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Alcalde, or mayor of the place, politely insisted upon our accompanying him home, and entertained us with great hospitality; nor, in truth, had we any cause to regret the unsuccessful issue of our inquiries, since, in addition to the good cheer with which we were presented, our host, being an intelligent person, did not fail to render himself an agreeable companion; and what contributed in no slight degree to the facility of our intercourse was, that though he assured us he had never quitted St. Michael's in his life, he spoke English with the fluency of a native. Among other pieces of information we learnt from him that the reef which impeded our progress towards the land, had formerly been an island. It appeared, he affirmed, one morning, in the most sudden and extraordinary manner, as if it had been thrown up by an earthquake during the night, and having continued so long above water as to embolden a single family of fishers to settle upon it, it disappeared again as suddenly as it had come, leaving no trace of its existence except the rocks which we had found so troublesome. Whether there be truth in this story, I cannot pretend to determine; and yet I see no reason to doubt the word of a man of respectability, who could have no motive whatever for deceiving us. But this was not all that we learnt from him respecting the reef. He declared that previous to the appearance of the island, the water in that very spot was unfathomable; and it was not till after it had sunk, that a single rock stood in the way to prevent the largest ship of war from anchoring within a stone's throw of the beach.

Finding our new acquaintance so civil and obliging, we naturally informed him of our intention to proceed next morning to Ponto del Gada, the principal town in St. Michael's, and requested his assistance in procuring some mode of conveyance; but we were startled by the intelligence that nothing of the kind could be had, and that there were not even horses or mules to be hired at any place nearer than the very town whither we were going. This was rather an alarming piece of news, for our boat had left us, the weather was too hot for walking, and the distance to be travelled full fifteen miles. Had we been prudent enough to detain our boat, the matter would have been easily managed, because we might have sailed round to the point where the fleet was to anchor; but this was no longer in our power, and being