Experiences of a Settler in the Early Days of Van Diemen's Land[1]

By

W. H. HUDSPETH, B.A.

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The Reverend John West, author of *The History of Tasmania*, writing in 1852, made these observations (p. 66):

> 'The landing of settlers, direct from Great Britain, was an important event: their efforts were experiments, and their achievements were prophetic. The political philosopher may trace, in their errors, trials, and successes, the lessons afforded by experience for the instruction of nations. The rapid advance of civilization tends to underrate the first efforts of our predecessors. The first colonial boatbuilder founded a great commercial navy: the first shepherd held in his slender flock a treasure of unimaginable worth.'

While making due allowance for the rhetorical flourishes of Mr. West's sonorous style, I have always felt that there is much truth in this paragraph, especially as to the tendency to underrate the efforts of our pioneers, or, at any rate, to forget the courage which prompted them to risk, and enabled them to overcome, the hardships and trials which inevitably awaited them in this far-off land in the early days of last century.

In the early years of the nineteenth century Van Diemen's Land was a practically unknown quantity, the voyage out lasted nearly six months, and the only ships available were small, ill-found vessels of a few hundred tons burthen. Moreover, few of these voluntary exiles from the home-land could look forward, with any assurance, to revisiting their native land. Long and anxious must have been the family conclaves ere the fateful decision could be made.

One of the main inducements to emigration at that time was, of course, the depression that hung like a pall over Europe after the Napoleonic wars. The situation was, in many respects, extraordinarily like that of the present day. Prices were low, the burden of taxation was heavy, and trade was stagnant.

[1] The following notes regarding the experiences of the pioneer settlers of V.D.L. are taken mainly from the correspondence of Mr. John Leake and his wife who arrived in Hobart Town in 1823 and from the diary of my grandfather, Dr. John Maule Hudspeth, who arrived in 1822.

From 1820 onwards a succession of publications drew attention at Home to the attractions of Van Diemen's Land. It was described (says West, p. 67) in *The Quarterly Review* for May, 1820, by a friendly pen, which stated that during three years a detachment of 100 men had not lost three, and that Hobart Town had been sixteen months without a funeral!

Lieut. Jeffreys, who came out to Van Diemen's Land in command of the brig *Kangaroo*, James Dixon, commander of the *Skelton*, and Edward Curr, the first Manager of the V.D.L. Coy., all published, between 1820 and 1824, books describing the island and advising intending settlers. G. W. Evans, the first Surveyor-General of Van Diemen's Land, who also came out in the *Kangaroo*, published in 1822 a description of Van Diemen's Land, in which he accuses Jeffreys of having appropriated on board ship some of his manuscript, and included it in his book. Evans' book contains a sketch of Hobart Town as it was in 1822. Curr's book contains a lengthy narrative of the career of Michael Howe, the notorious bushranger. Dixon includes in his book a copy of Macquarie's report of his visit to Van Diemen's Land in 1821, in which the population of the island is stated to be 6372 persons.

Godwin's *Emigrants' Guide to Van Diemen's Land*,[1] published in 1823, contains advice as to the procedure to be adopted to obtain a grant of land, and other useful information; also a small map of the island, and an interesting sketch of Hobart Town.

Among the letters to which I have had access is one written to the late Mrs. John Leake by her father, on the eve of her departure, with her husband and family, to Van Diemen's Land in 1822. In it he says:

> 'When I look back to your early childhood and consider that there was then not even the most distant prospect of your ever living or travelling beyond your native island . . . . to now hear you talk of removing almost as distant as it is possible to be . . . . not rashly, but calmly considering the privations and inconveniences naturally, with so many small children, attendant on so arduous an undertaking, is a proof of a great mind, fortified by a sense of duty rarely to be met with. May you both be blessed . . . . What may be the difficulties to be encountered in Van Diemen's Land I know not, and dislike to conjecture: of this I am assured—be they what they may, you would bear them with fortitude. But I hope and pray that fortitude may not require to be exerted . . . I truly hope, present difficulties over, you will find a resting place, and that the end will be peace.'

[1] Curr (p. viii) severely criticizes Godwin's Guide as containing 'false and delusive assertions,' betraying 'gross ignorance.'

The decision taken, preparations for the voyage were immediately begun. The house and furniture at Hull were disposed of. Passages were secured on the brig *Andromeda*—a first-class cabin for Mr. and Mrs. Leake and the two youngest children, and berths in the steerage for the four elder children and three servants. The total passage-money was £380.[1]

Then came the purchase of the long list of articles to be taken for their new enterprise. These and the luggage were included in an insurance policy for £1500. They included the following items:—Wine, hardware and saddlery, paint, oil, slops, clocks, glass, soap, mustard, tins and corks, earthenware, corn mill, agricultural impiements, plate, silks and ribbons, six chests of luggage, and one box of dollars. This formidable list gives us some idea of the forethought demanded of the intending settler in those days, and of the limited resources of the island.

In addition to all these, there was a most important item, viz., four Saxon sheep, with which Mr. Leake hoped to start his pastoral activities. These were procured in Leipzig, and, after a passage down the Elbe, shipped across to the Port of Leith, to be placed on board the *Andromeda*. For this a special licence had to be obtained, of which the following is a copy:—

Treasury Chambers,
10th September, 1822.

To John Leake,
Leith.

Sir,

I am commanded by The Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to acquaint you that my Lords have directed the Commissioners of Customs in Scotland to permit you to import from Hamburg to Leith Four Saxon sheep to be re-exported duty free to Van Diemen's Land, as required by you.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
R. LATHERGLEN.

Among their fellow passengers on the *Andromeda* were Messrs. Lewis Gilles and R. Horne, both of whom afterwards settled in the Macquarie District, and Dr. A. J. Ross, the well-known publisher of the early almanacs, who also cultivated other branches of authorship, verse, pamphlets, and an ethnological treatise; also the Rev. J. D. Lang, one of the first Presbyterian ministers in New South Wales, who afterwards started a newspaper in that colony; and letters of introduction were secured from Earl Bathurst and William Wilberforce to Sir Thomas Brisbane, Governor of New South Wales, and

[1] Average passage-money, £70 to £100 for cabin passengers, and £35 to £40 for steerage. Average duration of voyage, 100 to 140 days. (Curr.)

to Mr. Bromley, Naval Officer at Hobart Town. Mr. Wilberforce's letter is, perhaps, worthy of quotation:—

December 2nd, 1822.

Sir,

The Post which arrives late and goes out early at this place, allows one but a minute or two for writing to you, in addition to Letters in your behalf which I have just now dictated, to Sir Thomas Brisbane, and to Mr. Bromley, Naval Officer at Hobart Town.

I have also written in your favour to Earl Bathurst . . . And I can now only add my cordial good wishes, which the account of you received thro' Miss Terry has produced. (I well know the value of her praises), that it may please God to render your settlement in the Australasian Hemisphere productive of benefit to you and yours and to the community to which you belong.

Above all, may we be travelling the same road, though by different routes, and meet at length in a World of Holiness and Happiness and Love and Joy.

I remain with esteem
Sir
Your faithful
W. WILBERFORCE.

You had better not mention that my Letter to you is in my own Hand. In fact I should have dictated it, but my amanuensis is out of the way. I will just add, if this reaches you before you sail from England it may a little contribute to cheer you, that I have often thought were I to begin life in circumstances which did not promise much at Home, I would carry my family to Van Diemen's Land.

Mr. John Leake,
On board of the *Andromeda*,
Bound to Van Diemen's Land, at, or off, Falmouth.

Before embarkation the passengers were supplied with a complete schedule of the dietary to be enjoyed during the voyage. The schedule concludes with this significant paragraph:

> 'But the substituting of one article for another is to be at the entire control and pleasure of the Captain as he may find it convenient or desirable during the voyage.'

Notwithstanding this display of care for the welfare of the passengers' health, it became necessary, before the shores of England were left behind, for Mr. Leake to complain to the ship's agents of the quality of the food supplied to his children. The justice of the complaint was admitted, but the fact that it had been made unfortunately antagonized the captain, and was the cause of much misery and discomfort.

In passing it may be noted that, as was customary in those days, the ship sailed first westward, to call at Rio de Janeiro and to pick up the trade winds for the remainder of the voyage to Australia.

It appears from the *Sydney Gazette* shipping news for 1823 that the *Andromeda* left England on the 10th December, 1822, and arrived at Sydney, *via* Rio and Hobart Town, on 7th August, 1823—the voyage thus taking eight months.

Andrew Bent's *Almanac* for 1824 says that she reached Hobart Town on the 7th May, 1823—a quick passage.

In the early 'twenties of last century Hobart Town was little more than a depot for the reception of convicts. A few solid buildings for the military and civilian officials of the Home Government, and for the rest a number of rather ramshackle cottages, scattered in all directions, with the rivulet flowing along wooded banks to the blue waters of the Derwent. There were four water-mills on the Hobart Rivulet. (Evans, p. 61.)

Lieut. Charles Jeffreys, R.N. (1820), says that the town contained 300 houses and 1200 inhabitants. The houses were of one story (with the exception of Mr. Birch's, now known as Macquarie House, which was of three stories, with an embattled parapet). Government House was in the centre of the main street, adjoining a square, known as 'George's Square.' There was a church (old St. David's) 'of modest dimensions,' a gaol (in Murray-street, on the site of the Hobart Savings Bank), and the Military Barracks, in Murray-street, near what is now Hadley's Hotel.

The town must have grown rapidly, for West (1852) says that in 1821 it contained 426 houses and 2700 inhabitants, and Edward Curr (1824) says that in 1824 it contained 600 houses and a population of 3500, 'with new buildings rising up every day.'

The city had been laid out in 1811, under instructions from Governor Macquarie, by Meehan and Evans (the first Deputy Surveyor-General), but the streets were not formed. (Bigge's Report.)

Curr says the farm-houses in the country were mostly constructed of sods, logs, or mud, and thatched with straw.

In my grandfather's diary, written in 1822, he says, speaking of Hobart Town:

> 'There is very little cleared land in the vicinity of the Town. The streets are almost impassable for mud, and there is no meat of any kind to be had. Everything else is very dear. On Sunday I attended the Church (old St. David's). The Church is neat and commodious, the convicts sitting in the gallery set apart for them, and the free settlers and soldiers accommodated below. The attendance was, however, very thin. Service was performed too much in the Cathedral style, and the music more theatrical than sacred.'

Apparently the officiating clergyman's (Rev. Robert Knopwood's) reputation for spirituality was not remarkable, for he says, 'The Parson is not a man calculated to reform a depraved society, either by precept or example. He is both a swearer and a drunkard, and of course can have little real piety.'

From the first day of his arrival the newcomer was beset with difficulties. Often, upon unloading his effects, they were found

to be destroyed or damaged by seawater which had got into the ship's hold. Even after they had been landed, they were frequently stolen on the shore, so frequently, indeed, that no one took any notice, and it was impossible to obtain redress. Then it was difficult to get any useful information from the officials, without bribing them, as to the land available for selection, and even when this had been obtained, there was the problem of getting up-country to inspect. In the same diary Dr. Hudspeth narrates how he eventually got away to examine the country round Jericho, which he had been advised was a suitable place for settlement. The Derwent River was crossed at Austin's Ferry, the country passed through being described as 'thickly wooded and little cultivated.' Treeless plains were passed, on which the town of Brighton was projected, with the intention of making it the capital. At Green Ponds a gang of convicts were employed in making a road. Oatlands had not yet been laid out, and at York Plains more convicts were encountered, quarrying stone for a bridge across the river. At this time the Main-road was completed as far as Constitution Hill. (Evans, 1822, p. 84.) Jeffreys says he drove from Hobart Town to Port Dalrymple over beautiful level pasture without more than 20 miles of road. (Evans, p. 87.)

On returning to Hobart, preparations were made to proceed into the country to settle. After considerable difficulty and delay a pair of bullocks was purchased for thirty guineas, together with a cart, for which a licence had to be obtained. It was difficult to get anything together, as 'No one's word was to be depended upon,' and a general muster of convicts held two days previously was kept up 'as a drunken festival.' (This sounds more like Governor Davey's administration than that of Governor Sorell!) However, at last a start was made, with three convict servants, Mrs. Hudspeth, with a baby daughter, being on the bullock-dray. The road was almost impassable, and progress was very slow. At Spring Hill the bullocks refused to go on, and the night was spent where they were, enlivened by an attack by two footpads, who demanded Mr. Hudspeth's gun, and he was held in considerable suspense until the return with light and firearms of the two men whom he had sent ahead for assistance. When Jericho was finally reached the little family took up its abode in a hut consisting of two rooms, divided by a partition made of wattle and clay, one being occupied by the family, and the other by the assigned servants. The bed for the master and his wife was made out of materials which 'in the morning had been growing on the plain.'

The system of assigning prisoners to settlers as servants was introduced by Governor King in 1804. (West, 1852, p. 126.) These assigned servants were apparently treated with considerable severity, especially for offences against discipline, and in regard

to women, the latter due, no doubt, to the necessity for protecting them in their isolation. Thus we find that soon after their arrival at Bowsden, one of Dr. Hudspeth's servants was sentenced to 100 lashes and to be transported to Macquarie Harbour for the remainder of his original sentence, of which twelve years was unexpired. This was for insolence to Mrs. Hudspeth during the doctor's absence in Hobart Town.

In noting this in his journal Dr. Hudspeth states:

> 'Macquarie Harbour is a penal settlement which was established a few months ago, for the purpose of sending re-convicted offenders to; they are there hard-worked, ill-fed, and well whipped, and escape is impracticable. All who have attempted it have perished. A party of six, or eight, who ran off at first, were never more heard of, and some soldiers sent in pursuit of them never returned. Lately eight men made the attempt; two of whom got back, and just lived long enough to relate a horrid tale. By their account, the country on the West Coast is so rugged and barren that there is not a living creature to be seen, and it is intersected with ravines so deep and narrow that the sun's rays cannot penetrate to the bottom. In some of these chasms they were often up to the middle in dead leaves and moss, and the precipices above them were almost inaccessible. Their provisions were soon expended, and despair took possession of their savage breasts. It was proposed that one of the party should be slaughtered to feed the rest, and one of the name of Busby was doomed to be the victim, for he had planned their escapade, and undertaken to conduct them across the country to some settlement, and immediately they began with savage fury to murder him. He implored them to allow him to bleed himself to death, but in vain. They cut off his head, tore out his heart, and fried it, and afterwards gorged themselves upon his body. However, they all died but two, and they died also after their return.'

It may be useful at this point to digress for a moment, in order to explain the procedure adopted at that time by an intending settler to obtain a grant of land.

From 1803 to 1825 Van Diemen's Land was, in effect, a dependency of New South Wales, the colony not being granted responsible government until the latter year. Before leaving England the settler had to obtain from the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department an order to the Governor-in-Chief in Sydney, or the Lieut.-Governor in Hobart Town, authorizing him to issue a grant to the settler 'proportional to the means he may possess of bringing it into cultivation.' (Curr, 1824, pp. 92 *et seq.*)

Curr says the minimum amount of capital required to secure a grant was £500, but Jeffreys (1820) says that £200 would secure 200 acres. According to Evans (1822, p. 114) the Colonial Department required all settlers to have at least £500. (This regulation was probably invalid, as the Act 53 George III. c. 155 authorized any subject to settle in Australia without any licence.)

On arrival the settler lodged his letter with the Lieut.-Governor, together with a statement of his assets. He was presented by the Naval Officer to Lieut.-Governor Sorell, who pointed out the most eligible districts in which land was to be obtained. (It is said that Sorell was a most zealous immigration officer, and often succeeded in persuading those who had intended to settle in New South Wales to stay in Van Diemen's Land.)

The area granted was based upon the settler's means, as disclosed in his statement, but the maximum area was from 2000 to 2560 acres. In 1824 the Colonial Office fixed the maximum at 2560 acres and the minimum at 320 acres. Possession of £3000 would entitle him to 2000 acres, £1000 700 acres, and £500 to 400 to 500 acres.

Governor Davey was allotted a grant of 3000 acres by way of compensation for the capture by the Americans of his baggage, and this was the largest grant ever made to an individual. (West, p. 51.)

Extra land was occasionally given to settlers who had proved their worth and industry or done signal service to the colony, e.g., Gatenby, Batman, &c.

Having selected the spot on which he wished to settle, the next step was to obtain from the Deputy-Surveyor written permission to locate himself there. This was called a 'location order.' Owing to the delays which occurred in the issue of grants, many titles were founded upon these location orders alone.

There was also a regulation (not always enforced) that the settler should enter into a bond to maintain, if required, for a certain number of years, one prisoner for every 100 acres granted. If he took a second convict for one year, he was given a bonus of 100 acres.

Rations for the settler and his servants were also given at first.

Owing to the abuses which arose under this system, Governor Arthur set up a Land Board in 1828. Free grants were discontinued, and land was sold, at first by tender, and from 1831 by public auction. (West, 1852, p. 158.)

Immediately on his arrival at Hobart Town Mr. Leake set about securing a suitable grant of land. A formal application,

with a letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, was lodged with the Lieutenant-Governor in the prescribed form, of which the contents were as follows:—

Hobart Town, V.D. Land,
1823.

Sir,

Having arrived from England by the Brig *Andromeda* with an Order from His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonial Department for a Grant of Land proportioned to the Means that I possess for its cultivation and improvement, which Letter I have lodged in your Office, I beg leave to subjoin a Statement of the property which I bring with me, and which I intend to employ exclusively for that purpose, and to add that I am prepared to verify my Statement in any way that may be required.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
JOHN LEAKE.

To
The Secretary to His Honour
The Lieutenant-Governor,
V.D.L.

Upon this application, a Letter of Location was issued in the following terms:—

Colonial Secretary's Office,
1823.

To John Leake.

Sir,

In reply to your application for a Grant of Land, I am directed to acquaint you that the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to order a Location of 500 acres to be made to you upon condition of your cultivating and improving the Land and residing thereupon.

When you have decided upon the Tract you wish to obtain, you will communicate with the Surveyor-General upon the subject, to enable that officer to furnish a description of the boundaries for the approval of His Excellency, and an Order will then be issued from this Office to authorise your occupation of the Land.

I am, Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,
W. B. HAMILTON,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

The next step was to select the land, and we find Mr. Leake setting off up-country on horseback, and with a bullock-cart, the usual mode of conveyance at that time, to explore; leaving his wife and children in rooms at Derwent Park.

In a letter, dated 19th July, 1823, he writes to his wife:

> 'We are all well, and have fixed on our land at the junction of the Macquarie and the Elizabeth. . . . Our cart upset on the road and broke the rum bottle, but did no other material damage. . . . We are at present at the Government Hut, our bullocks having strayed away, but I trust we shall find them to-morrow. We are within two miles of our land, and shall make all the speed we can with our building. . . . I think you will like this part of the country, and shall feel most anxious to get the family up here.'

Enclosed with this letter there is a sketch plan of the situation of the area selected.

The cost of hire of the horse for this expedition was £15. On his return to Hobart Town some weeks later, two assigned servants, 'Government men,' as they were then called, were secured, and added to the establishment, and fifty ewes and lambs at a cost of £1 per head, and in August Mr. Leake started off again for Campbell Town, distant ninety miles or so, this time on foot, and accompanied by his son Robert, aged about fifteen. On the way he sends by messenger a letter from Tin Dish, 21 miles south of Campbell Town, from which I quote the following:

> 'Robert walks very stoutly. We came yesterday from Watson's at Bagdad to Mr. Pike's at 14 Tree Plain, a distance of 26 miles. He was quite fresh. To-day we have come but 15 miles. Our sheep are about 4 miles before us. . . . As soon as our land is measured and I have got business into a proper train, so that our work may go forward in my absence (which I think will be very soon accomplished), I shall return and fetch you all up. The roads are very good now, and it is pleasant travelling, and I trust it will be so much warmer that we may bush it on our journey.'

By September the first hut was finished, and a start had been made with a second for the assigned servants. Crops had been sown and a garden laid out, and planted with the seeds brought from England. One of the boys was shepherd, and another baker and cook. Mr. Leake himself did the washing, as he writes: "This is my washing day . . . I have eight sheets already "firsted," as you call it; they will be clear washed and rinsed in the River . . . it makes them a beautiful colour.' He also says that one of the boys had only two shirts, which were very dirty.

Wages for assigned servants were, for males, £10 per annum, and for females, £7. The latter were often unsatisfactory, as will be seen from the following extract from a letter written by Mrs. Leake not long after she had settled at Rosedale:

> 'I do not think I shall be able to keep the woman servant. She goes about her work very unwillingly and inactively. I have to look after her quite as much as I should any man servant. She has been taking upon herself to say she should go away—I believe she said "run away." I have been obliged to give her a severe reprimand. This morning she told me you had said she was to have more than seven pounds per year; that you had promised it to her. I do not think her worth any more, but I do not think I shall be able to keep her, and am very sorry she was ever sent. She asked me for shoes to-day, and had never, till you mentioned it, said the cloak had been

given in advance. As you said she was such a treasure I endeavoured to consider her as such, and treated her very kindly, but too much lenity will not do for these prisoners . . . I do not think women servants are suitable up the country, unless you need them for sickness or have a family of young children to look after . . .

You will tell me exactly what you gave the woman to understand about her wages, because we do not give the men more than ten pounds a year, who do more work than the women. We cannot expect them to be satisfied if she is given more than her allowance. She tells me she told you she would not come for seven pounds a year, but I do not see how a Government woman has the power of dictating.'

In October, 1823, the household were alarmed by some people lurking about the premises, but a party of soldiers arrived from Norfolk Plains in disguise, looking for them, and they decamped without actually attacking the house.

We get a glimpse of the loneliness of bush life in those days from two letters, written in 1824, to Mr. Leake by Mr. William Pike, of Park Farm, from which I quote the following extracts:

'You have no doubt heard that 14 Bushrangers escaped from Macquarie Harbour, and landed in the Derwent, committing burglaries and robberies wherever they go. I am happy to say that five are taken, one has given himself up, and one has been wounded. The remaining seven are in the bush; the most reasonable supposition was that they had made for the Big Lagoon in our immediate neighbourhood. Parties of soldiers and constables have been here on the look out for some days, without success. We have been preparing to give them a warm reception, should they come in the night. I hope our prowess will not be put to the test. You have doubtless heard of the murder of a settler in our neighbourhood by the natives. They get excessively treacherous. Should they ever come near you, let no insinuation of theirs induce you to appear friendly; I am warranted in this remark by this murder.'

About 18 months after this another gang of bushrangers was in the vicinity, and we find Mr. Willis, of Wanstead Park, writing to Mr. Leake as follows:

'March 12, 1826.

Sir,

In obedience to the command of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, I have to entreat the favour of your friendly co-operation with me in exerting our utmost vigilance in the capture of the broken ranks of Brady's party. Brady, I am happy to say, is taken, with Cody, Bryant, and Goodwin. It is supposed they

are lurking in the Forest; by prompt measures there is every hope of the whole being captured. I beg your immediate attention at my house with as many armed men as you can conveniently spare.'

Shortly after Mr. Pike's warning to beware of the natives a party of them was encountered on Rosedale, as narrated in the following letter, written by Mr. Leake, and dated 19th August, 1824:

'I have been now resident upon my farm in the centre of the island upwards of twelve months, and, though the native hordes, as we have observed by their fires upon the neighbouring mountains, have frequently been within the distance of a few miles, they have but once approached my dwelling. This happened about the month of March last. I was walking alone by the side of a new fence, which enclosed my arable ground, about 200 yards from the house, and was struck with astonishment to see four black figures sitting together on the ground, on the other side, with their feet in a hole, in which one of the posts was inserted, and which had not been quite filled up. I had scarcely recovered from my surprise before they all arose and discovered themselves to be four of what (in this case) cannot be described "the fair sex," and I as improperly accosted them in German . . . to which they replied with an unintelligent grin. Recollecting myself, I had recourse to signs, and putting my finger to my mouth, I said, "Bread? Bread?", when they nodded their approbation, upon which I signified by my hand that they should remain where they were whilst I went to fetch them some food. I soon returned with a loaf, and brought Mrs. Leake and some of the children with me to see them. We gave to each of them as much as they would eat, having understood that they never would divide anything they got with each other. We made various efforts to make ourselves understood, but to little purpose, and found when they spoke to each other that we could not catch any articulate sounds of their language, but they had evidently learned the word "Bread," and also "Tate" (Potatoes), from some previous intercourse with the English. After we had satisfied our curiosity, it being also dinner time, we left them munching their bread, and Mrs. Leake said, "Good bye, good bye." They repeated, and, mistaking it for an invitation to the House, they all suddenly leaped over the rails to come with us, but as they were very dirty in their persons, and had, besides, a kind of itch upon them, we were obliged to decline the honour of a nearer approach, and signed to them to remain as before. In a short time I returned, and brought with me a painted picture of the various costumes of the inhabitants of the earth, which I had brought from Hamburg . . . They appeared amused, and pointed to several

figures, among which those of the greatest variety of colouring seemed to claim their chief attention. The border was also much admired, and one of the girls ran her finger with great pleasure all round it. They however seemed to restrain the expression of their curiosity within due bounds, as persons who could not be thought to be too much excited, and were therefore cautious of manifesting an ignorant and savage wonder. But when I rolled up the scroll quickly it quite got the better of their caution, and they all burst out into an involuntary laugh at this piece of ingenuity. As it was drawing on towards evening, I pointed to a small shepherd's hut close by, of which they took no notice, and seeming still unsettled, and having reason to suspect that a camp of men might be at no great distance, whose presence might be very inconvenient, if not dangerous, we entered into a kind of treaty with them, and gave them a quantity of raw potatoes, on condition of their going away, which they punctually observed, and went gaily off, singing and dancing as they went. Notwithstanding this manner of behaviour, I am of opinion these women come about as spies for the men, who, as you may have seen by our paper, deal very treacherously, and take every opportunity to spear a white man when it is in their power. I even saw one of the women, at a time when she thought herself unobserved, using violent gestures, and, as I thought, cursing the ground, but it might be all imagination. No doubt, however, they look upon us as intruders.'

In 1825 Mr. Leake was granted a further 2000 acres, which he rather naïvely states was 'a mark of the Governor's favor which perhaps I should not have obtained had I not been under his frequent notice.'

In 1829 the Derwent Bank was established in Davey-street, opposite the present Lands and Works Offices, and Mr. Leake accepted a temporary position there as accountant, which necessitated his living in Hobart Town, and leaving the management of Rosedale to Mrs. Leake. Prices for all farming produce and stock were then very low, sheep being sold for nine or ten shillings. It was therefore necessary to add to their income, and it was desirable, for other reasons, to have one of the family in the Capital. There was a good deal of trouble about that time with sheep-stealing, and what with that, and other troubles, poor Mrs. Leake felt greatly the responsibility and isolation. She writes in 1828: 'I think it very long to look forward to your return. I never felt more lonely in my life. I am at times almost melancholy.' Indeed, we can only marvel at the heroism of these women, many of them women of culture and refinement, uprooted from the

sheltered existence they had enjoyed at Home, cut off from all the amenities of society, and planted in the bush among convict servants, bushrangers, and natives, and deprived of most of the ordinary comforts of life.

In a letter written from Hobart on 30th January, 1828, Mr. Leake says:

> 'I have seen two murderers executed to-day, and on Sunday I heard a sermon from the Archdeacon. The text was the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Wherein he traced the rise of uncontrolled passion to obstinacy in youth, and shewed how, step by step, men arrived at the commission of crime. Let my dear Edward and Robert beware of despising reproof, nor think it a light thing to begin, by any act of disobedience to parents (or hereafter to masters), a career which could possibly lead towards such terrible results.'

In January of that year he gives us a glimpse of Hobart society:

> 'You ask what sort of people I have to do with. In primis, there is the Sheriff, Dudley Fereday, Esq.[1] He is a bachelor, with a broad Brim, dressed almost as plainly as a Quaker, and very regular and methodical . . . His house is very neat, and yet very plainly furnished, and I observe he sometimes dines in his butler's pantry, and sometimes in his kitchen . . . I breakfast at eight, lunch at one, dine at five, and drink tea at nine. Mr. Lee Archer, the Government Architect, Mr. Ferrar, Collector of Customs, Mr. Wedge, a surveyor, and a few others, are our daily party. No drinking or rioting, and the table open to ladies and gentlemen, the same as the boarding house at Scarborough.'

In April there was a ball at Government House, which is described as a very splendid one, but it rained the whole evening, so that the ladies, who had not, in general, carriages, were almost up to the ankles in mud. However, all were much pleased with the entertainment, and quite charmed with the Governor's (Arthur's) politeness, which much exceeded expectations.'

Mrs. Adey (presumably the wife of the cashier of the Derwent Bank), writing to *The Morning Herald* in 1827, draws rather a different picture of social life in Hobart Town at that time, at any rate in official circles, and of the atmosphere of Government House:

> 'The official corps,' she says, 'are punctilious; fearful of compromising their rank; all etiquette. Entertainments at Govern-

[1] Dudley Fereday, Sheriff, is described by West (p. 129) as 'The most distinguished money-lender, whose ordinary charge was 35 per cent., or less with ample security. After a few years he returned (in 1834) to England, having realised £20,000 by usury. On his death he bequeathed a portion of his wealth to Oxford, to found a scholarship. Mr. Gellibrand applied to him with aptitude 'Burke's phrase, "His bible is his bill-book, and his gold his god."'

ment House are ceremonies rather than parties of pleasure. As the servant opens the door he seems to say, "You may enter, but don't speak." Some more daring spirits would venture a remark, as ballast is thrown out to send a balloon above the fogs; but caution, like Sancho's physician, interdicted the perilous indulgence, and restored the watchful silence. No Dutchman would willingly endure the Humdrumstadt on the Derwent, notwithstanding its natural advantages and commercial promise—a town without a library, and where the common spirit of detraction was exasperated by competition for those favours the Governor could refuse or transfer. The presence of power was everywhere felt; and dreaded wherever it could not be defied.' (West, 1852, p. 115.)

We find a reference to Sir John Franklin in a letter dated 6th July, 1837, in which Mr. Leake says:

'I fully intended returning to-day, but as Sir John Franklin arrived I remained to attend his levée, and had the pleasure of being introduced to him by Capt. Montague at Government House. He appears to be a very affable man. He is rather low in stature, but stout and manly in his deportment.'

Soon after their arrival both Sir John and Lady Franklin held levées. I came across the following description of the ladies' levée in another old diary of 1837:

'Some of our Methodist ladies were present. Mrs. Dunn from her carriage was presented, dressed in a black satin dress with short sleeves and white net over them, a black headdress with three white plumes, and black satin shoes.

'Mrs. Orton wore a black satin dress, short sleeves with net over, headdress, and satin shoes.

'Miss Orton a pink satin slip, with white net over, white satin shoes, and head finely dressed.

'Sarah ——, more in character, walked there in plain black silk dress and Quaker bonnet, in consequence of which she rendered herself very conspicuous, and formed a subject of conversation to the whole Town.

'I am told the Justice Pedder's lady became so much annoyed at length with the kind of company that she left Government House in disgust, and went home.'

Evidently human nature has not changed much from those early days!

And now, having seen our settlers fairly started on their new life, it is time to take leave of them. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to follow their fortunes further, though the later letters and papers afford us enticing glimpses of people and events which

have long since passed into history, and which make us wish to linger. A procession of Governors, from Sir George Arthur to Sir William Denison, passes across the stage: we see the sons of settlers presenting a formal petition to the Governor, protesting against the discontinuance of grants of land: we find a circular, dated 11th June, 1841, asking for subscriptions towards the establishment of a school in memory of Archdeacon Hutchins, with a list of subscribers, headed by Sir John and Lady Franklin: another circular, dated December, 1843, appealing for funds for the completion of Trinity Church, 'the roof of which was then nearly finished': a lengthy memorandum setting out the views of landholders against the cessation of transportation, which was the subject of such violent agitation: a document surrendering to the Crown an area of land at Risdon for the purposes of a bridge across the Derwent (which, after the lapse of over 80 years, is still unbuilt); the passing of an Act to authorize the construction of a road to Brown's River along the banks of the Derwent: a petition to the Queen, praying for the establishment of a Legislature to be elected by the people; and many other references to matters of public interest, on which time will not permit me to dwell.

On the purely personal side, we see Mr. Leake extending his holdings of land and of flocks and herds, and gradually being appointed to offices and duties of a public nature; and finally becoming a member of the Legislative Council: his sons crossing to the mainland, to find wealth and prosperity during the gold rush: the humble cottage of wattle and daub giving place, first to a modest cottage, and eventually becoming the stately mansion which now crowns the foothills of the Western Tiers.

And, as we pore over the yellowed pages, with their faded caligraphy, there emerges from the mists of the past a vision of high endeavour, of dauntless courage, and of unswerving faith, which stirs our hearts, and fills us with gratitude, admiration, and pride.

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