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John Herschel's Landscapes and Geology: The Cape Colony in the 1830s

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John Herschel (1792-1871) is best remembered now as an astronomer, but in fact his curiosity ranged widely over physics, chemistry, geology, and many other sciences. His interest in geology began with minerals and crystals and soon grew to include a series of extended geological excursions in Britain and Europe. When he relocated to the Cape Colony from 1834 to 1838 to conduct a survey of astronomical objects in the southern skies, he also was thinking of geology. He corresponded with Charles Lyell and Roderick Murchison on geological matters, met with Charles Darwin and Captain Fitzroy, and he drew scores of Camera Lucida landscapes.

Thanks to Brian Warner, David Evans, and Michael Crowe's team, many of the letters and drawings Herschel made around Cape Town are now readily available. My talk follows Herschel's activities around Table Mountain and as far afield as Paarl Rock, Franschoek Valley, and Caledon.

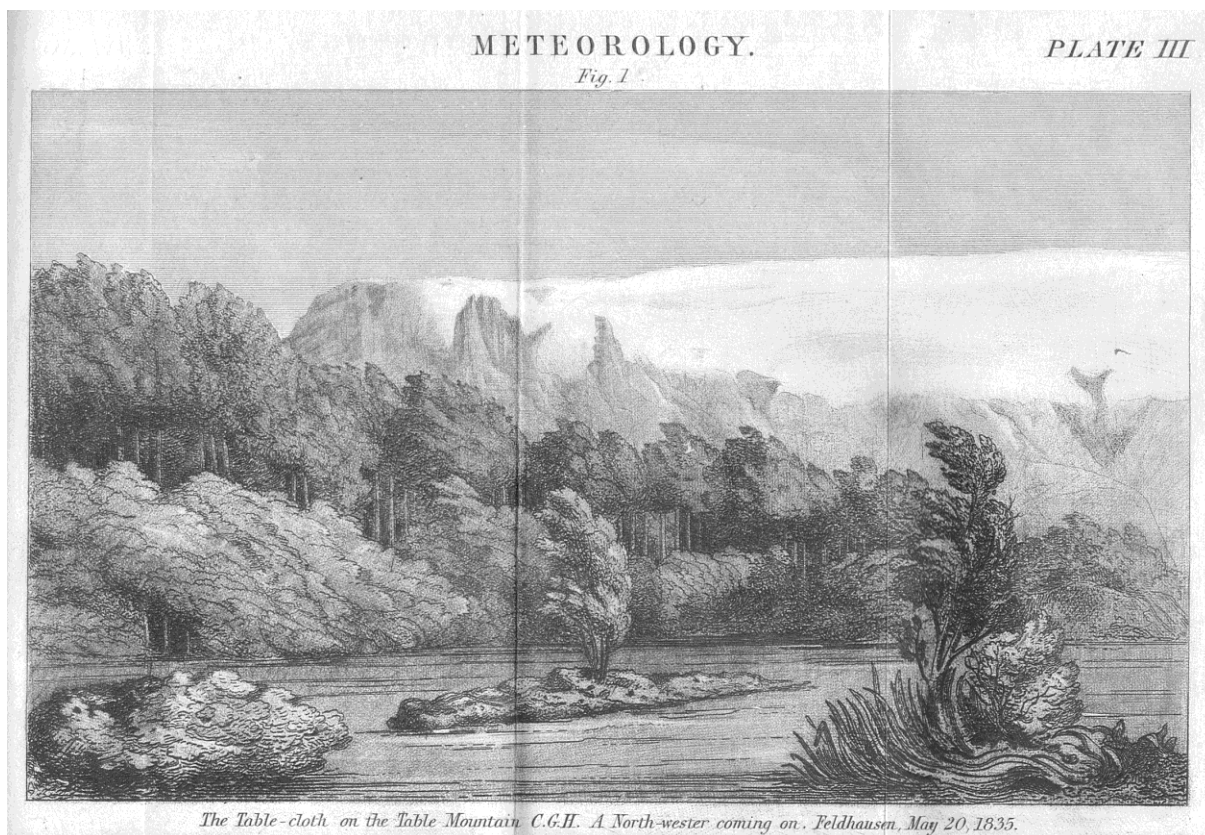


Figure 1: Table Mountain, Cape Town, South Africa

(John Herschel, *Meteorology*, Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1861.

