

The rising tide sometimes strikes upon the shore in a continuous manner, and with an incredible force. This violent shock is called the *ressac*. The surf then forms in the sea a mass of impetuous billows, stretching over an area of one thousand yards. The *ressac* increases as it advances towards the coast; when it attains the height of 20 to 22 feet, it may be likened to a mountain of water rolling over and over on its own axis. But this movement is not, in reality, a progressive one; it does not carry forward any floating bodies. The *ressac* is very potent at the island of Fogo (one of the Cape Verde group), and in India and Sumatra. To our English mariners it is known by the name of *surf*. It renders the approach to many coasts a very dangerous, and even impossible enterprise.

Sudden gales add to its terrors, creating huge waves or billows on the surface of the sea, which continually enlarge, and gradually swell into foam-crested mountains, rolling, bounding, and breaking one against another.

At one moment, says Malte-Brun, the waves seem to bear onward the goddesses of the sea, who come to amuse themselves with dance and pastime; at the next, a tempest bursts upon them, and maddens them with its fury; they seem to swell with wrath—you might almost believe they were ocean-monsters engaged in deadly battle. A strong, constant, and uniform wind, produces in the sea a succession of *waves*, or long wrinkles of water, which rise as it were on the same level, march with a regular movement, and hasten, one after the other, to precipitate themselves upon the shore. Sometimes the billows, suspended by a gust of wind, or arrested by a current, form, as it were, a liquid wall. Woe to the rash navigator who shall dare to approach it!

The highest waves known are those which prevail, at the epoch of the great tides, off the Cape of Good Hope, under the influence of a strong north-westerly breeze, which, traversing the broad sweep of the South Atlantic, drives the waters towards the African coast. These waves attain the height of 40 feet. A mountain like this, towering upwards between two vessels, hides each from the other's