

ACCOUNT
OF THE
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

CHAPTER I.

*Introduction—Cape of Good Hope—Origin of its Name.
Proper Seasons for passing it—Subject to Storms—First
Settlements made there by the Dutch—Southern Peninsula
and Shores described, with a Geographical Sketch of the
Country—Its Government and Divisions on the first Estab-
lishment by the Dutch.*

THE Author of this work, actuated by the encourage-
ment and indulgence he has received from the Public, in
their favourable reception of his first literary production,
the Account of the Island of Ceylon, is induced to offer
to them the following Descriptive Sketch of the Cape of
Good Hope.

Various reasons have induced the author to present this
work to the Public at the present crisis. The contents of
the following pages were indeed collected on the spot

by him some time ago; but particular circumstances, combined with his military duties, have prevented his arranging and bringing them sooner before the Public in a mature state.

The ship on board which the Author was embarked with a detachment of his regiment destined for the East Indies, having, in August 1796, put into False Bay for water and refreshments, was detained there nearly two months by one of those incidents common in time of war. During the period of his detention there, he had an opportunity of seeing and examining all that tract of country from False Bay and the opposite coast of Hottentot Holland, to Table Bay, Cape Town and its neighbourhood. This he was the better enabled to do, as the detachment of the 19th regiment, to which he belonged, was part of the force disembarked at Simon's Town, and which marched for the defence of Cape Town, at that critical period when General Craig, with the greatest part of the garrison, proceeded to Saldahna Bay against the Dutch Fleet under Admiral Lucas, which put in there in hopes of being joined by a French squadron from the Isle of France, and in conjunction with the Boors and Colonists of the Interior attempted to retake the Cape from the English. In this, however, they were disappointed by the extraordinary activity and exertion of Sir James Craig, and the army under his command, together with the unexpected appearance of Admiral Elphinstone, (now Lord Keith) with the English fleet.

When returning from India to Europe in 1801, on account of ill health contracted while on service there, the ship in which the author was passenger put into Table Bay, where being detained for two months, the author had a farther opportunity of visiting several parts of the country eastward of Cape Town, the villages of Stellenbosch, Drakenstein, and Swellendam; besides enlarging his observations and obtaining more particular information of the country in general, and the inhabitants.

From the author's residence at the Cape in the different seasons of the year, he had an opportunity of observing the effects resulting from their variations both to agriculture and commerce; an object which is here in particular of the most essential importance. He was also enabled to ascertain more accurately the nature of the climate, and its effects on the soil and appearance of the country, as well as to examine the natural productions of each season.

As some years had elapsed between the different periods of the author's touching at the Cape of Good Hope, he had occasion to remark a change very speedily produced in the habits and manners of the Dutch, in consequence of their connection with the English residing amongst them, and their intercourse with other strangers who were formerly excluded by a jealous government. He was also enabled to observe, with a patriotic pride, the improvements which took place in the civil and military establishments; and the economy and useful regulations introduced as soon as

it came into the possession of the British nation, which never fails to carry civilization, opulence, and industry, into every quarter of the globe which is reached by her arms or her commerce.

The inhabitants of Cape Town, and the planters residing in the country parts, are composed of a heterogeneous mixture of adventurers from almost every country of the Continent of Europe, who have at various periods, for several ages past, continued to form establishments for themselves in that settlement. Such however has been the influence of the medley of habits, customs, prejudices, and languages, that few retain any distinguishing trait of the country from which they originally sprung; and the whole society requires to be described as a people differing extremely from the natives of any part of Europe.

The author during his stay at the Cape, being, according to the custom of that country, an inmate in their families, as every house takes in strangers and passengers to board and lodge, who for the time are considered as members of the family, and are in consequence admitted to a perfect knowledge of their domestic concerns and most private habits, had thus an opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with their characters and modes of life; a species of information which in every instance is useful and entertaining, but more particularly so with regard to the colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, who exhibit features so very distinct from those of the inhabitants either of the mother country or of the other colonies.

The author is aware that several writers have already produced works on the Cape of Good Hope; and have given to the public, descriptions of the interior of Africa, which some of them have explored only with their pen. As he, however, for his part, had not an opportunity of visiting the interior, he does not pretend to describe it, but confines himself to what fell under his immediate observation in a tract within fifty miles round the Cape Town; and in treating of the country which lies within that compass, he has endeavoured to give every useful information which he could collect, and perhaps to add some new remarks on circumstances which may have escaped the notice of others. He may indeed be allowed to observe, without any imputation of arrogance or presumptuous censure, that during his residence at Cape Town, he was struck with many interesting facts respecting that place and its neighbourhood, which he has not been able to discover in any of the accounts which have hitherto been given to the public. Those, in general, who have undertaken to describe the Cape of Good Hope, have said little or nothing of the principal and most important part of the Colony, Cape Town, and the southern peninsula, where the chief harbours are situated; nor have they entered minutely into the characters and manners of the colonists; but have immediately dashed into the rude, wild, and uncultivated part of the country, filling up the pages of their journals with accounts of their daily transactions amongst the simple natives of

Hottentot Holland and Caffraria. With others, the botany and mineralogy of the Cape have been the sole subjects of enquiry, while those objects which are of most importance in a political and commercial point of view, have been almost entirely overlooked.

These animadversions on the works which have appeared relative to the Cape of Good Hope are far from being intended to deprive them in any degree of their particular merit. The botanist, the mineralogist, the zoologist, had each his own particular object in view; and it is but justice to say, that many of these writers who visited this colony are worthy the attention of those to whom their labours are particularly directed. The author of the following work neither pretends to appreciate their merits, nor at all to enter into a competition for which he is totally disqualified by the pursuits to which his attention through life has been directed. All he pretends to do is to describe, as they occurred to a man of common observation, those scenes and facts which fell under his notice; and in doing so, he presumes to hope that he shall be enabled to point out, in plain language, the principal military and commercial advantages resulting from this settlement, as well as the distinguishing characteristics of its inhabitants; subjects which, he conceives, have not been preoccupied by the more able and learned authors to whom he has alluded. His early entrance into the military profession, and the consequent employments which have prevented him from pursuing any regular plan of study,

are the excuses which he offered in his former work for the want of scientific language, and a more systematic mode of composition; and the reception which a candid public has given to his description, in plain and common language, of the productions of Ceylon, induces him to pursue the same plan with regard to those of the Cape of Good Hope. The man of science will find no difficulty in classifying any observation which he may look upon as useful; and the general reader will probably not be displeased to receive information at an easier rate, when divested of the more correct, but less understood, language of science. The author in some measure holds it a duty incumbent on military men, to give to their countrymen some account of those distant stations to which they are sent in the course of service; and he hopes his exertions, however feeble, may have some effect in stimulating similar efforts on the part of those officers who may find any leisure moments from their military avocations, to devote to pursuits of a similar nature. This practice has of late become very general among the officers of the French armies; and from the adoption of it among us, many national advantages must result, as both the government will become acquainted with the state of its distant possessions, and the officers of our armies will become better informed and better fitted to protect or improve the stations of which they may be intrusted with the command.

The Cape of Good Hope is the southern extremity of a very great and mountainous peninsula, which ships must

The Cape of
Good Hope
first possessed

by the Por- round on their voyage from Europe to India. It was first
tuguese. discovered by the Portuguese, who called it Cabo De Diable,
and Cabo Di Tormento, *i. e.* the Devil's Cape, and Cape
'Torment, from the violent winds and storms they encountered
there.

Difficulty in Formerly it was thought an object of great difficulty and
passing the danger to proceed by this passage; but now that the art of
Cape in navigation is brought to such perfection, and that the proper
former times. seasons for arriving in those latitudes, as well as the prevailing
currents are so well known, the danger which was thought
to attend this part of the voyage may be considered as
almost completely done away. However it is necessary for
Seasons for those ships which have India for the object of their voyage, to
ships passing endeavour to arrive in the latitude of the Cape in the summer
the Cape. or fair season, which is from the months of October to March
or April, as during the other months of the year those seas
are very tempestuous; and the wind blowing from a contrary
point often prevents ships from passing or rounding the Cape
for three weeks or a month together. During this period
they remain beating about in those troubled latitudes; and
not only lose much of their time, but are also subjected to
hardship, inconvenience, and danger. The winds which pre-
vail with so much violence in the winter months are from the
north-west, and are accompanied with heavy rain, fogs, and
hail; they blow towards the land, and the dangers arising
from this circumstance render it necessary to give the Cape
a *good birth*, as the sailors term it. In the summer months the
south-east winds are predominant, and often blow with great

Subject to
Violent
Storms.

violence, but are attended with less danger as they proceed from the land; they are favourable for ships taking their departure from the Cape, and will in a few days set them a great way on their voyage. Ships endeavouring to put into the Cape cannot effect it during the violence of the south-east wind, but must lay to or drift before it till its fury is spent, which generally happens in a few days, seldom lasting so long as the more steady fury of the gales from the north-west.

When on my return to Europe, the ship I took my passage in having occasion to stop at the Cape, experienced one of those south-easters as they are called; for though arrived at the mouth of Table Bay, and just coming to anchor, a violent south-east wind rushed suddenly down from the hills over Cape Town, and nearly swamped the vessel. She was instantly laid down on her side, the quarter-deck guns driven furiously over-board, and the sails in a moment split to pieces. Fortunately only the main top-sail and fore stay-sail were set, the rest being handed ready for anchoring, or she must inevitably have gone down. The helm was obliged to be put hard up, and the ship put to sea; we came-to immediately, and such was the great violence of the wind, and strength of the currents, that we drifted 160 miles in thirty hours, though lying-to all the time under bare poles. It afterwards took us three days to make the Cape when we bore up, though we had a strong favourable wind which carried us upwards of six miles an hour.

The author experienced a heavy storm in going into the Cape.

After the Portuguese surmounted the difficulty of passing

the Cape, their joy at having escaped the terrible tempests they encountered, made them term it Cabo de Boa Esperança, or the Cape of Good Hope, a name which has since continued to be given to the southern extremity of the continent of Africa.

First arrival
of the Eng-
lish at Sal-
dahna Bay.

So far back as the year 1620, the English attempted to establish a colony here, and with this intention put into Saldahna Bay, which they judged to be favourable for their purpose. This brought on disputes with the Dutch, who asserted a prior claim from having made use of this Bay previous to the arrival of the English. For some years afterwards the various nations trading to the East-Indies, occasionally and indiscriminately touched at Saldahna and De la Goo Bays for water and refreshments, which they procured from the natives for a few toys and such trifling articles as are usually employed in trafficking with savages. But the want of good and safe harbours in these parts of the Cape prevented the European nations from any attempt to establish themselves or form a permanent settlement; not having as yet discovered that its more southern extremity contained those commodious harbours now called False and Table Bay. The wild mountainous appearance of the country surrounding those last mentioned bays, with the storms which were not then known to return periodically, were sufficient to prevent navigators from entertaining any idea of exploring these stations.

Various na-
tions touched
there for re-
freshments.

Its advan-
tages not
known.

A few years afterwards the Dutch, accidentally finding out the good anchorage and secure harbours, which were presented by False and Table Bays, and being at that time a

spirited and enterprising people, formed the resolution of establishing a colony at the Cape, and with this view sent out a few persons to occupy the settlement, and ascertain its value, soil, and produce. Those earliest settlers giving a favourable report of the station were quickly followed by others; and the Dutch government exerted itself to people the colony by transporting a number of convicts, male and female, from their pest houses and houses of industry, together with such disorderly and idle persons as they could pick up in their sea-ports and trading towns. At first the colony laboured under many difficulties. The barrenness of the soil, and the rude state of nature in which it remained, conspired with the general wildness of an uninhabited country to dispirit the colonists. The rugged appearance of the mountains, the extended sandy and barren plains, subject to violent winds, which parched up the productions of the earth, and destroyed the produce of those spots which they had cultivated with much labour, afforded them little prospect of bettering their condition; while the vast numbers of wild beasts which frequently attacked the very settlement, carrying off cattle from the pastures, and even children from the houses, were sources of constant inquietude. The Hottentots seemed likewise leagued with the other savages of the forest to harass them; but the persevering spirit of the Dutch, which at that period was conspicuous, surmounted every obstacle. As they became acquainted with the evils they had to encounter, they gradually learned to overcome them. Having ascertained the nature of the climate, and the changes of the seasons at the

Dutch form a resolution of colonizing the Cape of Good Hope.

Disadvantages they laboured under in their first attempts;

which they in a great measure surmounted.

Cape, they entered more largely and vigourously into cultivation. They found means to prevent the attacks of the wild animals in a most effectual manner by thinning their numbers: and having in a great degree conciliated the natives, they purchased that tract of country in the vicinity of the Cape, giving in exchange liquor, iron, toys, and such articles as they knew were most gratifying to the ignorant Hottentots.

They organize their new territory.

The Dutch now becoming permanent masters of this tract, began to form plans for establishing a regular government and extending their territory. The daily arrival of new comers from Holland to settle at the Cape made it necessary to carry the settlement farther into the country. Care however was taken to bring the more immediate neighbourhood of the Cape into a high state of cultivation; and with this view large grants were made to the settlers on very advantageous terms. The colonists who chose to remove farther into the interior received only yearly leases, although the ground being here much less valuable, large tracts were held at a very small rent. At the same time in order to extend the settlement, a law was passed which would not allow of any house to be erected nearer than three or four miles from each other. By this means the colony soon became extended to a great distance, nor were any limits ever fixed to its farther extension.

The extent of the colony at the Cape had to be ascertained.

The actual extent of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope has never been accurately ascertained; but from the information I obtained while there, I am led to conclude that it is upwards of five hundred miles in length, and about half that

in breadth. The dwellings of the Dutch planters and farmers in the remotest parts are merely supposed to extend to that distance from Cape Town, as they do not measure their distances by miles as we do, but by hours, and judge of the length of their journey by the number of days and hours employed in performing it, which renders it extremely difficult to judge of its true extent: as unavoidable delays arising from natural obstacles, such as mountains of steep ascent, rivers which have overflowed their banks, and various other causes of a similar nature, may interrupt their progress, and occupy a great part of their time in a journey of several days. The Dutch have taken no observations of the country, nor surveyed any part but that immediately in the vicinity of Cape Town. They have but a very imperfect knowledge of the interior parts, nor does their government know either the distance at which the planters live, or the extent of their settlements; leaving to the people themselves to frame their accounts according to their own discretion, and to determine by the same rule what rent they shall pay the government. This abuse, which probably at first arose from negligence, has at length become incapable of remedy. The planters having been accustomed to extend their domains without any restraint or rule, they now seem to consider their doing so as a right with which government is not entitled to interfere; and successive governors have been too indolent to inquire into the real state of the plantations, and to form a proper estimate of their returns. The loss to the revenue is not however so great as might be imagined;

Reasons why
no accurate
survey has
ever been
taken.

for a very great proportion of the country is a wild desert, uncultivated and barren, and not fit either for the grazing of cattle, or any purpose of husbandry. The different divisions of the colony are bounded by long tracts of huge mountains, through which there are passes or kloofs, as they are called by the Dutch, some of them capable of being penetrated even by waggons.

The first range of mountains at the southern extremity.

The first great range of mountains situate in the southern extremity, comprehending those from False Bay stretching to the Cape Town, runs in a direction due east and west, inclosing an irregular tract of land which lies between it and the southern shores. This tract is upwards of fifty miles in length and twenty in breadth, indented with bays formed by the different promontories which stretch out into the sea. The soil in many parts is deep and fertile, intersected with streams of water issuing from the hills. The face of the plain is tolerably well clothed with grass and a variety of small plants and shrubs. Woods of forest trees are also interspersed in various parts; particularly groves of the silver-oak tree. This tract is subject to rain in the winter season when the north-west winds prevail; but on account of its nearness to the sea enjoys a temperate and healthy climate. Beyond this first range of mountains is another called the Zwarte Bergen, or Black Mountains, more lofty and wild than those we have described. The tracts of level country belonging to this division contain several plantations possessed by Dutch farmers. Its surface is considerably above the other, and its ap-

The second range of mountains more removed from the sea.

pearance much more varied. Some parts are disfigured by barren hills and naked sandy plains; while in others we find spots of well watered and fertile soil, where are situated the residences of the colonists.

The third range of mountains contains few inhabitants except the natives, and is known by the name of Hottentot Holland. It is much more elevated than the two former, and is not so subject to rain; it extends to a much greater distance in length and breadth. The soil of this division is a hard clay mixed with sand. It produces only a few acrid and succulent plants, and a small number of shrubs, which have a shrivelled and withered appearance, owing to the length of time which the country remains without water, joined to the parching heat of the south-east winds.

Third range
of moun-
tains.

The country extending farther into the interior, and approaching Caffraria, is still more elevated, being gradually raised by regular ranges of hills, whose flat surfaces resemble terraces successively rising above each other. The climate here becomes subject to extreme vicissitudes; the frost in winter is rather severe; and the heat becomes proportionably violent and oppressive in summer. Throughout all the southern extremity of Africa the soil towards the north is much more barren, sandy, and rugged, than towards the south and east; on which account we find this last part chiefly peopled by the Dutch who drove out the natives from it, and compelled them to seek a more secure residence amidst the inhospitable and barren re-

The country
in the inte-
rior.

gions to the northward. Of these unfortunate people, they allowed to remain only a few hordes or tribes, who live peaceably, and often assist the planters in the cultivation of the soil, and the management of their cattle.

Government
of the coun-
try.

The Dutch government of the Cape divided the colony into certain districts, and appointed a chief civil magistrate, and a court composed of the country burghers, to superintend the police of each, and determine all petty causes; at the same time reserving all criminal processes of importance to the high court of justice at Cape Town.

Its divisions.

The Cape Town and all the tract of country south of it, formed the first district; Stellenbosch, about thirty miles east of Cape Town, formed the next; Swellingdam was the third, and Graff Reynet the fourth. To each of these places are attached villages, and petty courts of justice.

Cape Falso.

Cape Falso is the southern extremity of the eastern side of False Bay, and must be doubled by vessels in their passage from India to Europe, which intend to touch at the Cape. Its name is said to be derived from the following circumstance. Although mariners on their passage from India first see the point which forms the real Cape of Good Hope, and the Table Land, which is the highest of the southern peninsula, and situated immediately over Cape Town; yet from the course ships are obliged to steer, in order to double the Cape, they previously find themselves under the necessity of passing another point of land, which, from lying lower, was not at first perceived, and which from this deception is called Cape Falso, or the False Cape of Good Hope.

On approaching Cape Falso, it hides from view the real Cape of Good Hope, as well as the Table Mountain; and after having passed it three or four leagues, another intermediate promontory is discovered, which it previously concealed from the view. This second point of land is called Hang Lip Point, and is the southern extremity of Hottentot Holland, which forms one side of the extreme end of a very large and commodious bay, which now opens beyond Hang Lip Point, and is called False Bay. After passing the mouth of this bay, which is about five leagues across, you fall in with that promontory which forms the real Cape of Good Hope, and which must be doubled by all ships proceeding from False to Table Bay. When ships round the Cape point on their way to Table Bay, they first meet two smaller ones, called Chapman's and Hout's Bay. The Table Mountain, the Lion's Head, the Lion's Rump, and the Tiger or Devil's Hill, successively open to the view; and after passing the Lion's Rump or Green Point, vessels find themselves presently in Table Bay, which skirts the northern side of the Cape of Good Hope.

Hang Lip
Point.

The Cape of
Good Hope.

Passage from
False to
Table Bay.

All this coast is one stupendous mass of rude, rocky, and bold mountains; connected together by lesser ones of various and uncommon shapes. The tops of some rise into lofty cones; while others, assuming a more level and unbroken form, stretch out far beyond the others, into the sea, and form capes or points indented with the bays I have already mentioned.

Appearance
of the shores.

To those who have been accustomed to see only the level shores of England, the appearance of this whole coast is awfully grand. The immense masses which rise in many places almost perpendicularly from the sea, and are lost among the clouds; the vast gullies and caverns, which seem to sink to an immeasurable depth amidst these stupendous mountains; the long extended ledges of rock, over which in a few places are scattered some tufts of stunted trees and withered shrubs; the successive ridges of white sandy hills, each of which appears like a valley to the one by which it is surmounted; the terrible surf which is continually raging on the beach, along which these ridges are stretched; with the spray which is thrown to an immense height by the waves recoiling from the more rocky parts—all these objects rushing at once upon the eye of those who approach the Cape, produce an effect which can be but faintly conveyed by description.

The spray of the sea carried far into the country.

Collects and forms lakes of salt water.

This surf which is driven towards the land with such fury, produces a phenomenon in the sandy deserts, even far removed from the sea. In the time of the violent south-east winds it is carried to a great distance into the country, presenting the appearance of a thick mist. It gradually quits the atmosphere, lighting on the trees and herbs, and lining the surface of the sands. On the commencement of the rainy season it is again dissolved; and being carried off by the streams which are then formed, it is lodged in a number of small lakes, which, by a natural process, in time become absolute salt pans; and thence it is that the

Dutch colonists collect the salt which supplies their consumption. A person walking on the sandy beach during the continuance of the south-east winds, so as to be exposed to its influence, soon finds his cloaths covered and incrustated with saline particles; while his skin is quite parched up, and his lips begin to feel their effects very sensibly.

False Bay and Table Bay are the only ones where ships anchor on this side the peninsula. Chapman's and Hout's Bay are too small, and too much exposed to the violence of the winds, which blow in eddies and currents down from the mountains. A ship putting into either of them, will find herself every moment exposed to the different shiftings of these winds, which are perpetually counteracted in their descent by opposing currents. As the beach, however, in these bays is sandy, there are military posts established, with batteries to prevent an enemy from landing and approaching Cape Town, by the side of Tiger Hill and the back of Table Mountain. They are of no other use but to prevent the landing of an enemy's boats, as no other inhabitants but the troops quartered there reside at those bays, the soil being uninviting, and the way from thence to Cape Town by land extremely steep and rugged.

The great chain of mountains which stretches along this shore, and forms this vast promontory of the Cape, is connected with the interior of Africa by low flat tracts and ridges of sand, collected together by the violence of the winds, which sweep unrestrained over these dreary wastes. There is little verdure to be seen on those vast masses which

form the chain of mountains ; the few small trees and plants peculiar to this part of the world, which grow here and there amidst the barren and rocky soil, seem stunted and withered, being parched up by the violence of the winds and the great length of time from one season to the other without rain ; a genial shower, during the summer months, rarely happening in that quarter. In the mountainous parts contiguous to Cape Town, the soil is a hard clay, mixed with a white glistening sand, which is brought up from the low tracts by the south-east winds. Some grass, and a few acrid plants, are nearly all the produce of this unpromising soil ; yet still there are spots on the sides of these elevations which receive cultivation, and produce vegetables and fruits ; although great labour is required for this purpose, and these spots must all be fenced in and well defended from the winds by thick hedges of myrtle, small oak, or other trees.

The soil in the vicinity of the mountainous tracts.

The low marshy spots scattered in various places round Cape Town, which have streams of water running through them, with a deep and rich soil, produce a vast number of succulent plants, flowery herbs, sweet grasses, and various kinds of heath ; which have afforded much room for the enterprise of botanists. Wherever these productive spots are found, they are cultivated with great care by the Dutch, and are converted into vineyards, gardens, and fields, covered with all kinds of vegetable productions, by which the town and shipping are abundantly supplied at a very cheap rate.

The profusion of plants which are spread over some parts of these sandy tracts, and seem peculiarly adapted to that soil, cannot fail to recal to the observer's mind, that wisdom with which every part of the creation is adjusted to the most beneficent purposes. Were it not for these spontaneous productions, the cattle must often be exterminated by hunger, amidst those tracts which for the most part refuse the culture of man, while the climate in other instances so often proves fatal to his labours. To the traveller these shrubberies afford shelter from the clouds of sand which fly at a certain season, and otherwise would prove altogether insufferable; and those who have never traversed these wide and waste plains of barren sand, will gratefully acknowledge the relief to the eye and the mind which is afforded by a refreshing spot of verdure, covered with herbs and flowers. The numerous birds which inhabit this space, derive their food from the berries and fruits belonging to those plants; while the more substantial ones are used for fuel, an article extremely scarce and dear about the Cape.

CHAPTER II.

Journal of Occurrences, during the Author's first Visit to the Cape—Taking of the Dutch Fleet at Saldahna Bay—Description of that Bay.

IN the last chapter I have given a general description of the Cape of Good Hope, and the first appearances which it presents to the eye of a stranger. I shall now introduce a journal of my transactions during the first visit which I paid to this colony; not from any idea that these circumstances can in any degree interest the public, from any relation which they bear to myself, but because they may serve to throw some light on the state of the colony, and the public events which took place at that period. Such details, although to some they may appear too minute to be interesting, contain many particulars which serve to give a more complete idea of the situation of a country, but which must necessarily have been omitted in a general description.

The author's
first arrival at
the Cape.

On the first of August 1796, we came in sight of Table Land, being, as I have already mentioned, the highest point, and the first which is seen on the passage from Europe to the Cape of Good Hope. It being late in the evening, and the weather at the same time very boisterous, our commodore, Captain Osburn, of the Trident, would not venture in, but lay-to till next morning, when we came to anchor in False Bay, after a pleasant passage

of eleven weeks from England. Here we found Admiral Elphinstone with a squadron of six sail of the line and three frigates, besides eight outward bound East Indiamen, who were waiting for convoy.

This fleet of Indiamen had a more tedious passage than that to which we belonged, having been sixteen weeks on their voyage. They brought out the 25th light dragoons, and the 33d and 80th regiments of foot, which were disembarked for some time and encamped on the heights above Simon's Town. The 27th light dragoons, and five companies of the 19th regiment, to which I belonged, were in the fleet convoyed by Commodore Osburn. The remaining five companies of my regiment were on board the Woodford and Dublin East Indiamen, which parted company the day before we made the land, and proceeded without stopping, with three others, on their voyage to the East Indies. As the object of putting into the Cape was merely to obtain water and refreshments, which began to be required on account of the number of troops on board, our stay here was intended to be limited to a week or ten days, being the period in which these necessaries might be procured; after which all the Indiamen, with the regiments I mentioned, were without delay to prosecute their voyage. Our commanding officer, Colonel Dalrymple, gave leave to his officers to pay a visit to Cape Town, which was at the distance of twenty-four miles from the place where our squadron lay; and this permission was so regulated that one half should be absent at a time, and the in-

terval so divided, as that all of us might spend a few days on shore. A very unexpected occurrence, however, rendered our stay much longer than was originally intended. The particulars of this event will be seen in the following journal which I kept from the day of my arrival in False Bay.

On Tuesday, August the second, came to anchor in False Bay; went on board Admiral Elphinstone's ship, the *Monarch*, where I expected to meet my brother, who was a lieutenant belonging to her; but in this I was disappointed, he having been taken prisoner on his passage from India to the Cape, in charge of a prize, some time back, by part of Admiral Sercy's squadron, and carried to the Mauritius; the *Sphynx* sloop of war narrowly escaped being taken at the same time.

August 3. Landed at Simon's Town to prepare for a journey to Cape Town; a detachment of the 78th regiment was quartered here, under the command of Major Monnypenny, besides the regiments before-mentioned encamped close by, waiting till the ships were ready to sail for India.

— 4. Two other officers and myself proceeded on foot, as horses could not be obtained. When we arrived at Munsenberg we found the grenadiers of the 78th, 84th, 95th, and 98th regiments at this post, and six miles further on, at Wineberg, where we slept, the light companies of those regiments; the battalion companies, with the 28th light dragoons, forming the garrison at Cape Town. We got beds and refreshments at Dutch boor's house.

Arrived at Cape Town; heard a rumour of a Dutch fleet August 5.
being seen near Saldahna Bay.

Remained at Cape Town. Viewed different parts of the town and its environs. Got comfortably lodged at a Dutch gentleman's house, at the rate of three rix-dollars a day. — 6.

In consequence of intelligence having been received of nine Dutch men of war being off Saldahna Bay, General Craig the commander in chief ordered all officers belonging to the regiments at Simon's town, to proceed immediately to join their respective corps; and at the same time sent an express to Admiral Elphinstone to put to sea with the fleet under his command, in pursuit of the Dutch, which he did that same day. The grenadiers and light companies stationed at Musenberg and Wineberg, marched into Cape Town, and, without halting, followed their regiments to Saldahna Bay. General Craig took with him a detachment of the 28th dragoons and artillery, the 78th, 80th, and part of the 84th regiments; leaving the 95th and 98th to garrison the Cape Town, under the command of Major General Doyle, who volunteered his services; for he was on board the fleet merely as a passenger, on his way to India. I, and three more officers of the 19th regiment, having with some difficulty procured a waggon, set off for Simon's Bay, and got on ship-board that night, very much fatigued by the bad road and jolting of our clumsy vehicle.

The 27th light dragoons, and five companies of the 19th, regiment, disembarked; the 25th light dragoons and de- — 7.

- August 8. detachments of the 78th and 33d regiments, were ordered to Cape Town, from whence they were to proceed after General Craig. The 27th light dragoons relieved the 25th in camp; and the 19th and 78th regiments, excepting a captain and sixty men, were sent forward to occupy the pass Musenberg, and all the flank companies pushed forward towards Saldahna Bay.
- 9. The movement of the troops continued; twelve sail of Indiamen in Simon's bay moored close in shore in the form of a half moon, and being flanked by the batteries ashore, presented a formidable appearance; and rendered an attack extremely difficult and hazardous to the Dutch, in case they should have escaped our fleet, and steered for this bay, which it was thought might possibly happen.
- 11. Positive intelligence [arrived that the Dutch Fleet was at anchor in Saldahna Bay, where they had landed five hundred men, on an island situated near its entrance; and were busily employed in throwing up fortifications and watering their ships.
- 12. The English Fleet which had been out some days without meeting the Dutch, from the imperfect intelligence the Admiral had received of their real destination, came into the bay in the evening and anchored. They had encountered very rough weather all the time they were out; and the wind, which blew strong from the north west, was against their making Saldahna Bay. They had sustained some injury in their masts and rigging. The Trident struck on a sunken rock, while coming into the bay,

and narrowly escaped foundering; she was then going at the rate of nine knots an hour.

The Admiral who had received an express to inform August 13. him of the enemy being at anchor, accompanied with orders to go out again immediately, found it impossible to do so, it blew so exceedingly strong; but he employed this interval in repairing the damages the fleet had sustained. The Tremendous of 74 guns, Admiral Pringle's ship, was with much difficulty and by great exertion saved from running ashore, having parted repeatedly from her anchors.

The weather being moderate, the Admiral and the — 14. whole fleet got under weigh, and was out of sight towards evening. A detachment of the 19th was ordered to march to Cape Town, and from thence to Saldahna Bay, with provisions, &c. while the rest of the regiment received orders to march in the morning.

The 19th regiment marched for Cape Town, and took — 15. up our captain's detachment posted at Musenberg, which was afterwards occupied by a troop of the 27th dragoons. Halted that night at Wineberg.

Marched into Cape Town, took possession of the bar- — 16 racks of the 80th, and did the duty there with the other troops, which, on account of the numerous posts round the town, and the number of guards required to occupy them, was very severe. General Craig with the army, arrived on the 14th at Saldahna Bay, having previously pushed on a detachment of dragoons and light troops; the Dutch sent at different times officers and parties on shore to

procure information from their friends, but those parties were all taken by our advanced detachment. The enemy found themselves miserably disappointed in all their objects. They had imagined that the English fleet was in India, or at least cruising off the Isle of France. They had also expected to be joined by a French squadron and troops from the Mauritius and Batavia; and with this reinforcement they had intended to surprise the Cape, having heard it was but weakly garrisoned by the English, and also calculating upon the assistance of a strong party of Dutch from the interior, and a powerful diversion in their favour by the inhabitants of Cape Town. But even had they been joined by the expected reinforcement, their designs would now have been rendered abortive; for the English fleet was both strong and well manned, and by the detention of the regiments bound to India, upwards of three thousand British troops were added to the force already stationed in this colony. These last circumstances were most critically fortunate, for the regiments in garrison at the Cape, were barely sufficient for the proper defence of the town; and could with difficulty have furnished an army to oppose the joint efforts of the French and Dutch. The plan which was formed by General Craig on this occasion, was as remarkable for the judgment with which it was formed, as the ability displayed in its execution.

Before I proceed to relate the circumstances which followed, it may afford a gratification to my readers to know

the situation and nature of that place, where the British and Dutch forces were now met.

Saldahna Bay is reckoned to be at the distance of about eighteen or twenty leagues from Table Bay, in the direction of north by west, and lies in latitude $33^{\circ} 10'$ south, and 18° east longitude. It is a secure harbour for the greater part of the year, and affords conveniences superior to either Table or False Bay, for the laying down, repairing, and refitting of ships. The north part of this bay is generally distinguished by the name of Hootjes Bay, which is very secure and commodious, being land-locked and well sheltered, and affording anchorage to large ships. This part of the bay is skirted by rocks, which occasionally jut out into the water, and form small basins, in which the water is deep, and as smooth as a mill pond. Ships might be hove down along side or close in with the rocks here in four or five fathoms water. Saldahna Bay, in its fullest extent, is about five leagues across in the direction of the coast, from north-east to south-west. The entrance is from the north side close to a ridge of hills moderately high, but barren and uncultivated. In this entrance are three rocky and sandy islands, one lying directly in its channel or mouth. It was this last on which Admiral Lucas landed his men, and began to raise fortifications. These three islands if fortified to the degree of which they are rendered capable by nature, would completely defend the entrance of the bay against an enemy's fleet. The Dutch Admiral had not the means, nor perhaps the skill,

to render them strong enough to oppose the entrance of Admiral Elphinstone; nor did he indeed attempt to fortify any but the one above-mentioned. Towards the southern extremity and within the bay, are two islands, called Schapen and Mewen; and between those two is a narrow passage into the south angle of Saldahna Bay, which here forms a kind of lake where small craft to any number might lie as securely as in dock. On the north side of those two islands there is good anchorage for large ships. Here it was that Admiral Lucas lay at anchor when the British fleet came to attack him, and hemmed him in by drawing up in line of battle across the narrow part of the bay, so that it was impossible for the Dutch fleet to attempt getting out.

The scarcity of wood and water in the neighbourhood of Saldahna Bay must, unless these disadvantages can by any means be removed, always render its advantages as a commodious and safe harbour abortive. Although ships sometimes touch here, and can remain all seasons of the year to be docked and repaired, it cannot be thought of as a general rendezvous for want of those essential articles. The Dutch never wished to remove these disadvantages even had it been in their power. It was far from their intention, and indeed directly opposite to the spirit of their policy to encourage the vessels of any nation, or even their own, to stop at this place. Their East-India company was so extremely avaricious that, in order not to lose the trifling revenue arising from the anchorage money which they ex-

acted from vessels touching at the Cape, they made a law to prohibit them from being supplied with any refreshments at any of the other harbours, such as Saldahna, Piettenberg, and De la Goe Bay; and with the same view they so far neglected the improvement of these stations that ships were compelled of necessity to put in at False or Table Bay to procure supplies, whenever they found their stock of provisions insufficient to carry them to the end of a long voyage. In consequence of this policy a precarious, temporary, and scanty supply of wood and water, is all that with a great deal of trouble can at present be procured at Saldahna Bay. Water might to a certain degree be procured from the adjacent country amidst the sand hills and vallies that surround the bay. A number of shrubby plants also grow there, whose long and thick roots, which are easily pulled out of the sand, might serve for fuel. The sides of the hills in several places are covered with plants bearing fruit and low trees; and the flat tracts at some distance from the shore frequently present forests half buried in sand. The general face of the surrounding country is flat, and intersected occasionally with hills; and like Musenberg and Wineberg, it forms a continued shrubbery. The soil is throughout loose and sandy; in some parts however it is fertile, producing wheat, barley, and vegetables, which grow astonishingly well, although growing in sheer sand. Had it been well planted with timber some years ago, Saldahna Bay and the adjacent country would have afforded solid advantages to Cape

Town, the passage by sea being much shorter and not so dangerous or difficult as either from Plettenberg or De la Goe Bay. The want of good water is the chief misfortune; nor has any been as yet discovered near the beach of Saldahna Bay, nor for a considerable extent around; and on this account that tract is thinly inhabited. Springs indeed have been found in several spots, but they are all strongly impregnated with salt. In Ceylon and many parts of India, I have seen the natives scoop holes with their hands in the sand close to the sea, and by this means obtain excellent water in a few minutes. Our soldiers, at the suggestion of officers who had served in the East-Indies, employed the same method at Saldahna Bay, and succeeded in procuring water, though in no great quantity nor very pure; yet still it was not unfit to be drunk. I do not believe it ever occurred to the Dutch to obtain it in this manner. It has been imagined that water might be procured from the White Rock or Witte Klip, on one of these islands at the entrance of the bay, although it would require much expense and labour to make an incision into the rock for this purpose. Colonel Gordon, and others of their engineers, laid a plan before the Dutch government to turn the course of a deep river which passes through the country within a few miles of the sea into a parallel direction with the coast; but, with the usual narrow policy of that people, it was rejected. Had this scheme been executed, shipping might have been supplied abundantly with water; and it would also have soon become more easy to

procure the other necessaries of life. The farmers, who reside a little way inland, breed a good deal of cattle, and sow a considerable quantity of corn and vegetables. The soil becomes more rich and fertile as it is removed to a greater distance from the shore. Game is in great plenty; and the rivers abound with that enormous quadruped the Hippopotamus.

Such is a short description of the bay into which the Dutch Admiral had conducted his fleet. It afforded a station undoubtedly of great security from the winds and the waves; but a more formidable enemy, from which there was no means of escape, presented itself to him both by land and sea, in British valour.

The Dutch Admiral, on discovering our troops who had August 17. now all arrived, but had been hitherto carefully concealed till the artillery was come up, and having received certain information of the near approach of our fleet, sent the Havoc sloop of war close in shore. She fired several shot at our men, but without effect; for only one shot took place, which hit a musket on the shoulder of a soldier of the 84th regiment, and broke it in two, but without doing him any material injury. General Craig, in order to return the compliment, ordered Captain Robertson, of the artillery, to bring his guns to bear on her, and laid a bet with the Captain that he would not hit her from the distance at which she lay; but Captain Robertson so well calculated his aim, that he struck her with the first shot,

upon which she hauled out from shore and did not attempt to return again.

About two hours afterwards the English fleet hove in sight, and were discovered by us from the eminences and signal posts. They were at length descried by the Dutch, who at first imagined them to be their long looked for and anxiously expected friends the French; but were soon undeceived, when to their great surprize the English fleet came to anchor outside of them across the neck of the bay, and drew up in line of battle. They now perceived that they were completely shut in, and that no chance was left for one of their ships to escape. The Dutch officers had some idea of running their vessels ashore to prevent their falling into our hands in a perfect state, and then to attempt to make their own escape into the country. General Craig, however, suspecting they might have such intentions, sent an officer with a flag of truce to inform the Dutch Admiral, that if they attempted to injure the ships he would allow them no quarter. It blew so fresh this evening that Admiral Elphinstone attempted nothing, but prepared his fleet for action in case the Dutch should resist.

August 18. Our Admiral sent a flag of truce to the Dutch Admiral Lucas, requiring him to surrender without delay. Resistance or escape were now equally impracticable; and therefore after a few ineffectual requests to obtain one of the frigates to carry him and his officers to Europe, he surrendered at discretion. On our boats boarding the

enemy's vessels, our officers found the Dutch sailors in a state of mutiny, and in the act of laying violent hands on their officers, towards whom they had lost all sense of respect. Several of them trampled on their own colours, and tore them to pieces; and our people were obliged to interfere in order to rescue the unfortunate Dutch officers from destruction. The Dutch ships were in a very bad condition for fighting, the crews were extremely disaffected, being mostly composed of requisition-men forced into the service. Few were natives of Holland, the far greater part being Hanoverians, Prussians, and Germans; and in addition to the evils to be apprehended from this mixture of foreigners, they were almost all raw and inexperienced, both sailors and soldiers. Admiral Lucas remonstrated with the Dutch government on their sending out this fleet so badly victualled and appointed; but he received for answer, that he should lose his head, if he did not immediately proceed on his voyage with the squadron. On their arrival at Saldahna Bay, they had not three days wood or water on board; even during the voyage they had but a very scanty allowance of provisions; many of them seemed quite happy on being taken by us, and several entered immediately into our service. Those who did so were distributed on board the East India ships, each receiving a proportion of them in lieu of the English seamen taken out of them by Admiral Elphinstone, to complete the complements of his fleet.

When our Commodore Osburn, of the Trident, went on

board one of the Dutch ships, and examined the charts and log books, he found to his great surprise, that for the last three weeks, before we arrived at the Cape, the Dutch fleet was never more than twelve hours sail, or twenty-five leagues from us, both fleets tacking at the same time, and keeping the same course, they being that distance to the westward of us. During the voyage we saw some of their ships, and chased them a whole day; they also discovered us, but bore away. The day we made Cape Land, we observed three or four sail to the westward at a great distance, and thought they were the English fleet cruizing in those latitudes. Although they at the same time discovered our fleet, they made no attempt to bear down upon us; as their Admiral had received positive orders not to chase any ship, but to proceed direct to Saldahna Bay. Had they fallen in with our fleet at sea, they might have captured some of us, as we had only one line of battle ship and seven sail of Indiamen; five of which left us the day before we saw the land. The Dutch fleet consisted of the Dortrecht of 68 guns, Admiral Lucas, Van Tromp 64, Revolutionaire 64, Castor 40, Brave 40, Syren 24, Havoc 24, Bellona 24, and the Maria transport, armed en flute, laden with military stores, and carrying 40 guns. The English fleet which assisted at their capture in Saldahna bay, was composed of the Monarch 74, Admiral Elphinstone; Tremendous 74, Admiral Pringle; America 64, Commodore Blanket; Ruby 64, Captain Hardy; Stately 64, Captain —; Trident 64, Captain Osburn; Jupiter

50, Captain Losac; Crescent 36, Captain Buller; Moselle 20, Captain ——; Sphinx 20, Captain ——; Rattlesnake and Echo of 16 guns each. From the 18th to the 23d nothing worthy of notice occurred at Cape Town.

General Doyle, in consequence of the victory over the August 23. Dutch, drew out the garrison on the parade in front of the castle, to fire a feu de joie. The Dutch were exceedingly mortified at the capture of their fleet; for a strong party was ready to act, if occasion offered, against us; and the planters in the country were only waiting for the landing of the Dutch troops, in order to join them. But the prudent and vigorous measures of General Craig, and the wise precautions which General Doyle took for the defence of the Cape Town and its neighbourhood, prevented any such attempt from being made by the disaffected. The cannon of the castle, and the different batteries at each end of the town, were turned upon it, and ready to play at a moment's warning, in case of any commotion.

General Craig arrived and was received with military —— 26. honours by the troops, who were drawn out for the purpose, and the officers afterwards waited on him at the castle.

General Craig reviewed the 19th regiment on the grand —— 27. parade, and was very much pleased with their appearance; he gave us orders to march next morning to False Bay, to embark for the East Indies. The 25th dragoons marched this day to Simon's Town to embark for the same destination. The 33d and 80th regiments were ordered to re-

main at the Cape to strengthen the garrison, which, on account of the number of prisoners, required a great force to place it in a state of security. This evening presented to our countrymen a most gratifying spectacle, the English fleet bringing their prizes into Table Bay. The appearance they presented was majestic; a strong breeze carried them in at the rate of nine knots an hour, and they all in a regular succession came to anchor before us. The triumph conspicuous among our countrymen on this occasion, could only be equalled by the shame and disappointment which the Dutch inhabitants appeared sensibly to feel, on seeing English colours flying over their own.

August 28. Marched to Wineberg; halted there that night very much fatigued, as we had experienced a dreadfully wet day, and been able to procure hardly any thing to eat. On our arrival here, we found nothing but wet rushes to lie on all night, and were consequently obliged to sleep on this uncomfortable bed, in our drenched clothes.

— 29. Marched to Simon's Town and embarked, glad of getting on board to a comfortable dinner, and our own beds, after a fast of nearly three days, and a fatiguing march through heavy sands. The 25th dragoons had embarked the day before. From this to the 20th of September we remained at anchor in Simon's Bay, the different ships being busily employed in taking in water and provisions, and preparing for their voyage to India. During this time, having little duty to attend to, I every day amused myself on shore, in shooting and fishing parties; and made daily excursions

into different parts of the country. I took an opportunity of again seeing Cape Town, and of visiting the vineyards and wine plantations of Constantia. In these excursions I collected many materials for this work, which will be presented in their proper place.

A signal was made by the oldest captain of the India Sept. 10. fleet (Captain Strover, of the Essex), who acted as Commodore, to weigh anchor and put to sea. About five o'clock that evening, having proceeded about two leagues out of this bay, the William Pitt, Indiaman, running foul of the Manship, carried away her bowsprit; upon which the Commodore made a signal to return.

We remained here six days longer, whilst the William Pitt was repairing her damages. Although we at first looked upon it as a disappointment, it proved in the end a fortunate circumstance, as next day there came on a furious gale of wind, which continued to blow with great violence for three days, and might have damaged the fleet, had we been at sea.

The ships being all ready, the Commodore again made — 16. the signal to get under weigh and proceed on our voyage to Madras. This evening we lost sight of the Cape, and made the land at Madras on the 14th of November.

On my return to Europe from India, in the year 1800, the ship in which I was passenger put into Table Bay on the 1st of December, to water and lay in stores; expecting also to find a convoy ready to depart for England. Our intention at that time was to remain there only ten days. On the

8th of December the *Arethusa*, frigate, Capt. in Woolley, arrived from St. Helena, to convoy the trade from the Cape to England. There we had to remain waiting for the Indiamen which were daily coming in, as well as the government store ships, till the 14th of January, 1801, when we weighed anchor from Table Bay; and on the 28th January made St. Helena, where we continued till the 6th of February.

During the time I remained at the Cape, having no military duty to perform, I had an opportunity of visiting several parts of the surrounding country, as well as the villages of Stellenbosch, Witte, Boem, and others at some distance. The observations which I made during this and my former visit to this colony, will be found in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III.

False Bay—Proper Season for anchoring there—Rocks—Seal Island—Beautiful Prospect from the Bay—Simon's Town—Public Buildings—Batteries—Customs in the Dutch Time.

I have already given a general geographical description of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope. I shall now proceed to give a more particular account of those places which, from their situation and advantages, have the greatest claim on the public attention.

False Bay is so called from Cape False. The promon- False Bay.
 tory of land which stretches to a great distance into the sea, forms an immense bay. This bay is not properly the harbour, or place where ships come to anchor, on this side the peninsula, but is rather the outer road of another smaller one, close in with the shore, called Simon's Bay, from the Simon's Bay.
 name of the town close by. It is only in this inner space Best season for anchoring there.
 that ships can remain with any security during the north-west winds, which prevail from March till September. During the other months of the year, when the south-east winds prevail, even Simon's Bay is unable to afford any security; vessels therefore at this period go round to Table Bay, which is equally secure in that season as Simon's Bay was in the other. In the winter, which is from March to September, all vessels put into False or Simon's Bay, and the little town close by is, at that period, much frequented.

This bay, formed by the most southern point of the southern extremity of the Cape, lies in latitude $34^{\circ} 9'$ south, and $18^{\circ} 32'$ east longitude. Ships on their voyage to India, which are under the necessity of taking in water and provisions at the Cape, prefer stopping at False Bay, as more favourable to their making their passage; and, on returning to Europe, the same reason induces them to put into Table Bay. From the indented shape of Simon's Bay, which is almost surrounded by exceedingly high hills, that cover it from the violence of the winds, vessels are in perfect security there, except when a violent south-east wind blows in shore, and can anchor within a quarter of a mile or less of Simon's Town. At the entrance of this bay are two remarkable rocks, of a very curious appearance, called the Roman Rocks and Noah's Ark; on the latter of which is placed a flag staff. Happily for vessels which intend to moor here, those rocks are so situated as not materially to obstruct them in their working in and out. In the outer part of False Bay, some sunken rocks have been discovered by the English. It was on one of these that the Trident struck in 1796, when she was so much damaged in her keel, and otherwise injured by the shock, that fears were entertained for her safety. It was supposed the Dutch knew of this rock, as it had been laid down in an old chart of theirs, but they would not inform us of it. Lord Keith had a buoy placed on it to prevent accidents in future. It is but justice to this excellent officer to remark, that he spared no pains to sound and explore both False

Rocks in
False Bay.

and Table Bay, whilst he remained on this station; and he was the first who had a ship hove down and thoroughly repaired in False Bay, instead of sending her at a great expense and loss of time to Bombay to be docked, which is generally done with the men of war on service in these latitudes; unless in the alternative of their being recalled to Europe.

A small barren island, called Seal Island, lies between Hanglip Point and False Bay, within two leagues of the shore. It is resorted to only by fishermen to catch seals, of which they procure a great number throughout all this bay. Abundance of fish of various kinds is got here; particularly about the Roman Rocks and Noah's Ark.

Immediately on a ship coming to anchor, she is surrounded by boats, laden with fish, vegetables, and fruit, which the slaves of the Dutch colonists come to sell for their masters. All kinds of fish peculiar to the Cape are found in this bay; many of them excellent and very agreeable to the palate. The most common is the Roman fish, so called from its being caught about the rock of that name: it is of a deep rose colour, and of the perch kind. The other species of fish found here are, the red and white Steenbrassen, also of the perch kind, and large and good: the Hottentot fish, which derives its name from its dirty brown colour, resembling the skin of that people: the silver fish, somewhat shaped like our turbot, and with its scales shining like silver: the strompneus, which has black and white spots down the middle and sides: the klip

Seal Island.
Different species of fish found in this bay.

or rock fish, with a coarse scaly skin, of a tolerable size, and very good when fried: the harder, somewhat of the flavour and appearance of our herring, but thicker: the schomber, or mackerel, which come at certain seasons into the bay, in large shoals, pursued by voracious enemies; also the schomber, or horse-mackerel, a species much inferior to ours: the speering eel, a small fish, with white clear shining spots: the springer, a flat fish, of a heavy, fat, luscious quality, particularly well adapted for the palate of a Dutchman: gurnets and soles resembling ours: skate, ray fish, star fish, and a species of the electrical torpedo: the bagre, a very bad species of fish, and supposed to be of a poisonous quality: dolphins and bonetas are sometimes caught; a species of dog fish is found, very like the shark, which latter fish is abundant on the coast; seals are in great plenty. Whales often come into the bay, and frequently strike with violence against the ships at anchor, when they are often pursued and taken. After a violent storm, it is not uncommon to see one or more of those immense animals lying exhausted on the beach; it is also customary with them, when wounded in those latitudes, to make for the shore, as I have had an opportunity of observing in several instances. Among the shell fish, are oysters, cray fish, small crabs, muscles, shrimps, the sea nautilus, and many others. The shells of these, with other marine productions, are often collected by the colonists, when they afford the only kind of lime used here. Fishing is a principal amusement with the passengers on board the ships that stop here,

Whales
sometimes
caught there.

who are not taken up with more material avocations. Whilst at anchor in this bay, I was often employed in this manner. The seals were so numerous and troublesome, that I was frequently obliged to strike at them with the boat-hook, for they would fearlessly come up close alongside, as if they would enter the boat. I however found the amusement of going out to fish to be attended with some risk, as the thick and heavy mists often come on so suddenly, that we could scarcely find our way back to the ship, though but a little way off.

That amphibious species equally between fish and fowl, called penguins or puffados, are in such numbers, that when on the wing, and mixed with the flocks of divers, ducks, cormorants, albatrosses, gulls, and various other aquatic birds, they absolutely darken the sky, and present an appearance altogether astonishing to a stranger on his first arrival. They keep hovering and flying without intermission around the ships at anchor in the bay, and may be easily killed from the deck by flinging a stick or stone among the surrounding flocks. In consequence of a fatal accident which happened the day I arrived, from an officer shooting at a flock of those birds, positive orders were issued to prevent any one from firing from on board or in the bay. The prospect which meets the eye, on coming to anchor in Simon's Bay, is extensive, diversified, and at once grand and beautiful. The exceedingly high and steep hills reaching close to the shore, which surround the greater part of the bay, seem to the European passenger even

Water fowl
in great
abundance.

Beautiful
prospect from
the shipping
in False Bay

more lofty, more near, and more awfully grand, after a long voyage, during which nothing has met his eye but the level surface of an extended watery plain, and nothing bounded his view but the uninterrupted circle of the horizon. On turning the eye towards one side of the bay, the little town at the foot of one of those hills, the houses scattered up and down the declivity, and gradually rising one above the other, the Company's gardens contiguous to the town, the landing place, the sandy beach and white road leading to Musenberg, the form of the bay on this side resembling a crescent, with the large flat surrounding plain bounded by the Musenberg hills, afford a prospect which to me at least conveyed the most pleasing sensations. On the other side of the bay a still nobler prospect opens to the view. Close to the shore appear several houses, plantations, and cultivated fields belonging to the Dutch farmers and burghers, over-topped by the green sheapen-berghen or sheep hills. Above them rise the amazingly high, steep, and wild mountains of Hottentot Holland, which in the finest and clearest weather are covered with snow and passing clouds. To the east a view is opened of the more distant Caffree country, whose mountains towering to a yet superior height, of a bright copper colour, close the sublime prospect. Such is the surrounding country of Simon's Bay as it appears to the European passenger before he has yet come to land; nor do these objects appear less striking to him when he has had an opportunity of examining them more minutely.

View of the
country
round.

From the station where ships anchor you row in a few ^{Landing place.} minutes to Simon's Town, and land without any risk or obstruction on the sandy beach, or at the pier or platform, which is carried out several yards into the sea on large piles of timber, for the more convenient loading and unloading of boats and small craft. Close to this pier is a ^{Reservoir.} most excellent reservoir of water, conveyed in pipes from the springs in the neighbouring hills, which afford a constant supply. It was constructed by the Dutch East-India Company for the convenience of watering their ships. There are also along the beach several small streams and springs of water, issuing from the different hills and running into the bay, where boats frequently take up water for their ships when the reservoir is too much occupied; for every one must wait his turn at the cistern, and by this regular mode the process of watering is much more easily and speedily accomplished.

Simon's Town, if it can be called a town, is pleasantly ^{Simon's Town.} situated on the sea side, under a very steep hill. It consists of about twenty houses rather scattered, and irregularly placed along the curve or bend of the shore. A few are built on the declivity of the hill, where the slope is sometimes interrupted by a gentle swell. Most of the houses are tolerably large and well built, and are inhabited by Dutchmen, either occasional residents or natives of the place. A part of the buildings here were erected by the ^{Public buildings.} Dutch East-India Company, at their own expense, for the use of their ships trading to and from India, and consist of

a long range of store houses close by the wharf or landing place.

The erecting of these buildings was occasioned by an accident which took place many years ago. A dreadful storm arose in Table Bay at a season when least to be expected. A great part of the shipping lying there was in consequence destroyed, and the rest obliged to put into False Bay to refit. The magazines then erected at Simon's Town for their accommodation have since been employed for refitting and supplying vessels who touch at the Cape during the winter season. This range of buildings is remarkably well laid out, and adapted for the use designed. It contains stores of all kinds; forges and work-shops for fitting and repairing the timber or iron-work of their vessels; with small houses and apartments attached for the residence of the workmen and artificers, as also for those who did the duty of guards, which in the Dutch time was occasionally performed by the people belonging to the magazines. At one end was a bake-house and a place for their working slaves; at a little distance from this was a very commodious and handsome house for the Governor when he resided here. It has since been the quarters of the British officers stationed at Simon's Town. A little higher up, on the ascent of a pleasant hill overlooking the bay, is another large building, which the Dutch used for an hospital for their sick seamen and soldiers, and those who required to recruit their health on shore. This was converted by the British into an excellent barrack, capable

of containing a regiment which was generally stationed here whilst it remained in our possession. There is also a very good house for the master intendant of the harbour and shipping. Besides the hospital already mentioned, there is another, a kind of pest-house for the sick slaves, and all those infected with contagious disorders, which the Dutch always took the greatest precautions to prevent from spreading; nor did they ever suffer any of the crews of their ships to land without being first examined by a doctor or health-master to certify they did not bring with them any symptoms of small-pox or other epidemic diseases.

About half a mile from the town, proceeding by a pleasant walk along the breast of the hill, and immediately over one side of the bay, you come to the Company's garden, containing about four acres well planted with vegetables for the use of their shipping, which were supplied with a certain proportion daily without expense. This garden was much out of order when I saw it, having been neglected since the capture of the Cape. At one end stood a very good house for the man who had the care of planting and dressing it, with offices for the Company's slaves who wrought under him.

Half way between the town and the garden is a strong battery en barbet, which commands great part of Simon's Bay, and can annoy ships very much on their entrance; besides this there are a few smaller batteries on a level with the sea, and guns planted at different places to enfilade the bay, and prevent an enemy from landing on the beach.