

Kelvedon 29th. 1^{mo} 1868

Respected Friend

Ferdinand Mueller

I have no doubt thou art wondering at my long delay in answering thy letters of 18/11/67 & 3/12/67 – the latter arrived in due course but the former was missent to Hobart Town instead of Swansea & from thence I suppose forwarded to Oyster Cove on the Derwent there it must have laid some time as it was only the other day that I received it. I hope thy trip to Western Australia has renewed thy health. I should have considered Tasmania a better climate for an [page break] Invalid; it was perhaps too early in the spring for this climate. If it is thy intention to write a paper on the Botany of this District for the R.S of Tasm^a would it not be as well to wait until I have sent the whole of my specimens. I regret to say that I go on very slowly with them having many interruptions, one month passes after another & little progress is made but the collecting & drying the specimens takes much time – The names I give to the plants must in most cases be altogether wrong, & besides not having looked at Botany for a long period I have forgotten a great deal of what I then knew & therefore feel much obliged by having the correct names & which I register in my collection The first mentioned are the Acacia I have a few more species to send 2nd Backia [Baeckea] diffusa [page break] Having furnished the first case only on this day – although I have devoted as much spare time to it as possible reminds me that it will be some time before a second case is ready, in the mean time I shall hear from thee whether the first case is of any use & worth being sent – Of all that are sent many more remain, some of the Classes are not even represented & few genera contain all the species found in the District –

As to the District it is a tract of Coast extending from Cape Bernier on the South to Doctors Creek or Seymour Mines on the North it was formerly known as the District of Oyster Bay, from that Bay occupying a considerable portion of the coast line now the South part is in the County of Pembroke the north part in that of Glamorgan – the whole forming a Coastline of 80 miles A strip of land for cultivation extends along the Coast & is backed by Tiers of hills that extend westward to the midland Districts of Tasmania, The Tiers are formed of Basalt (Greenstone) with in some cases Sandstone & the Coal formation, but this latter is seldom met with except on the Coast line [page break] Sandy swamps replete with plants occur at intervals along the Coast Line Oyster Bay is about 20 or 30 miles long & 15 to 20 broad. Maria Island lies at its mouth the Schouten Island & Freycinets Peninsula form the eastern side, Swansea lies at the head of the west side of the Bay & Kelvedon (where I reside) is 6 miles South of Swansea – The Schouten Island & Peninsula, have a strip of Porphoritic Granite on their Eastern side, extending up to Bicheno – The Rivers beginning South, are sandspit; Prossers, Little Swan Port (which forms a large Port or Lagoon previous to entering the sea, then several small ones (Ruxton's Meredith's-Cyghnet Cygnet) & Hyer then the Swan, Apsley & Douglas – The Swan & Apsley enter the head of Oyster Bay close to Freycinets Peninsula by one mouth but previously forming an extensive Port 12 miles long by 5 or 6 broad - I have never

collected plants beyond the Douglas River it is likely als [o] remarked in the thy description of Calystegia that numerous plants allied to those of Gipps Land would be found farther to the North of Douglas, I should like much to visit that part Our Climate is dry & warm perhaps the best of any District for salubrity. Rain in 1864 31.16 inches in 1865 19. 66 In^s in 1866 24.99 In^s average for the 3 y^{ts} 25.27 In^s – The Rivers of the District are swollen Torrents in heavy Rain & dry beds in summer, which are well filled with a variety of shrubs.

<http://eprints.utas.edu.au/1898/> (Letter 5), transcribed by Sarah Clarkson, 10th October 2014.