# CRUISE OF THE BEACON.

1854.

THE

# CRUISE OF THE BEACON:

A Narrative of a Visit

TO

THE ISLANDS IN BASS'S STRAITS,

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS;



BY THE

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# ILLUSTRATIONS.

# CRUISE OF THE BEACON.

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It had long been my desire to visit the islands in Bass's Straits, not so much on account of the extent of population by which they are inhabited, as because I was painfully aware that the few families settled therein were entirely deprived of the means of grace and the ministrations of the Church. David's troubled cry, "No man cared for my soul," must have found an echo in the heart of each one amongst them who had been but partially awakened to a knowledge of that soul's value in the sight of Him who bought it.

The navigation of these islands is intricate and dangerous; beset on every side with shoals and

sandpits, sunken rocks, and bare, rugged reefs. They are unvisited for the purposes of trade, and few persons would be tempted, by mere curiosity, to encounter the difficulties of approaching them.

Not to mention the extreme hazard of threading these islands without an experienced pilot, the small cutter which I keep, in partnership with my excellent friend the Chief Justice, is ill-adapted to encounter the heavy seas and sudden storms that prevail in Bass's Straits. Well calculated as is our little craft of ten tons for missionary work in the river or in D'Entrecasteaux Channel, something more substantial is required for a protracted cruise in a tempestuous region.

As I had good reason to believe that I should meet with an affectionate welcome from those whom I so longed to visit, it was with more than common joy that I availed myself of an unexpected opportunity of accomplishing my long-cherished wish.

The Government possesses a schooner of about ninety-six tons, which is kept mainly for the purpose of visiting and supplying the lighthouses belonging to the Colony and its dependencies.

ENTRANCE TO STORM BAY, VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

Recently, however, it was determined that her operations should be for once extended, and that the port-officer, Captain King, R.N., should not only inspect the lighthouses, but also visit some of the harbours along the northern coast of the island, while the surveyor-general, Robert Power, Esq., might communicate with all the tenants of Crown lands within the Straits.

A passage was readily granted to me, on application to the authorities; and on the morning of the 23d of September, 1854, I embarked on board the *Beacon*, in company with my two agreeable fellow-voyagers.

After many delays, consequent on our fouling the anchor of another vessel, we got under way about half-past two in the afternoon, with a fair wind, which gradually stiffened into a strong breeze as night drew on. We rounded Cape Pillar at 9 P.M. It is seldom that there is not a heavy sea running in this part of Storm Bay, and the wild nature of the coast acts as its own warning to induce mariners to give the basaltic columns with which it is studded as wide a berth as possible.

The accompanying sketches will serve to ex-

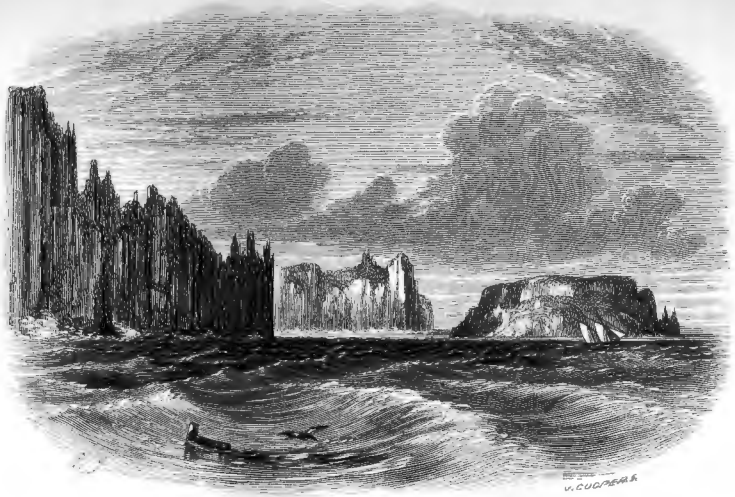
plain the character of this coast better than any description.

It was a rough night; but the only damage done by the seas which occasionally broke over us was the loss of our starboard gangway, which had not been properly secured.

SUNDAY, 24*th*.

The vessel was in too much confusion, and the motion in a singularly lively craft too incessant and irregular, to admit of the celebration of Divine Service, even had a severe headache, with which I have been frequently visited during the last few months, permitted me to attempt it.

At 6 P.M. we reached Swan Island, at which place we had to land stores for the use of the superintendent of the lighthouse. The weather looked so threatening, and the only good anchorage of the island so perfectly exposed to the south-east wind which was then blowing, that Captain King decided on pushing on for Goose Island. As far as the weather was concerned, our apprehensions were groundless; it fell calm, and we



Cape Raoul. Cape Pillar. Tasman's Island.

had the full benefit of some hours' rolling—a motion which to me, when tightly wedged in a narrow berth, is far from being unpleasant. A light breeze sprang up towards morning, and at half-past six on

MONDAY, *25th*,

we dropped anchor at Goose Island.

It was well that we were prevented from fulfilling our original intention of landing at Swan Island; for when the superintendent of the lighthouse, Captain Davis, came on board, we found that they had expended their last ounce of flour yesterday.

Soon after breakfast we went on shore, and visited first Captain Davis's snug abode, and then the lighthouse. I was keenly and painfully reminded of my last visit to this island in 1843, in company with my dear and lamented friend Sir John Franklin. Arrangements were made with Captain Davis for the celebration of Divine Service in the evening at his house—an offer which he gratefully accepted.

We went on board to dine, and rowed off at

dusk to the island. The short twilight in this region soon left us, and we had to push our way to the house through a narrow and tangled track, stumbling every now and then over sundry invisible obstacles, our ears the while saluted with the hoarse, discordant scream of the mutton-birds, the males of which species come annually to the island to prepare the nests for the females. We were told that their arrival was singularly regular; scarcely, in any instance, varying from the 21st of September.

A small but most attentive congregation assembled in Captain Davis's parlour, who listened to and joined in the service with an earnestness and devotion which evidently showed that the heart was with the act of worship. After the Second Lesson, a young Malay, of about eleven years of age, was brought to me to be baptized.

He was picked up in China by our host, when about four years of age; and since that period he has been most carefully tended by his parental patron, who has done his best to instruct him in the elements of Christian truth. One fruit of this teaching was exhibited in the anxious desire that



he had expressed to Captain Davis to be admitted to baptism. Poor boy! he was too shy to answer the questions which I put to him respecting the nature, privileges, and responsibilities of that holy Sacrament; but Captain Davis assured me that he quite understood what was said to him, and would give good proof of this by repeating, after my departure, all that had been said to him on the subject. He was named "Russell," at Mr. Power's suggestion; his bright eyes sparkling at the promise of a Prayer-book and Bible being given to him, so soon as he could read them with tolerable facility. It was a painful thing to think of the isolated condition of these wild places; their few inhabitants utterly devoid of all those outward means of grace which the Church supplies, and gradually, as almost a matter of course, ceasing to care deeply for the "word in season" which comes to them at such distant intervals. No minister of God's word had landed there since my visit in 1843.

The island itself is a long, narrow strip, about two miles from one extremity to the other, composed of huge granite boulders, flung about in the

most fantastic groups. During a long ramble which we took in the course of the day, we had abundant evidence that it was not devoid of the means of ministering to the comfort of its tenants. The soil deposited in the hollows, composed as it is chiefly of the manure of the mutton-birds, is rich in character and productive in quality. Vegetables grow luxuriantly; the gardens well repay the care that has been bestowed on them; and a handsome cow showed, by her sleek condition and portly person, that there was no lack of fattening forage, unpromising as was the appearance, at first sight, of this wild, rocky islet.

The lighthouse is 71 feet in height: the light itself, which is fixed and 108 feet above high-water mark, being visible twenty miles in clear weather. I should not omit to notice the thoughtful care of the Government in providing good and useful books, blending instruction with amusement, for the men attached to all the lighthouses. We took out 50*l.* worth, to be distributed among the five establishments; and to be exchanged from time to time.



TUESDAY, 26*th.*

Our intention of going on shore in the morning was frustrated by the uprising of a strong northerly breeze, which induced Captain King, at half-past nine, to run for Swan Island. After a fair passage of four and a half hours, we dropped anchor under the lee of the land at 2 P.M. It was too rough to land our stores, or even to enable us to jump on shore with any degree of comfort; so we remained quietly on board, and betook ourselves to various occupations. The superintendent (Morgan, formerly chief mate of the Government convict-ship, the *Lady Franklin*) managed to launch his whale-boat and, under the escort of a powerful crew, to come on board to pay his respects to his chief. His only child was unbaptized; so we made arrangements to go on shore on the morrow.

WEDNESDAY, 27*th.*

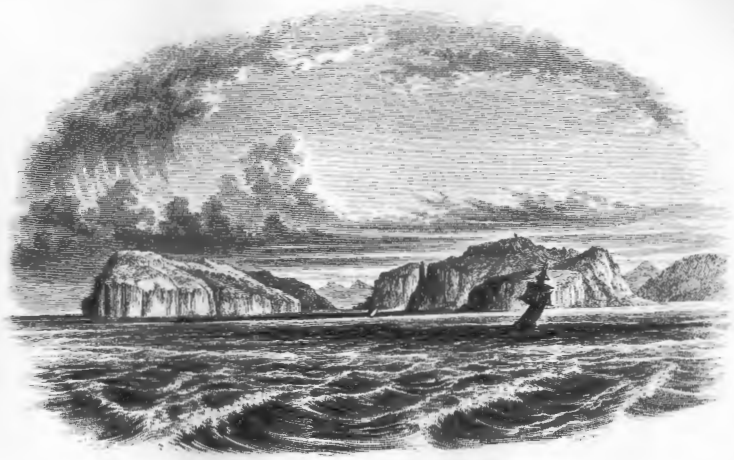
We had a tumbling night of it. It blew furiously: the wind shifting from W. to S.W. in heavy squalls; and a rolling sea setting in-shore, so as to render landing impossible.

THURSDAY, 28*th*.

The wind so far moderated as to allow us to go on shore; when I availed myself of the opportunity of baptizing Mr. Morgan's little girl. It was my earnest desire to have celebrated Divine Service in the evening; but the state of the weather warned us that our anchorage was unsafe, and that it was high time to be under way: so at 3 P.M. we set sail for Kent's Group.

Swan Island is the largest of a cluster of islets lying about three miles from the N.E. coast of Tasmania. It is little more than a succession of sand-heaps, covered here and there with tussocks and stunted shrubs. It seems strange that food should be found, out of such unpromising materials, for five cows, a score of sheep, and other live stock.

The lighthouse is placed at the S.E. end of this narrow, hammocky slip of sand and rock; differing only from that at Goose Island in that the light is revolving, not fixed. Eleven years have passed since I assisted at the ceremony of laying the first stone of this lighthouse, with dear



KENT'S GROUP.

old Sir John Franklin. Hundreds, nay, thousands, since that period have had good reason to bless the thoughtful care on his part, which provided so useful a beacon for this perilous and stormy coast.

FRIDAY, 29*th*.

Rolling heavily during the night: after a tolerably fair passage passed Goose Island at breakfast-time. Sighted the "pyramid," a huge, isolated rock, about 300 feet high. I must not omit to say how we were all struck with the singular formation of the peaks of Flinders Island as they opened upon us. I have rarely seen more picturesque or fantastic forms.

As the afternoon drew on, the high cliffs of Kent's Group rose in sight. I was strongly reminded, when at some distance, of my favourite old haunt, Capri. As we neared the islands the likeness somewhat lessened; for we became conscious that there was a passage that divided the Eastern from the Western Island.

The entrance is narrow and not without its perils; for, as is always the case in the immediate

vicinity of these high lands, the winds are baffling. The master of the vessel, Captain Nicholson, brought us through with admirable skill; and at about eight o'clock we anchored in West Cove, Erith Island.

### SATURDAY, 30*th*.

Soon after breakfast I went on shore with Mr. Power. Our amiable commander, Captain King, (who had slept on shore,) met us on the beach of Deal Island, and piloted us to the house of the superintendent. A winding road, cut with great judgment, through the scrub and she-oak trees, led us to Mr. Baudinet's residence. It was startling to see the comfort with which he was surrounded. Here, on this wild, isolated rock, we found a comfortable stone house; a well-appointed homestead; a garden redolent with sweets, and singularly beautiful in the varied colours of its flowers:—an atmosphere of peace and content breathing around this ocean-home. We found another evidence of the active enterprise of Mr. Baudinet and his sons in the wide road which formed the access to the

FLINDERS ISLAND.



lighthouse. From this point we had a noble view of Flinders and the surrounding islands to the eastward. Far as the eye could reach stood Wilson's promontory on the westward. It was with difficulty that we could tear ourselves away from this romantic scene, lit up as it was with all the glory of a bright Tasmanian sun.

On our return to the schooner we were much struck with the strange appearance of the cliffs that bound in West Cove to the southward. They bore the form of a huge face—eyes, nose, beard—complete. It was as though some monster giant was keeping his stony watch over the entrance to this narrow passage.

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1*st*.

Our arrangements for the celebration of Divine Service had been made on the previous evening with Mr. Baudinet. As the entire population of the island consists of his own family, (nine in number,) and two men employed at the lighthouse, our congregation was, of necessity, very small, even with the addition of the boat's crew of the *Beacon*,

Captain King, Mr. Power, and the schooner's commander. I have, however, often found a peculiar comfort in ministering to these little gatherings of Christian people. Scanty as they are in numbers, there is commonly a larger amount of manifest devotion and close attention to the services than is to be found in the crowded or well-appointed church. I was gratified, too, to find that Mr. Baudinet was so thoroughly impressed with the duty imposed upon him as a master of a family, and as bearing rule in this isolated place, as to gather together all around him for regular worship. No day passes without family prayer; and each Sunday finds him at his post, keeping alive a spirit of devotion by reading the Church Services in company with his little knot of worshippers.

The stores were soon landed; but the boisterous state of the weather rendered it unadvisable for us to leave our snug anchorage until the morning of the fourth. We set sail at about 10 A.M. with a fresh breeze, which gradually died away as we got in mid-channel. It was nervous work, swinging helplessly about between the huge masses of granite which stand on each side of Murray's



Pass. More than once we were drifting so closely to their jagged neighbourhood that it seemed almost impossible to avoid striking. Captain Nicholson handled the schooner with great skill and coolness. We all felt a sense of relief when a gentle breeze sprung up and carried us safely beyond our perils; for had the long swell heaved us upon the rocks, the schooner must have been dashed to pieces; to climb those perpendicular cliffs would have been impossible even for a chamois hunter: had the boats failed us in such a predicament, we must all have perished.

The passage between the two islands of Erith and Deal (which form the principal portion of the group) is about three miles in length, and from half-a-mile to a mile in width; so deep in the centre that the lead-line will not reach the bottom. The western of the two, Erith, possesses a safe anchorage (of which we availed ourselves) in a cove about a mile across from N. to S., and half-a-mile in depth. It is utterly devoid of all profitable vegetation; tenanted only by a few rabbits and the ever-present snake. Its length is about four miles; almost divided, near the centre, by a

narrow neck of loose stones covered partially, at high water.

Deal is somewhat larger and very much more productive. The enterprising superintendent and his active sons have succeeded in bringing several acres of land into cultivation; a good road, (as I have before mentioned,) about one and a half mile in length, has been cut to the lighthouse; and a capital garden supplies them abundantly with vegetables, and furnishes, withal, an ample stock of flowers, the full benefit of which we reaped for the adornment of our cabin. A team of six bullocks conveys their stores from place to place, and is rendered useful, of course, in many agricultural pursuits. Order and regularity, comfort and independence, appear to await upon the whole establishment. The lighthouse is erected upon a cliff that must be from 1,600 to 1,700 feet above the sea. It is revolving; and may be seen at a distance of fifty miles.

After a pleasant, though somewhat slow, passage, we cast anchor, late at night, midway, as far as we could judge, between Flinders and Hummock Islands.



THURSDAY, *5th.*

Morning proved to us that we were further off from Flinders than we had calculated upon. Consequently, when Mr. Power and I landed after an early breakfast, we found ourselves compelled to task the powers and patience of our boat's crew more severely than we could have wished.

Nearly eleven years had passed since I landed on the self-same rocks with Sir John Franklin. How changed the scene! Then the beach was covered with the aborigines, who greeted their kind and loved benefactor with yells of delight; capering and gesticulating with movements more indicative of exuberant wild joy than of elegance or propriety. Now all was still; a solitary labourer, impelled by curiosity rather than by any other feeling, remaining on the shore to watch our progress, and to point out the safest entrance.

I had no difficulty in recognising the little tract that led from the sands, through the tea-tree shrubbery, to the "settlement," even though the axe had been busy on every side. It was painful to witness the scene of ruin in the once neat and

well-ordered settlement. Desolation stared one in the face wherever the eye was turned: the comfortable house of the superintendent rapidly falling to decay; the gardens well-nigh rooted up; the range of buildings, in which the aborigines were formerly hutted, untenanted, broken, and tumbling down. The only sound fabric appears to be the old chapel, and that is turned into a barn.

Not that the present lessee of the island, Captain Malcolm Smith, is to blame for this altered state of things. The buildings are mostly useless to him, and perhaps the sooner they are down the better. Badly built in the first instance, they were not calculated for endurance, and are not worth keeping in repair.

Whilst speaking of Flinders Island, it may not be amiss to touch briefly upon the character of the aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land who were, for some time, settled on this island. They are fast disappearing from the face of the earth; and in all probability the lapse of a few years will find the race extinct, and no trace left to tell of those who once were lords of these fair possessions. Their numbers, on my visit to Flinders Island in 1843, were fifty-four; they are now reduced to sixteen; and though their new residence, Oyster Cove, in D'Entrecasteaux Channel, is in many respects superior to their former home, there seems no probability of any improvement being effected in those habits of living which so materially affect the constitution.



Early navigators speak of the aboriginal inhabitants of Tasmania as a social and gentle race, equally devoid of curiosity and of fear. Indolent and unenterprising, they were not prone to acts of open daring; but, as is the wont of savages, addicted to petty theft. All accounts agree in describing them as being singularly deficient in the most ordinary methods of procuring for themselves those comforts which usually characterise even the most untutored tribes of man.

No trace can be found of the existence of any religious usage, or even sentiment, amongst them, unless, indeed, we may call by that name the dread of a malignant and destructive spirit, which seems to have been their predominant, if not their only, feeling on the subject.

The first period of our taking possession of the

Colony (August, 1803) passed away without any act of violence on the part of the natives, or of oppression upon our side. But, in less than ten months from our occupancy, a serious and a fatal collision took place between the small party of British at Risdon, on the banks of the Derwent, and a numerous body of the aborigines, who, as it afterwards appeared, had visited our encampment for the purposes of observation rather than of plunder. In this affray it is said that fifty natives fell beneath our bullets.

Poor ignorant savages—all unconscious of our power and of our resources, knowing nothing of the white man, except that he was the deadliest foe with whom they had hitherto encountered—it is no wonder if, from that moment, they bent all their energies stealthily, but resolutely, to work the ruin of their invaders. This hostile feeling, once aroused, was never suffered again to sleep; and there is too good reason to fear that the savage instinct of revenge was perpetually whetted by acts of wanton barbarity inflicted upon them, at one time by the bushranger, at another by the convict stock-keeper.



It was in vain that successive governors denounced these enormities, and punished the delinquents when detected and convicted. The humane efforts of Collins, Davey, Sorell, and Arthur, to restore confidence and to establish friendly relations, were frustrated by the coarse brutality of a miserable portion of the European population.

It would be to no purpose to chronicle the savage deeds that were, from time to time, committed, either as acts of blind retaliation, on the one hand, or of capricious cruelty on the other. Old colonists have told me many a fearful tale of violence and murder, of insult and of violation. There are many such on record which make us blush for humanity when we read them, and forbid us to wonder that the maddened savage's indiscriminate fury should not only have refused to recognise the distinction between friend and foe, but have taught him to regard each white man as an intruding enemy, who must be got rid of at any cost.

Fearful and unsparing was his revenge. The rifled hut, the plundered stock-yard, the fired house, sheep and cattle killed, maimed, or stolen,

attested the wild spirit of hatred that had been aroused; whilst darker deeds raised up in array against them the passions even of those who might have been more disposed to pity them for their wrongs, than to sit in judgment upon them for indulging the animal instinct of retaliation.

No white man's life was safe: at no hour of day or night could he be sure that the sleepless eye of the stealthy savage was not upon him, watching for the favourable opportunity to pounce upon his unwary and helpless prey. Men, women, and children were speared alike.

At length, in 1830, a plan was devised by Colonel Arthur, which, it was hoped, would put an effectual stop to this incessant destruction of life and property. He determined to assemble all the available force of the Colony to establish a chain of posts extending in a line across the whole island, and so gradually to hem in the small remnant of the natives as to compel them to fall back upon Tasman's Peninsula, an isolated district joined to the main land by a narrow neck, and well adapted to ensure either their seclusion or their capture.



Volunteer parties assembled from all quarters of the country; the very prisoners of the Crown were armed, and incorporated with the forces; effectual means were taken to supply them abundantly with regular rations; martial law was proclaimed throughout the Colony; and the expedition set forth in number about five thousand.

Two months passed, nearly thirty thousand pounds had been expended, and the "Black War," as it was called, terminated in the capture of two individuals.

These means had signally failed; others were tried, with better success. A builder in Hobart Town, named Robinson, who had been placed in charge of twelve captured natives at Bruin Island, had succeeded in gaining a strong hold upon their confidence and affection. His experience of their character induced him to believe that he might exercise a similar influence over their unhappy countrymen, who had again scattered themselves throughout the Colony. The experiment was tried: he travelled over the country; some surrendered, as hopeless of a better state of things; others, sullen and exasperated, stood out longer; but,

after the lapse of a few years, the miserable remnant of the once lords of the Tasmanian soil were gathered together, some by capture, more by persuasion; and after much debate as to their ultimate disposal, and after some few changes in their destiny, they were transported to Flinders Island, in Bass's Straits. The last capture was made in December, 1842.

Huts of a comfortable character were erected for them, a medical superintendent and instructor appointed, and every reasonable attention paid to their comfort and improvement. The savage nature seemed to be extinguished by their new mode of life. So far as I am aware, no grave charge, no criminal outbreak, marked their residence at Flinders. They gradually sank into listless apathy, broken only by the rare occurrence of a stray visitor, or a new source of wonder.

Various reasons induced the Government to decide, in October, 1847, upon the removal of the small handful that yet survived to Oyster Cove, in D'Entrecasteaux Channel. A deserted penal station is now the last home of this unhappy race. I subjoin an interesting sketch of their habits



from the pen of Dr. Milligan, who was for some years their superintendent both at Flinders Island and at Oyster Cove.

"The aborigines of Tasmania, a race now nearly extinct, had a complexion and skin of a dark brown, or nearly black colour, with crisp hair, growing remarkably low upon the forehead, and extending down, in both sexes, on each side of the temples, in the shape of a whisker, projecting eyebrows, and sunken orbits, flat nose, and lips slightly thickened. In stature many of them were above the middle size, while, on the other side, many fell short of it. They wore no clothing whatever, except only in case of illness, when a kangaroo skin was put on, with the fur inwards, laced together in a way to fit the body. All along the eastern and central portion of the Colony they lived without having any fixed abode; and it was only on the west coast, between Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour, that huts were in use continuously, for periods of about six months together: these huts were conical, and thatched with grass, having an opening on one side, to answer the double purpose of door and chimney.

The numerous tribes of which the population of the island consisted were constantly at war with one another; and their language, or medium of communication, was, as might have been expected, split, by hostility and non-intercourse, into dialects almost as many as the various tribes in number. They lived chiefly on animal food; the kangaroo, wallaby, bandicoot, kangaroo rat, the opossum, and the wombat, nearly every bird and bird's-egg that could be procured, and, in the case of tribes near the sea, cray-fish and shell-fish, formed the staple articles of their diet. With these they mingled the core or pith of the fern trees, *Cibotium Billardieri* and *Alsophila Australis* (of which the former is rather astringent and dry for a European palate, and the latter, though more tolerable, is yet scarcely equal to a Swedish turnip); the young shoots of the *Pteris esculenti*, common ferns, as they emerge from the ground full of viscid mucous juice and various epiphytic fungi, of which one of the most important is that which grows on the Eucalypti, and is known, when dry, under the name of Punk, and used as a tinder in the Colony. Punk, when young, is nearly snow-white,



soft, and, to the taste, insipid, with a distant flavour of mushroom; in this stage they eat it freely, either raw or slightly roasted. The *Cyttaria* of the myrtle tree, a small morelle-looking, honey-combed fungus, growing upon a fine pedicle, was a great favourite; but that which afforded the largest amount of solid and substantial nutritious matter was the *native bread*, a fungus growing in the ground, after the manner of the truffle, and generally so near the roots of trees as to be reputed parasitical. Several mushrooms were also eaten by them; the onion-like leaves of some orchids, and the tubers of several plants of this tribe, were largely consumed by them, particularly those of *Gastrodi sessamoides*, the native potato, so called by the colonists, though never tasted by them, and having not the most remote relation to the plant of that name, except in a little resemblance of the tubers, in shape and appearance, to the kidney potato. The green seed-vessels of *Acacia sophora*, *A. maritima*, and several others were eaten freely by them, after having been half roasted by the fire; the amylaceous roots of the bulrush were roasted and eaten by them, together

with the carrot-like roots of some small umbelliferæ. Of berries and fruits of which they partook, the principal were those of *Solanum laciniatum*, or kangaroo apple, when dead ripe, of *Leucopogon gnidium* and *ericoides*, of certain species of *Coprosma*, of the *Gualtheria hispida*, the *Billardiera longiflora*, of *Cyathodes*, &c. &c. Besides these the leaf of the larger kelp, whenever it could be obtained, was eagerly looked for and greedily eaten, after having undergone a process of roasting and maceration in fresh water, followed by a second roasting, when, though tough, and too much like sole leather, it is susceptible of mastication, and, no doubt, nutritious. The women shaved their hair completely off; the men wore it long, and gave it a mop-like form and appearance by smearing it with fat of the wombat and kangaroo, and then daubing it full of red ochre, by which it was made to hang in corkscrews all around, and over the face and neck down to the shoulders; the women went about usually quite bald, and devoid of covering; frequently, however, they wore a fillet of gay flowers, of festoons of showy berries, or strings of shells, upon



their bare heads. They also wore a strip of the skin of wallaby or kangaroo under the knee, in place of a garter, or around the wrist or ankle. Other covering or ornament the aborigines had none, save and except the symmetrical lines of scars raised by incisions made, and long kept open, across the chest, and upon the arms and thighs—a practice to which the women appear often to have submitted, though more characteristic of the men their masters. It was rarely the custom amongst them to select wives from their own tribes, but rather to take them furtively, or by open force, from neighbouring clans; they were monogamous, but the practice of divorce was recognised, and acted upon, on incompatibility of disposition and habits, as well as on grosser cause given. Tasmanian lords had no difficulty, and made no scruple, about a succession of wives, and would thus occasionally, after temporary separation, readjust differences, and live happily ever after with their 'first loves:' still they never kept more than one wife at one time. They were polytheists; that is, they believed in guardian angels or spirits, and in a plurality of powerful

but generally evil-disposed beings, inhabiting crevices and caverns of rocky mountains, and making temporary abode in hollow trees and solitary valleys: of these a few were supposed to be of great power, while to the majority were imputed much of the nature and attributes of the goblins and elves of our native land. The aborigines were extremely superstitious, believing most implicitly in the return of the spirits of their departed friends and relations to bless or injure them, as the case might be; and they often carried about with them one or other of the bones of the deceased as a charm against adversity. Bones of the leg, arm, foot, and hand, the lower jaw, and even the skull, have in this way, and for this purpose, been found suspended round the necks of individuals amongst them. With respect to the burial of the dead, some of the tribes were in the habit of burning the remains; in which cases the ashes were sometimes taken up very carefully, and carried about as an amulet, to ward off sickness, and to ensure success in hunting and in war. Other tribes placed their dead in hollow trees, surrounded with implements of the chase and of war, building

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them in with pieces of wood gathered in the neighbourhood; while others would look out for natural graves, made by the upturn of large trees, and there deposit the bodies of their dead, leaving them but slightly covered with stones and loose earth. Long after Tasmania was first occupied, tribes have been met numbering more than one hundred. As European population crept in and increased, and their flocks and herds spread over the country, sanguinary feuds often arose between the original inhabitants and the stockmen and shepherds, usually terminating most fatally to the former. The inferior race has slowly but steadily yielded; and though long succoured and protected, there is now a mere handful of the aboriginal inhabitants left, maintained, however, in ease and comfort upon a Government establishment."

The present population of the island consists of fourteen individuals, five of Captain Smith's family, five men servants, two women, and two children. The greater part of its 480,000 acres is rock and scrub, as useless for pastoral as for agricultural purposes. There is, however, some good land; for Mr. Benvenuto Smith told us that

they obtained an average crop of thirty bushels to the acre from the thirty acres laid down in wheat; the land, it should be borne in mind, is most scantily helped with manure. Ten acres are sown with turnips, or planted with potatoes; about 1,200 acres may be reckoned upon as fit for pasture. An accurate survey, however, might tell a different tale.

Their stock seems large in proportion to their wants. They number about 150 horned cattle, including several bulls, which have taken to the bush and run wild. They are, as might be expected, both fierce and dangerous. More than once Captain Smith has had to run or climb a tree for his life. Before we left Hobart Town we were promised the exciting sight of a bull hunt; but the lessee's absence prevented it from taking place. Their sheep are reckoned at about 500. They have eight tame horses, and several run about the island as free and as wild as the bulls themselves.

The greatest drawback to the ordinary comforts of the inhabitants is the bad quality of the water, which, I am told, is becoming more brackish year



after year. They are entirely dependent upon rain-water for most domestic, and for all culinary purposes.

This vast territory of 480,000 acres is let to Captain Smith for ten years, at a rental of 100*l.* per annum, the lessee having the usufruct of all the stock that was upon it at the commencement of his lease; his covenant being to return the same number at its termination.

There was no possibility of holding divine service here during the few hours of our stay; the scanty number of inhabitants being engaged upon their several occupations, and most of them far a-field. One little girl was brought by her mother to be baptized.

On our way to the beach Mr. Power picked up a grizzled old seaman named Parish, who professed to be thoroughly acquainted with the intricate navigation of Franklin Inlet, which was the next place that we proposed to visit. Whilst Mr. Power was conducting the treaty with him as to our pilotage, I employed myself in sketching our distant anchorage.

We carried off our new pilot to the schooner,

which we reached at half-past eleven. Everything on board was ready for our immediate departure; so no time was lost in getting under way.

A fine steady breeze, which freshened as the afternoon drew on, took us past the dark granite peaks of Flinders, 2,350 feet in height, and brought us into Franklin Inlet. We soon had proof that we had shipped a most untrustworthy pilot. Our smart little vessel was running along under a seven-knot breeze, all sail set, and the wind right aft. So far as we could see, there was neither outlet nor passage in the direction towards which we were steering. On inquiring of the pilot where he intended to take us, he pointed to a spot which seemed to me to be nothing more than a reef, joining the extremity of Flinders to Dog Island. On mentioning my surmise to him (which, by the way, was strengthened by an observation through the telescope), he said that there was a narrow passage which he well knew; that once passed, a snug harbour awaited us round Flinders Island. I had very serious misgivings, but said no more.

Within ten minutes all doubts were at an end.



We had scarcely passed Woody and Tinkettle Islands, when we were suddenly brought up, "all standing." We had struck upon a sandspit, so completely on the edge, that within a stone's throw there were five or six fathoms of water. Happily for us it was almost low water; and as the tide in this inlet rises eight feet, we had every hope of getting off before dark. In an hour and a half our deliverance was effected, and at half-past five we floated off into deep water. The wind was increasing, the sea rising, our daylight fast waning; so Captain King thought it more prudent to cast anchor at once than to attempt the narrow passage of which our pilot spoke so confidently. It was well, as it afterwards appeared, that we did so.

It was almost dark when the boat of one of the sealers, Beadon, from Guncarriage or Vansittart Island, came to the rescue. The prudence of our course was abundantly confirmed.

It blew hard all night from the W.S.W., and a tumbling, though not heavy sea, was the consequence.

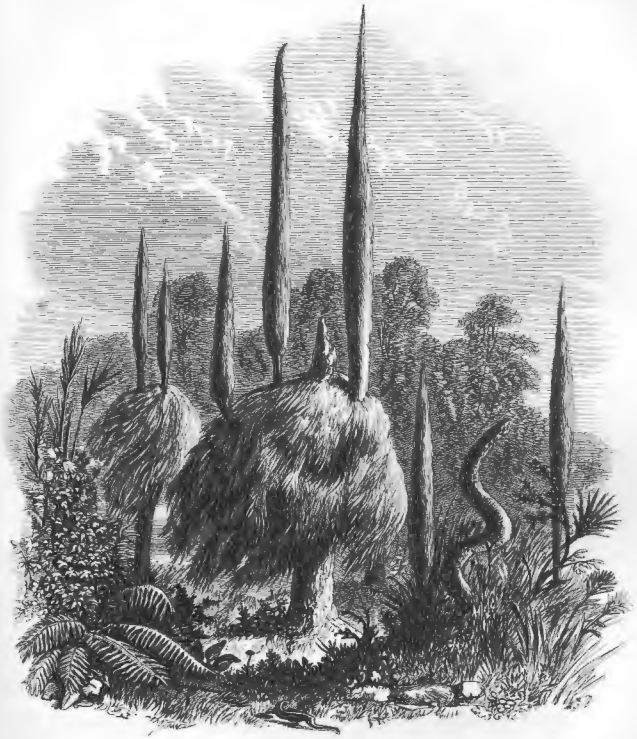
FRIDAY, *6th.*

Still blowing hard; bitterly cold; no prospect of getting on shore to-day unless the wind moderates considerably; for, though the wind in this quarter would allow us to reach Guncarriage Island, our return would be almost impossible.

There was a lull in the afternoon. Mr. Power and I took advantage of it, and went ashore to Flinders. A scramble through the bush brought us to a goodly collection of grass-trees, with which this part of the island is thickly studded.

An inspection of the reef, through the intricate passage of which our pilot had proposed to take the schooner, convinced us that we had good reason to be thankful for having grounded on the sandspit last evening. Had not our course been thus providentially arrested, the total destruction of our sea-home would have been inevitable. Our guide overlooked the difference between the draught of a whale-boat and a schooner of ninety tons. We must have been smashed to pieces.

Our convictions were confirmed in the evening when Tucker, the most experienced mariner and



GRASS TREE.

oldest resident in this quarter, came off from Guncarriage, and made arrangements with us for to morrow's work. It was settled that, weather permitting, we should attempt the landing in his boat soon after breakfast to-morrow.

SATURDAY, 7*th*.

It was about eight o'clock when Tucker (who, with his companions, had passed the night at Dog Island) came alongside. The weather was still so dark and threatening as to render our passage to Guncarriage a matter of doubt, on the score of prudence, as well as of safety. The distance is not above five miles; but the rapidity with which a heavy sea gets up in tempestuous weather, renders the transit somewhat perilous at times.

About half-past ten the gale moderated; the heavy rain ceased. We embraced the opportunity afforded us by the lull, and set sail. Nothing could be more favourable than our passage, until we were within a short distance of our destination. The increasing darkness, the sullen roar of the

gale, the whitening waters,—all portended the coming mischief. For some few minutes past Tucker had been looking anxiously around him. "We shall have it," he suddenly exclaimed; "stand by the halyards!" The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the whole fury of the sweeping tempest struck us at once. Our experienced boatmen were well prepared for what had, doubtless, happened to them many times before. It was the work of a moment to take in the foresail, to house the sprit, and to make all snug. It was well for us, perhaps, that the main-sheet was torn from the iron grasp of our powerful chief boatman, James Beadon. Had he retained his hold one instant longer, we should have come in for a severe drenching. As it was, the accident only facilitated our shortening sail. Less than ten minutes brought us to our anchorage. It was high time; for in that little space a heavy sea had got up, and a furious rain was falling. On our mounting up to Tucker's house,—picturesquely perched upon a rock almost overhanging the sea,—we found that the most hospitable preparations had been made to welcome us on our arrival. A



pan full of potatoes was ready to be put upon the fire; a fore-quarter of goat was stowed away in a curious contrivance, which formed a substitute both for oven and for spit, reminding me forcibly of a similar feat of ingenuity which I had seen, twenty years ago, in the Apennines; the welcome kettle, too, was boiling, in order to make the tea which was destined to garnish our dinner-board.

We were abundantly thankful at being well housed; the storm increased within a quarter of an hour of our landing, the gale had increased to a hurricane, the rain was driving against the casement in furious and fitful torrents, the sea, as we looked upon it from the streaming window, was white with foam, and the wind howled and raved through every chink and crevice of our frail tenement. I have been tolerably familiar with wild weather in the course of my many rambles; I have rarely met with such a land storm.

An early breakfast rendered an early dinner far from undesirable. By the time that we had finished the gale had slightly lulled, and the rain ceased altogether. It blew hard, but clear. We sallied forth to see the inhabitants at their

own houses. I should observe, that they were formerly known as "sealers," the remnant of a roving race, that went from island to island in the Straits, picking up a precarious subsistence from the skins of their captured prey. The seals have now nearly deserted these parts, so that their old enemies have betaken them to another employment. They live chiefly now by the sale of the oil and feathers of the mutton birds (or sooty petrels), which periodically visit these islands in myriads.

As we went from house to house (Mr. Power, who had visited this island some years ago, being our guide), we came, at last, to the residence of the "greatest lady" it has ever been my good fortune to encounter. Lucy Beadon, a noble-looking half-caste of some twenty-five years of age, bears the burden of twenty-three stone. Good-humoured and kind-hearted, she is every one's friend upon the island. High-minded, and earnest in her Christian profession, she has set herself to work to do good in her generation. From the pure love of those around her, she daily gathers together the children of the sealers, and



does her best to impart to them the rudiments both of secular and religious knowledge.

Tucker, it seems, had made known our coming to all within his reach; so that there was a considerable increase made to the ordinary inhabitants of Guncarriage from the adjacent islands. Some had brought their children to be baptized; others had come to learn tidings of their absent friends; all had strained their utmost to reach the island, in the earnest hope of hearing the word of God.

In the afternoon I baptized six children, all half-castes. One of them, a boy of two years of age, was as magnificent a little fellow as I ever saw. His large full black eyes, and finely formed features, would have done honour to any parentage. Soon after the administration of this sacrament, I united an old sealer, Edward Mansell, to Judy Thomas, an aboriginal woman. Upon investigating the facts of the case, I was glad to find that the best motives induced the man to repair past sin and folly by an union with this woman, aged as she was. She, poor creature, could with difficulty repeat the necessary words of the service. Indeed, her English, if such it could be called,

was such as to elicit a violent explosion of mirth on the part of the bridegroom; an unseemliness which was promptly repressed and rebuked by Captain King, who acted as father upon the occasion.

Before the evening closed in, Mr. Power and I took a long tramp over this wild but picturesque little island. Prepared as we were to meet the wind's rude buffeting, we could scarcely keep our legs when we mounted on the topmost ridge. A glorious prospect greeted us, when, screened by the rocks, we could rest quietly under their lee, and enjoy the scenery. Before us were the long low flats of Cape Barren Island, whereon many a stout vessel had been driven and broken up. The countless sunken rocks and broken bottom between Flinders and Guncarriage have caused such an almost incessant turmoil, that few places are so fraught with dread and danger to the coaster. The name of "Pot-boil," given to the strait that divides the two islands, sufficiently indicates both its character and its perils.

To the left were the wild jagged peaks of Flinders, lit up with the gorgeous colours of a



stormy sunset. It was a magnificent sight; but the rough nature of the ground which we had to traverse in our descent, warned us that it was not wise to linger too long upon the tempting scene before us.

Soon after dusk we returned to our hospitable quarters, where we found tea awaiting us. Our host, Tucker, and his active little Hindoo wife, were delighted at the proposal to close our evening with prayer.

Tired as I was, I got but little sleep. The smell of mutton-bird feathers, and the incessant invasion of the fleas, who appeared to be the *αὐτόχθονες* of the island, would effectually have "murdered sleep," even on the stillest night; but the wind howled and raved to such an extent as to make every timber in the crazy tenement rock and quiver with its fury.

SUNDAY, 8*th*.

It was no wonder that we were made wakeful and watchful by last night's storm. Tucker told us that he had not known such a fearful gale, even in this tempestuous region, for the last seven

years. On walking out after breakfast, I was amused by witnessing a striking instance of primitive hospitality. I have before mentioned, that an unusual addition was made to the ordinary population of the island in consequence of our arrival. The visitors had been abundantly cared for. On the previous evening I had observed that Beadon had selected a fine fat goat from out the herd, and borne him away upon his brawny shoulders. This morning I witnessed his remains. The defunct had been hung upon a sort of gallows; every man was his own butcher, and cut his slice or joint, according to his fancy. A thorough-bred practitioner would have been horrified at seeing all the mysteries of his craft cast aside, and the seemliness of the carcase sacrificed at the shrine of "private judgment." Our kind hostess (I should not fail to record) had devised a special dainty for the Bishop, which satisfied me that our tastes differed, and that we entertained widely opposite opinions upon the mysteries of cookery. To this hour I am ignorant of the component parts of the dish; but I shall always entertain a shrewd suspicion that I was entrapped into commencing



the demolition of a fat pancake fried in mutton-bird oil.

At ten o'clock we had divine service at Tucker's house, the bedroom being opened so as to increase the accommodation. Every inhabitant and every visitor on the island was present. Our congregation numbered twenty-eight, and a more quiet, orderly, and attentive gathering I never witnessed. It was with a solemn sense of the privilege conferred upon me, that there, in that little storm-girt hut, the winds and the sea roaring around us, I, as the first minister of God that had set foot upon the island, from the dawn of creation until then, commenced the humble offering of prayer and praise to that creation's Lord. There was a deep earnestness, too, with which my half-caste congregation joined in the several parts of the service, that I should be glad to witness in more educated and polished gatherings of Christian worshippers. There was a heartiness in their responses, a fervour in their repetition of the creeds, which gave good evidence that their hearts were in their holy work. They required no bidding, no hint even, that it is an unseemly thing for the

"miserable sinner" to sit leisurely down, whilst professing to pour out his very soul in penitent confession to his God. These simple half-castes, the last relics of the union of aboriginal women with the sealers, had taken the Prayer-book as their guide, and did not set up their own private fancies, or their own rebellious will, against its plain injunctions; they were not too proud to kneel.

Their psalmody, too, was correct, and touching in its expressiveness; timid at first, the women soon recovered courage, and, led by Tucker's manly voice, sang two hymns with an accuracy and fervour that would have done credit to a well-trained village choir. The second lesson for the day suggested the text, and, as I preached to them from Mark xi. 17, I felt that this was, for the time being, "the House of Prayer" indeed.

After the service I had some conversation with Tucker upon the manners and habits of the people. I was pleased to find, from his account, that there was so much simplicity of character and correctness of demeanour amongst them. I could see for myself that there was an air of



quiet domestic union amongst them all, that told well for their ordinary way of life. The men appeared sober, active, and intelligent; the women were unmistakeably modest and retiring in their manner. Tucker told me that drunkenness was, if not unknown amongst them, held in severe reprobation; whilst other crimes which, in more polished communities, are regarded as venial trespasses, are looked upon with abhorrence by these simple islanders. It was with tears in his eyes that Tucker told me of the comfort and consolation that he had derived from his Bible, and, in its interpretation, from the Prayer-book, which he had taken as the guide to his devotions with a child's simple trust.

The truths which he so appreciated himself he had endeavoured to teach to others. No Sunday passed without his assembling his friends and neighbours, for the purpose of prayer and reading of the Scriptures; again the Prayer-book was the guide, both of himself and others; and, in conducting the details of his humble Sabbath worship, he spoke of the blessedness of having so safe a monitor.

After dinner I again visited each family in turn, and then was glad to wander forth alone, to think and thank—to bless God for the opportunity vouchsafed to me of delivering His message to those who hitherto had never heard it from the lips of one of His appointed messengers; and yet the thankfulness was tinged with sorrow, too, for I felt how long it might, and probably would be, ere I could hope to set foot upon this place again, even if life and health were spared.

It was dark before I reached the landing-place on my return. Preparations were being made for our immediate departure to the schooner, which Captain King was anxious to rejoin at the earliest possible period. The wind had lulled considerably, the tide would serve within half an hour, our scanty amount of baggage was already on the beach. Our intended return to the vessel was soon known; with one exception (and that on the score of feeble health), every human being in the island came down to the rocks to bid us God speed and farewell; we were laden with presents. Lucy Beadon and her sister-in-law brought their little offerings of shells and sea-



weed; Mrs. Tucker loaded us with milk, cakes (not the fat pancake), shells, and shell necklaces; we had a difficulty in declining to add goat's flesh to our stores: experience had shown us that it was strong rather than palatable food. We set forward on our voyage with the hearty and affectionate farewells of these simple-hearted people; two hours' sail brought us to the schooner about ten o'clock. Our passage would have been more rapidly made, had not prudence suggested the expediency of our making a long board, in order to avoid the discomfort of tossing over the broken waters of a shoal which was right in our course; we drew near enough to hear the wild roaring of the waters: it was enough to convince us that the wind and tide were struggling for the mastery, and that the less we interfered in the contest the better, especially in the dark.

MONDAY, 9*th*.

A wet, gloomy, and drizzly morning; it was, nevertheless, our obvious course to press onwards, as all our work here was done; so, soon after

eight, we weighed anchor. The wind was light and variable, so that it was late in the afternoon before we got under the shelter of Clarke's and Preservation Island. Too wet to go on shore.

TUESDAY, 10*th*.

After an early breakfast, Mr. Power and I made preparations for visiting Clarke's Island. We were anticipated by the arrival of a Dr. Allen, who had resided there for some few years, and to whom Mr. Power was commissioned to give the formal notice to quit, as a defaulter in rent to the land fund. In consequence of this visit, we postponed our expedition to the afternoon, and went instead to Preservation Island, where he had to serve a similar notice on Dr. Allen's brother, who had quietly established himself and 300 sheep thereon, without licence or authority. Dr. Allen took off our pilot, whose services, never worth much, were now no longer required. It seemed to be but a forlorn expedition on which the poor fellow had resolved to start; however, as it was his own choice, we had nothing but



remonstrance to offer in opposition. His intention was to land on Cape Barren Island (a spot that well deserves its name), and from thence to work his way through the bush and scrub to the shore opposite Tinkettle Island, where, by lighting a fire, he hoped to attract the attention of the one or two inhabitants of the latter place, and so to tempt them to bring off a boat for his rescue.

Our mission to Preservation was satisfactorily accomplished. The Surveyor-General delivered his cartel, and had his bathe; I had my quiet talk with the two solitary inhabitants of the place, and afterwards took a ramble and a sketch; our boatmen were profitably employed in cutting green food for the goat.

We returned to the schooner in order to give the men time for their dinner, before proceeding to visit Dr. Allen and his household at Clarke's Island. A grim, wild-looking man met us on the beach, immediately on our stepping out of the boat; he told us a sad tale of disappointment. His name was Robinson, a son of the benevolent individual to whom I have already alluded, as

having established so strong a hold upon the confidence of the Aborigines. He was brother-in-law to Dr. Allen, who, it seems, had beguiled him to leave Port Phillip, where he was settled in tolerable comfort, and to embark himself, his sheep, and fortunes, on the barren shores of Clarke's Island.

He offered his services as our pilot to Dr. Allen's house. I was anxious to renew with this person a conversation that had been commenced between us on board respecting the baptism of his children. He had been upwards of eight years upon the island, living a secluded and semi-savage life, cut off from all contact with his fellows, and gradually, as it would appear, becoming as rough and wild as the uncultivated scenes around him.

A mile's walk brought us to his house, the external aspect of which presented a greater air of comfort than I could have anticipated. His wife was seated by the fire with a fine, filthy baby of some twelve or fourteen months of age in her lap. Seven other sturdy, dirty children were huddled together in various groups; some



creeping close to the blazing logs that were heaped up in the huge fire-place; others peeping at us from behind those who were more in advance; all ill clad, and worse mannered, shrinking, as it would seem, from the eye of the stranger.

During our conversation on board, Dr. Allen had intimated to me his own personal indifference as to the baptism of his children; he regarded it as a perfectly idle ceremony, to which people might or might not conform, just as their inclination or private judgment led them. He was "not of my Church," he said. Years ago he had been a Presbyterian; but, latterly, he had regarded himself as belonging to no Church, being content, as he averred, simply to "follow Christ;" in fact, he was a "Christian unattached." He emphatically disowned all respect for ordinances, rites, and ceremonies; as to baptism, as one of them, he did not, for his own part, wish his children "to be subjected to it." However, he said, their mother was a member of the Church of England. If she wished it, he had no objection; he should refer the matter to her on his return home, and abide by her decision.

I saw at once the hopelessness of arguing the point with him; after trying him upon one or two other topics, I was at no loss to take accurate measure of the mind of the man with whom I had to deal. He was one of those shallow dogmatists, whose fixedness of opinion was in exact proportion to its hollowness.

Soon after our arrival at his house, the subject was renewed by myself; for there was yet a lingering hope that the isolated life which his wife had led had not altogether obliterated every trace of love and respect for the sacraments of the Church; it was a vain hope, as the result proved. The subject had already been manifestly discussed between them; my impression was, that his authority had cowed and overawed her. Be this as it may, she said that she had no particular objection, nor any particular desire,—she was perfectly indifferent; wished to do what her husband liked; and concluded by referring the matter to him.' I reminded her briefly of her obligations and responsibility as a Christian mother, and as a professed member of the Church of England. It was to no purpose; she again



referred to her husband's decision: that, of course, was in the negative. So the poor misguided woman deliberately rejected the sacrament of Christ, and robbed her children of the privilege of being taken out of the great family of the world, and being brought into the covenanted household of Almighty God.

My mission here was ended, so we returned to the schooner. A breeze from the N.E. sprung up as the evening closed in, which allowed us to weigh anchor at half-past eight, and to work out to the open sea on to Circular Head.

### WEDNESDAY, 11*th*.

We had not been above an hour on our course before the breeze freshened into a furious gale, and a tumbling night we had of it. In the morning the wind had increased rather than abated, and, from the thick haze, it was hard to tell our exact position. As the wind was now gradually heading us and considerably freshening, it was thought advisable to stand in for the coast, in order that we might ascertain where we were;

the gathering gloom rendering all ordinary observations impossible. Sundry indications, well known to three or four of our party, to whom the coast was more or less familiar, told us that we were abreast of the Mersey, having outrun our reckoning by some thirty-eight miles in about fourteen hours; we then determined to seek shelter within George Town Heads, and to wait for a fair wind, our progress westward being, under existing circumstances, impossible.

We had a rapid run along the coast, a few hours bringing us out of a heavy rolling sea into comparatively smooth water. The anchor was dropped about four o'clock, and we were comforting ourselves with the prospect of approaching dinner, after a long fast.—"Up anchor again," for our berth was unsafe as well as uneasy. Captain King wisely determined to proceed at once to George Town Cove, where we were soon at as perfect rest as though we had been on shore.

My old friend, Mr. Pringle Stuart, the police magistrate at George Town, came on board in the evening with a bundle of newspapers, which



informed us of what had been doing in Hobart Town during our absence.

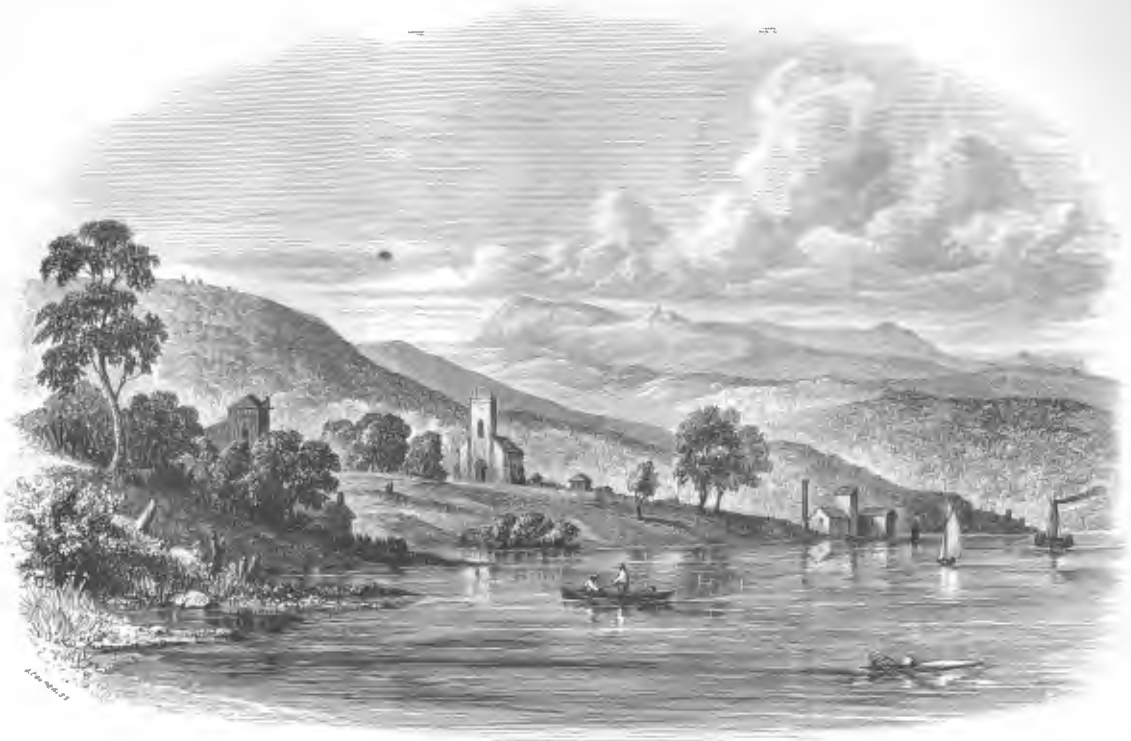
THURSDAY, 12*th*.

Not quite so easy a night as we had anticipated; it blew so furious that we "dragged our anchor," and got aground upon a sand-bank.

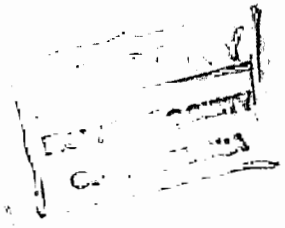
After breakfast the police-boat came off, and took me on shore. Two pleasant hours were spent with Mr. Stuart; after which, I went with Mr. Fereday, the chaplain, to inspect the church, the roof of which had been seriously damaged during the late heavy gales. On board again at twelve, in the hope of getting under way; still hard and fast, we must wait until the next tide.

The schoolmaster, Fraser, came on board for the purpose of soliciting my mediation with the Governor, for procuring his conditional pardon. His case is one of the many sorrowful instances with which we meet in this land, of the fearful consequences of yielding to a strong temptation to commit a positive sin for the purpose of gaining a possible advantage.

By birth and education this man was a gentleman, and most bitterly does he seem to feel the degradation of his altered position. His story, according to his own telling, is this. He was deeply embarked in Captain Warner's "long range" scheme, which, when brought to completion, was expected to prove a very mine of wealth. In order to facilitate the enterprise, he forged a power of attorney and sold out a portion of his wife's property, vested in trustees, with the full conviction of being able to replace it without the knowledge of any one; but One, who saw, baffled his calculations. Then came discovery,—disgrace,—the trial,—the conviction,—transportation: after having filled several subordinate situations, he is now glad to earn his subsistence by teaching in the village school. I know nothing of his character, nor am I aware how he has demeaned himself in his different vocations. His school is well conducted, and, at all events, experience has proved that "indulgence," granted to a prisoner of the Crown, has been commonly productive of beneficial and reformatory results, even when the antecedents of



WINDERMERE ON THE TAMAR.





the man would scarcely have justified the expectation of much better things.

FRIDAY, 13*th*.

Once more in deep water; a fair wind up the river. Having some stores to deliver at Launceston, Captain King decided upon taking advantage of it, instead of waiting until our return from the westward. A portion of our cargo consisted of two thirty-six pounders, which were intended for the defence of the newly-built fort at Launceston. As they have neither artillerymen, nor powder, nor ball, I fear that the guns will not add much to the security of the good town of Launceston.

A run of a few hours up the picturesque Tamar brought us to Launceston at four in the afternoon. I was speedily housed in the hospitable house of Mrs. Landale.

SATURDAY, 14*th*.

We all had reason to be glad of our detention. Mr. Power found that business required his

presence in Hobart Town. Captain King discovered that fresh orders awaited him, and I was rejoiced to find myself in time to take my part in the opening services at the little chapel in the new district of St. Paul's. As the warden of the College had been already invited and announced to preach in the morning, I did not desire to disturb the arrangement; so I settled to preach at Trinity Church in the morning and evening of to-morrow, and to be at St. Paul's in the afternoon.

SUNDAY, 15*th*.

The crowded state of our little chapel evinced the interest taken in the establishment of Divine service therein by those for whose benefit it was more immediately instituted. It is situated in a poor outlying district of Launceston, which has outgrown the powers of the chaplain of St. John's to pay it that close attention which is necessary. Some months ago, Mr. William Henty and I walked up to the high land that overlooks the town, which was spread out as a map before us; he then drew my attention to this district,



and inquired whether it was not possible to form it into a separate parish; the plan was resolved upon on the instant, and subsequently matured, chiefly through the instrumentality of himself and Mr. Cleveland. I have abundant reason to thank God for the earnestness of purpose with which this good work has been carried on, as well as for the harmony that has characterised the proceedings of all who have taken part in it.

At present a small building (used formerly as a school-room) is temporarily fitted up, so as to serve the twofold purposes of school and chapel. Subscriptions are being raised for the erection of a church; but, as the contributions are small, being gathered chiefly from those to whom it is an act of self-denial to give at all, years will probably elapse before we shall be able to complete it.

Mr. Banks Smith, whose services have hitherto been restricted to Newnham, near Launceston, will divide his labours between that place and the new district. He has been so warmly commended to me by Mr. Henty, who has had experience of the value of his ministrations, that

I have no hesitation in confiding a more enlarged sphere of duty to his charge.

THURSDAY, 19*th*.

After various delays our party once more re-assembled, and we quitted Launceston for our western expedition. The wind was foul, so that we made but little progress. The darkness of the night rendered it a matter of prudence to anchor in Spring Bay.

FRIDAY, 20*th*.

With the early morning tide we worked down to Whirlpool Reach and anchored again. I took advantage of the delay to pay a visit to the Presbyterian clergyman, Mr. Garrett, whose pretty parsonage, built on a rising ground from the river, forms a picturesque object from every point of view. Our reception was as cordial and as courteous as though he had been a clergyman of our own communion. The tide served in the afternoon, and allowed us to reach our anchorage at George Town before dark.



SATURDAY, 21*st*.

Went on shore; visited the school, and examined the children. Whilst in Launceston, I had embraced the opportunity of speaking to Sir William Denison respecting Fraser's conditional pardon. I was glad to communicate to the poor fellow Sir William's promise to do all in his power to effect the desired object. But Governors must steer by regulations.

In the afternoon we shifted our ground, and anchored in Pilot's Cove, close to the *Merrington*, a large emigrant ship of 800 tons, which had just arrived from England. Her passengers were chiefly miners from South Wales, under contract to the owners of the coal mines at the Mersey.

Made arrangements for proceeding to-morrow in the police-boat to George Town for Divine service.

SUNDAY, 22*d*.

The church being under repair, Divine service was conducted in the school-room; a most scanty

congregation, affording painful evidence of the little love entertained by the people of George Town for the sacred ordinances of the Church. The room, it is true, was tolerably full—of children: the adults did not number more than ten.

Soon after the conclusion of the service we embarked on board the police-boat, and went to the *Merrington*, where I had arranged to celebrate Divine service in the afternoon. It was too squally and boisterous to allow our congregation to assemble on the poop. The cuddy, therefore, served us for our chapel; and there I had the gratification of ministering to a devout, orderly, and crowded congregation. Every convenient arrangement had been made with great care and judgment by the captain's wife.

One important portion of the emigrants was, to a great extent, absent,—I mean the miners. Not being desirous of leaving the ship without giving them a word of welcome to their new home, as well as Christian counsel for their guidance, I requested that they might be assembled on the quarter-deck, so as to give me the opportunity of addressing them from the poop,—so far as the



weather would permit me to speak and them to hear. If I might judge from appearances, they were interested, and that deeply, in all that they heard.

It was a relief after the day's work to enjoy the quiet peacefulness of our little cabin on board the schooner.

MONDAY, 23*d*.

It was blowing too hard to allow anything to be done beyond the ordinary ship's work; and there was too much surf on shore to render it possible for the captain to land his cargo of coals, which had been shipped for the use of the pilots and lighthouse at this station. As the day advanced, the gale freshened from the west, and compelled us to let go another anchor. We were detained here, by stress of weather, until

SATURDAY, 28*th*,

when, soon after sunrise, we worked out of the Heads. We had not proceeded far before the wind freshened, and a heavy tumbling sea was

the consequence. Both pilot and captain were overcome with human infirmities for awhile. Our pilot endeavoured to take us into Port Sorell: the heavy sea that was raving across the bar rendered it prudent for him to wear ship, and stand out again to sea. Our course was then directed to the Mersey; the main purport of our visit being to lay down buoys and beacons for the purpose of facilitating the entrance of vessels into this beautiful but narrow-mouthed harbour. It was a stormy passage; the surf was high upon the bar upon our arrival; but our skilful pilot, Begent, brought us safely through our difficulties, and anchored us, late in the evening, in the quiet outer basin of the river. The contrast was instantaneous. Ten minutes brought us out of a rolling turbulent sea into water as smooth and as tranquil as that of a lake.

It is a noble basin in which we are lying so snugly; perfectly landlocked, except at the narrow winding entrance, the tall gum and peppermint trees coming down to the water's edge. To the left lies the township, consisting of a few wooden houses, two composed of the more imposing material, brick; several tents, too, evincing the conviction of their proprietors that no needless time is to be lost in providing comforts, if they are to make their way in the world, and are not to be jostled out by more enterprising neighbours.



Made arrangements with the Mersey pilot, Lambert, for Divine service, to-morrow morning, at Torquay, the only township as yet on the banks of the river.

SUNDAY, 29*th*.

An unfinished room in an incomplete house served us for a chapel, where we gathered together a quiet orderly congregation of nearly fifty.

In the afternoon, Mr. Power and myself went in the schooner's boat about five miles up the river, in order to proceed to the Denison Mines, where the emigrants who arrived by the *Merrington* had been established. At the western extremity of the second or inner basin of the river, a small inlet, called Ballahoo Creek, runs for some distance inland; we disembarked at its commencement, where a convenient landing-place had been made,

for the purpose of shipping timber. A walk of about a mile through the bush brought us to a long range of ten wooden huts, which were in the course of erection for the accommodation of the new comers; just beyond these were the works that had been already built at the mines, the tall chimney, the engine-room, and the forge.

It was rainy and squally, rendering it necessary for me to forego the intention of assembling the people for Divine service in the open air; the superintendent, Mr. Zephaniah Williams, placed the large room in his house at my disposal, where, within half an hour of our arrival, our congregation was assembled.

There did not seem to be the same amount of readiness (except in words) to welcome the proposal for the celebration of Divine service that has so often gladdened my heart when wandering in the bush; but this is easily accounted for. These South Welsh miners are almost all Wesleyans, and, as such, have no very cordial feeling towards the ordinances of the Church of England. Even here they have their "local preachers," who had conducted their worship in the morning; it was



not surprising that this should have damped the willingness of their hearers to listen to services of another character. The room, however, was tolerably well filled; our congregation was manifestly unused to the ritual of the Church of England, but few of them thinking it necessary to kneel when offering up their petitions to Almighty God. It was painful to see that there was but little *heart* in their devotions, the touching prayers of our Church being apparently to them nothing beyond the bare form or ceremony; listless as they were here, they paid marked attention to the sermon.

I was much interested in my conversation with Zephaniah Williams. In an evil hour he joined the chartist disturbances that took place, years ago, in South Wales, and was sent over to the colony in company with Frost and Jones; since his residence in Tasmania, he has conducted himself with great propriety and industry. It is to him that we are indebted for the discovery of coal at Newtown, and it is to his skill and enterprise that the proprietors of the Denison Mines must look to conduct their speculation to a successful issue. The coal is

of an excellent quality, and, if found in sufficient abundance, and at no great distance from the surface, must amply remunerate all who are concerned. He himself, as part proprietor, has a deep interest in the success of his endeavours. His wife and daughters, after a separation of many years, rejoined him by the *Merrington;* they do not appear to be enamoured of a bush life, for the rough details of which they were manifestly not prepared; in their estimation, the wild liberty does not compensate for the isolation and privations.

MONDAY, 30*th*.

Rode over with Mr. Power to the hospitable house of the Rev. J. Bishton, at Pardoe. On to Port Sorell, where we arranged with Mr. Nicholls, the police magistrate, to go to-morrow to the settlement across the river Forth. Rode over to the township of Burgess, situated at what may, more properly, be called "Port Sorell." When conversing with an intelligent settler, Captain Robinson, respecting the projected pier, and other contemplated improvements, he told us that, when



we were standing in on Saturday, every one on shore was anxiously watching our proceedings. Those who were well acquainted with the soundings were in momentary expectation of seeing us smashed to pieces on the dangerous sunken rock which lies in front of the entrance; but our pilot knew what he was about; in fact, we rounded it.

TUESDAY, 31*st*.

We were busily employed in writing for the post, when the signal was made from the shore that Mr. Nicholls was in waiting with the horses; Mr. Power, Captain King, and myself went in the boat to the opposite (or western) shore, leaving the horses to be ferried across, a proceeding at which the poor animals most vigorously rebel, unless custom has habituated them to its discomforts. The mode is this: a strong rope is fastened to the horse's head, the other end being lashed to the stern of the ferry boat; when the latter is pulled from the shore by powerful hands, the poor beast must follow, being fairly dragged into the water. At this river he is off his legs in a few yards;

sometimes he loses his presence of mind, gets confused and bewildered through his intense agony of fright. To meet such an emergency, an extra hand is usually placed in the boat, who holds the animal's head well out of the water, as was the case with one of our steeds to-day; it is, however, very rarely that any serious accident occurs.

A short ride brought us to the Don, which we forded easily, at nearly dead low water. The state of the tide warned us that it was necessary to push on rapidly to the Forth, about seven miles distant. Our movements were quickened by meeting a horseman, about half-way, who told us that the tide was rising when he crossed, and that we had not a moment to lose. The boat was gone, so that we should have to cross the river on horseback. We quickened our pace, and rode hard for it; a quarter of an hour later, and our horses would have been constrained to swim. As it was, we made a very fair passage, with no more discomfort than the ordinary wetting incident to fording ordinary rivers.

An hour more passed; when, after a leisurely



ride through the bush, we dismounted at "Erica Hill," the hospitable residence of Mr. Gilbert.

What a change from the rude, wild, primeval forest! We are ushered into a simple, wooden house, rough and unpretending in its exterior, but within, replete with all that indicates the refined and cultivated minds of its tenants. How refreshing to the eye—doubly refreshing in this remote spot—to look upon graceful works of art, the drawing, the engraving, the statuette; our hostess, too, a really fascinating lady, though long past the bloom of youth, doing the honours with all that graceful elegance which usually attends those who have been brought up in the refined atmosphere of the best Parisian circles! I have rarely passed such an evening.

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1*st*.

I was much disappointed in my hope of being able to assemble the people in the neighbourhood for Divine service. Upon inquiry, we found that all the adult population—indeed, that most of the women and children too—were too busy in the

potato-field to afford the remotest prospect of our gathering together for prayer. About midday, therefore, we remounted our horses, in order to return to the vessel.

Our passage of the river was not quite so favourable as that of yesterday, not being so quickly accomplished. We followed Mr. Nicholls, who acted as our guide, into the middle of the river. He attempted to pass close to the breakers, thinking that, if the stream was wider there than elsewhere, its depth was less. Before following him further, I waited to see the result of his endeavour. It was not long before he retraced his course, and then I knew that it was high time for me to seek the shore. We tried the passage some way further up, and crossed where the water was no higher than our knees as we sat upon the saddle.

THURSDAY, 2*d.*

was chiefly passed in exploring the country, and in visiting the people. Some time was spent in inspecting the saw-mill which had been recently built, about a mile above the township. It will,



I fear, prove an unfortunate speculation for its original projectors and proprietors.

FRIDAY, 3*d.*

As Captain King was anxious to see the inner basin of the river, as well as to visit the coal mines, I was very glad to accompany my kind old friend. We called at different places on our way up, in the boat, and early in the afternoon reached our destination at Ballahoo Creek. Some doubt seems to exist, whether the enormous expenses consequent upon the first working of the mines, will not swallow up all the profits. It appears, that during Mr. Williams's absence in Hobart Town, the carelessness of the man left in charge suffered the water to rush into the shaft, and so, for the time, to inutilize all their work. It will require an expenditure of 500*l.* to repair this evil. His energy, however, is manifestly equal to any emergency, and he is one to set to work resolutely to grapple with a difficulty, instead of brooding or mourning over it.

Notwithstanding the somewhat discouraging

experience of last Sunday, I made arrangements with him for coming up in the morning of the 5th, for Divine service.

SATURDAY, *4th.*

Visited the township, from house to house; marked out the burial-ground, and took measures for having it properly secured and fenced in. I am very glad to find that the settlers are strongly imbued with the good old English feeling of a reverential respect for the precincts of the dead. I endeavoured, and I hope not without success, to impress upon them the true Christian reason for this feeling; reminding them, that as the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, so each corpse must be reverently handled and dealt with, as a something which God himself has vouchsafed to honour and to sanctify by His own indwelling.

Walked over to Pardoe, and got thoroughly drenched on my return at night.



SUNDAY, *5th.*

Rowed up the river, for Divine service at the Denison Mines. The ideas that I entertained and recorded on Sunday last, were abundantly confirmed. Nevertheless, the testimony has been given—the seed sown—may God, in His good providence, vouchsafe to render the harvest! though we may be unconscious of its existence, until that day when we shall know even as we are known.

One pleasing incident, connected with my visit to the mines to-day, will always make me look back to it with singular pleasure.

I was gratified to see at our morning's gathering, one of my old Newtown neighbours, his wife, and child. About a year ago, he had sold his property immediately adjoining my premises, and had purchased a small farm at the Mersey.

When the service had concluded, he went down to the creek to prepare the boat for their return home, some three miles down the river. Mrs. Spotswood brought her little boy to me, a fine fellow, about six years old. "He has something

for you," she said. I held out my hand, into which he put a little paper packet. On opening it, I found that it contained a gold nugget and a sixpence. Thinking that the child was desirous merely to show me his treasures, I returned the packet, after having commended the beauty of his nugget. The tears gathered in the child's eyes, and his whole look betokened disappointment, and even sorrow. He refused to take back his offering.

The mother then explained; that, hearing that "his Bishop was coming," he had earnestly petitioned to be allowed to attend Divine service, to carry with him all his little savings and pocket-money, and to give it *his* Bishop, to be expended as he thought proper, for the good of the Church. Dear little fellow, it *was his all;* and it must have been an act of self-denial to have surrendered that "all," and to have left himself stripped and bare. But it was an act of faith, too; and I gladly record it as an evidence that there are, amongst our Tasmanian yeomen, those who are mindful of the duty that lies upon them, to train up their little ones, both by precept and example,



to understand and act upon the Christian's law of love.

In the afternoon, our Torquay congregation assembled; it was a different and a more comfortable scene; the devout demeanour of our little band of faithful worshippers giving me the cheering hope that they were disciples who felt the privilege and the blessing of the ministration of the Word.

MONDAY, *6th.*

Piloted Captain King to the Don. He was desirous to gain some information respecting the western coast and King's Island, from a respectable settler, named Drew, who has established a comfortable homestead for himself at the river's mouth. The Captain wished also, if possible, to secure his services as pilot during the difficult and perhaps perilous navigation that is before us. Not a soul on board knows anything of the places which we propose to visit. It is easy enough to proceed to Circular Head without a pilot; my own knowledge of the place would be enough for that, even if anything were required beyond the

charts; but the coast beyond requires a perfect knowledge of its intricacies on the part of the navigator, to render its inspection even moderately safe. If, too, we fulfil our intention of visiting Macquarie Harbour and Port Davey, common prudence would suggest the necessity of our having an experienced pilot.

Returned to the schooner; having failed in our mission. Mr. Drew, however, promises to come over on Thursday, and talk the matter over with Captain King. We shall, at least, gain some valuable information from one who knows the coast as well as he does his own farm-yard.

### TUESDAY, *7th.*

A long bush ramble and scramble over the rocks of the Mersey bluff; an excellent remedy for a dull, heavy headache, which indisposes me for mental work. Killed a whipsnake, upon which I all but trod, on leaping down from a dead fallen tree, on to the shingle. These little creatures, rarely above eighteen inches in length, are amongst the most dangerous of their tribe,



to wanderers in the bush. They are so small, as often to escape observation; so like a piece of brown, withered stick, that, when motionless, even a practised eye may be deceived. Their bite is deadly in its venom, and death the certain result, unless active measures are most promptly taken. If medical help be not immediately available, resort must be had to means whereby the rapid absorption of the poison into the system may be prevented. For this purpose a ligature should be tightly applied above the bitten part (between the puncture and the heart), so as to produce a turgid congestion of the small vessels leading from it. When the circulation of the blood has been thus arrested, the next step is to scarify and bleed freely, not the wound only, but the adjacent parts. Much depends upon the copious flow of blood. If the wound can then be sucked strongly, and afterwards cauterized, little need be feared. The most common mode of effecting the cautery is, to place gunpowder on the wound, and to ignite it. Lime, or wood ashes, I have been told, are efficacious, as well as a poultice of ipecacuanha powder.

It is very rarely that we hear of a fatal accident from a snake-bite. In fact, Providence has endued the venomous reptile with so great a dread of man, that it will almost always endeavour to escape. If, however, you happen to be between it and its hole, it will make a savage and a deadly spring, as much, perhaps, from terror, as from viciousness.

WEDNESDAY, *8th.*

Went on shore to the township, for the purpose of endeavouring to rouse the inhabitants to bestir themselves, for the establishment of a school. Drew up some hints, to enable them to facilitate the good work.

One small farmer I had not yet visited; so I extended my walk for about two miles along the river side, until I came to a neat, comfortable-looking cottage, that smacked of "home" and all its dear village associations. Its occupants and I soon discovered that we had a strong bond of union. He was a farmer from East Kent, named Oldacre, who had emigrated from Upper Hardres, when the free-trade system had flung most



of the poor lands out of cultivation. I was glad, too, to find that he had been intimately acquainted with my valued old friend, George Quested of Ash, whose hearty co-operation as churchwarden would have gladdened the heart of any parish priest in England.

THURSDAY, *9th.*

Our work here is finished; the buoys laid down; the beacons erected; and thus every facility given for entering the narrow passage into the harbour, which—although pronounced in the "Australian Directory," published under the authority of the Admiralty, a "small port," "fit only for boats"—has both space and depth of water to contain a squadron of vessels of at least 300 tons burden. Until the bar is removed, vessels of much larger tonnage (except steamers) would find it both difficult and hazardous to enter.

Mr. Drew came, and gave us some very valuable information respecting our voyage to King's Island. He strongly dissuades us from attempting to return by the western coast without a pilot.

Our original intention was to have got out to-day, but it blew so hard, and so directly into the mouth of the passage, that it would have been folly to attempt it. We determined to wait and see what the morrow would bring.

FRIDAY, 10*th*.

And that morrow brought a glorious dawn, a light, fair wind, and a smooth passage; so that at three, A.M., when the tide served, we worked out to sea. It was gliding, rather than sailing, to Emu Bay, where we dropped anchor about noon.

Mr. Power and myself went on shore in the whale boat, in charge of and towing a buoy, which was intended to be placed over some heavy moorings that had been laid down some time since for the security of vessels in this open and dangerous roadstead. The buoy rope had been lost, so that the people here will have to drag to recover the moorings.

The time did not allow us to do more than pay a few visits to some of the inhabitants; for an angry sky was threatening mischief, and this is



but a wild anchorage, with the wind to the eastward or northward.

I did not receive a very flourishing account from the chaplain, Mr. Pocock, of the success of his mission; or of the appreciation of the value of the means of grace amongst those to whom he is appointed to minister. We have, too often, to mourn over a strange apathy in religious matters that will not be stirred up to action, whilst, in things of this world, there is no lack of persevering energy.

We returned to the schooner early in the afternoon. Got under way at seven, P.M.

SATURDAY, 11*th*.

It was well that we did so, for it was a rough night. Upon going on deck this morning, I found that we were abreast of Rocky Cape, not having made much progress, with all our uneasy work during the last ten hours. Soon after breakfast, the breeze freshened and became more in our favour; at noon we anchored off Circular Head. In the afternoon the schooner was moored alongside the wharf.

The chaplain, Mr. Fookes, came on board. As I found that, in anticipation of my arrival, he had long since prepared a few candidates for Confirmation, I made arrangements to carry his wishes into effect to-morrow morning.

The Presbyterian minister, Mr. Garrett, who had just arrived on one of his periodical visits, expressed an earnest desire that we should hold our usual evening service in the afternoon, in order that he might assemble his own people in the evening at their own place of meeting. I was very glad to comply with his request. His visits are necessarily infrequent; but, at all other times, the Presbyterians are regular attendants at the services of our own Church.

SUNDAY, 12*th*.

Confirmed eight young females at Stanley in the morning. Took charge of the afternoon service, in order to allow Mr. Fookes to go to the Chapel in the Forest.

FOREST CHAPEL, CIRCULAR HEAD.

MONDAY, 13*th*.

Went with the churchwardens to inspect the state of the parsonage. It would seem, from their report, that no substantial repairs have been effected since the house was built. The roof requires shingling; the house itself is in a filthy condition; many of the windows are broken, and in some cases the frames are rotten for want of paint. We have no "law of dilapidation" in this Colony; consequently, there are no means of enforcing an incumbent to keep his house in substantial repair, nor to compel him to pay for dilapidations upon vacating the parsonage.

Visited and examined the school in the afternoon, and inspected the church; the former is well conducted, the latter in very good order.

TUESDAY, 14*th*.

Soon after breakfast, Mr. Power and myself, with some others, started for the Forest, about twelve miles distant; Captain King was too much indisposed to accompany us. In the cart, which

had been provided for his accommodation, were deposited Mr. Peebles (a surveyor), Miss Mills (governess at Mr. Ford's in the Forest), a young boy, and myself. Mr. Power and Mr. Fookes were on horseback; not so splendidly mounted as to tempt me to change places with either of them.

For some little distance, our way was on the sandy track of the Bay. We soon struck into the forest, and after two hours' "carriage exercise" (in the literal sense of the word), arrived at Mr. Ford's. On our road we halted, for a minute or two, to put an end to a large diamond snake that had crept out to enjoy a passing gleam of sunshine.

On our arrival at Mr. Ford's, our party separated. The surveyor-general rode on to inspect the Duck River. Mr. Fookes and myself determined to visit the Forest school. It was well for us that Miss Mills kindly offered herself as our guide; for the track through the bush was so tortuous and intricate, that, had we trusted to our own topographical skill, we should have wandered far and wide before reaching our destination.



As it was, we did not accomplish our task of two miles much under the hour. Heavy, driving storms of rain not only impeded our progress, but rendered the track so thoroughly sloppy, as to make our feet as wet as though we had marched through every creek and puddle in our way.

This sequestered spot is considerably altered since my last visit. So many trees have been cut down, and so much underwood cleared away, that it no longer possesses the romantic character which had arrested my attention so strongly a year or two ago. I was abundantly repaid for my wet walk, by examining a more than commonly intelligent class of children. The part of their ordinary lesson book which was placed in my hands, for examination and questioning, happened to be upon volcanoes. They had been well taught, not merely to repeat, but to understand their lessons. I was glad to have the opportunity of impressing the day's work upon their minds, by drawing a rough sketch of Vesuvius, and by relating what I had myself seen of its eruptions, during my many visits to it, both by day and night, some twenty years ago.

As might have been expected, we were completely drenched upon our return to Mr. Ford's hospitable quarters; which we soon quitted, on our homeward route, after a substantial luncheon. It was well for us that we were timely in our departure. We had scarcely reached the schooner at about half-past five, when the sharp driving squalls, which had, more or less, prevailed during the whole day, ended in a furious gale from the S.W. Had we remained at our first anchorage, instead of being moored at the wharf, our position would have been extremely uncomfortable—perhaps even somewhat perilous.

The little cutter, *David Howie*, belonging to an enterprising and skilful mariner of the same name, came in during the morning. We had been especially anxious to see him, as being the only person who could be said to be thoroughly acquainted with the intricate and perilous navigation amidst the shoals, reefs, islets, and sunken rocks, in the vicinity of King's Island. We were rejoiced to find that Captain King had already entered into negotiation with him to act as our pilot.



WEDNESDAY, 15*th*.

David Howie came on board to make final arrangements for accompanying us. We found him a singularly intelligent man. Years ago he came out to this Colony from Edinburgh, being then very young. For some time past he has resided at Robbin's Island; visiting alternately the other islands in the vicinity, with his little cutter of no more than twelve or fourteen tons burden; at one time sealing, at another trading; now bringing to Circular Head a cargo of live stock, again proceeding to Launceston with a consignment of potatoes. He has, however, another and a stronger claim to respect, beyond that which his enterprising energy commands. No man in the Straits has rendered so much assistance, in times of peril and of shipwreck, as David Howie. He told us some appalling tales of the fearful wreck of the female emigrant ship, *Cataraqui*, on the western coast of King's Island, on the morning of the 4th of August, 1845. Out of 423 souls on board, only nine were saved.

She was bound to Melbourne. All went on

smoothly, save some differences between the surgeon superintendent and the captain, which had broken out occasionally during the greater part of the voyage. It was the afternoon of the 3d of August; they were expecting to be in Melbourne on the morrow. The emigrants had gained permission from the captain to have their boxes brought up out of the hold, in order that they might look out and select their holiday attire for shore inspection, on their landing. The night as it drew on was dark and misty: there were, withal, sufficient indications of the speedy approach of bad weather, to induce the captain to shorten sail, and to put the vessel under very easy canvas. After having given the necessary orders, he went below. Most unfortunately, he overheard the surgeon criticising his caution in very disparaging terms, and attributing a commendable prudence to personal fear. In a moment of impatient irritation he went upon deck and gave his counter orders, "Shake out the reefs, and stand on!" As the night advanced, the gale freshened, the darkness increased. Ignorant of his actual position, and not aware of the strength of the current that drove



him miles out of his reckoning to the southward, the captain stood fearlessly on, at the rate of nine or ten knots an hour. The roaring of the wind prevented them from hearing the noise of the breakers, of whose existence they had no suspicion. In the thick darkness of a cold winter's morning, the rain beating heavily, and the gale blowing furiously, they suddenly struck upon a jagged rock, not a hundred yards from the shore. One terrific smash, and all was over. The ill-fated vessel parted, and broke up instantly. There was no time for boats; nay, had they been ever so prepared—in such weather, on such a coast, and in such a surf—few boats could have lived. The surgeon was the first to perish; the poor unhappy girls were tossed into the ocean as they were, unclad, unprepared; the wild screaming death shriek mingling with the wilder storm. There was no hope for feeble womanhood in that dark struggle with the rocks and billows for life and death. It is a marvel that even the strong man was able to battle it out, and to reach the shore in safety.

The morning dawned upon a horrible scene. Not a vestige of the vessel was to be seen, except

her scattered remains upon the beach. For two or three miles, the shore was strewn with the bleeding corpses of the poor girls, in every form of struggling agony. Howie was there two days after the shipwreck, and told us, with tears in his eyes, that he walked along the rocks at first, as though he had been in a mad oppressive dream; weeks, months, passed before he was able to resume his ordinary work and duties.

We spoke of the plan that had been suggested for the erection of a lighthouse on Wickham Point, the northern extremity of the island. He entertained serious misgivings that the proposal, if carried into effect, would prove a failure. His reasons were these: the land itself is low, and completely intersected with lagoons, the vapour from which casts so thick a haze over the whole island, that it is very commonly invisible for a great part of the year, until you are closely upon it. If his view be correct—knowing as we do that a current sets strongly to the southward—a vessel, determining to make the proposed light, might, and probably would, become hopelessly embayed before the haze permitted her to see it.



Howie seems to think, that a dépôt of stores and provisions, with a guard of a few men, under a trustworthy superintendent, would be of greater use. It is a question for mariners, not for landsmen to decide; to them we must be content to leave it.

THURSDAY, 16*th*.

Worked out at seven, A.M., David Howie preceding us in his little cutter. After a pleasant run, we anchored off Robbin's Island at two in the afternoon. As I had much to write, I stayed on board, whilst Mr. Power went on shore. I had reason to regret my decision; for instead of remaining here throughout to-morrow, in order to inspect Duck River, and then to proceed to Woolnorth, it was determined by Captain King that we should at once set sail for King's Island. So, if the wind holds, to-morrow morning will see us at work again.

FRIDAY, 17*th*.

Soon after daylight, David Howie came on board, but it was seven o'clock before we were fairly

under way. Our course was one which we should not have ventured to take without so experienced a pilot. We steered boldly through the passage between Hunter's Islands, threaded the narrow channel through the Petrel Islands, and passed within a mile of Albatross Island; where, as Howie reports, is a fine bed of guano. The island is so entirely an ocean rock, devoid of any landing-place, that those who are venturesome enough to attempt to collect the guano, are compelled to have their boats hauled up the craggy sides of this rude and barren precipice. In the afternoon we passed within half-a-mile of Reid's Rocks, where we saw a large herd of seals, snorting, disporting, and sunning themselves by turns.

It was about half-past five when we anchored in Fitzmaurice Bay, on the western coast of King's Island. I had omitted to mention, that rumours of recent wrecks (the *Brahmin* and *Waterwitch* especially) had determined us on searching this coast thoroughly, in the hope that we might, with God's blessing, be of some service to such as should be spared.

We were now close to the scene of the wreck of



the *Cataraqui*. After dinner I went on shore with Captain Nicholson and Howie, to ascertain if there were any traces of recent arrivals or of fresh disasters. There were none. Two native women, until very lately, lived here; they had been taken away to Melbourne. The tiny bark hut which they had erected was fresh and unmolested. The strand was a melancholy sight; signs of wreck and desolation meeting us at every step. Huge timbers were lying about amongst the rocks; doors, planks, spars, casks, were scattered on every side, relics, as Howie told us, of the unfortunate *Cataraqui*.

As it was possible that some stragglers from the wrecks might be, even yet, inland, we took the precaution of setting fire to the bush, as a signal, and at dusk returned to the schooner.

SATURDAY, 18*th*.

We breakfasted early, in order that we might begin work betimes. Mr. Power, David Howie, and myself, commenced our search. The fires that we lighted last evening would have brought

the stragglers down, had any remained from the recent wrecks. We then proceeded along the shore, in order to visit the relics of the unfortunate *Cataraqui*. It was intensely interesting, to retrace the scenes of this fearful catastrophe in the company of one who had borne so prominent a part in the rescue of the few survivors; who had buried the mangled dead by hundreds, and who had been an eye-witness of all that he described.

Our track led us for some way along the sand. We then struck into the thick tangled scrub, which was immediately above the belt of rocks that alone divided it from the sea. We had again descended from the scrub, as it was manifestly easier to scramble over the reefs, than to force our way through the tangled thicket before us. A shout from two of our sailors, who were in advance, hastened our steps. It was nothing but a whip-snake at which they were gazing, afraid to attack it, and unwilling to retreat. Used as I had been to make short work with these venomous creatures, wherever and whenever I fell in with them, it was the task of an instant to destroy it.



Not ten minutes afterwards, I espied a large diamond snake enjoying himself to the full. He was basking with his head in the sun, and with his tail in a pool of water, that had settled amidst the rocks. Scarcely was an exclamation of surprise out of my mouth, when Howie saw him too. With a vigorous blow he broke the reptile's spine; and then came the last struggle for the victory. I have never seen a snake fight so hardly for his life: he had so coiled his head around something below the water, that it was not until after a succession of strenuous efforts, that Howie pulled him out by the tail. He measured four feet six inches.

We were now approaching the immediate scene of the wreck; the shore and scrub were strewn with relics of misfortune, dumb witnesses of long past scenes of death and horror: tubs, spars, huge beams, iron knees, doors, all by turns meet our eyes. Our guide paused at a mound, at the end of which a rude plank had been erected as a memorial. "Yonder," he said, pointing to the rocks, "I dragged on shore the bodies of eighteen poor girls; some were locked in each other's arms,

others as tranquil as though they were asleep, others bent and twisted with the most distorted forms; and here I dug their grave, and buried them: the plank marks the number that lie beneath." Again, we came upon another grave, where he had buried twenty; nearer to the scene of the disaster was another, where fifty were entombed. At last we came to the great grave of all, within sight of the very rocks on which the ship was dashed to pieces. "Here," he said, in a hoarse whisper, each muscle of his face quivering with the remembrance of the horrid task of former years, "here I buried 245."

They lie in a square enclosure, with a wooden rail around them, the rank grass and tall underwood half concealing the very mound above them. We cleared it all away, made the whole place neat and orderly, painted the wood-work (such having been our intention when we left the schooner), and departed.

The authorities at Melbourne had sent out an iron tablet commemorative of the event. It was placed at the back of a huge rock, so near to the fatal reef as to be almost within sight of it, and



yet sufficiently secured as to be beyond the probability of being injured or washed away by the waves.

No tongue can describe, no sketch can delineate, the wild savage ruggedness of this fearful coast. It is not high, but beset on every side with reefs, girt in with sharp jagged rocks which would split to splinters the stoutest vessel that was unfortunate enough to come in contact with them.

After a thorough investigation of the coast, satisfying ourselves, by close examination, that there were no survivors of any wrecks, inspecting the indications of more recent disasters, we made our way back to the boat; a slight swell was setting in, so that after we had succeeded in launching it, the difficulty was to embark. Two of our sailors rowed it to the edge of the reef that stretched some way into the sea. We picked our steps along the rocks, watched narrowly the reflux of the wave, and then made a leap for it. The schooner was already under way when we reached her; at three P.M. we set sail, intending to anch under the shelter of the New Year Islands.

We were seated at dinner, reporting to Captain

King all that we had seen and done, when Howie, who was at the helm, cried out, "A wreck on shore!" It brought us upon deck in an instant. Our telescopes reported what appeared to be a large schooner flung stern foremost on the beach. A large spar had been erected as a signal upon some rising ground beyond; at the foot of which was something, which, at first, we all took to be a man keeping watch. Its immobility convinced us that we were mistaken. She had evidently been abandoned and stripped; a large sail was lying over the companion; two tents upon the beach afforded sufficient evidence that some, at least, had escaped: but no indication of anything moving led us to believe that any one was there at present. We lay to for a short time, and kept close watch with our glasses. No signal was made from shore, so we filled again and resumed our course.

"Another wreck!" was the cry in another hour, and the truth of the announcement was soon made manifest through the medium of our own glasses. No hull was visible, but the strand was strewn for at least a couple of miles with what appeared



to be the cargo of a large ship. Again the most careful examination satisfied us that there was nothing living there. Large tents, pitched at the end of the scrub, bore abundant testimony that many must have escaped to shore. The wind would not permit us to stand closer in, so we made for New Year Islands, and dropped anchor under the lee of the Western Island at half-past seven P.M.

We had a long conference this evening as to what was to be done on the morrow. Our conclusion was, that it would be a work of mercy to endeavour to visit these wrecks. True, we saw no signs of life; but some stragglers might have wandered inwards, who might require our help on this desolate and uninhabited region. Perhaps, too, we might render some assistance towards clearing up the doubts that have attended the wrecks of this treacherous and dreadful coast.

### SUNDAY, 19*th*.

We got under way at half-past five in the morning, and by nine we were abreast of the

schooner's wreck in Half Moon Bay. The bottom, on sounding, proved to be rocky, so that it was impossible to anchor. Captain King resolved to lie to, whilst Mr. Power, Howie, and myself, with the boat's crew, went ashore. No signs of life greeted us on landing; so that we felt sure that the survivors had been taken off and that the most important and intereresting part of our mission was at an end. On nearing the stranded vessel, we found that she was the *Waterwitch*. The first object that met our eyes, on advancing further, was a trunk, with a bright blue dress coat half hanging out. Its owner seemed determined not to part altogether with his best belongings, for the buttons were all cut off. We then came upon a kind of encampment, consisting of five tents made out of the rescued sails. On entering, we found them full of every species of comfort saved from the wreck. Beds and bedding, trunks, clothes, shoes, books, a medicine chest, scent-bottles, hair oil, tubs of flour, and bottles of fish-sauce, all were there in profusion. In other places, strewn and scattered about, as things of no, esteem, were Parisian stays, gutta



percha shoes, parasols, cigars, newspapers, a sextant and quadrant. The ship's caboose occupied a prominent position in the centre of the encampment; and a small well dug on one side proved that the most methodical attention had been paid by the commander to the comforts of his shipwrecked crew and passengers. Four sheep, singularly tame, were quietly browsing near the encampment: they merely stared at us, and did not offer to move away. The main boom had been erected on a high piece of land close by as a flag-staff; a large calico ensign with the word "distress" in large letters painted on it, together with the union jack, was at the foot of the staff. This was what we had at first taken for a man on the watch, at our yesterday's distant inspection. An inscription painted on a board set all our doubts and anxieties at rest. It set forth that the "crew and passengers were taken off by the steamer." On a huge whalebone another inscription was painted, "The *Waterwitch* wrecked 17th September, 1854. All hands saved. A. H. Forrest, commander."

She was bound from Melbourne to Mauritius,

with several French passengers, whose books, papers, and effects were plentifully strewn about. Howie and the carpenter waded through the sea, and clambered up the vessel's side. They reported, on their return, that her bottom was knocked completely out, and that her stripped condition evinced that the utmost care had been taken by her commander to save the property.

By eleven o'clock we were once more on board the *Beacon;* soon after one, we were abreast of the second wreck which we had descried yesterday. On landing, a fearful sight presented itself. The unfortunate vessel must have been as completely smashed upon the rocks, as was the *Cataraqui.* No doubt remained as to her identity. We had not scrambled many yards over the rough and jagged reef, before we came upon the remains of her stern, on which was inscribed the name, *Brahmin.* It was a sad scene of desolation, and of wanton destruction too; for case after case of valuable property had been torn open, for no other purpose, it would seem, than that of satisfying a wanton curiosity. The rocks, the shore, the bush, all were strewn with the



remnants of her cargo; whips, saddlery, shoes, stockings, printing paper, pictures, looking-glasses, stationery, a piano, wine and ale casks, were scattered about in ruinous profusion; spars, cordage, portions of the broken hull, and all the *débris* of the wreck, intermingled with the cargo. A neat marble tablet on the hill-side, carved, it would seem, by one of the rescued crew, told us the fate of the commander. Its inscription was "Sacred to the memory of Captain M'Eachern, late of the ship *Brahmin*, who was drowned on the 21st of May, 1854, aged 39 years." Several, as we afterwards understood, perished with him, including all the officers except the carpenter, so that the reckless scene of destruction was easily accounted for; there was no restraining hand, and each man did that which was right in his own eyes.

The survivors had erected tents; but they had manifestly not saved so many comforts as their brethren in misfortune at Half Moon Bay. A large fire, whether accidental or not, had consumed a vast amount of valuable property that had been heaped together, apparently as a kind of store.

It was a wretched sight, upon which, as we could do no good, we gladly turned our backs, but not, I hope, without a deep sense of thankfulness for our own successful expedition to this most dangerous coast. Howie told us, that during his experience of many years he has never known the sea so calm, or the landing-places so free from surf, as they have been to-day.

It was late before we reached our anchorage of the previous night; too late to keep the men from their rest, for the purpose of celebrating Divine service.

MONDAY, 20*th*.

In the morning, we went to explore the western coast of the New Year Islands, as well as to take observations; which, by the way, were interrupted by the appearance of a large black snake, which was soon despatched. Another was too nimble for my stick.

This Island (upon which some have proposed to erect the contemplated lighthouse) is a bare, sandy mass flung up upon granite rocks, which the deposits of the birds have alone made fertile



in parts and patches. "The pig's face" grows in abundance, as well as a small stunted shrub under which the mutton birds make their nests. We started some quails and snipe from these covers: prudence forbade any closer examination, for they were perfectly alive with snakes. Some few years ago, Howie scattered celery, parsley, and cabbage seeds. These have thriven well; and gave ample employment to our men, in cutting their produce and stowing it away in bags, as food for the goat.

The point on King's Island opposite to these rocky Islets was named by the Surveyor-General the "Bishop's Point," and so it will remain.

Our fine weather is breaking up, having lasted just long enough to allow us to complete the desired observations. It is coming on to blow hard from the westward, so the sooner we round Wickham Point, the better; else we may be kept here for days.

At mid-day we set sail, the wind heavy and puffy; a long swell setting in, a falling barometer, and every indication of dirty weather. Within a little of our quitting the anchorage, we sighted a

schooner, which, on nearing us, proved to be the *Native Lass*, with a party on board, intending to exhume, and convey to Launceston, the corpse of the ill-fated commander of the *Brahmin*. The tidings of the wreck and of the rescue have just reached that town. They were fortunate in having half-an-hour's conversation with Howie, who went on board for the purpose of giving them instructions how to proceed upon their landing.

Anchored soon after sundown behind the Sea Elephant's Rocks, on the eastern coast of King's Island—a very snug berth, let the west wind blow as hard as it may. A wild night; lightning on every side around us, heavy rain, and an occasional roll of thunder.

### TUESDAY, 21*st*.

Howie decided on leaving us this morning, for the western coast of the Island. He hopes to be in time to meet the party that is bound to the wreck of the *Brahmin*. It is blowing so hard from the S.W., that they will need both help and guidance.



After a long and anxious debate as to our future course, we are reluctantly compelled to abandon our intention of returning by the western coast. The wind is foul and stormy, with no prospect of any immediate alteration; and Captain King does not feel himself justified in detaining the schooner until it moderates. In fact, we require, in order to visit so dangerous a coast with safety, fair winds, smooth seas, moonlight nights, and an experienced pilot. Of the two first there is no present appearance; the third is out of the question, as the new moon commenced her course yesterday evening. Our pilot has determined to go elsewhere. So, our course is eastward, home through Banks's Straits.

Captain King accompanied Howie on shore. I do not envy him his tramp of seventeen miles across the bush to the western shores, in such a day as this is likely to turn out.

The Captain has just returned; in another hour the anchor will be up, the sails set, and ourselves homeward bound.

On leaving this much-dreaded coast, we cannot be too thankful for the many providential bless-

ings that have attended our visit. We fell in with the only man who thoroughly knows its every nook; while the weather has been more steadily fine and tranquil than our most sanguine expectations could have anticipated.

"Man the windlass!" is the cry. So we are off. And a furious day we have had of it; the wind fair, but the sea very heavy.

WEDNESDAY, 22*d*.

It was as severe a night as we have yet encountered, and we shipped two or three tumbling seas in consequence. But we have made a splendid run. By eight o'clock this morning we rounded Swan Island, having traversed the entire length of Bass's Straits in less than twenty-four hours. We hauled up, to allow the superintendent to come on board from the Island for a few minutes. The wind was light and variable all day. We had advanced no further than Cape Tourville by ten o'clock at night.



THURSDAY, 23*d*.

Light airs throughout the whole night; the vessel scarcely making any way during the last eight hours. In the morning, we were off the Geographe Passage, that divides Schonters Island from the main. We were near enough to have a noble view of the rugged basaltic rocks of the former.

Towards the afternoon, there was every appearance of the approach of very heavy weather; the increasing haze gradually concealed the coast from our sight, and the whole horizon looked indicative of mischief. It ended, however, not in storm, but in rain. We rounded Cape Pillar about six in the evening. And here we are, at nine P.M., off Wedge Islands, with all sail set, and a light at our bowsprit, standing quickly up Storm Bay, in smooth water, at the rate of about five knots an hour.

My last entry, before turning in for the night, must be a grateful acknowledgment of the many mercies that we have received at the hands of Divine Providence, during our two months'

absence. We have seen much, done much, planned much, and learnt much, without a single serious discomfort or misadventure.

FRIDAY, 24*th*.

Landed at half-past nine. Walked over to Bishop's Town, and found all well at home. *Laus Deo.*

THE END.

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