

Before concluding my remarks on the climate of the Cape, it is necessary to advert to the curious effects of refraction that are often observed. A strange distortion of objects is frequently seen, and even at a short distance from Robben's Island the surf sometimes appears to be thrown up into lofty jets of foam, or a wave is so distorted that it seems rolling in high enough to submerge the whole island. These distortions occur not only in the sea but in the land view. I noticed them during our visit to the observatory, and now call attention to them again, because the same effect seems to be produced on sea or on land by contrary causes. When at sea, refractions have been observed by us, whenever the thermometer at the masthead showed a higher degree of temperature than that at the surface of the water; but at the Cape the current of air in contact with the heated and sandy soil must be of a higher temperature than that immediately above it, and thus causes the distortion of distant objects; or the fact may be accounted for on the supposition of two parallel currents of different temperatures, moving in opposite directions, and beyond any immediate influence of the earth. I know of no place so favourable to the observation of this description of atmospheric phenomena as the Cape and its vicinity.

The population of the Cape colony, by the returns in 1841, was one hundred and fifty-three thousand, on an area of one hundred and nine thousand eight hundred and sixty-four square miles. The deaths amount annually to about one in forty. The coloured population exceeds the white by about ten thousand. A table containing the last statistical returns will be found in Appendix XV. Landed estates in the colony are generally held by those cultivating them, under a lease, and not in fee. The early settlers had not sufficient funds to enable them to purchase as large farms as were necessary, and the present system was in consequence resorted to. The leases, however, were made perpetual, and the farms held under this tenure are known in the colony as "Loan Farms;" they contain about three square miles, and there are many of this description still existing: these are considered as desirable tenures, being good as long as the rent is regularly paid, which is generally at the low rate of ten dollars for the tract. The lands, however, about the Cape, and in the Cape district, were obtained by grants, and are now known as "Gratuity Farms."

There are likewise freehold estates, which consist of a small farm, not much exceeding one hundred acres. These, I was told, were in the immediate vicinity of Cape Town. They were usually obtained by purchase of the first settlers.

The system of quit-rents is in perpetuity, and the rent is made to