41. Mauritius, or the Isle of France, and Isle Bourbon, lie about 450 miles to the Eastward of Madagascar; the former belonging to the English, the latter to the French: they are nearly the same in size and population, Mauritius containing 410 square miles and 160,000 inhabitants, and Bourbon 520 square miles and 100,000 inhabitants. The convenient harbours of Mauritius render it the more important possession. This is an important colony, its exports and imports being both little short of £1,500,000 sterling yearly; the principal of the former is sugar. The island is mountainous and well wooded, producing the vegetables and fruits of both tropical and temperate regions. Its principal elevations are Brabant and Peter Botie mountains, the former rising 3,000 and the latter 2,600 feet above the sea. It is, however, subject to hurricanes. The principal town is Port Louis, which is well defended, and contains 35,000 inhabitants, but the harbour is not safe at all seasons. The island of Bourbon was so named when first settled by the French in 1655; under the Empire it was named Ile Buona parte; on the restoration it resumed its old title, but has since been called Ile de la Réunion. It is divided into two parts by a chain of mountains of volcanic origin, which culminate on Pitou de Niges, 10,000 feet above the sea. These form districts differing in soil, climate, and are separate arrangements, under the names Windward and Leeward. One volcanic cone, the Pitou de la Fournaire is still active, at an elevation of 7,200 feet. This island has no harbour, and its trade is therefore restricted: its productions are similar to those of the Mauritius. The Comoro Islands lie about midway between the North Western extremity of Madagascar and the opposite coast of Africa: they are of volcanic origin, and four in number, viz. Angarija, or Great Comoro, as it is also called, Mohilla, Johanna or Anjouan, and Mayotta, containing unitedly about 1,000 square miles and 30,000 inhabitants. The latter island was ceded to France in 1848. The inhabitants are chiefly black, but there are some Arabs amongst them, who have spread the doctrines of Mahomet over all the islands: they are uncivilized, but remarkably gentle and harmless.—There is an extensive and widely dispersed group of islands lying off the North Eastern extremity of Madagascar, the chief of which are Juan de Novo, the Cosmolos, Albadra, and Natal, with the Malhe and Chagos archipelagos, all of which belong or are tributary to the British: they are of granitic and coralline formation. The principal island of the Malhe, or Seychelles archipelago, as it is also called, is likewise known by the name of Malhe or Seychelles; it is of no great extent, and does not contain more than 3,000 inhabitants; but it is a fruitful and very commodious place.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE AND NATAL.

42. The territory of the Cape of Good Hope is bounded on the E. by Kaffraria, or the country of the Kaffirs; on the S.
the Indian Ocean; on the W. by the Atlantic Ocean; and on the N. by the Orange River. It contains 94,400 square miles, and about 250,000 inhabitants, of whom two-thirds are Hottentots or negroes, and the remainder Europeans: it has derived its name from the great Southern promontory of Africa, so called, or sometimes, by way of eminence, The Cape. This famous Cape, the discovery of which, next to that of America, forms the greatest event in modern maritime history, was first visited by a Portuguese squadron, under the command of Bartholomew Diaz, in 1487, and was then named Cabo Tormentoso, from the tempestuous nature of the sea which is generally rolling off it, and which deterred its first discoverers from proceeding farther. The enterprising king of Portugal, however, entertaining no doubt of his having found the long desired route to India, deserted the name of the Cape of Tempests for one of better omen, and gave it the appellation by which it is at present known; he likewise equipped another squadron, confided it to the command of Vasco de Gama, who in the year 1497, surmounted all the difficulties which had deterred his predecessor, doubled the Cape, and had the glory of being the first who in an European vessel sailed over the Indian Seas. But the Portuguese never formed any permanent settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, though they generally touched at it in all their future voyages to India. The Dutch first fixed upon it at the beginning of the 17th century as a station of refreshment for them, and began about fifty years afterwards to colonize the neighbouring territory: they soon succeeded in driving the few inert and savage natives into the interior, or in reducing them to slavery, and by degrees extended the Cape Colony nearly to its present limits. It was taken from them by the English during the late war, in the year 1795, but was restored to them at the peace of Amiens; on the renewal of hostilities, however, it once more fell into the hands of the English, in the year 1806, and has ever since remained in our possession, the sovereignty of it having been confirmed to the king of Great Britain at the Congress of Vienna.

43. South Africa is a country of terraces sloping gently to the N. and W. from the summits of mountain ranges, which present steep escarpments to the S. and E.; the table land through which the Orange River and its tributaries flow is the highest of these, the S. portion of which is known as the Great Karroo. The Northern and principal range is known as the Swinberg or Stormberg Mountains, which may be considered as a spur of the Matatamba Mountains, to which, towards the N. and E., the other chains also appear to converge. This range probably attains an elevation exceeding considerably 12,000 feet, since the mountains at the sources of the Orange River must be that height, and Compassberg in Graaf Reinet rises 10,500. The southern ranges are known as Zwagenhoek, Kafferberg, and Amatola, and culminate in the Winterberg at 7,610 feet, and through the fertile valleys of these mountains the Great Fish, Kat, and Burneen, and North
Victoria rivers flow towards the E. into the sea, as the Bree de Garritz, Gamtoos, and Bushmans rivers do to the S., and Oliphants and Berg rivers to the W. The Orange River is, however, the most considerable, rising far to the E. in the highest elevations; its two principal sources unite after a course respectively of about 250 miles; of these the Southern is the Gariep; and the Northern the Vaal; the former receives the Caledon and other affluents, the latter the Eland, Mull, Mool, and others; from the point of junction to the sea may be 550 miles, and below this a considerable affluent joins the main stream from the S., formed by the Hartebeest, Zac, and Great Rift, and known as the Visch, while the Fish Borrodaile, and Oup flow into it from the N. through Namaqua land. The upper course of this river and its affluents are often through beautiful and fertile mountain valleys; in the middle and lower the water is scant, and the country arid and barren. The whole colony is divided into 2 provinces and 21 counties. The Western province contains the counties or divisions of the Cape Malmsbury, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Worcester, Swellendam, Caledon, Clanwilliam, George, and Somerset; the Eastern those of Albany, Fort Beaufort, Graaf Reinet, Somerset, Colesberg, Cradock, Uitenhage, Algoa Bay or Port Elizabeth, Albert, and Victoria; these presided over by commissioners who act as magistrates, are again subdivided into 275 field commissions or wards. The metropolis of the Colony is called Cape Town, and is situated at its South Western extremity, at the head of Table Bay, on a plain sloping downwards from the Table Mountain. Originally built by the Dutch, it is defended by a castle and forts, and has an extensive harbour, which however is not safe from June to August. It is the seat of government, a bishop’s see, and has an university; its population may be 25,000. The liquor called Constantia is made from the fruit of a single vineyard at the foot of Table Mountain. The other principal ports are Simon’s Town and Port Elizabeth; the former, which is the seat of the Admiralty, and where also vessels take refuge when Table Bay is unsafe, is 23 miles to the S. of Cape Town in False Bay, separated from Table Bay by a peninsula which includes the three remarkable and lofty mountains known by the names of the Table Mountain, the Lion’s Head, and the Lion’s Rump; and its Southern extremity forms the bold promontory of the Cape of Good Hope; the latter is in the district of Uitenhage or Algoa Bay, possesses a good harbour, and has a population of above 3,000 chiefly of English descent. The chief towns of the several counties bear the same names, excepting Graham’s Town in Albany, and Alice in Victoria; the former is fast rising into importance, its population may approach 7,000 in number. The commerce of Cape Colony is considerable, its exports exceeding half a million, and its imports approaching one million sterling. The principal occupations of the inhabitants are in producing corn and wine, and feeding cattle; Swellendam is the centre of the first, Stellenbosch of the second; the third is universal throughout the Colony.
44. The original inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope are called Hottentots, and may be divided into three principal classes, the Hottentots properly so called, the Boesmans, and the Namaques: they are all in a very low degree of civilization, and have been reduced to a state of servitude. They live for the most part in hemispherical huts, to a collective number of which the name of kraal is applied: the communities of these different kraals seldom intermarry with each other, but preserve themselves and their property entirely distinct, both from the influence and government of their neighbours. They are mostly pagans, though a few of them have been converted to the Christian faith, by the indefatigable labours of European Protestant missionaries. The Boesmans mostly dwell in the Northern parts of the colony. The Namaques inhabit the North Western parts of the colony, and though superior to the Boesmans and to the Hottentots of the Southern districts, are still very uncivilized. On the E. of Cape Colony is Kaffraria, or Kaffirland, extending from the Keishamma to the St. John River, which forms the Southern boundary of the colony of Natal; the principal part of its area is drained by the Kei, which, with the other rivers of the district, rises in the short slopes and Eastern spur of the Mathlamba ranges. This and the Orange River district were inhabited by Kaffirs, a race more intelligent and powerful than the Hottentots, and by whom the latter had been displaced; they were driven from the Orange River district by the English, who first assumed it under the title of the Orange River sovereignty, and have since abandoned the portion N. of the river; from them were also taken the Eastern districts of the colony. To the N. and W. of the Orange River, the Griquas, or Bastaards, descendants of Dutch fathers and Hottentot mothers, have settled, and on the N. the Bickhuusas have considerable towns, the principal of which are Latiaakoo and Kurrichane, while the Zooloo tribe of Kaffirs occupy the Eastern coast districts, which are separated from the colony of Natal by the Tukela River; this river drains a considerable area, and is formed by the confluence of the Umzimnyati or Buffalo, the Tukela, and the Mooi or Impafane; it rises in the Mathlamba, close to the sources of the Umfoota, which falls into Delagoa Bay, and between them is the St. Lucia, occupying the centre of the Zooloo country. Natal, the Eastern coast district, may be divided into three parts, physically distinct; that of the coast, which is flat, moist, and produces cottons and other sub-tropical vegetables; the thorn land, where the mimosa predominates, and the well-watered, well-wooded, and fertile mountain valleys. The political divisions of Natal are D'Urban, Pieter Maritzberg, Umvoti, Impafane, Tukela, and Umzimnyati; Pieter Maritzberg is the capital, but the most important place is D'Urban, or Port Natal, distant from it about 50 miles, and situated on a magnificent harbour, about the centre of the coast of the colony. This colony is dependent on the Cape of Good Hope, and has been erected into a Bishop's see.