

## CHAPTER III.

PASSAGE TO THE CAPE.—FUEL FOR STEAMERS.—TABLE BAY AND CAPE TOWN.—DESCRIPTION OF CAPE TOWN.—CLIMATE.—AVOIDANCE FROM DUTY.—VIOLENCE OF WINDS AND DIFFICULTY OF HOLDING TO ANCHORAGE.—SUPPLIES AT THE CAPE.—CAPE WAR AND ITS EFFECTS.—MODE OF TRANSPORTING PRODUCE ON LAND.—VINEYARDS OF CONSTANTIA.—EFFECTS OF EMANCIPATION BY SLAVES ON AGRICULTURAL LABOR.—MODE OF CULTIVATING THE VINE.—POPULATION OF CAPE COLONY.—BUSINESSES.—THE CAPTIVES.—PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.—FISHERIES.—MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF CAPTIVES.—CONDITION OF THE EMANCIPATED SLAVES.—DEPARTURE FROM TABLE BAY.—PASSAGE TO, AND ARRIVAL AT, MAURITIUS.—HARBOR OF PORT LOUIS.—DANGERS OF THE HARBOR.—SKILL OF PORT OFFICERS IN MOORING VESSELS.



FTER leaving St. Helena the ship was put on her course for the Cape of Good Hope. Prudential considerations alone induced the Commodore to touch at St. Helena. His opinion was that the best and most expeditious route for a steamer, going from Madeira to the Cape, (provided she can carry a sufficiency of coal,) is to be found by steering from the Cape de Vent islands direct toward Cape Palmas on the coast of Africa, and thence tracing the shore down to Table Bay.

On leaving Jamestown the ship encountered the trade, deviating very little from the southeast, and blowing alternately moderate and fresh. It was observable, however, that it was always stronger at night than in the day time, and brought with it a short head sea, which greatly retarded the progress of the vessel. It would have been easy to increase the steam power; but experience had shown that about twenty-six tons of coal per diem enabled the ship to accomplish the greatest distance with the most economical expenditure; and considering the extreme difficulty of procuring fuel in that region, its enormous cost, and the labor and delay incident to its shipment, the Commodore deemed it most expedient rather to protract the passage than allow extravagance in the use of an article so essential to the movements of the vessel. A current of one and a quarter knots was found setting in the direction of the wind, and this, as a retarding cause, was to be added to the force of the trade.

As to the possibility of obtaining a supply of fuel in this part of the world, it may be remarked that at St. Paul de Loango the English maintain a depot of coal for the accommodation of the African steam cruisers, and this would be a convenient point to which to send a coal vessel from the United States. Within a few years a depot of coal has been established

by an English company at Port Grand, Island of St. Vincent, of the Cape de Verde group, and it is said that a reasonable supply can always be obtained there by transient steamers.

Steamers from the United States might proceed direct to St. Vincent's, provided there be certainty of obtaining coal at that place, and thence proceed to the Cape by Cape Palmas, via Loango; but it is much better that cargoes of coal should be sent ahead of steamers leaving the United States, as the only security for a certain supply.

As to the route from England, that which is prescribed for her mail steamers bound round the Cape of Good Hope, is to touch at St. Vincent, and thence proceed to the Cape, via Ascension Island, replenishing their coal at all their stopping places. In pursuing this route, (which they are compelled to do to leave a mail at Ascension for the African squadron,) they are obliged to contend with the entire range of the southeast trades, which are directly ahead, blowing most of the time quite strongly, and always producing a lee current of from one to one and a quarter knots. By taking the route along the African coast a steamer has the advantage of the sea and land breezes, and the favorable current usually setting to the south.

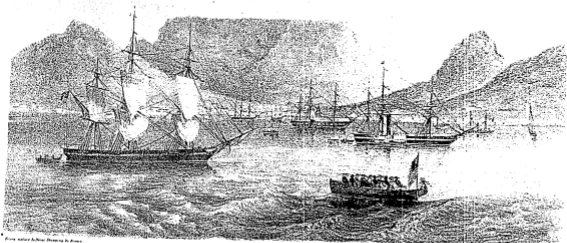
On the 24th of January, at nine in the morning, the ship made the land in the vicinity of Saldanha bay, and at two p. m. Table Mountain was in sight. After passing outside of Dassen Island, and through the channel between the main land and Robben's Island, at half past eight p. m. the ship came to anchor in Table Bay in seven fathoms, and the following day moved further in toward the town.

This port is easy of access either by night or day, if the two lights can be distinctly seen, so that the distance from Green Point can be accurately estimated. This is important, as by bordering upon that point too closely there is danger of a ledge of rocks near the Cape shore, and by keeping too far to the northward, the Whale Rock, at the southern end of Robben's Island, may bring a vessel up. Particular instructions for entering Table Bay at night will be found in the Appendix.

The Cape of Good Hope was first discovered by Bartholomew Diaz, a Portuguese, in 1483. During an exploration of the Atlantic coast of Africa, this navigator was driven out to sea by a storm, and the first land he made, after the subsidence of the gale, was Algoa Bay; he having thus doubled the Cape without his knowledge. Diaz gave the name of Cabo Tormentoso (the Cape of Storms) to the Cape, which was afterwards changed to that of Good Hope by the king of Portugal, as he rightly thought the discovery auspicious of a favorable result to the great prospect entertained by the Portuguese navigators of reaching India. In 1497, Vasco da Gama, another Portuguese navigator, doubled the Cape on his voyage to the Indian seas.

The Cape of Good Hope forms the southern extremity of a narrow peninsula about thirty miles in length, with the Atlantic ocean on the west, False Bay on the east, and Table Bay on the north. Cape Town is situated on Table Bay, and was originally founded by the Dutch in 1650, but fell into the hands of the English in 1795; and, it having been restored to its original possessors after the peace of Amiens, was finally retaken by the British in 1806, in whose possession it now remains.

The town is well built with substantial houses of stone and brick, and wide, regular streets. The general aspect of the place, with its well constructed public buildings and private residences, and its park, in the neighborhood of the government house, shaded by oaks of magnificent growth, is exceedingly agreeable.



From the Harbor of New York, N.Y.

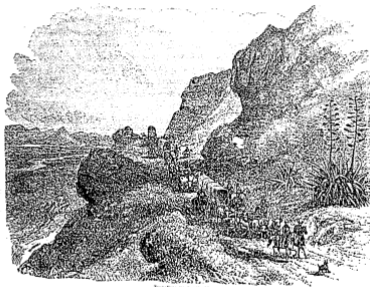
THE TOWN AND TABLE MOUNTAIN

The heat, however, in consequence of the position of the town, which is faced by the noonday sun and walled in behind by naked mountains, is excessive. This, added to the dust, caused those who went on shore to keep much within doors, so that Cape Town was found by the officers of the expedition but a dull and stupid place. The streets are unpaved, and, consequently, when the southeast gales, which prevail in midsummer, blow, the dust is raised in clouds and deposited in drifts of sand along the sidewalks several inches in depth, which keeps the street sweepers in constant occupation, who may be seen continually at work collecting the dirt in heaps, to be carried away by the dirt carts. So general is the experience of this nuisance from the dust that the male, as well as the female inhabitants, of all classes, are in the practice of wearing veils attached to their hats. The northeastern winds, which prove in raising the dust of such discomfort to the residents of Cape Town, prevail during midsummer, and their approach is always indicated by the appearance of a dense white cloud, which settles upon the summit of Table Mountain, therefore called the Table Cloth, and remains there until the gale subsides. These winds blow with great violence, sweeping along the land east of Table Mountain. If it were not for the perfect smoothness of the water in Table Bay, vessels would not be able to hold to their anchors during these southeasterly gales, of which two were experienced in the course of seven days, while the Mississippi was lying at Cape Town. Such is the severity of these winds that all business in the harbor is suspended during their height.

The town seemed to be in a highly prosperous condition, business of every kind was flourishing, and there was a general appearance of affluence among the government officials, and the high rents, among other indications, show the prosperous condition of trade. Handsome equipages are constantly seen in the streets, and the prosperity is so universal that even the lowest classes are hardly known to suffer from want. The Cape of Good Hope is of great commercial importance to Great Britain as a convenient rendezvous for her cruisers stationed in the neighborhood, and as a stopping place for vessels bound to and from the Indian Ocean. Excellent water, fresh provisions, fruit and other necessaries can be obtained in any quantity and at reasonable prices. Wood is scarce, but almost every description of article usually needed by vessels may be procured from the numerous well stocked stores and warehouses at Cape Town. Live stock can be readily obtained, bullocks at £6 per head and sheep at 15 shillings. The Mississippi was supplied with twelve of the former and eighteen of the latter at these prices.

Since the abolition of slavery in the British colonies the agricultural interests of the Cape have suffered, and although the commerce of some few of the colonial ports continues thriving, as, for example, that of Cape Town, the interior of the country has declined in prosperity, there being at present but few examples of prosperous farming, in consequence of a want of laborers. The agricultural condition of the country has also suffered from the effects of the war carried on between the British colonists and the Caffres, which, although it has enriched the merchants and tradesmen by the large expenditure of public money, has impoverished the farmers by depriving them of the necessary laborers, and by unsettling the tranquillity of the country. The consequence has been that many of the farms have been allowed to run to waste, and though the soil is capable of producing Indian corn, wheat, barley, oats, and several other descriptions of grain, such has been the unfavorable influence of the cause alluded to that the home consumption of these products is not fully provided for. There are, however, some articles produced for exportation, among which may be enumerated wine, hides, tallow and wool. The farming is chiefly of a grazing character, and vast herds of cattle, sheep, horses and mules are

raised. At Cape Town horses can be obtained at a price varying from thirty to one hundred and fifty dollars, and mules from thirty to seventy-five dollars. The cattle, which are indigenous to the country, somewhat resemble the buffalo in appearance, and the sheep are of the broad tailed species, which are highly esteemed for the excellence of their meat. The large teams of oxen passing to and from the city are characteristic objects at Cape Town. These teams are composed often of seven, eight, or even nine yoke, and are guided by two teamsters, one seated in front of a wagon, not unlike the wagons generally in use in Pennsylvania, where he urges the animals along by his voice and a long lash, while the other precedes the team, holding a halter fastened to the horns of the two leaders, with which he guides them. The arrangement of the team for an excursion of greater length is somewhat different, as then horsemen accompany it. The wagon, however, is the same. The ox of the Cape is a servicable animal, which has a good deal of the general aspect of the buffalo, with long horns, a compact body and tapering rump.



*Twelve in South Africa.*

The Commodore, accompanied by some of his officers, took occasion to visit one of the celebrated vineyards of Constantia, having provided himself with a barouche drawn by four beautiful stallions, driven four-in-hand by a negro boy, who evinced much skill in handling the reins. The drive was through a picturesque country, with pretty villas scattered about, and approached by beautiful avenues formed of the oak and the fir, which trees are raised from the seed, and generally cultivated in the colony, not only for ornamental purposes, but for fuel. Substantial hedges were also observed, formed of the young oak, of only three year's growth

from the acorn. The vineyard visited was of limited extent and the culture of a character that somewhat disappointed the expectations of the visitors.

The proprietor accounted for the inferior condition of his vineyard on the score of being unable to provide himself with the necessary supply of laborers, and remarked that he should be obliged to abandon the cultivation of the grape altogether had he not supplied himself with an American cultivator, which he had recently imported from the United States, and which simple plough, as he stated, drawn by a single horse, actually accomplished the labor of fifty men, according to the usual mode of working and cultivating the vine with a hoe. The grape is cultivated at Constantia, as in Sicily, by trimming the vine close to the ground, and not permitting it to grow higher than a gooseberry bush. The richness of the wine is dependent upon the condition of the grape when it goes to the press. Although the grape begins to ripen in the early part of February, it is not gathered until the middle of March, when the fruit has assumed almost the appearance of the dried raisin, in which condition it is pressed. The prices of these Constantia wines vary from two to six dollars a gallon, according to their quality.

The census of 1848 gives 200,546 as the population of Cape Colony. Of these 76,827 whites and 101,176 colored inhabitants make up the whole number of the inhabitants of the various parts of the colony, with the exception of Cape Town, which contains a population of 22,543. There are but few of the aboriginal Hottentots of pure race to be found, as their blood has been intermingled with that of the Dutch, the Negro, or the Malay. The first European discoverer of the southern promontory of Africa found it tolerably well peopled, and the natives, in some respects, in better condition than many of the more northern tribes. They were in possession of herds of cattle and sheep, and led a pastoral life. They were a comparatively happy people, divided into tribes under a patriarchal government, and wandered about with their flocks and herds, taking with them their moveable huts, constructed of boughs and poles, which were conveyed from pasture to pasture on the backs of oxen. Their tribes, however, have been mostly exterminated by the cruelty of the Europeans, although a wretched remnant have survived and live as miserable outcasts in the fastnesses of the desert and the forest, and are known as Bushmen. They are still savage in character, and disgusting in their persons and habits, having received but little benefit from the civilization of their white conquerors, who have always pursued them with a cruel wantonness, "though we, as Americans," remarks Commodore Perry, "have no right to rail at other nations for the wrong they have inflicted upon the aborigines of countries seized upon by them, for though hardly equal to the English in the disgusting hypocrisy with which they excuse their acts, we are not far behind them in the frauds and cruelties committed upon our native tribes."

The war-like Caffres still retain their characteristic wildness, and pursue their predatory life. They are in many respects inferior to the ordinary African, and have some of the peculiarities of the Egyptian races. They are of greater height and strength than the inferior negro; their color is browner, and though their hair is black and woolly they have fuller beards. Their noses are more prominent, but they have the thick negro lip, and with the prominent cheek bone of the Hottentots they possess the high European forehead. The Fingoes, though traced in origin to some scattered tribes of the Caffres, differ from them in some degree, and although spirited and brave in battle, are of a less savage nature, and have the character of being a comparatively good natured people. The Fingoes are pastoral like the Caffres, but more given

to the culture of the land, in which the men engage as well as the women, although this kind of labor is confined among the Caffres to the females alone. On the return of the Commodore



Caffre Chief.



Caffre Woman.

from Constantia, he stopped to pay a visit to a captive chief and his wife, whom the fortune of war had thrown into the hands of the Europeans. The chief was confined in a sort of country jail, at no great distance from the town. The keeper of the prison very civilly allowed free communication with the prince, a remarkably fine looking negro, about twenty-five years of age, who had been accompanied to imprisonment by his favorite wife and confidential lieutenant, who also had a similar companion to cheer his captivity. These women were counterparts of the men in good looks. Subsequently, Mr. Brown, one of the artists of the expedition, visited the prison and secured excellent likenesses of the prince and his wife.



African Chief.

African Chief, Sepah.



Wife of Sepah.

The war carried on by the English with the Hottentots and Caffres, which has continued so long, costing an immense amount of blood and treasure, is still prolonged by the obstinacy of the blacks. The whole frontier has been already devastated, and although there is some hope of bringing about a peace, no one believes that any treaty that may be made will be respected longer by the negroes than may suit their convenience. In the last battle, at the date of the visit of the Mississippi, in which the English force, headed by General Cathcart himself, was victorious, it is said that the Caffre chief brought into action six thousand foot and two thousand horse. These numbers are probably exaggerated, but it is well known that the blacks have acquired a tolerable organization, and that they are well supplied with arms and ammunition. They have hitherto had an abundance of provision, obtained from their own herds or from those stolen from the whites, but report says that, owing to the carelessness and waste always attendant upon the military movements of savages, the supply of food is running short with them. The English declare that the Caffres have been instructed in the art of war by numerous deserters from the British army and by a French missionary settled among them, who passed his early life in the army. Allusion has already been made to the disastrous effects of the war upon the agricultural and other resources of the country.

The principal white inhabitants of Cape Town are the government officials, army officers, and merchants and tradesmen. The laboring class is composed of the mixed races, the Malays, Coolies, and the negroes. The emancipated negroes and their descendants are very much in character and condition like the free blacks in the United States, though by no means as intelligent and good looking. They are perfectly independent of all restraint, so long as they do not violate the laws. They work when it suits them, and at their own prices, and break off from their labor if spoken to in a manner which they deem offensive. Their ordinary charge for labor is \$1 25 for a day of ten hours.

The Mississippi having taken on board from the ship *Faneuil Hall* a supply of coal, and a good supply of bullocks and sheep, and having filled the water tanks, left Table Bay at eleven o'clock, a. m., on the 31 February. On getting fairly out of the harbor, the wind was found to be blowing strong from the westward, with a heavy swell setting in from that quarter. In seven hours after leaving Table Bay the steamer was off the pitch of the Cape, whence, having Cape Hanglip full in sight, her course was directed southeast, in order to reach the parallel of thirty-seven degrees of latitude, to avoid the southeast gales which prevail near the Cape, and cause a strong current to the northward and westward, and to meet the variables which are found south of the border of the southeast trades.

For the first three days after leaving the Cape the wind blew from the northwest to the southwest until the steamer reached the latitude of  $30^{\circ} 16'$  S., and the longitude of  $23^{\circ} 40'$  E., when it changed to the northward and eastward, rather northwardly, and so remained to the latitude of  $35^{\circ} 06'$ , and longitude  $44^{\circ} 03'$ . At this latter point the wind gradually hauled to the southward, allowing the course of the ship to be inclined more to the northward, until the southeast trades were met. The Commodore, however, fearing that the wind might back again to the eastward, was careful not to make too much northing, lest he might fall to the leeward of Mauritius, thus losing the benefit of a fair wind, which not only increases the rate of going of a steamer, as of a sailing vessel, but also saves the fuel of the former. From the 11th to the 14th of February, inclusive, the wind continued from the southward and eastward, and at the latter date the ship reached latitude  $29^{\circ} 34'$ , and longitude  $55^{\circ} 22'$ , from which period to her arrival

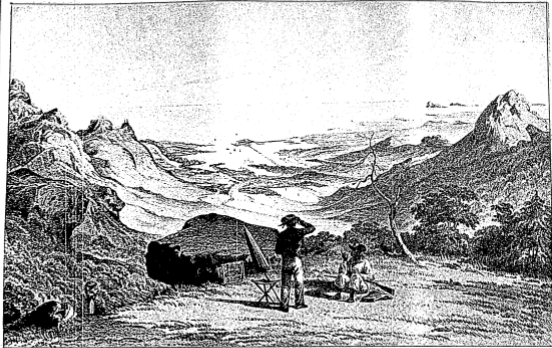
at Port Louis on the 18th the wind hung to the northward and eastward, the trades having entirely failed. The weather throughout the passage was fine, the barometer varying from  $29^{\circ} 80'$  to  $29^{\circ} 95'$ , the thermometer from  $74^{\circ}$  to  $84^{\circ}$ , the currents setting with the wind, and running at about three-quarters of a knot per hour.

There is no reason to doubt the correctness of the opinion of Horsburgh, to the effect that the best route for a sailing ship bound from the Cape of Good Hope to Mauritius is that in which nearly the whole, if not all, the easting is made between the parallels of  $35^{\circ}$  and  $38^{\circ}$  of latitude, and the southeast trades are struck between the latitude of  $27^{\circ}$  and the longitude of  $53^{\circ}$  or  $57^{\circ}$ . This course brings vessels well to the windward, and enables them to fetch the island of Mauritius without difficulty, provided the trade winds do not haul north of E. by N. In the passage of the Mississippi the wind actually hauled as far as N.N.E., an occurrence not usual at the season, when northerly and northwesterly winds frequently prevail from Madagascar toward and beyond the island of Bourbon, (or, as it is now termed, Réunion,) and Mauritius.

The question has been agitated as to whether it is advisable for steamers to make this curve in their route to Mauritius, or to steam directly from the Cape to the island, passing close round Cape Agulhas. The Commodore is decidedly of the opinion that, unless the steamer be one of first-rate speed, it would be unwise to take the direct route, in which she would have to contend against a strong trade wind and its consequent current. The difference between the two routes is about 240 miles, which would hardly seem to compensate for the loss occasioned by head winds and currents, leaving out of consideration the advantage of the cooler and more agreeable weather of the southern passage. The mail, and indeed all the European steamers, have usually taken the latter route; and the *Susquehanna*, which attempted the direct course, although a faster steamer than the Mississippi, had a passage of seventeen days, while the Mississippi, of inferior powers and speed, made the run by the other course in fifteen days.

The Mississippi, in doubling the Cape of Good Hope in midsummer, escaped any very heavy blow, although hardly a week passes without a gale from some quarter. Horsburgh remarks, in regard to the weather, that "in the storms off the Cape Bank and to the eastward, the sea is turbulent, and then generally accompanied with a black overcast sky; when they are about to commence, and during their continuance, numbers of albatross, petrels, and other oceanic birds, are seen flying about, although in moderate weather few are perceived, for at this time they rest on the surface of the sea to fish, which they cannot do in a storm."

Nothing was observed of a remarkable character in a meteorological point of view. The temperature of the air and water gave similar indications to those in corresponding northern latitudes. The barometer gave due notice of all the various changes of weather, and proved of great utility. There is a peculiarity in the action of this instrument in the neighborhood of the Cape, and in that part of the route across the Indian Ocean as far as the Equator, of which Horsburgh thus remarks: "In the vicinity of the Cape Bank, and in most parts of the southern hemisphere, the mercury rises with northerly and falls with southerly winds; these latter proceeding from a warmer atmosphere are much rarefied, consequently the mercury falls in the barometer, whereas northerly winds coming from the frozen regions near the pole are more dense, and cause the mercury to rise. This ought to be kept in remembrance, for, when the wind is from southeast," continues Horsburgh, "I have several times observed the mercury to fall considerably before it changed to the north, and expected a gale, but the fall resulted only from the warmer air coming in contact with and repelling the former."



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MAURITIUS FROM THE "POUCE"

In the course of the passage the Mississippi spoke her Britannic Majesty's steamer *Styx*, thirteen days from Simon's Bay, bound to Mauritius. She was under sail, her engine having been disconnected, and the wheels, with all their buckets, allowed to revolve by the movement of the vessel through the water. She made tolerable way, but drifted much to leeward. The English war steamers frequently, by a simple arrangement, disconnect their engines for the purpose of saving fuel. This process of connecting and disconnecting is accomplished in a few minutes. In American naval steamers it is almost impossible to disconnect the engines, and the only practicable mode of using the sails exclusively is by the removal of the immersed floats. This requires moderate weather for its accomplishment, and the time necessary for doing it is about two hours, and double that time is required for the readjustment of the floats or buckets.

It must be acknowledged with mortification that our navy is in many respects very backward in availing itself of some of these improvements in steam vessels which have been already adopted by other nations, and even by private enterprise. Since the construction of the Mississippi and the Missouri, the two first ocean war steamers introduced into our naval service, and for a time esteemed the finest in the world, there has been less progress in the building of such vessels than our position as a nation would seem to demand. Most of the maritime powers of Europe and many companies, and even private individuals, have put afloat such vessels as it must be acknowledged but few of our steamers could fairly compete with in excellence of construction and equipment. The *San Jacinto*, *Saranac*, *Fulton*, and the *Princeton*, may be pointed to in illustration of these remarks.

At half-past nine o'clock, on the morning of the 13th of February, the Mauritius was first seen from the deck, bearing N.N.E., and at noon the Mississippi was nearly abreast of Cape Bravant, having passed in sight of Grand Port, the scene of the memorable action in August, 1810, between an English squadron, under the command of Captains Pyne and Willoughby, and a French force, under Commodore Duperie. In this engagement the English were worsted, having lost nearly all their vessels. The battle was fought within the coral shoals which form the harbor of Grand Port, the batteries on the shore taking part in the action, which was prolonged several days.

Early in the evening, the pilot having boarded the Mississippi near the mouth of the harbor, anchored and secured the steamer for the night at the outer, which are termed the Admiral's moorings. Next morning the pilot returned to the ship, bringing with him several launches, manned by natives of Malabar, who, with the assistance of the crew of the Mississippi, completed her moorings, which was a process requiring much time and labor. All vessels entering the harbor of Port Louis are secured by frigates' chains attached to mooring anchors, and brought on board, one at each bow and one at each quarter. This operation is entirely under the direction of the pilots, who with their launches, warps, and numerous hands, are constantly occupied in mooring and unmooring the various vessels as they enter or leave the harbor. Vessels are moored head and stern, with their bows to the southeast, the direction from which the hurricanes usually come. As these generally blow directly out of the harbor, they are accompanied with very little sea; but such is often the violence of the wind, that the strong moorings give way, and the most destructive results ensue, the vessels being dashed against each other, and the shores strewn with wrecks. It is rarely that these gales blow into the harbor, but when they do, a tremendous sea is thrown into the little port, and the strongest moored and best found vessels can hardly escape disaster.

Every possible precaution has been taken by the government to provide against the destructive effects of these furious storms, and the authorities are vigorously seconded in their efforts by the intelligence and indefatigable attention of Lieutenant Edward Kelly, of the royal navy, the harbor master, who is ever on the alert to meet the wants of vessels, giving warning of the appearance of an approaching gale, and suggesting such measures as may the better guard them against accident. Such was the favorable impression made upon the Commodore by the perfect state of the port regulations, that he was induced to address a note to Lieutenant Kelly, expressing his satisfaction, and thanking him for the facilities which had been rendered to the Mississippi.

Our Light-house Board might gather from the example of these excellent regulations some useful hints; but it is feared that that branch of administration, like too many others, is so much exposed to ignorant legislation, that any disposition it may have toward reform and progress would be hindered by unwise interference.



Cape of Good Hope.