

TASMANIAN RELICS IN THE HAVRE MUSEUM.

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(Communicated by E. L. Piessé.)

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At the initiative of the Institute of France, the Government of the day despatched a scientific exploring expedition to Australasia. Under the command of Capt. Nicholas Baudin, two vessels, the "Géographe" and the "Naturaliste," left Havre on the 19th October, 1800. After a voyage of twenty thousand leagues the survivors arrived at Lorient, 25th March, 1814. The mortality on these ships, probably from scurvy, was frightful. The commander and a considerable number of his officers died on the voyage, while others were invalided at Mauritius.

Never before had the scientific staff and equipment been equalled; the expedition was especially fortunate in its historian, the gifted François Péron, who, poor fellow, lived just long enough to hand the manuscript of his book to his faithful friend Louis Freycinet.

The extensive and valuable collections procured by this expedition furnished material for the chief scientific authorities in France to work upon. For several decades Cuvier, Valenciennes, Lanarck, Blainville, Dumeril, and others continued to publish novelties discovered by Baudin's expedition. Perhaps it was on account of political disturbance that the scientific results were not issued as a whole, but merely written up piecemeal.

Though the biological collections were transferred to the Museum of the Jardin des Plantes, yet a considerable body of notes, descriptions and drawings, seem to have been returned to the survivors of the scientific staff. We are told that Petit and Milbert, two of the artists of the expedition, privately disposed of a number of drawings of Tasmanian natives.

The drawings of Charles Alexander Lesueur, an accomplished artist of this expedition, were ultimately acquired by the Havre Museum. A list of these has been published by Dr. G. Lennier,* from which may be mentioned fifteen sketches of canoes and utensils, another fifteen of scenes

* Lennier.—*Bull. Soc. Zool., France*, VIII., 1883, p. 9.

and ceremonies, and ten portraits of Tasmanians, besides much Australian matter. Further notes on Lesueur's collection were published by Dr. A. Loir.⁵⁵

The object of the present communication is to draw the attention of those interested in Tasmanian ethnology, to a probable store of information on this subject in the Havre Museum.

⁵⁵ Loir.—*Bull. de Geograph. Hist. et Descript.*, 1912, p. 274.