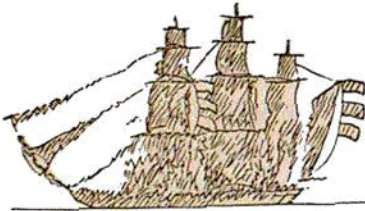


Robben's Island, on whose shore we saw, as usual, the breaking surf curiously refracted.

Robben's Island is now used as a place of confinement for criminals, who are employed in the quarries to furnish stone for paving and building. The stone is a schistus, and commonly known at the Cape as blue flag.

As we cleared the island, objects to seaward were seen refracted in a manner that I had never before observed so distinctly. As before stated, there was an upper and an under current in the atmosphere, and these strata were of different temperature. The thermometer at the masthead marking 73° , while that on the deck stood at no more than 59° . A ship about three miles distant in the offing, was seen vertically and horizontally refracted at the same time. Her courses and topsails appeared ill-defined, shapeless, and quivering; her bowsprit and head-spars formed curves, while her jib and flying-jib were drawn out in nearly horizontal lines. Above, her topgallant-sails and royals were seen perfectly well defined; a distinct line of bluish haze divided them from the lower sails, and could be traced to about sixty degrees on each side, until it joined with the horizon.

A signal made by this ship at the time, showed in faint colours, as if flying from her peak and fore-topsail-yard at the same time. The annexed wood-cut, from a sketch made at the time, will give a better idea of this appearance.



The angle subtended between the line of haze and the horizon, was twenty-five minutes.

The temperature of the water was often tried: it was found to stand at about the same temperature as when we entered on soundings, varying little from 64° . After running off about thirty miles from the coast, the temperature of the air rose to the same point.

On the 19th, Joseph Sylva (boy), died of phthisis. He had been long lingering, and was apparently affected with the disease when taken on board at Oahu, a few months previously.

We now shaped our course for St. Helena, which I was desirous of reaching at the earliest day, in order to intercept the two brigs, and if a further supply of bread could be obtained there, to proceed with them directly for the United States.

Our passage to St. Helena was of the ordinary length, thirteen days; we had very light winds and a smooth sea, indicating that a long calm had existed. Northerly currents generally prevailed, though at times