

Asiatic possessions; and because so large a portion of those who visit them, touch there; either in going to, or when returning from, India. The political importance of a point so advantageously situated, and having such an expanse of territory annexed, may, perhaps, at some convenient moment, become a subject for future discussion: in the mean while, as connected with the Cape, I shall treat of St. Helena.

This island is most singularly situated, being in the 16th degree of south latitude, and separated from the two continents of Africa and America by immense seas, in every part unfathomable: from the former it is about 1200 miles distant; from the latter about 1800. According to an analytic description, published in 1805, it appears tolerably certain, that Saint Helena owes its elevation above the sea to some great convulsion of nature; probably to an earthquake: for it does not, like its neighbour Ascension, shew much remains of volcanic matter, neither does there appear any cavity at all resembling a crater. On the contrary, the whole island is composed of immense strata of rock, chiefly basaltic, which, from the variety of directions they assume, some declining one way, some another, while a few assume nearly a perpendicular tendency, may be supposed to have been disrupted, and ejected from the great submarine mass, by some tremendous earthquake.