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Jane Franklin's incomplete diary of the voyage home from Hobart Town, March 6 1844

RS 16/2(5)

Voyage home from Hobart Town

March 6th 1844

Transcribed by Gabrielle Irvin-Speck, 02/07/2019

Wednesday 6th March / The Captain was up all night, the weather being variable & the wind likely at any moment to change. It was during the whole of this day dead on end, but there was very little of it. We were talking as it is not unusual to do in a calm, of the pirates & of the first sail we should see since we left Port Phillip now nearly 2 months, being of this sort. The gentlemen had no sooner left the table than a sail was in sight seen on our starboard quarter & going in the same direction as ourselves. She was pronounced after much recognizance to be a large merchantman. It was supposed from our movements that she might have suspicions about us, for she showed her colours, when there was not sufficient light to make them out.

I told Dr Browning in the evening that I had a treat for him. It was an account by Lord Shrewsbury of the Estatica of Caldero which I had cut out of a newspaper. I received from him Birt's *Summary of the Principles & History of Popery* which I forthwith began to read.

The ship was not visible the next morning and the wind continued full with light squalls & rain - one of these about noon brought it however there were some signs of stormy weather. The sun set in rising clouds, casting a fluctuating tinge of red in a narrow & broken stream across the sheet of purple waters, now rippled by a very light breeze which just enabled us to hold our course. The sun went down like a globe of fire which we could look at without pain & brought out distinctly some purple hills for so they appeared behind it. The Captain who admitted that some faint & ill defined outlines Eastward of this was the distant coast of Africa asserted these sun banks to be closer - if otherwise, his observations were all wrong, & it was therefore with satisfaction we heard the 2nd mate at tea time exultingly report that the mountains were rising up into the sky. The darkness which soon came on was illuminated by frequent & rather vivid flashes of sheet lightning which came from all quarters of the horizon. The Moon had not risen, but Jupiter only a little above the horizon looked so large & so brilliant in the darkness & was so regularly & rapidly hid & disclosed by the passage of dark clouds that we might have fancied it a new & splendid

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revolving light on Cape Agulhas.

I finished this evening my old book of voyages, containing Sir John Marlborough's, Tasmans', Woods', & Martens', before attempting to take up Penn afterwards with the 2 Testaments. I fell into a stupor produced by the closeness of the evening & was obliged to give it up.

Nothing particular followed the stormy indications - a few light showers fell during the night & the next morning we were making a little progress with an unfavourable breeze from the S.W. It was Sunday morning the 10th we had church in the Cuddy. Sir John read the Communion service instead

of the Litany as he usually does on alternate Sundays. The Dr. read an excellent sermon of the late Mr. Andrew Thompson of Edinburgh – “Behold, now is the accepted time” etc.

We all went on deck after the service to look at the ship (the same vessel it is supposed which we saw before/which was in sight on the starboard bow, nearer shore. In the evening Mr. ~~Washam~~ Weston invited me to walk. I told him of my plan to [?] [?] get onto a clergyman &

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his wife for the education of girls & of my scheme of introducing them into society at Govt. House, which he seemed highly to approve of – he spoke of Miss Cowie & Miss Manley (now Mrs. Horne/ who was at one time governess in his family – he said she was extremely accomplished, but that her manners were not very good & had the appearance of a little flightiness, this it was only the effect of a nervous & excitable temperament. –

Dr Browning’s evening discourse was a composition of his own upon the moral & intellectual beings whom we have scriptural authority for believing exist in the Universe besides the human race, in other words upon Angels & Devils, but principally the former.

I finished to day Birt’s *Summary of the Principles & Practice of Popery*. At 6 o’clock on Monday morning the 11th, we spoke our Companion ship which was a fine merchantmen of 800 tons, called the _____ no one was sure about the name but it was a proper name of 4 or 5 syllables & ended in a. She was from Bengal - a word which gave rise to much after discussion whether it was not Bombay that it was said, whilst some one thought they heard “Calcutta”. In reply to the questions on their side, Captain Ferguson said we were from Port Phillip which not being intellible [sic] to them, he added New South Wales. English news had arrived in India up to the 6th Dec^{br}. The stranger Captain said he was not going into the Cape & desired we would report him which Captain Ferguson replied to by saying we were not going there either & the stranger was requested to report us in her way home. None but the gentle men witnessed this event, but on board of the stranger were seen the faces of colored women looking out from the port holes, and it was thought some fairer heads in dishabille behind – a few gentlemen including a military man in a red cloak was on the deck. – I rejoiced much that the ship was not going into the Cape & thus that there was nothing to be apprehended from the report to the Col. Secretary there of our exact movements towards the scene of future strife.

At 9 o’clock this forenoon, we passed Cape Agulhas & having a most favourable & smart breeze & a rising current which carried us along at the rate of 9 knots an hour, we, about ...

... little reading & thus finished the 4 numbers of the VDL Monthly Magazine & began Dampier's Voyages & Nicholson's lectures on Hezekiah – I had some evening walks with Mr Weston & on Saturday 17th I told him of the [?] Art Union Society which led to his making some observations on the desideratum of a public library. He questioned me if any thing of the kind had been organised & I replied in the negative except the special & limited library of the Tasmanian Museum which I had to explain & in which he seemed to take much interest – he said he had been promised an engraving of the Museum – on returning to the cabin, Eleanor [sic] told me it was the anniversary of the foundation of Ancanthe Museum, which led me at once to fetch the engravings & present 2 or 3 to Mr. Weston. I brought out also the [?] [?]. The other gentlemen seemed to listen to the perpetual holiday then founded, with interest, & I gave each of them an engraving to remind them that they also were invited to become benefactors to the library.-

Sunday 17th we had 2 services on the Quarter Deck, & at each Dr. Browning read discourses of his own composition which had considerable merit. The 8 o'clock evening service was in addition to these, but without any other reading than the Scriptures. I finished Nicholson's lectures on Hezekiah which may be called rather a pretty book of its class, but a little superficial – also Clark on Climate. A favourable but moderate carried us steadily on towards St. Helena, till Tuesday the 19th, when we were nearly becalmed during the day & more so at night. We crossed the Tropick of Cancer in the forenoon - this without wind, we are not yet suffering from the heat, gone are the flies which disappeared in a great increase during the cool weather round the Cape, came on up again in force. A new generation of them, mostly very minute, but in different stages of increase seem to be taking the place of their parents. It appears to be rather an unusual circumstance to be becalmed in this part of the ocean, it being a common [?] to roll from the Cape to St. Helena, as indicative of the ships' motion in a rolling sea. The Captain observed that we had the sun near the Equator, we had crossed the tropick & had a new moon & considering all these, he expected confusion of some sort. We watched on deck the setting ...

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