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## CHAPTER I.

### DEPARTURE FROM ENGLAND.

At daylight of the 8th of May, 1821, his Majesty's ships *Fury* and *Hecla*, accompanied by the *Nautilus* transport, carrying stores, weighed, and stood out from the *Little Nore*.

On the 16th, having made *Kinnaird's Light*, near *Waterhead*, we sent the pilots on shore, and by them were enabled to send letters to our friends.

Making the *Orkneys* on the 18th, it was Captain *Parry's* intention to take the ships through the *Pentland Firth*, and we procured pilots for that purpose from some fishing boats, which were catching cod in great plenty for the *London* market, to which they are forwarded by a company established for that trade at the *Orkneys*. We had scarcely, however, entered the *Firth*, when the wind came so fresh from the northward to oblige us to bear up for *Widewall Bay*, in the end of *South Ronaldsha*. This place, although small and shallow, afforded good shelter for our little squadron.

We remained four days, and, during that period, received the most hospitable treatment from the lairds of the country. The island appeared to me even more interesting than I had expected, owing, perhaps, to having left *England* at so fine a season; at all events, I was calculated to prepare me for the barren scenes which were so soon to visit.

On the 22d, we made another fruitless attempt to pass through the *Firth*, but the rapid tide and strong