the winds having failed, the fleet did not arrive at its anchorage until the day was too far advanced to attempt a landing.

On the morning of the 5th the 1st brigade, under the orders of Brigadier-General Beresford, was embarked in boats, and proceeded towards the only accessible parts of the shore in a smaller bay sixteen miles to the northward of Cape Town, whence it appeared practicable to effect a

debarkation; but the surf had increased so considerably, that combined with the local difficulties of the spot, it was found necessary to abandon the attempt.

The rest of the day was devoted to a careful examination of the coast from Lospard's Bay to within gun-shot of the batteries in Cape Town, but which only produced the distressing conviction that the chance of effecting a landing depended on contingencies very unlikely to be realized, except in a perfect calm.

In consequence of this inference, and in order to obviate the disadvantages of delay in adopting a resolution which I apprehended would at last be necessarily imposed on me, I directed Brigadier-General Beresford to proceed with the 38th regiment and the 20th light dragoons, escorted by H. M. S. Diomedé to Saldanah Bay, where the debarkation could be accomplished with facility, and a prospect was afforded us of procuring horses and cattle; and I proposed following with the main body of the army in the event of the beach where we were being impracticable the ensuing morning. The surf along the shore of Lospard's Bay having considerably abated next morning, I determined, with the concurrence of Commodore Sir Home Popham, to make an effort to get the troops a-shore; and accordingly the Highland brigade, composed of the 71st, 72nd, and 93rd regiments, effected that object, under the command of Brigadier-General Fergusson.

The shore had been previously very closely inspected by the Brigadier, and by his spirited exertions and example our efforts were crowned with success, although a confined and intricate channel to the shore (which had been accurately pointed out by beacons which had been laid down by the diligence and activity of the boats of H. M. S. Diadem,) and a tremendous surf opposed the passage of the troops.

The enemy had scattered a party of sharpshooters over

the contiguous heights commanding the landing; but the casualties of this service arose principally from natural difficulties, and it is with the deepest concern I have the honour to inform your Lordship that we lost thirty-five rank and file of the 93rd regiment, by the oversetting of one of the boats, notwithstanding every possible effort to rescue these unfortunate men.

The remainder of the troops could only be brought on shore on the succeeding day, when the extraordinary obstacles to all intercourse with the fleet, which nothing but the courage and perseverance of British seamen could surmount, barely enabled us to obtain the indispensable supplies of water and provisions for immediate subsistence.

On the morning of the 8th the army, consisting of the 24th, 59th, 71st, 72nd, 83rd, and 93rd regiments, about four thousand strong, was formed into two brigades, with two howitzers and six light field-pieces, and moved towards the road which leads to Cape Town; and having ascended the summit of the Blauwe berg or Blue Mountains, and dislodged the enemy's light troops, I discovered their main body drawn up in two lines, prepared to receive us, and even in motion to anticipate our approach.

The enemy's force apparently consisted of about five thousand men, the greater proportion of which was cavalry, and twenty-three pieces of cannon, yoked to horses. The disposition and the nature of the ground occupied by the enemy's troops, made it evident that they meant to reserve their right wing, and with their left attempt to turn our right flank. But to frustrate their design, I formed the army into two columns, the second brigade under Brigadier-General Fergusson keeping the road, while the first struck off to the right, and took the defile of the mountains.

Having accomplished my purpose, our line was formed with equal celerity and order, and the left wing, composed of the Highland brigade, was thrown forward, and ad-

vanced with the steadiest step under a very heavy fire of round shot, grape, and musketry. Nothing could surpass or resist the determined bravery of the troops, headed by their gallant leader, Brigadier-General Fergusson, and the numbers of the enemy who swarmed in the plain served only to augment their ardour and confirm their discipline.

The enemy received our fire and maintained his position obstinately, but in the moment of charging, the valour of British troops bore down all opposition, and forced him to a precipitate retreat.

The first brigade, composed of the 24th, 59th, and 83rd regiments, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Baird in the absence of Brigadier-General Beresford, was unavoidably precluded by its situation from any considerable participation in the triumph of the British arms. The flank companies of the 24th, however, had an opportunity of distinguishing themselves in dislodging a number of horse and rifle-men from the heights on our right flank. This brilliant achievement was, however, clouded by the loss of Captain Forster, of the Grenadiers, whose gallantry is recorded in the hearts of his brother soldiers and the universal regrets of the army.

It is utterly impossible to convey to your Lordship an adequate idea of the obstacles which opposed the advance, and retarded the success of our army; but it is my duty to inform your Lordship, that the nature of the country, a deep, heavy, and dry sand, covered with shrubs, scarcely pervious by light bodies of infantry; and above all, the total privation of water under the effect of a burning sun, had nearly exhausted our gallant fellows in the moment of victory; and with the greatest difficulty were we able to reach Reit Valley, where we took our position for the night.

A considerable portion of the provisions and necessaries with which we started, had been lost during the action, and

we occupied our ground under an apprehension that even the great exertions of Sir Home Popham and the navy, could not relieve us from starvation.

My Lord, on every occasion where it has been found necessary to call for the co-operation of British seamen in land enterprises, their valour has been so conspicuous, and their spirit of labour and perseverance so unconquerable, that no tribute of my applause can add a lustre to their character; but I discharge a most agreeable portion of my duty, in assuring your Lordship, that on the recent employment of their services, they have maintained their reputation; and in this place it behoves me to inform your Lordship, that the uniform good conduct of those gallant fellows, and the zeal of Captain George Byng* who commanded them, together with that of every subordinate officer, have merited my fullest approbation.

The loss of the enemy in the engagement is reported to exceed 700 men killed and wounded; and it is with the most sensible gratification that I contrast it with the enclosed return of our casualties. Your lordship will perceive the name of Lieut.-Colonel Grant among the wounded, but the heroic spirit of this officer was not subdued by his misfortune, and he continued to lead his regiment to

* The Honourable Captain George Byng, on the 8th of January, 1813, succeeded to the title of Viscount Torrington, on the death of his brother John, the fifth Viscount. His Lordship married, first, 8th February, 1799, Elizabeth, daughter of Philip Langmead, Esq. who died August 20th, 1810; and second, 5th of October, 1811, Frances Harriet, second daughter of Rear Admiral Sir Robert Barlow, K.C.B. by whom he had issue George, the present Viscount, born with a twin sister, 9th of September, 1812, and four other children. His Lordship at the time of his death, June 18, 1831, was a Vice Admiral of the Blue.

glory as long as an enemy was opposed to His Majesty's 72nd. I have the cordial satisfaction to add, that his wound, although very severe, is not pronounced dangerous; and I do indulge the hope and expectation of his early recovery, and resumption of command.

On the morning of the 9th, recruited by such supplies as the unwearied diligence and efforts of the navy could throw on shore (the 59th regiment being however almost destitute of food), we prosecuted our march upon Cape Town, and took up a position south of the Sael River, which we trusted might preserve a free communication with the squadron; for our battering train, as well as every other necessary, except water, had yet to pass to us from His Majesty's ships.

In this situation, a flag of truce was sent to me by the commandant of the garrison, at Cape Town, (the Governor-General Janssens having retired after the action of the 8th, into the country, moving by Hottentots Holland Kloof), requesting a suspension of hostilities for forty-eight hours, in order to negotiate a capitulation. In answer to this overture, I despatched Brigadier-General Fergusson, accompanied by Lieut.-Colonel Brownrigg, to stipulate, as the condition of my acquiescence, the surrender of the outworks of the town within six hours, allowing thirty-six for arranging the articles of capitulation.

My proposition being assented to, the 59th regiment marched into Fort Kreocke; and on the next day, in conjunction with Sir Home Popham, the terms were agreed upon, and His Majesty's troops were put into possession of the several defences of the town. Of the modified capitulation, as ratified by us, I have the honour to enclose a copy.

The cordial, able, and zealous co-operation of Commodore Sir Home Popham, emulated by all the officers under his command, merits my warmest acknowledgments and commendations; and I have the satisfaction to add, that

no united service ever was performed with more harmony than has uniformly been manifested by both branches of His Majesty's forces. Such of His Majesty's ships as could be spared from the service of Leopard's Bay, constantly coasted the enemy's shores, throwing shot amongst her troops and people, and contributing to keep him ignorant of the actual place of our debarkation; and a very spirited effort was made by the marines of the fleet, and a party of seamen from the Diadem, under the commodore's immediate command, to occupy a position in Reit Valley, and co-operate with the army.

The marines, and the Honourable Company's recruits, as well as their cadets, headed by Lieut.-Colonel Wellesley, of the Bengal establishment, have been usefully employed in different branches of the service; but I have to regret the deprivation of the services of the 20th light dragoons, and the 38th regiment, under conviction that they could not have failed to discharge their duty in the same exemplary manner as the rest of His Majesty's troops engaged in action.

Public as well as personal considerations induce me to lament the absence of Brigade-General Beresford, from whose talents and experience I should have derived the most essential assistance in our disputed and difficult progress from Leopard's Bay.

The duties of the Quarter-Master-General's department were very ably and judiciously discharged by Lieut.-Colonel Brownrigg; and although the army had the greatest cause to lament the absence from severe illness of Major Tucker, Deputy Adjutant General, yet the zeal and activity manifested by Major Trotter of the 83rd, and his Assistant-Adjutant-General Captain Munro, happily precluded all deficiencies in that department.

The absence with the Saldanah detachment of Captain Smyth, of the Royal Engineers, was also matter of great

regret to me; for his knowledge of the country would have relieved me from much embarrassment.

To the several commanding officers of corps, I am under considerable obligation for their spirited, gallant, zealous, and judicious conduct in leading their men to the enemy. British troops, headed by such men, must ever, under Providence, command success; and every man has, it will I trust be considered, preserved the character of the British soldier, and faithfully discharged his duty to his King and country.

This despatch will be delivered to your Lordship by Lieut.-Colonel Baird, to whom I beg leave to refer your Lordship for any additional information you may wish to obtain respecting our proceedings, and I beg leave to recommend this zealous and meritorious old officer to your Lordship's protection.

I take the liberty of mentioning to your Lordship, that not having been joined by the *Narcissus* frigate prior to our debarkation or subsequent operations in the field, I have unfortunately been deprived of the service of Captain Sorell, Assistant-Adjutant-General, who was charged with my despatches from Madeira to Governor Pellew, at St. Helena, and with the execution of my wishes to procure intelligence relative to the strength and condition of this colony, and from whose extensive local knowledge and professional talents, I expected to derive great assistance.*

Herewith I have the honour to enclose for your Lordship's information, a return of the ordnance found in the

* The writer of this memoir begs in this place to acknowledge the very great obligations he is under to Captain, now Lieut.-Colonel Sorell, for the greater part of the details connected with the Cape expedition. In another part of this work, Colonel Sorell's communications will be found to be even more important.

citadel and other defences of the settlement, but which is perhaps inaccurate for the reason assigned by the commanding officer of artillery.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

With the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

D. BAIRD,

Major-General Commanding-in-chief.

To the Right Honourable

Lord Viscount Castlereagh.

By the articles of capitulation, to which Sir David Baird refers in this despatch, the regular troops in garrison, including the French seamen and marines, became prisoners of war, such officers as were domiciliated in the town having liberty to remain there on parole. The inhabitants who had borne arms were allowed to return to their homes and occupations. All private property was to be respected, and the burghers and other inhabitants were confirmed in their rights and privileges. The paper money which formed the principal part of the circulating medium, was to remain current until the King's pleasure should be known. These formed the leading conditions of the treaty, which was dictated in a spirit of liberality towards the vanquished, consistent with the known wish of the British Government to protect and improve the colony rather than to weaken or oppress it. The number of guns mounted on the different works and lines which surround the town, according to the official return,

amounted to four hundred and fifty-six pieces of cannon and mortars, generally of heavy calibre.

The possession of Cape Town, although it did not necessarily ensure the conquest of the colony, was of the greatest importance to the British Commanders. The fleet immediately after the surrender, took up the usual anchorage inside the bay, whilst Sir David Baird was fully occupied in providing for the internal administration of the place, and in preparing for a campaign in the interior, should General Janssen persevere in his resistance.

The colonial militia was disarmed, and the tranquillity of the town assured by vigilance and wholesome regulations. A requisition was made of all horses used for pleasure, which might be fit for the use of the cavalry and artillery. These were paid for, at a rate fixed on by English and Dutch Commissioners, with a condition that they might be reclaimed by their owners, on repaying the amount of their valuation, at the conclusion of the service for which they were required.

Whilst these preparations were in progress, detachments were sent to take possession of Symonds Town, Muisenberg and Wynberg; and our troops occupied those posts without meeting with any resistance.

On the morning of the 13th January, Brigadier-General Beresford, who had previously arrived at Cape Town from Saldanah Bay with the cavalry and 38th regiment, moved thence with the 59th

and 72nd regiment, accompanied by a detachment of artillery with four six-pounders and two howitzers, to take post at the village of Stellenbosch, situated about twenty miles from Cape Town, partly in the direction taken by the enemy. The object of this movement was twofold. It gave us possession of an extensive tract of country, whence the town was in a great measure supplied with provisions, and it threatened the position taken by General Janssens at Hottentots Holland Kloof, not only in front, but by a very circuitous route to its rear, through the Roode-Sand Kloof and the district of Sulback.

In order to give a correct idea of the relative situation of the forces, it may be proper to furnish a brief sketch of the nature of the country in which the events we are recording took place.

Cape Town is seated on the shores of Table Bay, in a narrow valley, between the sea and the northern end of a mountainous and rocky tract of country, which extends from thence to Cape Point, at the southern extremity of the African continent. This mountainous range is connected with the main land by a low sandy plain, or isthmus, of considerable width, (over which the sea at some remote period undoubtedly flowed,) and which occupies the space between False Bay to the south, and Table Bay to the north, extending from Cape Town to a vast range or accumulation of mountains, which separate, at different distances, varying from twenty-five to forty miles, the Cape district (properly so called) from the rest of

the colony. The general features of this plain are those of flatness and sterility, but wherever the ground rises into hills, or water is to be found, the soil, although light, is very productive. Through the mountain barrier just mentioned, three principal openings connect the Cape district with the interior, and form the only lines of communication between the seat of Government and the various subordinate establishments in remote parts of the country. The pass at Groenkloof leads towards Saldanah Bay and the country immediately to the north. The Hottentots Holland Kloof towards Swellendam and the extensive and fertile districts which border the sea to the east, whilst the Roode-Sand Kloof (placed between the other two) communicates with the more central portions of the settlement.

The plan of operations determined on by Sir David Baird, as the position taken by General Janssens at Hottentots Holland Kloof was unattackable in front, was to turn it on its right by a force detached through the Roode-Sand Kloof; whilst a second detachment proceeded by sea to False Bay, and landed in his rear towards the left. By this combined movement it was expected either to induce him to retire farther into the interior from a fear of being enclosed, or, if he waited until it was completed, so to straiten him in his position at the Kloof, as to compel him to a speedy surrender from a want of supplies. This latter expectation was very much strengthened when it was ascertained that, shortly after his arrival at the Kloof, he had

dismissed the Country militia and Burgher cavalry, who had accompanied him on the retreat, retaining only the regular troops, amounting to 1000 or 1200 men, with from twenty to thirty pieces of cannon.

Indeed the disposition of General Janssen ill-accorded with his expressed intention of having recourse to those extremities by which his resistance might have been prolonged, although with little chance of its proving finally successful. Brave in the field, but mild, humane, and kind-hearted in all the private relations of life, when the hour of trial came, he shrank from the cruel system of defence which he had previously contemplated, upon the conviction that it must lead to the devastation of the country, and the ruin of its helpless and unoffending inhabitants, to whom he appears to have been very much attached.

Sir David Baird was desirous of profiting by the indecision which marked the Batavian General's conduct, at the same time that he fully appreciated the honourable motives which occasioned it. His generous disposition sympathized warmly in the painful situation to which a gallant soldier was reduced, who, anxious to fulfil to the utmost his duty towards his Government and country whilst the slightest chance of success might remain, felt at the same time a paternal anxiety to spare the interesting colony confided to his care, from the ruin which inevitably menaced it, should he adhere to a scheme of resistance. In order to hasten his determination, Sir David Baird determined to open a communica-

tion with him, through the medium of General Beresford, who moved for this purpose from Stellenbosch towards Hottentots Holland, and took post at an extensive farm not far distant from the entrance into the pass, threatening the enemy's position in front.

A letter to General Janssens, of which the following is a copy, was at this juncture transmitted to him through General Beresford.

Cape Town, 11th January, 1806.

SIR,

You have discharged your duty to your country, as became a brave man, at the head of a gallant though feeble army. I know how to respect the high qualities of such a man; and do not doubt that the humanity which ever characterises an intrepid soldier, will now operate in your breast to check the fatal consequences of a fruitless contest. The naval and military forces of His Britannic Majesty which have possessed themselves of the seat of your recent Government, are of a magnitude to leave no question respecting the issue of further hostilities, and therefore a temporary resistance is all you can possibly oppose to superior numbers. Under these circumstances, nothing can result but the devastation of the country you casually occupy, and such a consequence can never be contemplated without anguish by a generous mind, or be gratifying to the man who feels for the prosperity and tranquillity of the colony, lately subject to his administration. But if unhappily your resolution is formed to oppose an enemy of such superior force, by protracting a contest which must entail misery and ruin on the industrious and peaceably disposed settlers of this colony, I shall be exonerated from the reproach of my own conscience by this

frank overture; and you must justify to yourself and to your countrymen, the further effusion of blood, and the desolation of the country.

You are necessarily so well acquainted with the extent of the calamities in which the interior of the country may be involved, that I shall not enlarge on your power of causing mischief to be done to all its inhabitants; but I persuade myself that considerations of a more laudable nature will influence your decision on this occasion, and that you will manifest an immediate disposition to promote a general tranquillity.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

With sentiments of the highest consideration,

Sir, Yours, &c.

(Signed) D. BAIRD,

Major-General Commanding-in-chief.

To Lieutenant-General Janssens.

This letter was accompanied by a notice from Brigadier-General Beresford, that he was vested with powers to treat for the final settlement of the colony.

This communication led to a truce for the purpose of entering into a negotiation, but the pretensions urged by General Janssens in objection to the terms offered, rendering his final acquiescence doubtful, the 59th and 72d regiments were moved to Roode-Sand Kloof, and replaced by the 93d at the post in front of the enemy, whilst the 83d embarked and sailed on the 16th of January for Mosell's Bay to the eastward, in order to cut the enemy off from Swellendam, should he endeavour to retreat in that direction.

At length, when nearly every hope of bringing the negociation to a favourable issue had vanished, General Janssens despatched his military secretary, Captain Debittz, to Sir David Baird (who had joined the troops in the neighbourhood of his position) with a modified draught of, the terms which had been just sent to him. Sir David, however, refused to consent to any change in the conditions which he had originally proposed ; and after a good deal of discussion, and a further reference to the Batavian General, these were finally acceded to by General Janssens, and a capitulation to the following effect signed accordingly.

The whole of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope and its dependencies, and all the rights and privileges held and exercised by the Batavian Government, were surrendered to His Britannic Majesty. The Batavian troops to march from their present camp within three days, or earlier if convenient, to Symond's Town, with guns, arms, and baggage, and the honours of war, retaining their private property, and the officers their swords and horses, but the arms of the troops and public property of every description, including the cavalry and artillery horses, were to be given up. In consequence of their gallant conduct, the troops to be embarked and sent direct to Holland, at the expense of the British Government, without being considered prisoners of war, but under an engagement not to serve against His Britannic Majesty or his allies until landed in that country. The Hottentots under

arms to be permitted to return to their homes, or to enter into His Majesty's service as they might think proper. The Batavian troops to be subsisted at the expense of the British Government until embarked, and the sick and wounded to be sent after their recovery, in like manner, to Holland. All the inhabitants of the colony to participate in the terms granted to Cape Town, by the capitulation of the 10th, with the exception of their remaining liable to have troops quartered upon them in consequence of the different circumstances in which they were placed.

Such were the principal conditions of the treaty which placed the colony of the Cape a second time under British protection.

We do not propose here to enter into a detailed account of the civil administration of General Baird during the short time he was permitted to hold the Government of the Cape; but it may be proper briefly to notice such acts and regulations as the particular circumstances in which he found the colony gave rise to, or which seem to have had a permanent and beneficial influence on its condition and prospects.

His government in general was marked by the same unbending firmness, strict impartiality, and love of justice, which distinguished every action of his life; and its best eulogy will be found in the universal regret which his removal occasioned, not only to the garrison, but to the Dutch inhabitants, and even in the sentiments frequently and warmly expressed by his immediate successor, General Grey,

in these concise but memorable words, "On my arrival at the Cape, I found much to admire, and nothing to change."

On his return from Hottentots Holland to Cape Town, the objects which first engaged the attention of General Baird, were those of carrying into effect the conditions of the capitulation with General Janssens; receiving the submission of the authorities attached to the country districts; and extending a vigorous system of responsibility and superintendence over the whole, so as to provide for the due administration of justice, and secure the general tranquillity of the settlement. Such public officers as were qualified and recommended by their honourable conduct, were permitted to retain their respective employments. Few removals consequently took place; but as it was of the highest importance to put persons of unquestionable loyalty into the more immediately confidential situations, Captain Carmichael Smyth, of the Engineers, was named Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Reynevelt appointed Fiscal. The latter gentleman had long held the same office under the former British Government, and was one of the very few who joined our colours before the capitulation.

But another and far more important circumstance soon called forth all the energy of General Baird's character. Intelligence was brought by a neutral vessel that a strong French squadron was at sea; and it was ascertained by intercepted correspondence, that its destination was the Cape of Good Hope.

Its force was greatly superior to that, under Sir Home Popham, which, by the departure of the India fleet, was reduced to the Diadem of sixty-four guns, the Diomede of fifty, the Leda and Narcissus frigates, and two or three gun-brigs, whilst the French Admiral Villeaumez was known to have six or seven heavy ships of the line, besides inferior vessels. To meet this great disproportion of force, a plan of defence was concerted with the British Commodore. The ships of war took up a defensive position, so as to give a clear range to the heavy batteries which protect the anchorage, and command the usual channel into the bay, whilst their broadsides were placed so as to produce a cross and raking fire on any approaching enemy. The batteries were provided with furnaces and fuel for heating shot, and a strong draft of picked men from the line, was attached to the artillery, as the strength of the latter corps was insufficient to man the whole of the works which bear on the sea; whilst the light company of the 71st was embarked as a reinforcement to the marines of the squadron.

To prevent Admiral Villeaumez from receiving information that the colony had fallen under the dominion of Great Britain, an embargo was laid on all vessels lying in Table Bay.

Nor was the protection of the interior neglected. As it was by no means improbable that the French Admiral, if he got intelligence of the surrender of the colony at no great distance from the African coast, might find it necessary to seek an anchorage

to refit and water his ships, and for this purpose put into Saldanha Bay, posts were established in its neighbourhood, and on the line of communication between that place and Cape Town, and a considerable force equipped for field service, and held in constant readiness to proceed to any part of the colony which might be threatened.

Thus prepared, the arrival of the enemy in Table Bay was ardently desired by every individual in the two services, from a conviction that the result of an attack would be equally advantageous and honourable to his Majesty's arms.

But the hopes thus eagerly indulged in, of adding to the laurels already won, those which would have attended the destruction or capture of a fleet which ranked among its captains, a brother of Buonaparte,* were not destined to be realized! Admiral Villeaumez, having received intelligence of the change which had taken place in the government of the colony, either by a neutral vessel, or by touching at the Island of Noronha, immediately altered his course, and proceeded to St. Salvador, where he arrived in the month of June, and shortly afterwards sailed for the West Indies.

The precautions, however, which had been adopted to deceive an approaching enemy, were not altogether unproductive of advantage. The French frigate, *La Volontaire*, of forty-four guns, which sailed from France to join Admiral Villeaumez's

* Jerome Buonaparte was Captain of a seventy-four gun ship in Admiral Villeaumez's squadron.

fleet at the Cape of Good Hope, fell in with an English transport from Gibraltar, having a company of the 2d foot, and a company of the 54th on board. After taking out the troops, she suffered the transport to proceed on her voyage, and pursued her course to the Cape, where she arrived on the 4th of March, having left Brest on the 13th of December.

Perceiving the Dutch colours flying on the forts, and shipping, the Captain, confident of meeting a hospitable reception from his friends, brought his ship into the usual anchorage, where he was permitted quietly to establish himself, and as soon as every chance of his escape was terminated, as well by his position under the batteries as by the manœuvres of two English frigates which had immediately got under weigh, and cut off his retreat, a shot was fired across her bows from the Chevron battery, and the Dutch flag being at the same moment hauled down, and the British union hoisted, the French Captain instantly struck his colours. By this stratagem, a fine frigate was captured from the enemy, and nearly two hundred English soldiers were instantly released from imprisonment, rendered more distressing by the crowded state of the vessel.*

* The detail of this capture is given from an account, the accuracy of which is unquestionable; but as a public document also exists, which gives a somewhat different account of the circumstances, we think it right to submit it to the reader. The document in question is a letter from Sir Home Popham to Mr. Marsden, Secretary of the Admiralty.

SIR,

Diadem, Table Bay, March 4, 1806.

I beg you will do me the honour to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the Diadem, Leda, and

Two or three days previous to the arrival and capture of this ship, General Janssens, the late Governor, had quitted the Cape in a British vessel for Holland, together with the French and Batavian troops, who had capitulated with him; and owing to the kind consideration of General Baird, several wounded officers who were not included in the surrender at Hottentot Hollands Kloof, were permitted also to return on their parole.

Diomedé, anchored here yesterday evening; and at nine this morning a ship was discovered coming from the southward under a press of sail, and soon after two more, one of which the station on the Lion's Rump reported to be of the line, and an enemy's ship. As the Marengo and Belle Poule were hourly expected, I thought it possible it might be them, and I directed the Diomedé and Leda to slip and keep on the edge of the south-easter, which had partially set in on the east side of the bay.

At eleven the headmost ship hoisted French colours, and stood towards the Diadem, and by this time I was satisfied, from the judicious manœuvres of the two ships in the offing, that they could be no other than the Reasonable and the Narcissus.

At twelve the French frigate passed within hail of the Diadem, when we changed our colours from Dutch to English, and desired her to strike, which she very properly did immediately, and I sent the Hon. Captain Percy, who was serving with me as a volunteer, to take possession of her. She proved to be La Volontaire, the forerunner of Admiral Villeaumez's squadron; she is nearly eleven hundred tons, and mounts forty-six guns, with a complement of 360 men on board.

I congratulate their Lordships, that by this capture, detachments of the Queen's and fifty-fourth regiments, consisting of 217 men, who were taken in two transports in the Bay of Biscay, are restored to His Majesty's service.

I have the honour to be, &c.

W. Marsden, Esq.

HOME POPHAM.

At first sight there appears a discrepancy between the letter and our detail; it will however be easily reconciled, when it is recollected that our narrative describes what occurred as it appeared *from the shore*.

CHAPTER V.

FRESH ACCOUNTS OF THE FRENCH FLEET—ITS DEPARTURE FOR THE WEST INDIES—SIR HOME POPHAM'S PLAN OF ATTACKING THE SOUTH AMERICAN COLONIES DEVELOPED TO SIR DAVID BAIRD—HIS RELUCTANCE TO ACCEDE TO THE REQUEST OF SIR HOME FOR TROOPS—STATEMENTS OF SIR HOME—SIR DAVID BAIRD ULTIMATELY CONSENTS—LETTER TO COLONEL GORDON—DEPARTURE OF THE EXPEDITION—LETTER OF SIR HOME POPHAM TO MR. MARSDEN—INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE CAPE—WISE REGULATIONS OF SIR DAVID BAIRD—IMPROVEMENTS OF THE COLONY—INTIMATION OF RECAL BY THE WHIG MINISTERS—ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS DESPATCHES BY MR. WINDHAM—SUCCESS OF THE SOUTH AMERICA EXPEDITION—SIR DAVID SENDS REINFORCEMENTS TO GENERAL BERESFORD—DISASTROUS EVENTS AT BUENOS AYRES—CAPITULATION OF THE ENGLISH—SIR HOME POPHAM RECALLED—SIR DAVID BAIRD RECALLED—QUITS THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE—ADDRESSES PRESENTED TO HIM—SAILS FOR ENGLAND—ARRIVAL THERE.

WHEN the *Volontaire* arrived and was captured, General Baird obtained much important information from her officers—it appeared that she had sailed from Brest in company with eleven sail of the line, and some frigates and corvettes; soon after getting to sea, they separated into two divisions, one of four, and the other of six line-of-battle ships, each taking a proportion of the smaller vessels. The first division steered to the westward, the second to the southward; but from what could be collected

from the officers, both divisions were eventually intended for the Cape of Good Hope, whence they were to proceed to India.

Jerome Buonaparte, whom we have already mentioned as commanding one of the line-of-battle ships, the *Veteran*, of seventy-four, had with him, it was said, a commission as Commander-in-chief of the French forces and possessions eastward of the Cape.

“Since,” says General Baird (in a letter to Colonel Gordon, Secretary to the Commander-in-chief, dated March 8th, 1806,) “Since the receipt of this information, which gives us reason to expect a visit from the enemy, every preparation has been making, both on the part of Commodore Sir Home Popham and myself, to receive him as becomes us. It is ascertained that there are no troops on board the squadron, and therefore no apprehensions need be entertained for the safety of the colony—so great a number of ships of the line, however, may annoy us considerably, both in Table and Symonds Bay; but, although we cannot hope to frustrate altogether the projects they may have formed against our Indian commerce and possessions, yet it may be in our power to retard the execution of them, by damaging and crippling their ships.”

One precaution General Baird felt it necessary to take on the receipt of this intelligence—the French prisoners of war at the Cape were accumulating; and accordingly we find the General in a subsequent paragraph of the same letter, informing Colonel Gordon, “that Sir Home Popham had determined to send the officers and crew of the *Volontaire* to France direct, in two transports, as

it might not be prudent to have them here (at the Cape) at the time of an attack from a French squadron. For the same reason," adds the General, "I intend to send to France in a similar manner the captains, officers, and crews, late of the *Atalante* frigate, and the *Napoleon* corvette.

About a fortnight after the despatch of this letter, an English whaler arrived in Saldanah Bay, which reported having seen on the 25th of February, in lat. $33^{\circ} 31'$ south, long. $2^{\circ} 50'$ east, eight large ships; and a neutral vessel which came in, about the same period, gave an account of her having been boarded on the same day by a boat from a seventy-four gun ship, supposed to be French, in company with seven others, in lat. $33^{\circ} 23'$ south, long. $10^{\circ} 14'$ east.

From the coincidence of time, latitude, and number of ships, Sir David Baird entertained no doubt of these being the same ships as those seen by the whaler—the difference of longitude he accounted for by the known inaccuracy of foreign merchant vessels in their reckonings.

At this juncture, General Baird renewed an application which he had previously made to the Commander-in-chief in England, for a reinforcement of cavalry—he stated that during the Dutch government of the colony, the force had greatly exceeded that of the detachment now with him, which in his opinion was not only inefficient from the smallness of its number, but from being composed of foreigners,

in the proportion at least of three fourths. The result of this application we shall hereafter see.

Shortly after the receipt of the intelligence which led the General to expect a visit from the French fleet, some other neutral vessels arrived, from which it was satisfactorily ascertained that Admiral Villeaumez, either from having fallen in with some vessels coming from the Cape, or by touching at some port in his way, had discovered that that settlement had fallen into the hands of the English; for he had changed his course, and was, when last seen, steering towards the coast of Brazil and the West Indies.

This being the case, and no attack even from their ships being apprehended, Sir Home Popham developed to General Baird a plan which he had long meditated of making an attack upon the Spanish settlements at the Rio de Plata.

The anxiety of Sir Home upon this point was so great, as to induce Sir David Baird to listen with attention to an officer of whose merit and zeal, an intimate professional acquaintance, both in Egypt, before, and at this very period at the Cape, had given him the highest opinion; and he was more easily led to lend a favourable ear to the representations of his gallant friend, because, in order to induce Sir David to co-operate in the project, he told him distinctly that the enterprize he then proposed was founded on an understanding with the British ministry, whose sentiments he knew would be favourable to the undertaking.

This statement had naturally a powerful effect upon Sir David, who was too excellent a disciplinarian not to feel the difficulty and delicacy of venturing to detach any part of the military force under his command for the purpose of attempting the capture of another colony; and it was by this representation of Sir Home's, added to the admitted influence which he had gained over Sir David Baird, that Sir David's consent to join him in the proceeding was ultimately obtained.

Our duty compels us to say, that however much the statement of Sir Home contributed to carry his favourite point, it was not supported as might have been expected by events; for on the trial of Sir Home Popham, it appeared by the evidence of Lord Melville, that although Sir Home Popham had been originally appointed to the *Dia-dem* (before the Cape expedition was determined on) for the purpose of co-operating with General Miranda, to the extent of taking advantage of any of his proceedings which might tend to our obtaining a position on the continent of South America favourable to the trade of the country; yet that he was fully aware that all views of the kind were for the present, through deference to Russia, abandoned; nor had he when he sailed for the Cape, any instructions whatever, either public or private, which could be construed into giving him authority to employ the squadron under his command on any service unconnected with the conquest and preservation of that particular colony.

Notwithstanding the strength and earnestness of Sir Home Popham's application, Sir David continued to hesitate; until at length determined, as it appeared, to bring the matter to a decided and final issue, Sir Home declared that Sir David's refusal to afford him military assistance in the enterprize would not prevent his making the effort with the naval force he had under his command, unaided by troops, and expressed his determination of taking the fleet to Rio de Plata, convinced that the opportunity then presented itself for striking a blow, which might prove in the highest degree advantageous to his country.

He maintained that the risk was by no means commensurate with the important results which must accrue to the political and commercial interests of Great Britain by success, and declared his knowledge of the fact, that the Spanish force at Buenos Ayres was very feeble, and that the people were in an actual state of discontent and ferment.

Having made all these statements and declarations, he ended his conversation by telling Sir David Baird that it only remained for him to determine how far he would be justified in hazarding the success of an enterprize which *should and would be undertaken without his co-operation*, by refusing a few troops, which now all apprehension of an attack upon the colony had entirely subsided, might be spared with perfect security; adding that the light company of the 71st was already embarked as marines,

and all he asked was the remainder of that regiment and a few artillery men.

Sir Home Popham, aware that the leading feature of Sir David Baird's character was an entire devotion to the interests of his King and country, assailed him with unremitting assiduity upon the subject of this favourite expedition; and having, as we have just stated, declared his intention of making the attempt with ships alone, should the General refuse his concurrence, left, as it were, upon *him*, the responsibility of the failure of a design, for the success of which, he could not be made responsible in any ordinary course of circumstances. Sir Home, however, had struck the right chord; his solicitations for support were eventually successful, and accordingly a force consisting of the 71st regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Pack, with a small detachment of artillery, and a few light field-pieces, was embarked on board Sir Home Popham's squadron, under the command of Brigadier-General Beresford, who particularly requested the appointment.

The garrison left at the Cape consisted of the 21st light dragoons, the 24th, 38th, 72nd, and 93rd regiments, with a Hottentot light infantry corps, about three hundred strong, and the two companies of the 2nd and 51st, which had been released from captivity on board the French frigate.

Sir David Baird's despatch to Colonel Gordon, Secretary to the Commander-in-chief, dated April 14th, will best describe his views and feelings upon

the subject of the assistance he had felt it his duty, in consequence of the strong representation of the Commodore, to afford that officer in the undertaking.

Cape Town, April 14th, 1806.

SIR,

In my private letter to you, by *La Volontaire* frigate, I took occasion to mention that I had been much pressed by Sir Home Popham to detach a regiment with the squadron under his command, for the purpose of making an attack upon the Spanish settlements at Rio de la Plata, but that many reasons combined at the moment to prevent my acquiescence in the Commodore's wish.*

The additional intelligence (since) received here of the weak and defenceless condition of those settlements, the great advantages derivable to Great Britain from the possession of them, particularly as opening a fresh and profitable channel for the exportation of our manufactures, the certainty that Admiral Villeaumez has proceeded to India, and cannot for some months interrupt the present tranquillity of this colony, and the rapidly increasing strength and discipline of the Cape regiments, have together united in determining me to detach a small part of the force under my command upon this service.

I am aware that I have taken upon myself a high responsibility, but the importance of the object in a national point of view will, I trust, bear me out, and ensure to me the

* It is remarkable, as a proof of the great carefulness on the part of Sir David Baird not to leave Sir Home Popham under the imputation of blame, that although the statement contained in this paragraph is made to Colonel Gordon (to whom he had previously written privately on the subject), it is omitted in his despatch of the same date to Lord Castlereagh, and the despatch to his Lordship begins with the second paragraph of this letter.

approbation of His Majesty, and of his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief.

As I deemed it essential to the success of the undertaking that the command should be entrusted to an officer of rank, and of approved ability, judgment, and zeal, I selected Brigadier-General Beresford, although I shall experience by his absence the want of his valuable services.

Having also considered that, in the event of success, the officer discharging the civil and military duties of His Majesty's Lieutenant Governor and Commandant should possess a high military rank, I have taken upon myself to desire that Brigadier-General Beresford should assume, upon landing in South America with the troops under his command, the rank of Major-General in that country only—as the standing of this officer in the service, induces the belief of his having already been appointed to that rank by his Majesty, I am the more induced to hope my making this appointment will meet with the approbation of his royal highness the Commander-in-chief.*

If success attend this undertaking, and His Majesty shall determine upon retaining possession of the Spanish settlement which may surrender to her arms, a reinforcement of troops cannot be despatched to General Beresford too soon—the country is well adapted to cavalry, and any number of dragoons may be expeditiously and well mounted.

It will also be expedient to replace as soon as possible the troops detached from this, as well as to send out two general officers in the room of Generals Beresford and Ferguson; and were I permitted on this occasion to express an opinion in favour of any individual, I should certainly

* It is curious enough, that by the brevet expected by Sir David Baird, eighteen Major-Generals were made, and the promotion stopped exactly at the one before Colonel Beresford.

point out Sir Samuel Auchmuty, whose assistance I hoped for in the expedition against this colony, and whom I know to be qualified in an eminent degree for the situation of second in command here.

In the despatch from which these are extracts, there is, as we have already said, no evidence of Sir David's having been over-persuaded into consenting to the detachment of this force; not the slightest reference is made to the assertions or sophistry of Sir Home Popham, or the urgent importunity of General Beresford, who was equally anxious to obtain his consent. Sir David at once takes upon himself the responsibility, which ought never, in fact, to have rested upon his shoulders. We have no intention here to enter at any length into a discussion of the merits of Sir Home's enterprize; but although founded, as his conduct doubtlessly was, upon zeal for the service, it is impossible to deny that the example of an officer in command departing so entirely from the line of his instructions, and on his own responsibility, undertaking an expedition of such infinite importance in its probable results, without any authority beyond the knowledge that similar views had *some time before* engaged the attention of Government, was most difficult of defence or justification.

The part really taken by Sir David was of a distinct and even secondary character: he had no share in the design, and could at any rate have had no control over the proceedings of the squadron; still,

by yielding to the solicitations of the Commodore, (of whom, as we have more than once had occasion to show, he had the highest opinion,) so far as to grant him the support of a body of troops, he was considered to have implicated himself sufficiently in the affair to partake of the censure with which it was eventually visited, and which afforded a pretext for the Whig ministry to recall him from the government of the colony.

On the 12th or 13th of April, the small military force above recapitulated, together with the whole fleet under Sir Home Popham's command, left Table Bay; and we consider it our duty here to submit to the reader a letter written by that officer, dated *Diadem, St. Helena, 30th April 1806*, addressed to Mr. Marsden, the Secretary of the Admiralty, as conveying *his* views of the expedition, and of the grounds he had for venturing to undertake it under circumstances of such difficulty and delicacy as those which we have already endeavoured to describe. It contains, in fact, all that could be said on his part, in vindication of his conduct.

Diadem, St. Helena, 30th April 1806.

SIR,

In consequence of my having borne up for St. Helena, as mentioned in my letter of this day's date, and a Company's packet giving me the opportunity of a safe conveyance to write on the subject of Rio de la Plata, I deem it right to trouble you with this letter for their Lordships' information.

To satisfy their Lordships, in the first instance, that the

project has not arisen from any sudden impulse, or the immediate desire of gratifying an adventurous spirit, I take the liberty of transmitting for your perusal the copy of a paper which I wrote by the desire of Lord Melville when he was at the Board of Admiralty, after having previously had a conference with Mr. Pitt and his Lordship on that subject.

You will observe, Sir, that the paper in question holds out, under certain combinations, some prospects of a general emancipation in South America, and that the great organ of action in this undertaking is General Miranda, who is now in London.

Rio de la Plata is one of the points proposed to be attacked, and was considered more a military position than one of absolute negotiation, though considerable dependence was placed on the effect which a successful issue in other places might have had in that respect.

If therefore such an enterprise on general grounds of advantage to the kingdom has been so long in agitation by different cabinets, I have reason to conclude no formidable objection has ever existed either to the principle or policy of the measure.

I am aware, however, that much has been said on the expediency of foreign territorial acquisition taken simply as a conquest, but the arguments applied to situations without commercial resources, and which were exceedingly remote from the inspection or intercourse of the mother country.

In the present expedition no such objection exists: the destination of it is contiguous to that important colony, the Cape of Good Hope, and if the possession of Monte Video and Buenos Ayres is not absolutely necessary to its existence, it will be materially conducive to its prosperity and advantages; and were I only on this calculation to consider the importation of corn to the Cape, I trust in that

article alone the beneficial consequences even speculatively taken, will far exceed any risk or expense that can be fairly said to attach to this enterprize.

This, Sir, is the least important consideration, and if the records of the Admiralty were to be examined, or the still better evidence, the living testimonies of the merchants of London resorted to, you will, I have no doubt, find that Buenos Ayres is the best commercial situation in South America. It is the grand centre and emporium of the trade of all its provinces, and is the channel through which a great proportion of the wealth of the kingdom of Chili and Peru annually passes.

These advantages have been so strongly urged in a provincial weekly publication which I am in possession of, that the Spanish Government was obliged to interfere, and stop its further progress; as it was evidently written to invite foreign protection, and to induce Great Britain to profit of the neglected state in which those valuable colonies were left by the mother country.

The productions according to this statement, exclusive of gold, silver, and precious stones, are cocoa, indigo, cochineal, copper, wool, hemp, hair, wheat, gums, drugs, horns, besides hides and tallow, which I consider to be the great staple. It appears also by the work already quoted, (the Mercantile Telegraph of Buenos Ayres,) that about six hundred coasters enter inwards annually at Monte Video, and one hundred and thirty European ships, and about the same number clear outwards; but in this commercial intercourse, the exactions, duties, and restrictions, are so arbitrary, that the natives are in a state not many removes from open revolt.

I have hitherto dwelt principally on the export trade of these colonies, which enjoys all the advantages of easy transport by the Paraguay and other fine rivers that are navigable, several hundred miles from Buenos Ayres.

These advantages apply also to the importation of manufactures from Great Britain; and when we consider that at least six millions of inhabitants are within the reach of such a supply, I do presume to submit whether even a temporary encouragement to our manufacturing towns under such prospects of benefit as are eventually held out, is not sufficient to justify the attempt in agitation, even under a less favourable promise of success.

I know, Sir, that in ordinary cases the opening a new channel for the consumption of our manufactures is not only a measure of extreme policy to the state, but of equal popularity to the existing Government of the country; and although it may be urged that an officer has nothing to do with the latter consideration, yet I cannot admit the principle until I hear it confirmed by a paramount authority.

It may be also thought that I have in some respects exceeded the bounds of discretion which are vested in a commanding officer; if, however, I have given too liberal a construction to that power, I have done so because I thought it would essentially serve my country; and I have had the satisfaction of obtaining by manifest demonstrations of eventual benefits, the concurrent sentiment of Lieutenant-General Sir David Baird to the policy of this measure, followed up by a co-operation of a detachment of his army under Brigadier-General Beresford.

Viewing this project in the most limited way, I trust I shall not be thought too arrogant, if, in addition to the prospects of advantage which may appear likely to result from its successful issue, I add that it may be considered as an equivalent of some moment on any pacific negotiation, and it will be the means of totally preventing the enemy during the war, from enjoying the benefits of its valuable productions, which it does now to the greatest extent, by the systematical intervention of neutral flags.

Taking, however, a more enlarged view, and such a one

as would be justified by the favourable reception that the enclosed memoir has received from His Majesty's Ministers, then I must consider the benefits of the position in question as incalculable in its relation of assistance to General Miranda's plan through the province of St. Fe de Bagota and the Caraccas: and if it should at this period of the war, and under the general derangement of our allies on the continent, be thought expedient to prosecute this scheme, either to obtain a balance of foreign territory against the continental aggrandizement of the French Government, or to cut off those resources which it derives through Spain from South America, then I trust the measure I am about to carry into execution will be approved, as laying a successful foundation to that great enterprise.

General Miranda, if not already sailed, is, I conclude, in a state of readiness to proceed to Trinidad and the Caraccas, without a moment's loss of time, and the small military force which he requires will, I trust, bear scarce any degree of comparison to the probable ulterior benefits of its application on South America.

It is necessary to observe, that in consequence of bearing up to St. Helena, an additional force has been obtained of one hundred and fifty infantry, and one hundred artillery, consequently we shall leave this with the 71st regiment (750), and twenty-five artillery; one hundred and fifty St. Helena infantry, one hundred artillery; and in the first instance we shall be able to land about eight hundred men from the fleet.

It may now probably be right that I should give the most concise account possible of the information I have received of the state and defences of the enemy's possessions in La Plata.

In addition and corroboration of all the intelligence I obtained last war, Mr. Wilson, an eminent merchant of the city of London, informed me a few days before I left town,

and which communication I made to Mr. Pitt, that Monte Video was very defenceless, and that a thousand men would easily obtain possession of that place and Buenos Ayres, which is an open town; and after the Spanish troops were sent from the country, the natives would easily keep possession of it under an amelioration of their export and import duties and some other heavy and oppressive taxes.

At St. Salvadore, where there is a continual intercourse with La Plata, we obtained information similar to that already quoted; and an Englishman who had been eleven months a ship-carpenter at Monte Video, and had only just arrived in a Spanish vessel, has, under every kind of cross-examination, adhered without variation to this account—that there are not above two hundred and fifty regular troops at Monte Video, and some provincial cavalry and militia; that the walls of the town are in a ruinous state; and that he believes the inhabitants would force a surrender without firing a shot.

The letter from Mr. Wayne, master of the Elizabeth American ship, conveys his sentiments; and he is now on board the Diadem.

There is also an Englishman who was taken by the Polyphemus, who had been a resident eight years at Buenos Ayres, and two of which he was interpreter to the Custom-house. His information is much the same as the preceding person with respect to Buenos Ayres, which is an open town: he asserts that there never was a thousand regular troops while he was at Buenos Ayres, and at this moment he does not conceive that there are six hundred in both places; and the disposition of the inhabitants so averse to their existing Government, that they will materially assist in the conquest of the place.

We have many other similar testimonies of its military weakness and its political disaffection: under such infor-

mation, therefore, we may presume on success, and if it is to be commanded by the physical extent of our force, we may look forward with pleasure to the issue, from its zeal, energy, and spirit.

There can be no idea of moving a man into the country; the object will be to gain that by negotiation, and the offer of a liberal trade, and make Monte Video, which is the key of the river, as strong as possible, till some reinforcements arrive from Europe; and we can only hope that if it is possible to spare two regiments, they will be sent without loss of time in fast-sailing ships. Every expedient that I possess shall be adopted to create a diversion on the merits of such intelligence as I may receive after we are in possession of the place.

The expedition will sail to-morrow evening, and we calculate on four weeks passage, but I trust that this small armament will only be considered as a floating force to keep up the national characteristic enterprise, and ready to apply to any point of the enemy's possessions which have been neglected, provided there is moral certainty of success, and no risk beyond the common calculation under such circumstances.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
(Signed) HOME POPHAM.

Having thus developed Sir Home Popham's intentions and views, and exhibited the objects to which his operations were to be chiefly directed, we shall return to the Cape of Good Hope, where, just at the period of the departure of the expedition for South America, and in the midst of all the excitement so naturally attending it, a question of a very different and far less animating character, claimed the

anxious solicitude of the newly-established Government. The supply of wheat brought to Cape Town had progressively diminished in quantity, and the result of the inquiries which were immediately instituted as to the cause of this deficiency, was the alarming certainty that the stock on hand in the interior, would prove very inadequate to the wants of the population until the return of the harvest, augmented as that population was by the presence of a strong British garrison, and by the numerous arrivals from Europe and India, which the change of circumstances had occasioned and would continue to produce. The most active measures were immediately adopted to avert the threatened evil. The Northumberland Indiaman, which happened to be in the bay, was despatched to St. Helena, in the hope of obtaining a cargo of rice. The operation of the laws which regulated the introduction of grain into the colony was suspended, and the ports thrown open to its free admission, a bounty being offered on the importation of wheat, during a period sufficiently extended to admit of supplies being brought from the North American States.

But the views of Sir David Baird on this interesting and important subject were not limited to the mere application of a temporary remedy for an existing mischief. The colony, during the time it had been formerly under the Government of England, as well as after its restoration to its original founders, had been repeatedly visited by similar indications of scarcity.