

THE BERMUDAS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMARANTH,

Sir,—Feeling an earnest desire, so far as my humble means will admit, to contribute to your *Monthly Miscellany*, I shall occasionally take the liberty of forwarding you a few of the productions of hours long since passed away, in the hope that they may be deemed worthy of public approbation. And as that which I now send is commemorative of my leaving the Bermudas, permit me to give a brief description of those charming Islands, where several of the happiest years of my life were spent: where its incidents were interwoven by the hand of fortune; after a varied but not distasteful pattern: and where, to use the words of Waller,

“So soft the air, so moderate the clime,
None sickly live, or die before their prime.”

THE BERMUDAS are a cluster of small islands, in about the same latitude as Madeira, and in the longitude of Halifax. They form the principal naval station, and to a power like Great Britain, may be considered the key of North America. Of this the government of the Mother Country is well aware; and during the last twenty-five or thirty years, it has bestowed much labour and expence in erecting a naval arsenal, and securing it by extensive fortifications.

These islands possess great means of natural defence however, in the extended reefs of coral rocks, that almost entirely surround them; through which a vessel must be navigated with great care by skilful pilots, and must obey a ready helm. The principal passage through these reefs, is termed the north-rock channel, the extreme point of which is ten miles from the land, and by which government vessels alone are permitted to pass; and when it is navigated, its sinuous course requires to be buoyed off to aid the undertaking; and the wind must be perfectly fair. An instance once occurred, in which a frigate was taken aback in this passage, and the pilot, James Darrell, with great coolness and presence of mind, had the vessel's sail shortened, backed her through the more intricate part of the channel, until he had room to wear-ship; and then proceeded by the usual course, past St. Catherine's point to sea.

There are other passages, at what is called the west-end, through which merchant vessels are piloted; but those reefs extend from the south-west breaker, which is about four miles

from the land in that direction, round northerly and easterly, 'till they terminate opposite St. David's head, the south-eastern promontory of the island on the south side the shore is perfectly bold, a singular chain of rocks running along the coast, about pistol-shot distant, that are mostly covered at low tide; inside of which the water is quite deep, and through which there are openings, sufficiently wide to admit a vessel. And I have heard of one that was wrecked, passing between these rocks in the dark, and running against the main land, on that the crew landed without difficulty, and there was no loss of life.

On the south side also is *Curtle-harbour*, where the king's ships formerly anchored at a short distance within its entrance, the interior abounding with numerous shoals, chiefly sand-banks, of which substance the hills in its vicinity are composed. Subsequently, the harbour of St. George at the east end, was the rendezvous of the smaller class of vessels, there not being quite eighteen feet over the bar at its entrance; the larger ships anchoring in St. Catherine's bay, or at what is termed the north side, within the reefs before alluded to, and which form a tolerable shelter in a gale of wind; the water being never agitated at a sufficient depth, materially to effect the motion of a vessel, drawing more than eighteen or twenty feet of water.

The Bermudas were discovered by Juan Bermudez, a Spaniard, who was wrecked there in 1522. Sir George Somers experienced a similar misfortune in 1609, and afterwards formed a settlement there. It was from this circumstance that they are called Somers' or Summer islands. Sir George died there, and his tomb may be seen projecting into one of the streets of St. George, near the Governor's garden. The principal islands, as far eastward as the ferry, which separates the island of that name from the main land are cavernous, and the caves are well worth visiting.—The soil of these islands is every where remarkably fertile, abounding with limestone.

These islands resemble a shepherd's crook, the principal one being about twenty miles in length, having at its eastern termination those of St. David and St. George; and at the westward, forming the crook, that of Ireland, where are the naval yard, hospital and public stores; ships bound thither, entering from the eastward, passing to the north-ward of St. George and the main land, and within the shoals to which I have already alluded.

Owing to the warmth of the Gulf-stream,