



Views of St. Helena.



Fort Marden

Report's Hill

Landing Place

Government House  
James Town & Valley

High Knave appearing over L. Hill  
An Indianman with the Cropongo Canoe

Ladder Hill

An Indian

General View of St. Helena

London Published 27 Sept. 1815, for the Proprietor, by S. & J. Fuller, 34, Bathurst Place.



Drawn, by Lieut. W. J. Peacock. R.N.

T. Sutherland, Sculp<sup>r</sup>

N. 2. View of the High Knowle, & Waterfall at the head of James's Valley.



Drawn by Lieut. W.J. Poveck, R.N.

N<sup>o</sup> 3, View from Diana's Seat looking to the Northward.

T. Sutherland, Sculp<sup>t</sup>



Drawn by Lieut. W. J. Peacock R.N.

T. Sutherland Sculp.<sup>r</sup>

*N<sup>o</sup> 4. View from Diana's peak looking Southward towards Sandy bay.*



*Drawn by Lieut. W. J. Pocock, R.N.*

*T. Sutherland, Sculp.*

*N. 5, View of High Knowle, & Ruperts Hill, looking Northward.*

*London, Published, 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 1815, for the Proprietor, by S & J Fuller, 34, Rathbone Place.*

**FIVE VIEWS**  
**OF**  
***THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA,***

**From Drawings taken on the Spot :**

TO WHICH IS ADDED

**A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF THE ISLAND.**

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***BY LIEUT. W. INNES POCOCK, R. N.***

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**LONDON :**

Printed by D. N. SHURY, Berwick Street, Soho :

And Published by S. and J. FULLER, at the Temple of Fancy, Rathbone Place.

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1815.

A CONCISE ACCOUNT  
OF  
***THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA,***  
&c. &c. &c.

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THIS ISLAND, when first discovered, presented nothing to the view of the navigator but a mass of rock ; and produced nothing for his use but water, which was then attainable only with much labour, and some danger. It is now well known as lying in the homeward-bound track of our East India Fleets. Its position is remarkable, in the South Atlantic Ocean, at a greater distance from inhabited land than any other spot that can be named ; viz.—about 400 nautical leagues from the Coast of Africa, and 700 from that of America. The passage to it from England is usually accomplished in about eight weeks ; although, from the constancy of the trade winds always blowing from the SE, it is necessary to make a very considerable circuit to get there. Ships bound to St. Helena cross the Equator about the 19° of west longitude, and continue their course southerly till they approach the Island of Trinidad, or the rocks of Martin Vas. The trade wind here becomes variable ; and a few degrees further south, entirely ceases. A strong counter wind from the WNW is generally experienced, with which they sail, till arriving in a sufficiently eastern situation, they steer to the NE, and again passing through the variable latitudes that separate the WNW

from the trade wind, keep on that course, till having weathered the Island about 20 leagues, they bear up and arrive at the anchorage. This route, traced on a map, or on a globe, will represent a fish-hook, the stem of which is at the Equator, the extreme part of the curve in the latitude of 32° south, and the point terminating in St. Helena.

Considerable skill in navigation is requisite to make this Island to a certainty, and by the shortest route. If the navigator finds himself to the westward of the Island, his best way is at once to haul to the southward again ; for the currents caused by the trade wind here, and in all other places where it prevails, set to leeward, and render it almost impossible to beat up again. The weather is likewise frequently exceedingly hazy. From the united effects of both these causes, it has sometimes been sought for by unskilful navigators without success. When the Island is first made, it has the appearance of the ridge of a saddle, with the pommel to the northward : as you approach nearer, a dark and sombre mass of rock rises to the view, than which it is impossible to imagine any thing more uninviting ; it appears what it really is—a burnt and cinder-like volcanic production. Approaching nearer, its eastern

extremity, called Barn Point, is the first remarkable feature ; after passing which, the cliffs increase in elevation, and the highest of them is said to be 2900 feet above the level of the sea : their effect is heightened by being viewed at a small distance, as the natural course of ships arriving from the eastward obliges them to pass near the shore. These cliffs continue, without interruption, till they terminate at Buttermilk Point\*, where a battery has been erected, to which all vessels are obliged to send a boat with a report of their nations, names, &c. before they are allowed to pass. His Majesty's ships are not exempted from the obligation of going through this ceremony. To the east of Buttermilk Point, it is absolutely impossible to land, from the nature of the coast ; and to the westward, batteries, whose fires cross each other in every possible direction, guard the coast as far as Fort Munden. The platform and batteries of the town, and a number of guns on Ladder Hill continue the line of defence, till it terminates at the small post on the third cliff from the right of the Island in the general view. On the windward side of the Island there is no anchoring ground or landing place ; and if there were, the tremendous surf on the coast would prevent its being made use of. It is presumed that the general view in which the roads, as well as every material object is represented and referred to, will render a further description of the appearance of the Island from the sea unnecessary.

Approaching the shore to land, the most striking object is the cavern under Fort Munden : to this place the whole male population of James Town resort to bathe : in any other place it would be considered as very indifferent for that purpose. The Island, however, though surrounded by the sea, scarcely affords another point tolerably adapted for this healthful and agreeable exercise. The landing place is as good as masonry and ingenuity can make it ; but it is seldom that the sea is tranquil enough to allow it to be made use of without some caution. The swell of

the ocean rolls round Barn Point, and continuing the undulating majestic motion peculiar to very deep water, usually rises and falls at every wave about three feet—frequently eight ; and when this happens, business is at a stand, and communication with the shore can only be effected by a very skilful boat's crew. The bathing cove at such times cannot be made use of.

To obviate the difficulties of watering ships, anchors have been laid down a considerable distance in the sea, and their cables hove tight and made fast to the shore ; to these, ships' launches are secured, and the water being conducted by pipes from a considerable distance up the valley to a reservoir near the end of the wharf, is thence conveyed under the road to the quay head, and by flexible pipes of leather or canvas into the casks in the boats. There is a second landing place nearer the town, and at both, cranes have been erected for the convenience of landing goods ; notwithstanding all these accommodations, business is frequently interrupted, and it is surprising how, before they existed, it could be carried on at all.

From the landing place, the road runs about three hundred yards along the foot of a perpendicular cliff, to the barrack of the outer town guard, where a small bastion enfilades the seaward face of the platform before the town. A draw-bridge, over a ditch of considerable magnitude, sunk in the solid rock, which is here first observed, affords a communication with the Esplanade. This is planted with a double row of trees, concealing the town wall, nearly in the middle of which is the gate, the only entrance allowed to the Island.

Having entered, a handsome square presents itself ; the principal building being the Government House, which fronts the roadstead and communicates with the town wall, the level top of which is used as an evening parade by the Governor's family and parties. On the right,

\* Where the asterisk occurs, a reference to the general View is intended.

looking up the valley, a spot of ground is appropriated to the use of the Ordnance Store-Keeper; further up is the only decent house of public entertainment. On the left, nearest the wall, are the Company's Store-houses, called by an unnecessary introduction of an Indian word, *Godowns*; the other side of the square is finished on the left by the Company's public garden, which is merely for pleasure, small, and much neglected; and on the right by the church. From the square, a broad and tolerably handsome street continues forward several hundred yards, the houses on each side being two stories high and neatly built; it then branches into two of minor importance. The left rises on the slope of the hill side, and finishing in a road, furnishes means of communication with the NE and SE division of the Island. That on the right is continued forward to the head of the valley, where a cascade falling over a perpendicular rock concludes the walk. From the point where the main street branches, a zig-zag road commences and terminates at the summit of Ladder Hill, forming the means of communication with the NW and SW divisions of the Island. Beside the buildings already mentioned, there is a Freemason's Lodge, and a Theatre. The inferior habitations are occupied by people who subsist principally by the fleets, and mostly keep wine shops for the accommodation of soldiers and sailors. The houses are white-washed, which, though extremely offensive to the eyes from its very powerful reflection, gives the town a cleanly appearance; and the rain which falls sometimes in great abundance, is carried off by a natural water course on its eastern side, and emptied into the ditch before mentioned, whence it escapes into the sea.

Horses may be hired, but the drawings in this book were made during an excursion on foot, it being impossible to go on horseback out of the direct road and gain the summit of the mountain in the centre of the Island, which was the principal motive for undertaking the walk. It commenced by the road from the town up the hill on the left, the

ascent being easy, and the road good and practicable for every sort of carriage; it leads to the point whence the drawing, No. 2, was taken. The rocky hill on the right, is the eminence known by the name of the High Knowle. Over the rock tumbles the cascade at the head of James Valley; and after the heavy rain of the wet season, it is sometimes very considerable. On the left, the hill on which the sketch was taken, rocky and barren as its opposite. In the vale below, a little verdure contrasted well with the ruggedness of the other parts of the scene; a short way up the side of High Knowle, a little vegetation covered the slope; but on the upper part of the mass, a blade of grass to tempt the sure-footed goat is not discernible. At the top of the High Knowle is a round tower, built and used by the Dutch as a citadel; the construction of the modern works has reduced its importance, and caused it to be disused for that purpose. From the last station, the road winds through and up a rugged defile, to the top of Rupert's ridge, and the sea breeze which has hitherto been intercepted by its height, again refreshes the traveller. The view has hitherto been bounded by the steep sides of the mountains; from hence the view expands, and looking to the NE, a number of alternate hills and vales present themselves, of rock, and without any change of hue to diversify their appearance. In a nook inland, two or three country houses presented a cheerful and enlivening scene; they were white-washed, and shrubs, greensward, and flower beds round and before them added a neatness of appearance, resembling the antient country residences in England. Continuing along the road, which now attains its greatest elevation, Diana's Peak presents itself in front, clothed with trees at the summit and some distance down its sides, finishing in scanty brushwood; grass succeeds and covers the remaining part of the declivity to the bottom of the valley, in which a number of cattle are fed. A few scattered houses seemed to boast a proprietorship, and the pasture was of such value as to be worth enclosing, which is ex-

cuted throughout the Island very neatly by means of stone walls. This pleasing scene continues about a mile, and conducts the traveller to the head of the valley; the road then declines, and turning to the eastward leads to Long Wood, the seat of the Lieutenant-Governor; it is named from its characteristic feature; a grove extending a mile in length, which is however very narrow, and comparatively low. That officer inhabits it by virtue of his situation; the same observation applies to the Governor's House, and generally to the residence of every officer in the Island.

Leaving the road and turning to the right, a foot path leads to the most elevated signal station on the Island. From this place, fleets are usually seen the evening before their arrival, and from its extreme height they always appear like white specks emerging from the ocean, and not rising, according to the usual appearance, from behind the horizon. This information was received from an intelligent signal man at the post, but at the time no vessel happened to be in sight, by which his observations might be verified; the horizon was, however, so distant as to be nearly blended with the firmament. From the signal post, the ascent becomes steeper; the declivity on each side very abrupt; that on the left particularly, where rails have been placed for security. Brushwood is first met with and then small trees. To gain the highest point of the peak, it is requisite to make use of the hands as well as feet. From beneath a tree on the ascent to the peak, the view, No. 3, was taken, during a rest after a walk, not long, but perhaps as remarkable as any in the world. In this view, the broad bluff point on the right is that whose height in a former part is stated to be 2900 feet above the level of the sea; the horizon from this point of view appearing above it; the second distance pointed, and higher, is that on the left of James's Valley in the frontispiece; but viewed from the sea, it loses its vast height, from being somewhat inland. The third distance is a huge mass of

reddish white-stone: the fourth is covered with verdure, as well as the fore-ground, in which the Signal House stands. The whole would, if covered with heather, be aptly described by a word common in descriptions of our Highland scenery; viz.—braes. The wall in the fore-ground shews that the lands are private property, and the railing on the right will identify the spot where the View was taken.

Leaving this station, the path, practicable only for foot passengers, descends along the northern side of the cross ridge that separates the two principal vales of the Island; it stands like a wall, uniting Diana's Peak to the western ridge. Looking to the south, over a natural parapet, the passenger may contemplate the scene that forms the subject of the Drawing No. 4. Diana's Peak, on the left, stretches toward the sea shore; and as far as it can be seen, its summit, continued in a steep ridge, is covered with trees and brushwood: the lower part only is included in this View. The ridge of rock that forms the distant object is wonderful for its innumerable fissures, rents, and pinnacles, and is of the darkest coloured pumice. The second distance is coloured in the Plate as it appeared at the time the drawing was taken: either from the effect of light, or the ferruginous mixture in the composition of its masses, it had a very remarkable rusty crimson tinge. The conical mass, nearly in the centre of the Picture, will identify the spot whence the View was taken. Contrasted with these extraordinary masses, the verdure of the valley, and the idea of extreme seclusion suggested by the two or three houses in it, the extraordinary height whence the whole is viewed, the horizon being almost lost in extreme distance, and the feeling (probably mechanical) constantly experienced at great elevation, communicate a mixed sensation of wonder and delight, which, though universally known and felt, are not to be communicated by the pencil of the most accomplished artist, or the powers of the most gifted poet.

From this station it is perceived that the Island is naturally divided

into two parts by vallies; the northernmost, that of James Town, which, but for the interruption at the waterfall, ascends to the foot of the Peak of Diana; the other, commencing on the south side at Sandy Bay, likewise ascends till it arrives at the foot of the cross ridge, which stands between and divides them. The Island, thus severed by Nature, is not united by the construction of any road; the foot path only is practicable, by which the tourist came from the eastern to the western road. By descending from the ridge through the pasture, a circuitous route is avoided, and the sources, whence the town is supplied with water, are discovered. Springs gush out in abundance from the side of the hill, and collecting in the bottom, form a rivulet, which having received contributions in its progress, falls over the rock at the head of James's Valley. The springs, therefore, from whence fleets stopping at St. Helena are supplied, are within 200 feet of the summit of a mountain, whose elevation is about 3500 feet above the level of the sea, its base being, without exception, on the sea shore, a black and barren rock. Crossing this rivulet and ascending to the ridge opposite the Peak, the road mentioned as affording communication to the western parts of the Island is gained; it leads to the southern valley which is the subject of Plate 4, and ends at a place called Sandy Bay. This road is as good as the eastern road, and from a point on it the last View in this Series was taken. It comprehends the High Knowle on the left; the broken cliff on the right is the same that forms the second distance in Plate No. 3; the peak of Sugar-Loaf Hill appearing over the slope, will identify the spot, in which the objects below and the small rocky elevation will assist; it will give a just idea of the size, appearance, and situation (mostly at the bottom of the vales) of the country houses in the Island. Descending the road, the Governor's House lies on the left hand, and the plantation about it is in a thriving state, and has a pleasing appearance; passing to the foot of High Knowle, the road winds to the west-

ward round its base; the summit is a military post, where an officer and party are stationed in a wooden barrack. I believe it serves also as the general powder magazine. On the slope, at its foot, some field artillery were planted, pointing down Lemon Valley, a circumstance that evidently presupposes the possibility of an enemy's effecting a landing at that point.

The descent from the Knowle, to the top of Ladder Hill, is a steep and rugged pumice-stone rock, without a path; as unreclaimed as if it had just cooled after its ejection from a crater. To an observer looking down from the battery on this hill, the decks of the ships near the shore are as much exposed as Ludgate Hill is to a person on the top of St. Paul's. Some of the guns here are very ingeniously mounted, and may be fired at a depressed angle of  $45^{\circ}$ , nearly reversing the principle by which the greatest horizontal range is obtained. These guns are intended to fire red-hot shot, and furnaces have been erected to heat them; some mortars are also planted at this place.

A short walk down the zig-zig road concludes the excursion: and while resting after rather a fatiguing expedition, the commodiousness of the houses, the goodness of the roads, the number of structures, both public and private, and the value of property accumulated on a spot so dreary and unproductive, pressed upon the consideration of the tourist, and his reflections ended in the conviction, that there scarcely exists a place, for which Nature has done so little, or where Art has accomplished so much.

The historical particulars relative to St. Helena are very few: it was discovered by the Portuguese in the year 1502, on St. Helen's Day, and her name was given to it, according to the universal practice of the early navigators of naming their discoveries from the Romish calendar. They made no settlement there, but put on shore some sheep, pigs, and poultry, to multiply and furnish supplies for the use of such ships as

might touch there, a custom that has dropped into disuse as completely as that previously mentioned. The Dutch first settled there, and remained in undisturbed possession till the year 1600, when it came into the power of the English. In 1673 the Dutch surprized and retook it; but did not long remain masters of it: for an English commander, of the name of Munden, arrived shortly after with a small squadron, and finding the landing place fortified (which is the first mention of defensive works on the shore), he landed during the night in a place supposed to be inaccessible, and appearing in the rear of the batteries in the morning, forced the astonished Dutchmen to lay down their arms and surrender at discretion. These changes were effected without bloodshed. The original designation of the principal settlement was Chapel Valley: it is still in use; but the Island having been given by the Crown to the East India Company, they called it James Town, in compliment to our second king of that name, and being the most common, is used throughout this account.

The Island is in latitude  $15^{\circ} 55' S$ , and longitude  $5^{\circ} 55' W$ , from the observation of an excellent navigator of high rank in His Majesty's service. Its shape is an indented oval, the longer axis of which lies in a direction NNW and SSE, and is about eight miles and a half in length. The medium account of its circumference is 24 miles.

The Views given of this Island will demonstrate that it is evidently of volcanic origin. The higher regions produce wood; but it never arrives to a size fit for building, and is used only for firing. The grass of these hills has been already noticed, and it is, next to water, the principal production of the Island. Corn does not succeed; and the inhabitants say it is because the grain is always destroyed in the earth by rats. Perhaps a better reason may be, that though the mould, or greensward, is good, a very few inches brings any digging utensil to the solid rock. Some cattle and sheep are bred; but they are, compared with cattle of

English pasture, small, and when killed produce very indifferent meat.

It is related that before the first settlers could get the grass to grow, they were obliged to plant furze, as a cover to protect it from the great heat of the sun. Having obtained their object, they have since rooted the furze out, and the grass remains. This story may admit of a doubt, but very plainly proves the extreme difficulty of getting any thing to take root, and will, perhaps, be considered a better reason why corn is not produced than the one usually assigned.

Fruit is the principal production, and some sorts are fine and abundant. Figs are the best; oranges and lemons, pumpkins, pomegranates, apples and pears, are also brought to market; but they are very indifferent. Peaches thrive here. Potatoes are produced; but are very small and indifferent: and the few greens attempted to be produced suffer much from the caterpillars: in short, nothing is obtained but by great exertion from this ungrateful soil.

Among the attempts to ameliorate the condition of this rock, endeavours have been made to obtain field sports, by introducing some of the game tribe; but the only bird that I could ascertain as having taken to the place and multiplied in it, was the pheasant. This bird is sometimes seen on table at the higher order of entertainments; but is excessively dear. Quails also have been brought from India, and landed here: they indeed form a part of the live stock of every Indiaman coming to this Island. A sort of partridge is found here; but hares and rabbits could not be introduced, without running the risk of having every thing green in the Island eaten up. But sporting never can be made a means of amusement in this Island; for it is quite impossible to ride, and almost to walk, any where out of the direct roads.

The air of the higher parts of the Island is pure and salubrious, and so constantly the same, that upwards of 100 years have elapsed since the

last recorded hurricane. Health and long life are the necessary consequences.

Whatever the Island enjoys beyond air, water, and water cresses, has been brought from elsewhere; and for it, is indebted to human industry and ingenuity.

In the sea round St. Helena, at the anchorage particularly, vast quantities of fish are caught; but they are all large and coarse, such as the albicore, dolphin, and bonetta, which are seldom eaten but by the lowest of the community. The smaller ones are better, as mackerel, sprats, and several other different kinds; the most remarkable of which is the bottle fish; it has the power of inflating its belly to a surprising degree: it is about twelve inches long, and taken in deep water. All these fish are caught in great abundance by seamen, who bait with their salt pork; but they are so indigestible, that after eating them, a violent flush in the face frequently comes on, which they call being poisoned. The affection is not dangerous, and is always cured by an application of a large dose of the sailor's catholicon, a dram. Turtle, as there is no sandy beach, is very scarce; it is never taken but when it is asleep. At Ascension, as well as every other place within the tropics where there is a sandy beach, the turtles go on shore always during the night to lay their eggs. At this season they are preferred; and they are turned by people who watch them come out of the sea, which they do many at a time. If unmolested, they deposit one, two, or three thousand eggs in the sand, and retire; the sun hatches them. Hundreds of the calipee, or under shells of the chicken turtle, are found on the beach of Ascension; the remains of the young animals which have been arrested by birds of prey in their first attempt to gain their native element.

The administration of the affairs of the Island is committed to a Governor, assisted by a Lieutenant-Governor; his authority is however undivided, and the government approaches nearer to a full military form

than perhaps any other British dependency. The Governor, it has been remarked, resides in the western, and the Lieutenant-Governor in the eastern district of the country: an officer, third in importance, who always officiates in military costume, with the title of Town Major, has charge of all affairs therein. He is at the head of the police, and soldiers are his peace officers. A battalion of infantry and two or three companies of artillery compose the regular garrison; but every man on the Island is obliged to turn out as a militia man. There is one clergyman on the Island, and his assistant combines the offices of clerk and sexton. The place of Vendue Master is of some importance. All the offices in the Island are in the Company's gift; its sovereignty and almost the whole private property is theirs. All the Company's servants have houses attached to their offices, and are paid as men must be who renounce the rest of the world to live in exile on a rock. Without permission, no strangers are allowed to land, to settle, or to exercise any calling in the Island; this is, however, granted to some merchants and artizans.

The few inhabitants who are natives, descend from the original settlers of Dutch extraction, some French protestant refugees, and some English settlers of the time of Charles and James II. They are served by negro slaves, who, with soldiers' wives and children, make the whole civil population amount to a little upward of two thousand persons. The laws for the regulation of the whole colony are military; or, at least, all authority is in the hands of the Governor; civil law is in force, though seldom heard of; a black gown is never seen.

The Company's mercantile business is extremely insignificant; and whatever customs or duties they levy, a very small return is made of the vast sums their establishment costs them. In their Godowns are lodged a large quantity of stores from China, consisting of teas, sugar-candy, nankeens, and silks. From India, quantities of pepper

spices, muslins, handkerchiefs, long cloths, gingham, and the long list of other articles from both those countries. From England, two store ships in the year touch there, and deposit vast quantities of provisions; for not only the garrison, but the inhabitants depend principally on the Company's stock of flour, pease, oatmeal, salt beef, and pork, for subsistence. This vast collection is carried off by the retail dealers on the Island itself; by North Americans, who bring provisions which are always saleable, and procure in return the produce of the East at this place, rather than make the longer and more precarious voyages to India and China; and by the Portuguese and Spaniards of South America.

To supply the retail dealers in goods, and the inhabitants in general with provisions, the Company's Godowns are opened on certain days, when they must attend and make their purchases. Except on these days, the Store-houses are never opened without an order from the Governor. The Company's prices are fixed, and from them no deviation is made.

The business of the auctioneer is to dispose of such stores as have remained in the Godowns till they are damaged, as well as those injured on ship board. But his place being a monopoly, every person who has goods to dispose of must apply to him; and the effects of deceased persons exposed to sale are necessarily knocked down by his official hammer. The Company then, dealing in this wholesale way, leave the retail business in the hands of the merchants settled there, and consequently every thing requisite in commerce, for dress, the table, furniture, and all the elegancies and conveniences of civilized life, form the assortment of commodities in which they deal.

Provisions thus collected from every part of the world, must necessarily be dear. Cattle and sheep are brought from the Cape, and sold at about one third the price of those bred on the Island. Fresh meat at the Cape being four-pence a pound and in St. Helena never less than one

shilling, and usually 1s. 3d., i. e. a quarter of a dollar. At the public house in the Square a dinner for one person, composed of a small fish, with salted butter, and potatoes, cold meat, and one bottle of beer, cost 13s. The prices were regulated by a schedule in the eating room, and were therefore what every body must pay who from choice or necessity visits it. Apples have been mentioned as produced in this Island: six-pence each was their price in the market. The accommodation of a bed for the night is not to be had. In the dinner it may be remarked, that water was the only thing contributed by the Island itself, and the fish from the sea round it; the mutton from the Cape, and every thing else from England.

Before the annexation of the Cape of Good Hope to the British dominions, the slaughtering a bullock was a state affair; the Governor's fiat was necessary, and I believe is so now in some measure; but porkers may be killed without any ceremony; and it is not at all in their favour, that a number of Jews are mixed among the population of the Island. Being cramped at all points in the matter of eating, the soldiers, sailors, and populace make themselves amends by indulging in copious libations of Cape wine, which is abundant, cheap, and good.

From the preceding observations on the produce of the Island, it will be obvious that little can be obtained for the refreshment of ships' companies after long voyages. The price of meat is such, that commanders of His Majesty's ships seldom authorise their pursers to purchase it oftener than twice a week. Potatoes are given to the ships' companies of Indiamen once or twice during their stay; but are so small, that they seem to have undergone the process by which the Irish cottagers separate the larger productions of their fields from the smaller; the first being eaten in the cottage, the last in the pigsty.

Turtle is the best fresh meat that can be procured, or given to seamen, in tropical climates: but though it is taken much pains with,

vegetables, wines, and seasoning being put into the soup—though they eat and are thankful—yet the incorrigible varlets always prefer *the wing of an ox!*

In fine, St. Helena is a rock dedicated to the love of gain. Some lucrative situations induce the superior officers to remain there for years; merchants also, and both classes, may amass much money. Military discipline keeps the inferior ranks in order. Where getting money is the sole object of life, it is not to be expected that any of it is wasted in the display of hospitality, which, in all probability, can never be repaid. Whoever, therefore, may visit this Island, either from curiosity or inclination, will soon be troubled with a violent inclination to get away.

Yet a short visit to St. Helena is not unpleasant, if chosen at the time of the arrival of the India and China fleets. That period is the carnival of the whole Island: it is their golden harvest; and if they happen to reap more than their consciences quite approve, they no doubt in the ensuing Lent quiet them as efficaciously as the revellers of Venice or Naples, without the assistance of a confessor. The scene is worth a description. The manners of an English settlement are but as a part of a whole. At St. Helena, the officers and their families form the principal part of the society, in which there is a large proportion of ladies educated in England; it is therefore decent, if not highly polished, and most acceptable to passengers from ship board after a long voyage.

The alarm of a fleet being in sight makes every one fly to their post, many of them not very agreeable to people whose fingers itch to be turning money. Here they remain till the commander has been hailed from, and returned a satisfactory answer to, Buttermilk Point, which is communicated to the Governor; and the Islanders return to their usual avocations. The arrival of the fleet is particularly a pleasing

sight. The anchorage is small; and to get in without damage, it is absolutely necessary that the ships follow each other at such a distance as to give the headmost one time to anchor before the next arrives at her birth, and so in succession. The few days of trade wind, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, (it should be called by its first name, the Cape of Storms,) is diligently spent in painting and brushing up, and they arrive at St. Helena "all fine."

The Islanders enjoy the sight as a token of good things to come. James Town is generally uninhabited by any who have country seats; but at this season each house is garnished and fitted to receive the numerous acquaintance and passengers they expect in the fleet, while every species of eatable marches by general consent to the metropolis to be devoured. Captains and passengers, in haste to escape from their respective ships, flock to the Government House, where his Excellency waits to receive them; the interview has all the requisites of a complete levee, bowing and compliment, crowding and jostling, and introducing, questions not intended to be answered, and answers to questions never intended to be asked. This important affair settled, the arrivals take possession of their furnished houses, and endeavour to make up by pleasant parties for the privations of the voyage from India; by chit-chat, the rendezvous for which is at the entrance of the government gardens, and morning parties to the interior, of which the chief attraction is usually an excellent cold collation; but the main business of an East Indian life being to dine well, that most important affair is reserved till the afternoon, that our gentlemen may ameliorate the labours of the board and the bottle by a short transition to the society of the females.

An established custom obliges the Governor to give a dinner to the gentlemen, and conclude it with a ball in the evening for the ladies. The Lieutenant-Governor is expected, when they happen to be both in the Island, to do the same. There are generally two or three balls given on

board the Indiamen, and many dinners. In short, the Haute Monde spend their time very agreeably; the mates and crews of the Indiamen are employed in landing the company's goods for their store-houses; watering, and managing their private trade. The commercial people on shore meet the traders of the ships, and much private business is done. In general, cheerful faces and much bustle prevail; here and there a measured step and lengthened visage give very unequivocal symptoms of having made a bad venture.

The convoy for the fleet is usually a 64-gun ship; and it may be asked how the crew of this ship pass their time in this scene of business and amusement? The Captain is generally with the Governor; the ward-room class, as their table is constant, though they spend much time on shore, rather give than receive entertainments; the inferior officers spend all their time they are allowed in rambling about the Island, and in the house of public entertainment. Some of the ship's company, by turns, are landed in Lemon Valley always early in the morning, where they amuse themselves picking water-cresses, the only thing procurable on the Island gratuitously. They are also indulged in the afternoon with leave to go on shore.

The Midshipmen of the different ships meet and enjoy themselves together, and sometimes after debating the respective merits of the two services, cement their friendship by a boxing match that would do credit to Moulsey Hurst. Of this proscribed class, none ever find their way into the superior circles, unless now and then a captain's follower; a new term for a guinea-pig; a useless animal, that having been dismissed the East India service as a nuisance, has housed itself in the navy. This active scene, so highly interesting to the men, is not entirely without its charms for the ladies. The Governor's ball gives them an opportunity of setting their caps to the best advantage, and many an unwary batchelor becomes inextricably enthralled by the syrens of St.

Helena. It has been usual to represent Love as always taking his station in bowers wreathed of roses and lilies, and other pretty things of the like nature: but he now and then takes a trip to St. Helena, and he certainly must have been hid among the rocks in the year 1809. He shot, with his bandage on, at the Governor's ball, and transfixed a jolly toper, whose age, to say the best of it, trembled between the right and wrong side of forty. His charmer's might be just as doubtful whether it was above or below twenty. Here was fearful odds; but the lover *perhaps* knew that Cupid had seldom stood squinting and ogling long, when he had the advantage of being perched on the money-bags of a supercargo; with those for a foundation, he borrowed Rosalind's "Ladder to Matrimony;" and before the fleet sailed, the Island parson had done all he could to make him completely happy. But this, however, out of English routine, is nothing new; James Town is very prettily situated for encouraging inflammatory complaints of this nature; and many years ago, a fit brought on Commodore Thompson, of poetical memory, by a pair of sparkling eyes, produced the popular ballad—

Tell her I'll love her while the clouds drop rain,  
Or while there's water in the pathless main;  
Tell her I'll love her till this life is o'er,  
And then my ghost shall visit this sweet shore\*.

Tell her I'll only ask she'll think of me;  
I'll love her while there's motion in the sea:  
Tell her all this, tell it her o'er and o'er,  
The anchor's up, or I would tell her more.

Vide the\* sweet shore, and mark the winding-up of this affair. The Commodore was, at the time he wrote the sonnet, a Guinea Pig: on his arrival in the Downs, he entered on board a man of war, where the humours of a cockpit soon extinguished the fire of his Pegasus.

At this time too the play-house is put in requisition, and many a laughter-moving tragedy is performed, as well as farces, that provoke any thing but mirth. A company of players, aptly denominated strollers, had pitched on St. Helena, by some strange accident, at the time these notes were made. They were reinforced from the garrison and shipping with amateurs at least as accomplished as Mr. Coates. Among these recruits appeared as extraordinary a fellow for extent and versatility of talent in low life as ever figured on a stage. On board his ship he was the head of the police, vigilant, cunning, and active, to a degree that would have qualified him to be right-hand man to Fouché, Duke of Otranto, with as few qualms of conscience. These gentry are seldom troubled with much morality; nor had he more than the rest; yet, local circumstances taking a religious turn, he soon placed himself at the head of all psalm-singing and other devotional exercises; a good gravedigger, sexton, and undertaker. A young gentleman happened to be drowned at China, and a monument was wanted. Proteus came forward, bricklayer, mason, and plasterer; and put out of hand a tomb that would have done credit to an English church-yard. His masonic powers extended to the Lodge, where he could parody his more serious musical performances in a style peculiar to himself. After showing off in numberless other characters, the company of players at St. Helena put forth their bills:—"The Padlock; the part of Mungo by a Gentleman of the Fleet:" and to give Mungo his due, he was the best performer among them. Proteus appeared on the stage again.

The fleet season is, therefore, fully occupied with business and pleasure; and it is calculated by a merchant, who had good means for the purpose, that £12,000 were received by the inhabitants of the place from a fleet that had stayed but a fortnight, for refreshment. At other times the families, both of the Islanders and military, being much scattered, have little intercourse with each other; but as there are numbers,

it must be their own faults if they do not associate and live together on good terms.

As water is the staple commodity of the Island, it may be observed, that the springs about a century ago were so nearly dried up, that one eighth part of the population perished in the space of two months; if this notice should fall into the hands of mariners, it may be of service to them to know, that after rain the water that comes down the valley is highly discoloured as if with chalk; if they allow their casks to be filled while it is in this state, their ships' companies will be liable to dysentery from the use of it.

While a rival and hostile company was in possession of the Cape of Good Hope, it was absolutely necessary that St. Helena should be kept in a state of defence, capable of repelling any attack that a foreign power could make upon it. Without some point to divide the voyage from India, ships must have supplied themselves with water and provisions for twenty-four weeks at least. The Island lies in such a situation as to divide the whole passage in the proportions of three and two, i. e. from twelve to fifteen weeks from India to St. Helena, and from eight to ten from thence to England. But whole fleets relying on this place for a supply of water, only provide as much as will serve their purpose; if, therefore, on their arrival, they should find the Island possessed by an enemy, a surrender, perhaps unconditional, or a recapture of the Island, would be the only alternative, for it is at so vast a distance from any place where water can be procured, that they could by almost no possibility reach one before every person on board expired of thirst. If left totally unoccupied, it would afford a point from whence an active squadron might intercept nearly all the trade from India. No half measure will do; it must be fortified and garrisoned to rely on itself, or be left to a squadron stationed there. After all, St. Helena must be possessed by that power whose navy preponderates.

But it is not merely as a place of refreshment, and a rendezvous for cruisers, that St. Helena is of importance. Should the British even find it necessary to act in any way on the coast of South America, this is the place of all others most proper for the assemblage of the necessary means; any number of men might be assembled and encamped on the Island, with a moral certainty that when wanted for action, scarcely a man would be inefficient from sickness.

The season of the year for doubling Cape Horn, or going through the Straights of Magellan is ascertained; and the voyage that totally destroyed the fleets both of Anson and his Spanish Adversary, may now be undertaken with every prospect of easy execution and a favourable result. A trade wind, that may be depended on almost to a certainty, will insure a rate of sailing, to every point of the eastern coast of South America, of five miles an hour to the dullest transport, and affords the datum from which to calculate and adjust projected measures to the season proper for their execution. It may be added, that it is perhaps the only spot throughout the widely extended dominions of this empire, whence an expedition could sail with an absolute certainty of keeping its destination secret. Its importance in this point of view will remain unaltered, though, in all probability, the whole of its commercial interest will be transferred to the Cape of Good Hope.

It only remains to consider it as a place of confinement for the extraordinary prisoner now on his voyage thither. "However difficult," it is said, "to get away, it may be accomplished." It is true that obstacles usually reckoned insurmountable, are sometimes overcome by ingenious and persevering men; force, stratagem, bribery, compassion, and all their subordinates, range themselves naturally on the side of the prisoner, while the whole art of the Janitor is reducible to one article, incessant vigilance. In the present state of the fortifications, with a line of signal posts extending quite round the Island, it will be admitted that it can

neither be forced nor surprised from without, except in consequence of the most culpable negligence. This cannot be supposed for a moment.

It then remains to be enquired, what means there are in the Island which may conduce to and enable him to effect his escape from it. Two instances only have occurred where attempts have succeeded to get away without permission. The first occurred in the year 1693, when a band of mutineers assassinated the governor, detained his deputy and some of the principal inhabitants as hostages, till they had levied contributions on the inhabitants; and having plundered the treasury, embarked in the only ship in the Roads, which they had previously secured, and effected their escape. The other escape was accomplished by a sergeant of artillery in 1799, with five privates. They were taken off the Island by the master of an American ship, and proceeded to sea in a whale boat, expecting to be taken on board. Being disappointed, they bore away for the Brazils; and on the 29th day were cast on shore near Porto Siguro. The ring-leader died by suicide, and two others were drowned.

Napoleon Bonaparte, placed by his late brother Sovereigns "without the pale of civil relations," an outlaw and a wanderer, after waging against this country a war, of which "Delenda est Carthago" was the political basis, and became a proverb in the mouths of the Parisians, and the acknowledged aim of the French army and people, has thrown himself on it for an asylum, depending on its magnanimity. He is a state prisoner, in whose safe custody every sovereign and every nation in Europe is interested; and he should be kept as far as possible from the admiring curiosity of the many of all countries. For this purpose, as a place where he may be securely confined, with a due regard to the national character for magnanimity, the dominions of Great Britain do not offer a more eligible place than St. Helena.

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