

Canal, still its possession, in the event of war occurring between Great Britain and any of the maritime powers, would be of no slight consequence. Only Gibraltar and Malta among the fortresses of the world, can be compared to St. Helena for strength, and these only surpass it in so far as the costly nature of their works and equipments is taken into account. The only possible ingress to the island is through the deep gorge on which Jamestown is built. There are one or two other narrow, precipitous ravines near to this gorge, through which it might be possible to make way with infinite labor. But gorge and ravines are strongly fortified, and batteries of cannon occupy every coigne of vantage from base to mountain top. All the navies in the world might be blown to atoms in the event of an attempt being made to carry the island by assault, while their shot would batter almost harmlessly against the solid cliffs.

The roadstead in front of Jamestown is the only anchorage ground; being situated on the northern, or leeward, side of the island, it is effectually sheltered from the prevailing winds, and shipping is perfectly safe at all times of the year. On landing we were impressed anew with the great strength of this island-fortress. Passing under a massive gateway and over a drawbridge, we found ourselves in the public square of the town. On each side, the houses were bounded by the solid walls of rock which towered high aloft on either hand, every platform and terrace planted with artillery. To the right is one of the curiosities of the island—Jacob's Ladder—a flight of wooden steps, or rather a series of flights, the ascent of which is considered no small feat. A few enquiries made us aware of the fact that the inhabitants are nearly all of African descent, the white population consisting only of the garrison, the few merchants, and some old soldiers who after the expiry of their service continue to reside on the island.

As we walk through the square two little imps of darkness attach themselves to us. An opinion prevails among the residents, and naturally enough, that anyone landing there must necessarily desire to see Longwood and the tomb of Napoleon. We are willing enough to add our confirmation to this belief, and preceded by our guides we turn out of the square through an alley, into a carriage road cut out of the hillside. Along this road we proceed; the town, which lies immediately below, has contracted into a single street, very narrow and very ancient-looking, on which there is a huge barrack, occupied by a company of artillery, the sole garrison of the island. We soon come within view of the Briars, just outside of the town, a straggling erection situated at the head of the gorge, where the narrow gulf swells and blends again with the prevailing mountain mass. We remember how Napoleon having slept in an inn in Jamestown on the night of his arrival, rode out on the following morning, 17th October, 1815, along with the Admiral (Cockburn) and his grand Marshal (Bertrand), to see the progress that had been made in fitting Longwood for his reception, and how on their way back, he being pleased with the aspect of the Pavilion, a detached building of the Briars, the Admiral made arrangements with Mr. Balcombe, the owner, that General Bonaparte should stay there for a season. Here Napoleon stayed for nearly two months, and here it was that the querulous disposition of the exile began first to show itself. The fallen Emperor had been so long accustomed to be treated with profound and reverend submission, that he whose will had hitherto been the supreme rule and guide for all who came in contact with him, could not be brought to realize the hard truth that his supremacy was entirely a thing of the past. After the lapse of years we can review such events with a calmness which would be difficult at the time of which we write; for