

A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany-Bay eBook

A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany-Bay by Watkin Tench

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INTRODUCTION

In offering this little tract to the public, it is equally the writer's wish to conduce to their amusement and information.

The expedition on which he is engaged has excited much curiosity, and given birth to many speculations, respecting the consequences to arise from it. While men continue to think freely, they will judge variously. Some have been sanguine enough to foresee the most beneficial effects to the Parent State, from the Colony we are endeavouring to establish; and some have not been wanting to pronounce the scheme big with folly, impolicy, and ruin. Which of these predictions will be completed, I leave to the decision of the public. I cannot, however, dismiss the subject without expressing a hope, that the candid and liberal of each opinion, induced by the humane and benevolent intention in which it originated, will unite in waiting the result of a fair trial to an experiment, no less new in its design, than difficult in its execution.

As this publication enters the world with the name of the author, candour will, he trusts, induce its readers to believe, that no consideration could weigh with him in an endeavour to mislead them. Facts are related simply as they happened, and when opinions are hazarded, they are such as, he hopes, patient inquiry, and deliberate decision, will be found to have authorised. For the most part he has spoken from actual observation; and in those places where the relations of others have been unavoidably adopted. He has been careful to search for the truth, and repress that spirit of exaggeration which is almost ever the effect of novelty on ignorance.

The nautical part of the work is comprized in as few pages as possible. By the professional part of my readers this will be deemed judicious; and the rest will not, I believe, be dissatisfied at its brevity. I beg leave, however, to say of the astronomical calculations, that they may be depended on with the greatest degree of security, as they were communicated by an officer, who was furnished with instruments, and commissioned by the Board of Longitude, to make observations during the voyage, and in the southern hemisphere.

An unpractised writer is generally anxious to bespeak public attention, and to solicit public indulgence. Except on professional subjects, military men are, perhaps, too fearful of critical censure. For the present narrative no other apology is attempted, than the intentions of its author, who has endeavoured not only to satisfy present curiosity, but to point out to future adventurers, the favourable, as well as adverse circumstances which will attend their settling here. The candid, it is hoped, will overlook the inaccuracies of this imperfect sketch, drawn amidst the complicated duties of the service in which the Author is engaged, and make due allowance for the want of opportunity of gaining more extensive information.

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Watkin Tench, Capt. of the Marines.

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, New South Wales, 10 July, 1788.

CHAPTER I

From the Embarkation of the Convicts, to the Departure of the Ships from England.

The marines and convicts having been previously embarked in the River, at Portsmouth, and Plymouth, the whole fleet destined for the expedition rendezvoused at the Mother Bank, on the 16th of March 1787, and remained there until the 13th of May following. In this period, excepting a slight appearance of contagion in one of the transports, the ships were universally healthy, and the prisoners in high spirits. Few complaints or lamentations were to be heard among them, and an ardent wish for the hour of departure seemed generally to prevail.

As the reputation, equally with the safety of the officers and soldiers appointed to guard the convicts, consisted in maintaining due subordination, an opportunity was taken, immediately on their being embarked, to convince them, in the most pointed terms, that any attempt on their side, either to contest the command, or to force their escape, should be punished with instant death; orders to this effect were given to the centinels in their presence; happily, however, for all parties, there occurred not any instance in which there was occasion to have recourse to so desperate a measure; the behavior of the convicts being in general humble, submissive, and regular: indeed I should feel myself wanting in justice to those unfortunate men, were I not to bear this public testimony of the sobriety and decency of their conduct.

Unpleasant as a state of inactivity and delay for many weeks appeared to us, it was not without its advantages; for by means of it we were enabled to establish necessary regulations among the convicts, and to adopt such a system of defence, as left us little to Apprehend for our own security, in case a spirit of madness and desperation had hurried them on to attempt our destruction.

Among many other troublesome parts of duty which the service we were engaged on required, the inspection of all letters brought to, or sent from the ships, was not one of the least tiresome and disagreeable. The number and contents of those in the vessel I was embarked in, frequently surprised me very much; they varied according to the dispositions of the writers: but their constant language was, an apprehension of the impracticability of returning home, the dread of a sickly passage, and the fearful prospect of a distant and barbarous country. But this apparent despondency proceeded in few instances from sentiment. With too many it was, doubtless, an artifice to awaken compassion, and call forth relief; the correspondence invariably ending in a petition for

money and tobacco. Perhaps a want of the latter, which is considered a great luxury by its admirers among the lower classes of life, might be the more severely felt, from their being debarred in all cases whatever, sickness excepted, the use of spirituous liquors.

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It may be thought proper for me to mention, that during our stay at the Mother Bank, the soldiers and convicts were indiscriminately served with fresh beef. The former, in addition, had the usual quantity of beer allowed in the navy, and were at what is called full allowance of all species of provisions; the latter, at two thirds only.

CHAPTER II.

From the Departure, to the Arrival of the Fleet at Teneriffe.

Governor Phillip having at length reached Portsmouth, and all things deemed necessary for the expedition being put on board, at daylight on the morning of the 13th, the signal to weigh anchor was made in the Commanding Officer's ship the *Sirius*. Before six o'clock the whole fleet were under sail; and, the weather being fine and wind easterly, proceeded through the Needles with a fresh leading breeze. In addition to our little armament, the *Hyena* frigate was ordered to accompany us a certain distance to the westward, by which means our number was increased to twelve sail: His Majesty's ships '*Sirius*', '*Hyena*', and '*Supply*', three Victuallers with two years stores and provisions on board for the Settlement, and six Transports, with troops and convicts. In the transports were embarked four captains, twelve subalterns, twenty-four serjeants and corporals, eight drummers, and one hundred and sixty private marines, making the whole of the military force, including the Major Commandant and Staff on board the *Sirius*, to consist of two hundred and twelve persons, of whom two hundred and ten were volunteers. The number of convicts was five hundred and sixty-five men, one hundred and ninety-two women, and eighteen children; the major part of the prisoners were mechanics and husbandmen, selected on purpose by order of Government.

By ten o'clock we had got clear of the Isle of Wight, at which time, having very little pleasure in conversing with my own thoughts, I strolled down among the convicts, to observe their sentiments at this juncture. A very few excepted, their countenances indicated a high degree of satisfaction, though in some, the pang of being severed, perhaps for ever, from their native land, could not be wholly suppressed; in general, marks of distress were more perceptible among the men than the women; for I recollect to have seen but one of those affected on the occasion, "Some natural tears she dropp'd, but wip'd them soon." After this the accent of sorrow was no longer heard; more genial skies and change of scene banished repining and discontent, and introduced in their stead cheerfulness and acquiescence in a lot, now not to be altered.

To add to the good disposition which was beginning to manifest itself, on the morning of the 20th, in consequence of some favorable representations made by the officers commanding detachments, they were hailed and told from the *Sirius*, that in those cases where they judged it proper, they were at liberty to release the convicts from the fetters in which they had been hitherto confined. In complying with these directions, I had great pleasure in being able to extend this humane order to the whole of those

under my charge, without a single exception. It is hardly necessary for me to say, that the precaution of ironing the convicts at any time reached to the men only.

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In the evening of the same day, the Hyena left us for England, which afforded an early opportunity of writing to our friends, and easing their apprehensions by a communication of the favourable accounts it was in our power to send them.

From this time to the day of our making the land, little occurred worthy of remark. I cannot, however, help noticing the propriety of employing the marines on a service which requires activity and exertion at sea, in preference to other troops. Had a regiment recruited since the war been sent out, sea-sickness would have incapacitated half the men from performing the duties immediately and indispensably necessary; whereas the marines, from being accustomed to serve on board ship, accommodated themselves with ease to every exigency, and surmounted every difficulty.

At daybreak, on the morning of the 30th of May we saw the rocks named the Deserters, which lie off the south-east end of Madeira; and found the south-east extremity of the most southerly of them, to be in the latitude of 32 deg 28 min north, longitude 16 deg 17 1/2 min west of Greenwich. The following day we saw the Salvages, a cluster of rocks which are placed between the Madeiras and Canary Islands, and determined the latitude of the middle of the Great Salvage to be 30 deg 12 min north, and the longitude of its eastern side to be 15 deg 39 min west. It is no less extraordinary than unpardonable, that in some very modern charts of the Atlantic, published in London, the Salvages are totally omitted.

We made the island of Teneriffe on the 3d of June, and in the evening anchored in the road of Santa Cruz, after an excellent passage of three weeks from the day we left England.

CHAPTER III.

From the Fleet's Arrival at Teneriffe, to its Departure for Rio de Janeiro, in the Brazils.

There is little to please a traveller at Teneriffe. He has heard wonders of its celebrated Peak, but he may remain for weeks together at the town of Santa Cruz without having a glimpse of it, and when its cloud-topped head emerges, the chance is, that he feels disappointed, for, from the point of view in which he sees it, the neighbouring mountains lessen its effect very considerably. Excepting the Peak, the eye receives little pleasure from the general face of the country, which is sterile and uninviting to the last degree. The town, however, from its cheerful white appearance, contrasted with the dreary brownness of the back ground, makes not an unpleasing coup d'oeil. It is neither irregular in its plan, nor despicable in its style of building; and the churches and religious houses are numerous, sumptuous, and highly ornamented.

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The morning of our arrival, as many officers as could be spared from the different ships were introduced to the Marquis de Brancifort, Governor of the Canary Islands, whose reception was highly flattering and polite. His Excellency is a Sicilian by birth, and is most deservedly popular in his government. He prefers residing at Teneriffe, for the conveniency of frequent communication with Europe, to the Grand Canary, which is properly the seat of power; and though not long fixed here, has already found means to establish a manufactory in cotton, silk, and thread, under excellent regulations, which employs more than sixty persons, and is of infinite service to the common people. During our short stay we had every day some fresh proof of his Excellency's esteem and attention, and had the honour of dining with him, in a style of equal elegance and splendor. At this entertainment the profusion of ices which appeared in the desert was surprising, considering that we were enjoying them under a sun nearly vertical. But it seems the caverns of the Peak, very far below its summit, afford, at all seasons, ice in abundance.

The restless importunity of the beggars, and the immodesty of the lowest class of women, are highly disgusting. From the number of his countrymen to be found, an Englishman is at no loss for society. In the mercantile houses established here, it is from gentlemen of this description that any information is derived, for the taciturnity of the Spaniards is not to be overcome in a short acquaintance, especially by Englishmen, whose reserve falls little short of their own. The inland country is described as fertile, and highly romantic; and the environs of the small town of Laguzá mentioned as particularly pleasant. Some of our officers who made an excursion to it confirmed the account amply.

It should seem that the power of the Church, which has been so long on the decline in Europe, is at length beginning to be shaken in the colonies of the Catholic powers: some recent instances which have taken place at Teneriffe, evince it very fully. Were not a stranger, however, to be apprized of this, he would hardly draw the conclusion from his own observations. The Bishop of these islands, which conjunctively form a See, resides on the Grand Canary. He is represented as a man in years, and of a character as amiable as exalted, extremely beloved both by foreigners and those of his own church. The bishopric is valued at ten thousand pounds per annum; the government at somewhat less than two.

In spite of every precaution, while we lay at anchor in the road, a convict had the address, one night, to secrete himself on the deck, when the rest were turned below; and after remaining quiet for some hours, let himself down over the bow of the ship, and floated to a boat that lay astern, into which he got, and cutting her adrift, suffered himself to be carried away by the current, until at a sufficient distance

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to be out of hearing, when he rowed off. This elopement was not discovered till some hours after, when a search being made, and boats sent to the different parts of the island, he was discovered in a small cove, to which he had fled for refuge. On being questioned, it appeared he had endeavoured to get himself received on board a Dutch East Indiaman in the road; but being rejected there, he resolved on crossing over to the Grand Canary, which is at the distance of ten leagues, and when detected, was recruiting his strength in order to make the attempt. At the same time that the boats of the fleet were sent on this pursuit, information was given to the Spanish Governor of what had happened, who immediately detached parties every way in order to apprehend the delinquent.

Having remained a week at Teneriffe, and in that time completed our stock of water, and taken on board wine, &c. early on the morning of the 10th of June we weighed anchor, and stood out to sea with a light easterly breeze. The shortness of our stay, and the consequent hurry, prevented our increasing much any previous knowledge we might have had of the place. For the information of those who may follow us on this service, it may not, however, be amiss to state the little that will be found of use to them.

The markets afford fresh meat, though it is neither plentiful nor good. Fish is scarce; but poultry may be procured in almost any quantity, at as cheap a rate as in the English sea-ports. Vegetables do not abound, except pumpkins and onions, of which I advise all ships to lay in a large stock. Milch goats are bought for a trifle, and easily procured. Grapes cannot be scarce in their season; but when we were here, except figs and excellent mulberries, no fruit was to be procured. Dry wines, as the merchants term them, are sold from ten to fifteen pounds a pipe; for the latter price, the very best, called the London Particular, may be bought: sweet wines are considerably dearer. Brandy is also a cheap article. I would not advise the voyager to depend on this place for either his hogs or sheep. And he will do well to supply himself with dollars before he quits England, to expend in the different ports he may happen to touch at. Should he, however, have neglected this precaution, let him remember when he discounts bills, or exchanges English money here, not to receive his returns in quarter dollars, which will be tendered to him, but altogether in whole ones, as he will find the latter turn to better account than the former, both at Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope.

The latitude of the town of Santa Cruz is 28 deg 27 1/2 min north, the longitude 16 deg 17 1/2 min west of Greenwich.

CHAPTER IV.

The Passage from Teneriffe to Rio de Janeiro, in the Brazils.

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In sailing from Teneriffe to the south-east, the various and picturesque appearances of the Peak are beautiful to the highest degree. The stupendous height, which before was lost on the traveller, now strikes him with awe and admiration, the whole island appearing one vast mountain with a pyramidal top. As we proceeded with light winds, at an easy rate, we saw it distinctly for three days after our departure, and should have continued to see it longer, had not the haziness of the atmosphere interrupted our view. The good people of Santa Cruz tell some stories of the wonderful extent of space to be seen from the summit of it, that would not disgrace the memoirs of the ever-memorable Baron Munchausen.

On the 18th of June we saw the most northerly of the Cape de Verd Islands, at which time the Commodore gave the fleet to understand, by signal, that his intention was to touch at some of them. The following day we made St. Jago, and stood in to gain an anchorage in Port Praya Bay. But the baffling winds and lee current rendering it a matter of doubt whether or not the ships would be able to fetch, the signal for anchoring was hauled down, and the fleet bore up before the wind. In passing along them we were enabled to ascertain the south end of the Isle of Sal to be in 16 deg 40 min north latitude, and 23 deg 5 min west longitude. The south end of Bonavista to be in 15 deg 57 min north, 23 deg 8 min west. The south end of the Isle of May in 15 deg 11 min north, 23 deg 26 min west; and the longitude of the fort, in the town of Port Praya, to be 23 deg 36 1/2 min west of Greenwich.

By this time the weather, from the sun being so far advanced in the northern tropic, was become intolerably hot, which, joined to the heavy rains that soon after came on, made us very apprehensive for the health of the fleet. Contrary, however, to expectation, the number of sick in the ship I was embarked on was surprisingly small, and the rest of the fleet were nearly as healthy. Frequent explosions of gunpowder, lighting fires between decks, and a liberal use of that admirable antiseptic, oil of tar, were the preventives we made use of against impure air; and above all things we were careful to keep the men's bedding and wearing apparel dry. As we advanced towards the Line, the weather grew gradually better and more pleasant. On the 14th of July we passed the Equator, at which time the atmosphere was as serene, and the temperature of the air not hotter than in a bright summer day in England. From this period, until our arrival on the American coast, the heats, the calms, and the rains by which we had been so much incommoded, were succeeded by a series of weather as delightful as it was unlooked for. At three o'clock in the afternoon of the 2nd of August, the 'Supply', which had been previously sent a-head on purpose, made the signal for seeing the land, which was visible to the whole fleet before sunset, and proved to be Cape Frio, in latitude 23 deg 5 min south, longitude 41 deg 40 1/4 min west.

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Owing to light airs we did not get a-breast of the city of St. Sebastian, in the harbour of Rio de Janeiro, until the 7th of the month, when we anchored about three quarters of a mile from the shore.

CHAPTER V.

From the Arrival of the Fleet at Rio de Janeiro, till its Departure for the Cape of Good Hope; with some Remarks on the Brazils.

Brazil is a country very imperfectly known in Europe. The Portuguese, from political motives, have been sparing in their accounts of it. Whence our descriptions of it, in the geographical publications in England, are drawn, I know not: that they are miserably erroneous and defective, is certain.

The city of St. Sebastian stands on the west side of the harbour, in a low unhealthy situation, surrounded on all sides by hills, which stop the free circulation of air, and subject its inhabitants to intermittents and putrid diseases. It is of considerable extent: Mr. Cook makes it as large as Liverpool; but Liverpool, in 1767, when Mr. Cook wrote, was not two-thirds of its present size. Perhaps it equals Chester, or Exeter, in the share of ground it occupies, and is infinitely more populous than either of them. The streets intersect each other at right angles, are tolerably well built, and excellently paved, abounding with shops of every kind, in which the wants of a stranger, if money is not one of them, can hardly remain unsatisfied. About the centre of the city, and at a little distance from the beach, the Palace of the Viceroy stands, a long, low building, no wise remarkable in its exterior appearance; though within are some spacious and handsome apartments. The churches and convents are numerous, and richly decorated; hardly a night passes without some of the latter being illuminated in honour of their patron saints, which has a very brilliant effect when viewed from the water, and was at first mistaken by us for public rejoicings. At the corner of almost every street stands a little image of the Virgin, stuck round with lights in an evening, before which passengers frequently stop to pray and sing very loudly. Indeed, the height to which religious zeal is carried in this place, cannot fail of creating astonishment in a stranger. The greatest part of the inhabitants seem to have no other occupation, than that of paying visits and going to church, at which times you see them sally forth richly dressed, en chapeau bras, with the appendages of a bag for the hair, and a small sword: even boys of six years old are seen parading about, furnished with these indispensable requisites. Except when at their devotions, it is not easy to get a sight of the women, and when obtained, the comparisons drawn by a traveller, lately arrived from England, are little flattering to Portuguese beauty. In justice, however, to the ladies of St. Sebastian, I must observe, that the custom of throwing nosegays at strangers, for the purpose of bringing on an assignation, which Doctor Solander, and another gentleman of Mr. Cook's ship, met with when here, was never seen by any of us in a single instance. We were so deplorably unfortunate as to walk every evening before their windows and balconies, without being

honoured with a single bouquet, though nymphs and flowers were in equal and great abundance.

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Among other public buildings, I had almost forgot to mention an observatory, which stands near the middle of the town, and is tolerably well furnished with astronomical instruments. During our stay here, some Spanish and Portuguese mathematicians were endeavouring to determine the boundaries of the territories belonging to their respective crowns. Unhappily, however, for the cause of science, these gentlemen have not hitherto been able to coincide in their accounts, so that very little information on this head, to be depended upon, could be gained. How far political motives may have caused this disagreement, I do not presume to decide; though it deserves notice, that the Portuguese accuse the Abbee de la Caille, who observed here by order of the King of France, of having laid down the longitude of this place forty-five miles too much to the eastward.

Until the year 1770, all the flour in the settlement was brought from Europe; but since that time the inhabitants have made so rapid a progress in raising grain, as to be able to supply themselves with it abundantly. The principal corn country lies around Rio Grande, in the latitude of 32 deg south, where wheat flourishes so luxuriantly, as to yield from seventy to eighty bushels for one. Coffee also, which they formerly received from Portugal, now grows in such plenty as to enable them to export considerable quantities of it. But the staple commodity of the country is sugar. That they have not, however, learnt the art of making palatable rum, the English troops in New South Wales can bear testimony; a large quantity, very ill flavoured, having been bought and shipped here for the use of the garrison of Port Jackson.

It was in 1771 that St. Salvador, which had for more than a century been the capital of Brazil, ceased to be so; and that the seat of Government was removed to St. Sebastian. The change took place on account of the colonial war, at that time carried on by the Courts of Lisbon and Madrid. And, indeed, were the object of security alone to determine the seat of Government, I know but few places better situated in that respect than the one I am describing; the natural strength of the country, joined to the difficulties which would attend an attack on the fortifications, being such as to render it very formidable.

It may be presumed that the Portuguese Government is well apprized of this circumstance and of the little risque they run in being deprived of so important a possession, else it will not be easy to penetrate the reasons which induce them to treat the troops who compose the garrison with such cruel negligence. Their regiments were ordered out with a promise of being relieved, and sent back to Europe at the end of three years, in conformity to which they settled all their domestic arrangements. But the faith of Government has been broken, and at the expiration of twenty years, all that is left to the remnant of these unfortunate men, is to suffer in submissive silence. I was one evening walking with a Portuguese officer, when this subject was started, and on my telling him, that such a breach of public honour to English troops would become a subject of parliamentary enquiry, he seized my hand with great eagerness, "Ah, Sir!"

exclaimed he, "yours is a free country—we"!——His emotions spoke what his tongue refused.

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As I am mentioning the army, I cannot help observing, that I saw nothing here to confirm the remark of Mr. Cook, that the inhabitants of the place, whenever they meet an officer of the garrison, bow to him with the greatest obsequiousness; and by omitting such a ceremony, would subject themselves to be knocked down, though the other seldom deigns to return the compliment. The interchange of civilities is general between them, and seems by no means extorted. The people who could submit to such insolent superiority, would, indeed, deserve to be treated as slaves.

The police of the city is very good. Soldiers patrol the streets frequently, and riots are seldom heard of. The dreadful custom of stabbing, from motives of private resentment, is nearly at an end, since the church has ceased to afford an asylum to murderers. In other respects, the progress of improvement appears slow, and fettered by obstacles almost insurmountable, whose baneful influence will continue, until a more enlightened system of policy shall be adopted. From morning to night the ears of a stranger are greeted by the tinkling of the convent bells, and his eyes saluted by processions of devotees, whose adoration and levity seem to keep equal pace, and succeed each other in turns. "Do you want to make your son sick of soldiering? Shew him the Trainbands of London on a field-day." Let him who would wish to give his son a distaste to Popery, point out to him the sloth, the ignorance, and the bigotry of this place.

Being nearly ready to depart by the 1st of September, as many officers as possible went on that day to the palace to take leave of his Excellency, the Viceroy of the Brazils, to whom we had been previously introduced; who on this, and every other occasion, was pleased to honour us with the most distinguished marks of regard and attention. Some part, indeed, of the numerous indulgencies we experienced during our stay here, must doubtless be attributed to the high respect in which the Portuguese held Governor Phillip, who was for many years a captain in their navy, and commanded a ship of war on this station: in consequence of which, many privileges were extended to us, very unusual to be granted to strangers. We were allowed the liberty of making short excursions into the country, and on these occasions, as well as when walking in the city, the mortifying custom of having an officer of the garrison attending us was dispensed with on our leaving our names and ranks, at the time of landing, with the adjutant of orders at the palace. It happened, however, sometimes, that the presence of a military man was necessary to prevent imposition in the shopkeepers, who frequently made a practice of asking more for their goods than the worth of them. In which case an officer, when applied to, always told us the usual price of the commodity with the greatest readiness, and adjusted the terms of the purchase.

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On the morning of the fourth of September we left Rio de Janeiro, amply furnished with the good things which its happy soil and clime so abundantly produce. The future voyager may with security depend on this place for laying in many parts of his stock. Among these may be enumerated sugar, coffee, rum, port wine, rice, tapioca, and tobacco, besides very beautiful wood for the purposes of household furniture. Poultry is not remarkably cheap, but may be procured in any quantity; as may hops at a low rate. The markets are well supplied with butcher's meat, and vegetables of every sort are to be procured at a price next to nothing; the yams are particularly excellent. Oranges abound so much, as to be sold for sixpence a hundred; and limes are to be had on terms equally moderate. Bananas, cocoa nuts, and guavas, are common; but the few pineapples brought to market are not remarkable either for flavour, or cheapness. Besides the inducements to lay out money already mentioned, the naturalist may add to his collection by an almost endless variety of beautiful birds and curious insects, which are to be bought at a reasonable price, well preserved, and neatly assorted.

I shall close my account of this place by informing strangers, who may come here, that the Portuguese reckon their money in rees, an imaginary coin, twenty of which make a small copper piece called a 'vintin', and sixteen of these last a 'petack'. Every piece is marked with the number of rees it is worth, so that a mistake can hardly happen. English silver coin has lost its reputation here, and dollars will be found preferable to any other money.

CHAPTER VI.

The Passage from the Brazils to the Cape of Good Hope; with an Account of the Transactions of the Fleet there.

Our passage from Rio de Janeiro to the Cape of Good Hope was equally prosperous with that which had preceded it. We steered away to the south-east, and lost sight of the American coast the day after our departure. From this time until the 13th of October, when we made the Cape, nothing remarkable occurred, except the loss of a convict in the ship I was on board, who unfortunately fell into the sea, and perished in spite of our efforts to save him, by cutting adrift a life buoy and hoisting out a boat. During the passage, a slight dysentery prevailed in some of the ships, but was in no instance mortal. We were at first inclined to impute it to the water we took on board at the Brazils, but as the effect was very partial, some other cause was more probably the occasion of it.

At seven o'clock in the evening of the 13th of October, we cast anchor in Table Bay, and found many ships of different nations in the harbour.

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Little can be added to the many accounts already published of the Cape of Good Hope, though, if an opinion on the subject might be risked, the descriptions they contain are too flattering. When contrasted with Rio de Janeiro, it certainly suffers in the comparison. Indeed we arrived at a time equally unfavourable for judging of the produce of the soil and the temper of its cultivators, who had suffered considerably from a dearth that had happened the preceding season, and created a general scarcity. Nor was the chagrin of these deprivations lessened by the news daily arriving of the convulsions that shook the republic, which could not fail to make an impression even on Batavian phlegm.

As a considerable quantity of flour, and the principal part of the live stock, which was to store our intended settlement, were meant to be procured here, Governor Phillip lost no time in waiting on Mynheer Van Graaffe, the Dutch Governor, to request permission (according to the custom of the place) to purchase all that we stood in need of. How far the demand extended, I know not, nor Mynheer Van Graaffe's reasons for complying with it in part only. To this gentleman's political sentiments I confess myself a stranger; though I should do his politeness and liberality at his own table an injustice, were I not to take this public opportunity of acknowledging them; nor can I resist the opportunity which presents itself, to inform my readers, in honor of M. Van Graaffe's humanity, that he has made repeated efforts to recover the unfortunate remains of the crew of the Grosvenor Indiaman, which was wrecked about five years ago on the coast of Caffraria. This information was given me by Colonel Gordon, commandant of the Dutch troops at the Cape, whose knowledge of the interior parts of this country surpasses that of any other man. And I am sorry to say that the Colonel added, these unhappy people were irrecoverably lost to the world and their friends, by being detained among the Caffres, the most savage set of brutes on earth.

His Excellency resides at the Government house, in the East India Company's garden. This last is of considerable extent, and is planted chiefly with vegetables for the Dutch Indiamen which may happen to touch at the port. Some of the walks are extremely pleasant from the shade they afford, and the whole garden is very neatly kept. The regular lines intersecting each other at right angles, in which it is laid out, will, nevertheless, afford but little gratification to an Englishman, who has been used to contemplate the natural style which distinguishes the pleasure grounds of his own country. At the head of the centre walks stands a menagerie, on which, as well as the garden, many pompous eulogiums have been passed, though in my own judgment, considering the local advantages possessed by the Company, it is poorly furnished both with animals and birds; a tyger, a zebra, some fine ostriches, a cassowary, and the lovely crown-fowl, are among the most remarkable.

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The table land, which stands at the back of the town, is a black dreary looking mountain, apparently flat at top, and of more than eleven hundred yards in height. The gusts of wind which blow from it are violent to an excess, and have a very unpleasant effect, by raising the dust in such clouds, as to render stirring out of doors next to impossible. Nor can any precaution prevent the inhabitants from being annoyed by it, as much within doors as without.

At length the wished-for day, on which the next effort for reaching the place of our destination was to be made, appeared. The morning was calm, but the land wind getting up about noon, on the 12th of November we weighed anchor, and soon left far behind every scene of civilization and humanized manners, to explore a remote and barbarous land; and plant in it those happy arts, which alone constitute the pre-eminence and dignity of other countries.

The live animals we took on board on the public account from the Cape, for stocking our projected colony, were, two bulls, three cows, three horses, forty-four sheep, and thirty-two hogs, besides goats, and a very large quantity of poultry of every kind. A considerable addition to this was made by the private stocks of the officers, who were, however, under a necessity of circumscribing their original intentions on this head very much, from the excessive dearness of many of the articles. It will readily be believed, that few of the military found it convenient to purchase sheep, when hay to feed them costs sixteen shillings a hundred weight.

The boarding-houses on shore, to which strangers have recourse, are more reasonable than might be expected. For a dollar and a half per day we were well lodged, and partook of a table tolerably supplied in the French style. Should a traveller's stock of tea run short, it is a thousand chances to one that he will be able to replenish it here at a cheaper rate than in England. He may procure plenty of arrack and white wine; also raisins, and dried fruits of other sorts. If he dislikes to live at a boarding-house, he will find the markets well stored, and the price of butcher's meat and vegetables far from excessive.

Just before the signal for weighing was made, a ship, under American colours, entered the road, bound from Boston, from whence she had sailed one hundred and forty days, on a trading voyage to the East Indies. In her route, she had been lucky enough to pick up several of the inferior officers and crew of the Harcourt East-Indiaman, which ship had been wrecked on one of the Cape de Verd Islands. The master, who appeared to be a man of some information, on being told the destination of our fleet, gave it as his opinion, that if a reception could be secured, emigrations would take place to New South Wales, not only from the old continent, but the new one, where the spirit of adventure and thirst for novelty were excessive.

CHAPTER VII.

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The Passage from the Cape of Good Hope to Botany Bay.

We had hardly cleared the land when a south-east wind set in, and, except at short intervals, continued to blow until the 19th of the month; when we were in the latitude of 37 deg 40 min south, and by the time-keeper, in longitude 11 deg 30 min east, so that our distance from Botany Bay had increased nearly an hundred leagues since leaving the Cape. As no appearance of a change in our favour seemed likely to take place, Governor Phillip at this time signified his intention of shifting his pennant from the Sirius to the 'Supply', and proceeding on his voyage without waiting for the rest of the fleet, which was formed in two divisions. The first consisting of three transports, known to be the best sailors, was put under the command of a Lieutenant of the navy; and the remaining three, with the victuallers, left in charge of Captain Hunter, of his Majesty's ship Sirius. In the last division was the vessel, in which the author of this narrative served. Various causes prevented the separation from taking place until the 25th, when several sawyers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and other mechanics, were shifted from different ships into the 'Supply', in order to facilitate his Excellency's intention of forwarding the necessary buildings to be erected at Botany Bay, by the time the rest of the fleet might be expected to arrive. Lieutenant Governor Ross, and the Staff of the marine battalion, also removed from the Sirius into the Scarborough transport, one of the ships of the first division, in order to afford every assistance which the public service might receive, by their being early on the spot on which our future operations were to be conducted.

From this time a succession of fair winds and pleasant weather corresponded to our eager desires, and on the 7th of January, 1788, the long wished for shore of Van Diemen gratified our sight. We made the land at two o'clock in the afternoon, the very hour we expected to see it from the lunar observations of Captain Hunter, whose accuracy, as an astronomer, and conduct as an officer, had inspired us with equal gratitude and admiration.

After so long a confinement, on a service so peculiarly disgusting and troublesome, it cannot be matter of surprise that we were overjoyed at the near prospect of a change of scene. By sunset we had passed between the rocks, which Captain Furneaux named the Mewstone and Swilly. The former bears a very close resemblance to the little island near Plymouth, whence it took its name: its latitude is 43 deg 48 min south, longitude 146 deg 25 min east of Greenwich.

In running along shore, we cast many an anxious eye towards the land, on which so much of our future destiny depended. Our distance, joined to the haziness of the atmosphere, prevented us, however, from being able to discover much. With our best glasses we could see nothing but hills of a moderate height, cloathed with trees, to which some little patches of white sandstone gave the appearance of being covered with snow. Many fires were observed on the hills in the evening.

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As no person in the ship I was on board had been on this coast before, we consulted a little chart, published by Steele, of the Minories, London, and found it, in general, very correct; it would be more so, were not the Mewstone laid down at too great a distance from the land, and one object made of the Eddystone and Swilly, when, in fact, they are distinct. Between the two last is an entire bed of impassable rocks, many of them above water. The latitude of the Eddystone is 43 deg 53 1/2 min, longitude 147 deg 9 min; that of Swilly 43 deg 54 min south, longitude 147 deg 3 min east of Greenwich.

In the night the westerly wind, which had so long befriended us, died away, and was succeeded by one from the north-east. When day appeared we had lost sight of the land, and did not regain it until the 19th, at only the distance of 17 leagues from our desired port. The wind was now fair, the sky serene, though a little hazy, and the temperature of the air delightfully pleasant: joy sparkled in every countenance, and congratulations issued from every mouth. Ithaca itself was scarcely more longed for by Ulysses, than Botany Bay by the adventurers who had traversed so many thousand miles to take possession of it.

“Heavily in clouds came on the day” which ushered in our arrival. To us it was “a great, an important day,” though I hope the foundation, not the fall, of an empire will be dated from it.

On the morning of the 20th, by ten o’clock, the whole of the fleet had cast anchor in Botany Bay, where, to our mutual satisfaction, we found the Governor, and the first division of transports. On inquiry, we heard, that the ‘Supply’ had arrived on the 18th, and the transports only the preceding day.

Thus, after a passage of exactly thirty-six weeks from Portsmouth, we happily effected our arduous undertaking, with such a train of unexampled blessings as hardly ever attended a fleet in a like predicament. Of two hundred and twelve marines we lost only one; and of seven hundred and seventy-five convicts, put on board in England, but twenty-four perished in our route. To what cause are we to attribute this unhopèd for success? I wish I could answer to the liberal manner in which Government supplied the expedition. But when the reader is told, that some of the necessary articles allowed to ships on a common passage to West Indies, were withheld from us; that portable soup, wheat, and pickled vegetables were not allowed; and that an inadequate quantity of essence of malt was the only antiscorbutic supplied, his surprise will redouble at the result of the voyage. For it must be remembered, that the people thus sent out were not a ship’s company starting with every advantage of health and good living, which a state of freedom produces; but the major part a miserable set of convicts, emaciated from confinement, and in want of cloaths, and almost every convenience to render so long a passage tolerable. I beg leave, however, to say, that the provisions served on board were good, and of a much superior quality to those usually supplied by contract: they were furnished by Mr. Richards, junior, of Walworth, Surrey.

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CHAPTER VIII.

From the Fleet's Arrival at Botany Bay to the Evacuation of it; and taking Possession of Port Jackson. Interviews with the Natives; and an Account of the Country about Botany Bay.

We had scarcely bid each other welcome on our arrival, when an expedition up the Bay was undertaken by the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, in order to explore the nature of the country, and fix on a spot to begin our operations upon. None, however, which could be deemed very eligible, being discovered, his Excellency proceeded in a boat to examine the opening, to which Mr. Cook had given the name of Port Jackson, on an idea that a shelter for shipping within it might be found. The boat returned on the evening of the 23rd, with such an account of the harbour and advantages attending the place, that it was determined the evacuation of Botany Bay should commence the next morning.

In consequence of this decision, the few seamen and marines who had been landed from the squadron, were instantly reembarked, and every preparation made to bid adieu to a port which had so long been the subject of our conversation; which but three days before we had entered with so many sentiments of satisfaction; and in which, as we had believed, so many of our future hours were to be passed. The thoughts of removal banished sleep, so that I rose at the first dawn of the morning. But judge of my surprize on hearing from a serjeant, who ran down almost breathless to the cabin where I was dressing, that a ship was seen off the harbour's mouth. At first I only laughed, but knowing the man who spoke to me to be of great veracity, and hearing him repeat his information, I flew upon deck, on which I had barely set my foot, when the cry of "another sail" struck on my astonished ear.

Confounded by a thousand ideas which arose in my mind in an instant, I sprang upon the barricado and plainly descried two ships of considerable size, standing in for the mouth of the Bay. By this time the alarm had become general, and every one appeared lost in conjecture. Now they were Dutchmen sent to dispossess us, and the moment after storeships from England, with supplies for the settlement. The improbabilities which attended both these conclusions, were sunk in the agitation of the moment. It was by Governor Phillip, that this mystery was at length unravelled, and the cause of the alarm pronounced to be two French ships, which, it was now recollected, were on a voyage of discovery in the southern hemisphere. Thus were our doubts cleared up, and our apprehensions banished; it was, however, judged expedient to postpone our removal to Port Jackson, until a complete confirmation of our conjectures could be procured.

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Had the sea breeze set in, the strange ships would have been at anchor in the Bay by eight o'clock in the morning, but the wind blowing out, they were driven by a strong lee current to the southward of the port. On the following day they re-appeared in their former situation, and a boat was sent to them, with a lieutenant of the navy in her, to offer assistance, and point out the necessary marks for entering the harbour. In the course of the day the officer returned, and brought intelligence that the ships were the Boussole and Astrolabe, sent out by order of the King of France, and under the command of Monsieur De Perrouse. The astonishment of the French at seeing us, had not equalled that we had experienced, for it appeared, that in the course of their voyage they had touched at Kamschatka, and by that means learnt that our expedition was in contemplation. They dropped anchor the next morning, just as we had got under weigh to work out of the Bay, so that for the present nothing more than salutations could pass between us.

Before I quit Botany Bay, I shall relate the observations we were enabled to make during our short stay there; as well as those which our subsequent visits to it from Port Jackson enabled us to complete.

The Bay is very open, and greatly exposed to the fury of the S.E. winds, which, when they blow, cause a heavy and dangerous swell. It is of prodigious extent, the principal arm, which takes a S.W. direction, being not less, including its windings, than twenty four miles from the capes which form the entrance, according to the report of the French officers, who took uncommon pains to survey it. At the distance of a league from the harbour's mouth is a bar, on which at low water, not more than fifteen feet are to be found. Within this bar, for many miles up the S.W. arm, is a haven, equal in every respect to any hitherto known, and in which any number of ships might anchor, secured from all winds. The country around far exceeds in richness of soil that about Cape Banks and Point Solander, though unfortunately they resemble each other in one respect, a scarcity of fresh water.

We found the natives tolerably numerous as we advanced up the river, and even at the harbour's mouth we had reason to conclude the country more populous than Mr. Cook thought it. For on the Supply's arrival in the Bay on the 18th of the month, they were assembled on the beach of the south shore, to the number of not less than forty persons, shouting and making many uncouth signs and gestures. This appearance whetted curiosity to its utmost, but as prudence forbade a few people to venture wantonly among so great a number, and a party of only six men was observed on the north shore, the Governor immediately proceeded to land on that side, in order to take possession of his new territory, and bring about an intercourse between its old and new masters. The boat in which his Excellency was, rowed up the harbour, close

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to the land, for some distance; the Indians keeping pace with her on the beach. At last an officer in the boat made signs of a want of water, which it was judged would indicate his wish of landing. The natives directly comprehended what he wanted, and pointed to a spot where water could be procured; on which the boat was immediately pushed in, and a landing took place. As on the event of this meeting might depend so much of our future tranquillity, every delicacy on our side was requisite. The Indians, though timorous, shewed no signs of resentment at the Governor's going on shore; an interview commenced, in which the conduct of both parties pleased each other so much, that the strangers returned to their ships with a much better opinion of the natives than they had landed with; and the latter seemed highly entertained with their new acquaintance, from whom they condescended to accept of a looking glass, some beads, and other toys.

Owing to the lateness of our arrival, it was not my good fortune to go on shore until three days after this had happened, when I went with a party to the south side of the harbour, and had scarcely landed five minutes, when we were met by a dozen Indians, naked as at the moment of their birth, walking along the beach. Eager to come to a conference, and yet afraid of giving offence, we advanced with caution towards them, nor would they, at first approach nearer to us than the distance of some paces. Both parties were armed; yet an attack seemed as unlikely on their part, as we knew it to be on our own.

I had at this time a little boy, of not more than seven years of age, in my hand. The child seemed to attract their attention very much, for they frequently pointed to him and spoke to each other; and as he was not frightened, I advanced with him towards them, at the same time baring his bosom and, shewing the whiteness of the skin. On the cloaths being removed, they gave a loud exclamation, and one of the party, an old man, with a long beard, hideously ugly, came close to us. I bade my little charge not to be afraid, and introduced him to the acquaintance of this uncouth personage. The Indian, with great gentleness, laid his hand on the child's hat, and afterwards felt his cloaths, muttering to himself all the while. I found it necessary, however, by this time to send away the child, as such a close connection rather alarmed him; and in this, as the conclusion verified, I gave no offence to the old gentleman. Indeed it was but putting ourselves on a par with them, as I had observed from the first, that some youths of their own, though considerably older than the one with us, were, kept back by the grown people.

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Several more now came up, to whom, we made various presents, but our toys seemed not to be regarded as very valuable; nor would they for a long time make any returns to them, though before we parted, a large club, with a head almost sufficient to fell an ox, was obtained in exchange for a looking-glass. These people seemed at a loss to know (probably from our want of beards) of what sex we were, which having understood, they burst into the most immoderate fits of laughter, talking to each other at the same time with such rapidity and vociferation as I had never before heard. After nearly an hour's conversation by signs and gestures, they repeated several times the word whurra, which signifies, begone, and walked away from us to the head of the Bay.

The natives being departed, we set out to observe the country, which, on inspection, rather disappointed our hopes, being invariably sandy and unpromising for the purposes of cultivation, though the trees and grass flourish in great luxuriance. Close to us was the spring at which Mr. Cook watered, but we did not think the water very excellent, nor did it run freely. In the evening we returned on board, not greatly pleased with the latter part of our discoveries, as it indicated an increase of those difficulties, which before seemed sufficiently numerous.

Between this and our departure we had several more interviews with the natives, which ended in so friendly a manner, that we began to entertain strong hopes of bringing about a connection with them. Our first object was to win their affections, and our next to convince them of the superiority we possessed: for without the latter, the former we knew would be of little importance.

An officer one day prevailed on one of them to place a target, made of bark, against a tree, which he fired at with a pistol, at the distance of some paces. The Indians, though terrified at the report, did not run away, but their astonishment exceeded their alarm, on looking at the shield which the ball had perforated. As this produced a little shyness, the officer, to dissipate their fears and remove their jealousy, whistled the air of Malbrooke, which they appeared highly charmed with, and imitated him with equal pleasure and readiness. I cannot help remarking here, what I was afterwards told by Monsieur De Perrouse, that the natives of California, and throughout all the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and in short wherever he had been, seemed equally touched and delighted with this little plaintive air.

CHAPTER IX.

The taking Possession of Port Jackson, with the Disembarkation of the Marines and Convicts.

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Our passage to Port Jackson took up but few hours, and those were spent far from unpleasantly. The evening was bright, and the prospect before us such as might justify sanguine expectation. Having passed between the capes which form its entrance, we found ourselves in a port superior, in extent and excellency, to all we had seen before. We continued to run up the harbour about four miles, in a westerly direction, enjoying the luxuriant prospect of its shores, covered with trees to the water's edge, among which many of the Indians were frequently seen, till we arrived at a small snug cove on the southern side, on whose banks the plan of our operations was destined to commence.

The landing of a part of the marines and convicts took place the next day, and on the following, the remainder was disembarked. Business now sat on every brow, and the scene, to an indifferent spectator, at leisure to contemplate it, would have been highly picturesque and amusing. In one place, a party cutting down the woods; a second, setting up a blacksmith's forge; a third, dragging along a load of stones or provisions; here an officer pitching his marquee, with a detachment of troops parading on one side of him, and a cook's fire blazing up on the other. Through the unwearied diligence of those at the head of the different departments, regularity was, however, soon introduced, and, as far as the unsettled state of matters would allow, confusion gave place to system.

Into the head of the cove, on which our establishment is fixed, runs a small stream of fresh water, which serves to divide the adjacent country to a little distance, in the direction of north and south. On the eastern side of this rivulet the Governor fixed his place of residence, with a large body of convicts encamped near him; and on the western side was disposed the remaining part of these people, near the marine encampment. From this last two guards, consisting of two subalterns, as many serjeants, four corporals, two drummers, and forty-two private men, under the orders of a Captain of the day, to whom all reports were made, daily mounted for the public security, with such directions to use force, in case of necessity, as left no room for those who were the object of the order, but to remain peaceable, or perish by the bayonet.

As the straggling of the convicts was not only a desertion from the public labour, but might be attended with ill consequences to the settlement, in case of their meeting the natives, every care was taken to prevent it. The Provost Martial with his men was ordered to patrol the country around, and the convicts informed, that the severest punishment would be inflicted on transgressors. In spite, however, of all our precautions, they soon found the road to Botany Bay, in visits to the French, who would gladly have dispensed with their company.

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But as severity alone was known to be inadequate at once to chastize and reform, no opportunity was omitted to assure the convicts, that by their good behaviour and submissive deportment, every claim to present distinction and future favour was to be earned. That this caution was not attended with all the good effects which were hoped from it, I have only to lament; that it operated in some cases is indisputable; nor will a candid and humane mind fail to consider and allow for the situation these unfortunate beings so peculiarly stood in. While they were on board ship, the two sexes had been kept most rigorously apart; but, when landed, their separation became impracticable, and would have been, perhaps, wrong. Licentiousness was the unavoidable consequence, and their old habits of depravity were beginning to recur. What was to be attempted? To prevent their intercourse was impossible; and to palliate its evils only remained. Marriage was recommended, and such advantages held out to those who aimed at reformation, as have greatly contributed to the tranquillity of the settlement.

On the Sunday after our landing divine service was performed under a great tree, by the Rev. Mr. Johnson, Chaplain of the Settlement, in the presence of the troops and convicts, whose behaviour on the occasion was equally regular and attentive. In the course of our passage this had been repeated every Sunday, while the ships were in port; and in addition to it, Mr. Johnson had furnished them with books, at once tending to promote instruction and piety.

The Indians for a little while after our arrival paid us frequent visits, but in a few days they were observed to be more shy of our company. From what cause their distaste: arose we never could trace, as we had made it our study, on these occasions, to treat them with kindness, and load them with presents. No quarrel had happened, and we had flattered ourselves, from Governor Phillip's first reception among them, that such a connection might be established as would tend to the interest of both parties. It seems, that on that occasion, they not only received our people with great cordiality, but so far acknowledged their authority as to submit, that a boundary, during their first interview, might be drawn on the sand, which they attempted not to infringe, and appeared to be satisfied with.

CHAPTER X.

The reading of the Commissions, and taking Possession of the Settlement, in form. With an Account of the Courts of Law, and Mode of administering Public Justice in this Country.

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Owing to the multiplicity of pressing business necessary to be performed immediately after landing, it was found impossible to read the public commissions and take possession of the colony in form, until the 7th of February. On that day all the officers of guard took post in the marine battalion, which was drawn up, and marched off the parade with music playing, and colours flying, to an adjoining ground, which had been cleared for the occasion, whereon the convicts were assembled to hear His Majesty's commission read, appointing his Excellency Arthur Phillip, Esq. Governor and Captain General in and over the territory of New South Wales, and its dependencies; together with the Act of Parliament for establishing trials by law within the same; and the patents under the Great Seal of Great Britain, for holding the civil and criminal courts of judicature, by which all cases of life and death, as well as matters of property, were to be decided. When the Judge Advocate had finished reading, his Excellency addressed himself to the convicts in a pointed and judicious speech, informing them of his future intentions, which were, invariably to cherish and render happy those who shewed a disposition to amendment; and to let the rigour of the law take its course against such as might dare to transgress the bounds prescribed. At the close three volleys were fired in honour of the occasion, and the battalion marched back to their parade, where they were reviewed by the Governor, who was received with all the honours due to his rank. His Excellency was afterwards pleased to thank them, in public orders, for their behaviour from the time of their embarkation; and to ask the officers to partake of a cold collation at which it is scarce necessary to observe, that many loyal and public toasts were drank in commemoration of the day.

In the Governor's commission, the extent of this authority is defined to reach from the latitude of 43 deg 49 min south, to the latitude of 10 deg 37 min south, being the northern and southern extremities of the continent of New Holland. It commences again at 135th degree of longitude east of Greenwich, and, proceeding in an easterly direction, includes all islands within the limits of the above specified latitudes in the Pacific Ocean. By this partition it may be fairly presumed, that every source of future litigation between the Dutch and us will be for ever cut off, as the discoveries of English navigators alone are comprized in this territory.

Nor have Government been more backward in arming Mr. Phillip with plenitude of power, than extent of dominion. No mention is made of a Council to be appointed, so that he is left to act entirely from his own judgment. And as no stated time of assembling the Courts of justice is pointed out, similar to the assizes and gaol deliveries of England, the duration of imprisonment is altogether in his hands. The power of summoning General Courts Martial to meet he is also invested with, but the insertion in the marine mutiny act, of a smaller number of officers than thirteen being able to compose such a tribunal, has been neglected: so that a Military court, should detachments be made from headquarters, or sickness prevail, may not always be found practicable to be obtained, unless the number of officers, at present in the Settlement, shall be increased.

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Should the Governor see cause, he is enabled to grant pardons to offenders convicted, "in all cases whatever, treason and wilful murder excepted," and even in these, has authority to stay the execution of the law, until the King's pleasure shall be signified. In case of the Governor's death, the Lieutenant Governor takes his place; and on his demise, the senior officer on the spot is authorised to assume the reins of power.

Notwithstanding the promises made on one side, and the forbearance shewn on the other, joined to the impending rod of justice, it was with infinite regret that every one saw, in four days afterwards, the necessity of assembling a Criminal Court, which was accordingly convened by warrant from the Governor, and consisted of the Judge Advocate, who presided, three naval, and three marine officers.

As the constitution of this court is altogether new in the British annals, I hope my reader will not think me prolix in the description I am about to give of it. The number of members, including the Judge Advocate, is limited, by Act of Parliament, to seven, who are expressly ordered to be officers, either of His Majesty's sea or land forces. The court being met, completely arrayed and armed as at a military tribunal, the Judge Advocate proceeds to administer the usual oaths taken by jurymen in England to each member; one of whom afterwards swears him in a like manner. This ceremony being adjusted, the crime laid to the prisoner's charge is read to him, and the question of Guilty, or Not guilty, put. No law officer on the side of the crown being appointed, (for I presume the head of the court ought hardly to consider himself in that light, notwithstanding the title he bears) to prosecute the criminal is left entirely to the party, at whose suit he is tried. All the witnesses are examined on oath, and the decision is directed to be given according to the laws of England, "or as nearly as may be, allowing for the circumstances and situation of the settlement," by a majority of votes, beginning with the youngest member, and ending with the president of the court. In cases, however, of a capital nature, no verdict can be given, unless five, at least, of the seven members present concur therein. The evidence on both sides being finished, and the prisoner's defence heard, the court is cleared, and, on the judgement being settled, is thrown open again, and sentence pronounced. During the time the court sits, the place in which it is assembled is directed to be surrounded by a guard under arms, and admission to every one who may choose to enter it, granted. Of late, however, our colonists are supposed to be in such a train of subordination, as to make the presence of so large a military force unnecessary; and two centinels, in addition to the Provost Martial, are considered as sufficient.

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It would be as needless, as impertinent, to anticipate the reflections which will arise in reading the above account, wherein a regard to accuracy only has been consulted. By comparing it with the mode of administering justice in the English courts of law, it will be found to differ in many points very essentially. And if we turn our eyes to the usage of military tribunals, it no less departs from the customs observed in them. Let not the novelty of it, however, prejudice any one so far as to dispute its efficacy, and the necessity of the case which gave it birth.

The court, whose meeting is already spoken of, proceeded to the trial of three convicts, one of whom was convicted of having struck a marine with a cooper's adze, and otherwise behaving in a very riotous and scandalous manner, for which he was sentenced to receive one hundred and fifty lashes, being a smaller punishment than a soldier in a like case would have suffered from the judgement of a court martial. A second, for having committed a petty theft, was sent to a small barren island, and kept there on bread and water only, for a week. And the third was sentenced to receive fifty lashes, but was recommended by the court to the Governor, and forgiven.

Hitherto, however, (February) nothing of a very atrocious nature had appeared. But the day was at hand, on which the violation of public security could no longer be restrained, by the infliction of temporary punishment. A set of desperate and hardened villains leagued themselves for the purposes of depredation, and, as it generally happens, had art enough to persuade some others, less deeply versed in iniquity, to be the instruments for carrying it on. Fortunately the progress of these miscreants was not of long duration. They were detected in stealing a large quantity of provisions at the time of issuing them. And on being apprehended, one of the tools of the superiors impeached the rest, and disclosed the scheme. The trial came on the 28th of the month, and of four who were arraigned for the offence, three were condemned to die, and the fourth to receive a very severe corporal punishment. In hopes that his lenity would not be abused, his Excellency was, however, pleased to order one only for execution, which took place a little before sun-set the same day. The name of the unhappy wretch was Thomas Barret, an old and desperate offender, who died with that hardy spirit, which too often is found in the worst and most abandoned class of men. During the execution the battalion of marines was under arms, and the whole of the convicts obliged to be present. The two associates of the sufferer were ordered to be kept close prisoners, until an eligible place to banish them to could be fixed on; as were also two more, who on the following day were condemned to die for a similar offence.

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Besides the Criminal court, there is an inferior one composed of the Judge Advocate, and one or more justices of the peace, for the trial of small misdemeanours. This court is likewise empowered to decide all law suits, and its verdict is final, except where the sum in dispute amounts to more than three hundred pounds, in which case an appeal to England can be made from its decree. Should necessity warrant it, an Admiralty court, of which Lieutenant Governor Ross is judge, can also be summoned, for the trial of offences committed on the high seas.

From being unwilling to break the thread of my narrative, I omitted to note in its proper place the sailing of the 'Supply', Lieut. Ball, on the 15th of the month, for Norfolk Island, which the Governor had instructions from the ministry to take possession of. Lieut. King of the Sirius was sent as superintendent and commandant of this place, and carried with him a surgeon, a midshipman, a sawyer, a weaver, two marines, and sixteen convicts, of whom six were women. He was also supplied with a certain number of live animals to stock the island, besides garden seeds, grain, and other requisites.

CHAPTER XI

A Description of the Natives of New South Wales, and our Transactions with them.

I doubt not my readers will be as glad as I feel myself, to conclude the dull detail of the last chapter. If they please, they may turn from the subtle intricacies of the law, to contemplate the simple, undisguised workings of nature, in her most artless colouring.

I have already said, we had been but very few days at Port Jackson, when an alteration in the behaviour of the natives was perceptible; and I wish I could add, that a longer residence in their neighbourhood had introduced a greater degree of cordiality and intermixture between the old, and new, lords of the soil, than at the day on which this publication is dated subsists.

From their easy reception of us in the beginning, many were induced to call in question the accounts which Mr. Cook had given of this people. That celebrated navigator, we were willing believe, had somehow by his conduct offended them, which prevented the intercourse that would otherwise have taken place. The result, however, of our repeated endeavours to induce them to come among us has been such as to confirm me in an opinion, that they either fear or despise us too much, to be anxious for a closer connection. And I beg leave at once, to apprise the reader, that all I can here, or in any future part of this work, relate with fidelity of the natives of New South Wales, must be made up of detached observations, taken at different times, and not from a regular series of knowledge of the customs and manners of a people, with whom opportunities of communication are so scarce, as to have been seldom obtained.

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In their persons, they are far from being a stout race of men, though nimble, sprightly, and vigorous. The deficiency of one of the fore teeth of the upper jaw, mentioned by Dampier, we have seen in almost the whole of the men; but their organs of sight so far from being defective, as that author mentions those of the inhabitants of the western side of the continent to be, are remarkably quick and piercing. Their colour, Mr. Cook is inclined to think rather a deep chocolate, than an absolute black, though he confesses, they have the appearance of the latter, which he attributes to the greasy filth their skins are loaded with. Of their want of cleanliness we have had sufficient proofs, but I am of opinion, all the washing in the world would not render them two degrees less black than an African negro. At some of our first interviews, we had several droll instances of their mistaking the Africans we brought with us for their own countrymen.

Notwithstanding the disregard they have invariably shewn for all the finery we could deck them with, they are fond of adorning themselves with scars, which increase their natural hideousness. It is hardly possible to see any thing in human shape more ugly, than one of these savages thus scarified, and farther ornamented with a fish bone struck through the gristle of the nose. The custom of daubing themselves with white earth is also frequent among both sexes: but, unlike the inhabitants of the Islands in the Pacific Ocean, they reject the beautiful feathers which the birds of their country afford.

Exclusive of their weapons of offence, and a few stone hatchets very rudely fashioned, their ingenuity is confined to manufacturing small nets, in which they put the fish they catch, and to fish-hooks made of bone, neither of which are unskilfully executed. On many of the rocks are also to be found delineations of the figures of men and birds, very poorly cut.

Of the use or benefit of cloathing, these people appear to have no comprehension, though their sufferings from the climate they live in, strongly point out the necessity of a covering from the rigour of the seasons. Both sexes, and those of all ages, are invariably found naked. But it must not be inferred from this, that custom so inures them to the changes of the elements, as to make them bear with indifference the extremes of heat and cold; for we have had visible and repeated proofs, that the latter affects them severely, when they are seen shivering, and huddling themselves up in heaps in their huts, or the caverns of the rocks, until a fire can be kindled.

Than these huts nothing more rude in construction, or deficient in conveniency, can be imagined. They consist only of pieces of bark laid together in the form of an oven, open at one end, and very low, though long enough for a man to lie at full length. There is reason, however, to believe, that they depend less on them for shelter, than on the caverns with which the rocks abound.

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To cultivation of the ground they are utter strangers, and wholly depend for food on the few fruits they gather; the roots they dig up in the swamps; and the fish they pick up along shore, or contrive to strike from their canoes with spears. Fishing, indeed, seems to engross nearly the whole of their time, probably from its forming the chief part of a subsistence, which, observation has convinced us, nothing short of the most painful labour, and unwearied assiduity, can procure. When fish are scarce, which frequently happens, they often watch the moment of our hauling the seine, and have more than once been known to plunder its contents, in spite of the opposition of those on the spot to guard it: and this even after having received a part of what had been caught. The only resource at these times is to shew a musquet, and if the bare sight is not sufficient, to fire it over their heads, which has seldom failed of dispersing them hitherto, but how long the terror which it excites may continue is doubtful.

The canoes in which they fish are as despicable as their huts, being nothing more than a large piece of bark tied up at both ends with vines. Their dexterous management of them, added to the swiftness with which they paddle, and the boldness that leads them several miles in the open sea, are, nevertheless, highly deserving of admiration. A canoe is seldom seen without a fire in it, to dress the fish by, as soon as caught: fire they procure by attrition.

From their manner of disposing of those who die, which will be mentioned hereafter, as well as from every other observation, there seems no reason to suppose these people cannibals; nor do they ever eat animal substances in a raw state, unless pressed by extreme hunger, but indiscriminately broil them, and their vegetables, on a fire, which renders these last an innocent food, though in their raw state many of them are of a poisonous quality: as a poor convict who unguardedly eat of them experienced, by falling a sacrifice in twenty-four hours afterwards. If bread be given to the Indians, they chew and spit it out again, seldom choosing to swallow it. Salt beef and pork they like rather better, but spirits they never could be brought to taste a second time.

The only domestic animal they have is the dog, which in their language is called Dingo, and a good deal resembles the fox dog of England. These animals are equally shy of us, and attached to the natives. One of them is now in the possession of the Governor, and tolerably well reconciled to his new master. As the Indians see the dislike of the dogs to us, they are sometimes mischievous enough to set them on single persons whom they chance to meet in the woods. A surly fellow was one day out shooting, when the natives attempted to divert themselves in this manner at his expense. The man bore the teasing and gnawing of the dog at his heels for some time, but apprehending at length, that his patience might embolden them to use still farther liberties, he turned round and shot poor Dingo dead on the spot: the owners of him set off with the utmost expedition.

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There is no part of the behaviour of these people, that has puzzled us more, than that which relates to their women. Comparatively speaking we have seen but few of them, and those have been sometimes kept back with every symptom of jealous sensibility; and sometimes offered with every appearance of courteous familiarity. Cautious, however, of alarming the feelings of the men on so tender a point, we have constantly made a rule of treating the females with that distance and reserve, which we judged most likely to remove any impression they might have received of our intending aught, which could give offence on so delicate a subject. And so successful have our endeavours been, that a quarrel on this head has in no instance, that I know of, happened. The tone of voice of the women, which is pleasingly soft and feminine, forms a striking contrast to the rough guttural pronunciation of the men. Of the other charms of the ladies I shall be silent, though justice obliges me to mention, that, in the opinion of some amongst us, they shew a degree of timidity and bashfulness, which are, perhaps, inseparable from the female character in its rudest state. It is not a little singular, that the custom of cutting off the two lower joints of the little finger of the left hand, observed in the Society Islands, is found here among the women, who have for the most part undergone this amputation. Hitherto we have not been able to trace out the cause of this usage. At first we supposed it to be peculiar to the married women, or those who had borne children; but this conclusion must have been erroneous, as we have no right to believe that celibacy prevails in any instance, and some of the oldest of the women are without this distinction; and girls of a very tender age are marked by it.

On first setting foot in the country, we were inclined to hold the spears of the natives very cheap. Fatal experience has, however, convinced us, that the wound inflicted by this weapon is not a trivial one; and that the skill of the Indians in throwing it, is far from despicable. Besides more than a dozen convicts who have unaccountably disappeared, we know that two, who were employed as rush cutters up the harbour, were (from what cause we are yet ignorant) most dreadfully mangled and butchered by the natives. A spear had passed entirely through the thickest part of the body of one of them, though a very robust man, and the skull of the other was beaten in. Their tools were taken away, but some provisions which they had with them at the time of the murder, and their cloaths, were left untouched. In addition to this misfortune, two more convicts, who were peaceably engaged in picking of greens, on a spot very remote from that where their comrades suffered, were unawares attacked by a party of Indians, and before they could effect their escape, one of them was pierced by a spear in the hip, after which they knocked him down, and plundered his cloaths. The poor wretch, though dreadfully

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wounded, made shift to crawl off, but his companion was carried away by these barbarians, and his fate doubtful, until a soldier, a few days afterwards, picked up his jacket and hat in a native's hut, the latter pierced through by a spear. We have found that these spears are not made invariably alike, some of them being barbed like a fish gig, and others simply pointed. In repairing them they are no less dexterous than in throwing them. A broken one being given by a gentleman to an Indian, he instantly snatched up an oyster-shell, and converted it with his teeth into a tool with which he presently fashioned the spear, and rendered it fit for use: in performing this operation, the sole of his foot served him as a work-board. Nor are their weapons of offence confined to the spear only, for they have besides long wooden swords, shaped like a sabre, capable of inflicting a mortal wound, and clubs of an immense size. Small targets, made of the bark of trees, are likewise now and then to be seen among them.

From circumstances which have been observed, we have sometimes been inclined to believe these people at war with each other. They have more than once been seen assembled, as if bent on an expedition. An officer one day met fourteen of them marching along in a regular Indian file through the woods, each man armed with a spear in his right hand, and a large stone in his left: at their head appeared a chief, who was distinguished by being painted. Though in the proportion of five to one of our people they passed peaceably on.

That their skill in throwing the spear sometimes enables them to kill the kangaroo we have no right to doubt, as a long splinter of this weapon was taken out of the thigh of one of these animals, over which the flesh had completely closed; but we have never discovered that they have any method of ensnaring them, or that they know any other beasts but the kangaroo and dog. Whatever animal is shewn them, a dog excepted, they call kangaroo: a strong presumption that the wild animals of the country are very few.

Soon after our arrival at Port Jackson, I was walking out near a place where I observed a party of Indians, busily employed in looking at some sheep in an inclosure, and repeatedly crying out, 'kangaroo, kangaroo!' As this seemed to afford them pleasure, I was willing to increase it by pointing out the horses and cows, which were at no great distance. But unluckily, at the moment, some female convicts, employed near the place, made their appearance, and all my endeavours to divert their attention from the ladies became fruitless. They attempted not, however, to offer them the least degree of violence or injury, but stood at the distance of several paces, expressing very significantly the manner they were attracted.

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It would be trespassing on the reader's indulgence were I to impose on him an account of any civil regulations, or ordinances, which may possibly exist among this people. I declare to him, that I know not of any, and that excepting a little tributary respect which the younger part appear to pay those more advanced in years, I never could observe any degrees of subordination among them. To their religious rites and opinions I am equally a stranger. Had an opportunity offered of seeing the ceremonies observed at disposing of the dead, perhaps, some insight might have been gained; but all that we at present know with certainty is, that they burn the corpse, and afterwards heap up the earth around it, somewhat in the manner of the small tumuli, found in many counties of England.

I have already hinted, that the country is more populous than it was generally believed to be in Europe at the time of our sailing. But this remark is not meant to be extended to the interior parts of the continent, which there is every reason to conclude from our researches, as well as from the manner of living practised by the natives, to be uninhabited. It appears as if some of the Indian families confine their society and connections within their own pale: but that this cannot always be the case we know; for on the north-west arm of Botany Bay stands a village, which contains more than a dozen houses, and perhaps five times that number of people; being the most considerable establishment that we are acquainted with in the country. As a striking proof, besides, of the numerousness of the natives, I beg leave to state, that Governor Phillip, when on an excursion between the head of this harbour and that of Botany Bay, once fell in with a party which consisted of more than three hundred persons, two hundred and twelve of whom were men: this happened only on the day following the murder of the two convict rush cutters, before noticed, and his Excellency was at the very time in search of the murderers, on whom, could they have been found, he intended to inflict a memorable and exemplary punishment. The meeting was unexpected to both parties, and considering the critical situation of affairs, perhaps not very pleasing to our side, which consisted but of twelve persons, until the peaceable disposition of the Indians was manifest. After the strictest search the Governor was obliged to return without having gained any information. The laudable perseverance of his Excellency to throw every light on this unhappy and mysterious business did not, however stop here, for he instituted the most rigorous inquiry to find out, if possible, whether the convicts had at any time ill treated or killed any of the natives; and farther, issued a proclamation, offering the most tempting of all rewards, a state of freedom, to him who should point out the murderer, in case such an one existed.

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I have thus impartially stated the situation of matters, as they stand, while I write, between the natives and us; that greater progress in attaching them to us has not been made, I have only to regret; but that all ranks of men have tried to effect it, by every reasonable effort from which success might have been expected, I can testify; nor can I omit saying, that in the higher stations this has been eminently conspicuous. The public orders of Governor Phillip have invariably tended to promote such a behaviour on our side, as was most likely to produce this much wished-for event. To what cause then are we to attribute the distance which the accomplishment of it appears at? I answer, to the fickle, jealous, wavering disposition of the people we have to deal with, who, like all other savages, are either too indolent, too indifferent, or too fearful to form an attachment on easy terms, with those who differ in habits and manners so widely from themselves. Before I close the subject, I cannot, however, omit to relate the following ludicrous adventure, which possibly may be of greater use in effecting what we have so much at heart, than all our endeavours.

Some young gentlemen belonging to the *Sirius* one day met a native, an old man, in the woods; he had a beard of considerable length, which his new acquaintance gave him to understand, by signals, they would rid him of, if he pleased; stroking their chins, and shewing him the smoothness of them at the same time; at length the old Indian consented, and one of the youngsters taking a penknife from his pocket, and making use of the best substitute for lather he could find, performed the operation with great success, and, as it proved, much to the liking of the old man, who in a few days after reposed a confidence in us, of which we had hitherto known no example, by paddling along-side the *Sirius* in his canoe, and pointing to his beard. Various arts were ineffectually tried to induce him to enter the ship; but as he continued to decline the invitation, a barber was sent down into the boat along-side the canoe, from whence, leaning over the gunnel, he complied with the wish of the old beau, to his infinite satisfaction. In addition to the consequences which our sanguine hopes led us to expect from this dawning of cordiality, it affords proof, that the beard is considered by this people more as an incumbrance than a mark of dignity.

CHAPTER XII.

The Departure of the French from Botany Bay; and the Return of the 'Supply' from Norfolk Island; with a Discovery made by Lieutenant Ball on his Passage to it.

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About the middle of the month our good friends the French departed from Botany Bay, in prosecution of their voyage. During their stay in that port, the officers of the two nations had frequent opportunities of testifying their mutual regard by visits, and every interchange of friendship and esteem. These ships sailed from France, by order of the King, on the 1st of August, 1785, under the command of Monsieur De Perrouse, an officer whose eminent qualifications, we had reason to think, entitle him to fill the highest stations. In England, particularly, he ought long to be remembered with admiration and gratitude, for the humanity which marked his conduct, when ordered to destroy our settlement at Hudson's Bay, in the last war. His second in command was the Chevalier Clonard, an officer also of distinguished merit.

In the course of the voyage these ships had been so unfortunate as to lose a boat, with many men and officers in her, off the west of California; and afterwards met with an accident still more to be regretted, at an island in the Pacific Ocean, discovered by Monsieur Bougainville, in the latitude of 14 deg 19 min south, longitude 173 deg 3 min 20 sec east of Paris. Here they had the misfortune to have no less than thirteen of their crews, among whom was the officer at that time second in command, cut off by the natives, and many more desperately wounded. To what cause this cruel event was to be attributed, they knew not, as they were about to quit the island after having lived with the Indians in the greatest harmony for several weeks; and exchanged, during the time, their European commodities for the produce of the place, which they describe as filled with a race of people remarkable for beauty and comeliness; and abounding in refreshments of all kinds.

It was no less gratifying to an English ear, than honourable to Monsieur De Perrouse, to witness the feeling manner in which he always mentioned the name and talents of Captain Cook. That illustrious circumnavigator had, he said, left nothing to those who might follow in his track to describe, or fill up. As I found, in the course of conversation, that the French ships had touched at the Sandwich Islands, I asked M. De Perrouse what reception he had met with there. His answer deserves to be known: "During the whole of our voyage in the South Seas, the people of the Sandwich Islands were the only Indians who never gave us cause of complaint. They furnished us liberally with provisions, and administered cheerfully to all our wants." It may not be improper to remark, that Owhyee was not one of the islands visited by this gentleman.

In the short stay made by these ships at Botany Bay, an Abbe, one of the naturalists on board, died, and was buried on the north shore. The French had hardly departed, when the natives pulled down a small board, which had been placed over the spot where the corpse was interred, and defaced everything around. On being informed of it, the Governor sent a party over with orders to affix a plate of copper on a tree near the place, with the following inscription on it, which is a copy of what was written on the board:

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Hic jacet L. RECEVEUR, E.F.F. minnibus Galliae, Sacerdos, Physicus, in circumnavigatione mundi, Duce De La Perrouse. Obiit die 17 Februarii, anno 1788.

This mark of respectful attention was more particularly due, from M. De Perrouse having, when at Kamschatka, paid a similar tribute of gratitude to the memory of Captain Clarke, whose tomb was found in nearly as ruinous a state as that of the Abbe.

Like ourselves, the French found it necessary, more than once, to chastise a spirit of rapine and intrusion which prevailed among the Indians around the Bay. The menace of pointing a musquet to them was frequently used; and in one or two instances it was fired off, though without being attended with fatal consequences. Indeed the French commandant, both from a regard to the orders of his Court as well as to our quiet and security, shewed a moderation and forbearance on this head highly becoming.

On the 20th of March, the 'Supply' arrived from Norfolk Island, after having safely landed Lieutenant King and his little garrison. The pine-trees growing there are described to be of a growth and height superior, perhaps, to any in the world. But the difficulty of bringing them away will not be easily surmounted, from the badness and danger of the landing place. After the most exact search not a single plant of the New Zealand flax could be found, though we had been taught to believe it abounded there.

Lieutenant Ball, in returning to Port Jackson, touched at a small island in latitude 31 deg 36 min south, longitude 159 deg 4 min east of Greenwich, which he had been fortunate enough to discover on his passage to Norfolk, and to which he gave the name of Lord Howe's Island. It is entirely without inhabitants, or any traces of any having ever been there. But it happily abounds in what will be infinitely more important to the settlers on New South Wales: green turtle of the finest kind frequent it in the summer season. Of this Mr. Ball gave us some very handsome and acceptable specimens on his return. Besides turtle, the island is well stocked with birds, many of them so tame as to be knocked down by the seamen with sticks. At the distance of four leagues from Lord Howe Island, and in latitude 31 deg 30 min south, longitude 159 deg 8 min east, stands a remarkable rock, of considerable height, to which Mr. Ball gave the name of Ball's Pyramid, from the shape it bears.

While the 'Supply' was absent, Governor Phillip made an excursion to Broken Bay, a few leagues to the northward of Port Jackson, in order to explore it. As a harbour it almost equals the latter, but the adjacent country was found so rocky and bare, as to preclude all possibility of turning it to account. Some rivulets of fresh water fall into the head of the Bay, forming a very picturesque scene. The Indians who live on its banks are numerous, and behaved attentively in a variety of instances while our people remained among them.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Transactions at Port Jackson in the Months of April and May.

As winter was fast approaching, it became necessary to secure ourselves in quarters, which might shield us from the cold we were taught to expect in this hemisphere, though in so low a latitude. The erection of barracks for the soldiers was projected, and the private men of each company undertook to build for themselves two wooden houses, of sixty-eight feet in length, and twenty-three in breadth. To forward the design, several saw-pits were immediately set to work, and four ship carpenters attached to the battalion, for the purpose of directing and completing this necessary undertaking. In prosecuting it, however, so many difficulties occurred, that we were fain to circumscribe our original intention; and, instead of eight houses, content ourselves with four. And even these, from the badness of the timber, the scarcity of artificers, and other impediments, are, at the day on which I write, so little advanced, that it will be well, if at the close of the year 1788, we shall be established in them. In the meanwhile the married people, by proceeding on a more contracted scale, were soon under comfortable shelter. Nor were the convicts forgotten; and as leisure was frequently afforded them for the purpose, little edifices quickly multiplied on the ground allotted them to build upon.

But as these habitations were intended by Governor Phillip to answer only the exigency of the moment, the plan of the town was drawn, and the ground on which it is hereafter to stand surveyed, and marked out. To proceed on a narrow, confined scale, in a country of the extensive limits we possess, would be unpardonable: extent of empire demands grandeur of design. That this has been our view will be readily believed, when I tell the reader, that the principal street in our projected city will be, when completed, agreeable to the plan laid down, two hundred feet in breadth, and all the rest of a corresponding proportion. How far this will be accompanied with adequate dispatch, is another question, as the incredulous among us are sometimes hardy enough to declare, that ten times our strength would not be able to finish it in as many years.

Invariably intent on exploring a country, from which curiosity promises so many gratifications, his Excellency about this time undertook an expedition into the interior parts of the continent. His party consisted of eleven persons, who, after being conveyed by water to the head of the harbour, proceeded in a westerly direction, to reach a chain of mountains, which in clear weather are discernible, though at an immense distance, from some heights near our encampment. With unwearied industry they continued to penetrate the country for four days; but at the end of that time, finding the base of the mountain to be yet at the distance of more than twenty miles, and provisions

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growing scarce, it was judged prudent to return, without having accomplished the end for which the expedition had been undertaken. To reward their toils, our adventurers had, however, the pleasure of discovering and traversing an extensive tract of ground, which they had reason to believe, from the observations they were enabled to make, capable of producing every thing, which a happy soil and genial climate can bring forth. In addition to this flattering appearance, the face of the country is such, as to promise success whenever it shall be cultivated, the trees being at a considerable distance from each other, and the intermediate space filled, not with underwood, but a thick rich grass, growing in the utmost luxuriance. I must not, however, conceal, that in this long march, our gentlemen found not a single rivulet, but were under a necessity of supplying themselves with water from standing pools, which they met with in the vallies, supposed to be formed by the rains that fall at particular seasons of the year. Nor had they the good fortune to see any quadrupeds worth notice, except a few kangaroos. To their great surprize, they observed indisputable tracks of the natives having been lately there, though in their whole route none of them were to be seen; nor any means to be traced, by which they could procure subsistence so far from the sea shore.

On the 6th of May the 'Supply' sailed for Lord Howe Island, to take on board turtle for the settlement; but after waiting there several days was obliged to return without having seen one, owing we apprehended to the advanced season of the year. Three of the transports also, which were engaged by the East India Company to proceed to China, to take on board a lading of tea, sailed about this time for Canton.

The unsuccessful return of the 'Supply' cast a general damp on our spirits, for by this time fresh provisions were become scarcer than in a blockaded town. The little live stock, which with so heavy an expense, and through so many difficulties, we had brought on shore, prudence forbade us to use; and fish, which on our arrival, and for a short time after had been tolerable plenty, were become so scarce, as to be rarely seen at the tables of the first among us. Had it not been for a stray kangaroo, which fortune now and then threw in our way, we should have been utter strangers to the taste of fresh food.

Thus situated, the scurvy began its usual ravages, and extended its baneful influence, more or less, through all descriptions of persons. Unfortunately the esculent vegetable productions of the country are neither plentiful, nor tend very effectually to remove this disease. And, the ground we had turned up and planted with garden seeds, either from the nature of the soil, or, which is more probable, the lateness of the season, yielded but a scanty and insufficient supply of what we stood so greatly in need of.

During the period I am describing, few enormous offences were perpetrated by the convicts. A petty theft was now and then heard of, and a spirit of refractory sullenness broke out at times in some individuals: one execution only, however, took place. The

sufferer, who was a very young man, was convicted of a burglary, and met his fate with a hardness and insensibility, which the grossest ignorance, and most deplorable want of feeling, alone could supply.

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CHAPTER XIV.

From the Beginning of June, to the Departure of the Ships for Europe.

Hours of festivity, which under happier skies pass away unregarded, and are soon consigned to oblivion, acquire in this forlorn and distant circle a superior degree of acceptable importance.

On the anniversary of the King's birthday all the officers not on duty, both of the garrison and his Majesty's ships, dined with the Governor. On so joyful an occasion, the first too ever celebrated in our new settlement, it were needless to say, that loyal conviviality dictated every sentiment, and inspired every guest. Among other public toasts drank, was, Prosperity to Sydney Cove, in Cumberland county, now named so by authority. At day-light in the morning the ships of war had fired twenty-one guns each, which was repeated at noon, and answered by three volleys from the battalion of marines.

Nor were the officers alone partakers of the general relaxation. The four unhappy wretches labouring under sentence of banishment were freed from their fetters, to rejoin their former society; and three days given as holidays to every convict in the colony. Hospitality too, which ever acquires a double relish by being extended, was not forgotten on the 4th of June, when each prisoner, male and female, received an allowance of grog; and every non-commissioned officer and private soldier had the honor of drinking prosperity to his royal master, in a pint of porter, served out at the flag staff, in addition to the customary allowance of spirits. Bonfires concluded the evening, and I am happy to say, that excepting a single instance which shall be taken notice of hereafter, no bad consequence, or unpleasant remembrance, flowed from an indulgence so amply bestowed.

About this time (June) an accident happened, which I record with much regret. The whole of our black cattle, consisting of five cows and a bull, either from not being properly secured, or from the negligence of those appointed to take care of them, strayed into the woods, and in spite of all the search we have been able to make, are not yet found. As a convict of the name of Corbet, who was accused of a theft, eloped nearly at the same time, it was at first believed, that he had taken the desperate measure of driving off the cattle, in order to subsist on them as long as possible; or perhaps to deliver them to the natives. In this uncertainty, parties to search were sent out in different directions; and the fugitive declared an outlaw, in case of not returning by a fixed day. After much anxiety and fatigue, those who had undertaken the task returned without finding the cattle. But on the 21st of the month, Corbet made his appearance near a farm belonging to the Governor, and entreated a convict, who happened to be on the spot, to give him some food, as he was perishing for hunger. The man applied to, under pretence of fetching what

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he asked for, went away and immediately gave the necessary information, in consequence of which a party under arms was sent out and apprehended him. When the poor wretch was brought in, he was greatly emaciated and almost famished. But on proper restoratives being administered, he was so far recovered by the 24th, as to be able to stand his trial, when he pleaded Guilty to the robbery with which he stood charged, and received sentence of death. In the course of repeated examinations it plainly appeared, he was an utter stranger to the place where the cattle might be, and was in no shape concerned in having driven them off.

Samuel Peyton, convict, for having on the evening of the King's birth-day broke open an officer's marquee, with an intent to commit robbery, of which he was fully convicted, had sentence of death passed on him at the same time as Corbet; and on the following day they were both executed, confessing the justness of their fate, and imploring the forgiveness of those whom they had injured. Peyton, at the time of his suffering, was but twenty years of age, the greatest part of which had been invariably passed in the commission of crimes, that at length terminated in his ignominious end. The following letter, written by a fellow convict to the sufferer's unhappy mother, I shall make no apology for presenting to the reader; it affords a melancholy proof, that not the ignorant and untaught only have provoked the justice of their country to banish them to this remote region.

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson,

New South Wales, 24th June, 1788.

"My dear and honoured mother!

"With a heart oppressed by the keenest sense of anguish, and too much agitated by the idea of my very melancholy condition, to express my own sentiments, I have prevailed on the goodness of a commiserating friend, to do me the last sad office of acquainting you with the dreadful fate that awaits me.

"My dear mother! with what agony of soul do I dedicate the few last moments of my life, to bid you an eternal adieu! my doom being irrevocably fixed, and ere this hour to-morrow I shall have quitted this vale of wretchedness, to enter into an unknown and endless eternity. I will not distress your tender maternal feelings by any long comment on the cause of my present misfortune. Let it therefore suffice to say, that impelled by that strong propensity to evil, which neither the virtuous precepts nor example of the best of parents could eradicate, I have at length fallen an unhappy, though just, victim to my own follies.



“Too late I regret my inattention to your admonitions, and feel myself sensibly affected by the remembrance of the many anxious moments you have passed on my account. For these, and all my other transgressions, however great, I supplicate the Divine forgiveness; and encouraged by the promises of that Saviour who died for us all, I trust to receive that mercy in the world to come, which my offences have deprived

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me of all hope, or expectation of, in this. The affliction which this will cost you, I hope the Almighty will enable you to bear. Banish from your memory all my former indiscretions, and let the cheering hope of a happy meeting hereafter, console you for my loss. Sincerely penitent for my sins; sensible of the justice of my conviction and sentence, and firmly relying on the merits of a Blessed Redeemer, I am at perfect peace with all mankind, and trust I shall yet experience that peace, which this world cannot give. Commend my soul to the Divine mercy. I bid you an eternal farewell.

“Your unhappy dying Son,

“*Samuel Peyton.*”

After this nothing occurred with which I think it necessary to trouble the reader. The contents of the following chapters could not, I conceive, be so properly interwoven in the body of the work; I have, therefore, assigned them a place by themselves, with a view that the conclusions adopted in them may be more strongly enforced on the minds of those, to whom they are more particularly addressed.

CHAPTER XV.

The Face of the Country; its Productions, Climate, &c.

To the geographical knowledge of this country, supplied by Captain Cook, and Captain Furneaux, we are able to add nothing. The latter explored the coast from Van Diemen's land to the latitude of 39 deg south; and Cook from Point Hicks, which lies in 37 deg 58 min, to Endeavour Straights. The intermediate space between the end of Furneaux's discovery and Point Hicks, is, therefore, the only part of the south-east coast unknown, and it so happened on our passage thither, owing to the weather, which forbade any part of the ships engaging with the shore, that we are unable to pronounce whether, or not, a streight intersects the continent hereabouts: though I beg leave to say, that I have been informed by a naval friend, that when the fleet was off this part of the coast, a strong set-off shore was plainly felt.

At the distance of 60 miles inland, a prodigious chain of lofty mountains runs nearly in a north and south direction, further than the eye can trace them. Should nothing intervene to prevent it, the Governor intends, shortly, to explore their summits: and, I think there can be little doubt, that his curiosity will not go unrewarded. If large rivers do exist in the country, which some of us are almost sceptical enough to doubt, their sources must arise amidst these hills; and the direction they run in, for a considerable distance, must be either due north, or due south. For it is strikingly singular that three

such noble harbours as Botany Bay, Port Jackson, and Broken Bay, alike end in shallows and swamps, filled with mangroves.

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The general face of the country is certainly pleasing, being diversified with gentle ascents, and little winding vallies, covered for the most part with large spreading trees, which afford a succession of leaves in all seasons. In those places where trees are scarce, a variety of flowering shrubs abound, most of them entirely new to an European, and surpassing in beauty, fragrance, and number, all I ever saw in an uncultivated state: among these, a tall shrub, bearing an elegant white flower, which smells like English May, is particularly delightful, and perfumes the air around to a great distance. The species of trees are few, and, I am concerned to add, the wood universally of so bad a grain, as almost to preclude a possibility of using it: the increase of labour occasioned by this in our buildings has been such, as nearly to exceed belief. These trees yield a profusion of thick red gum (not unlike the 'sanguis draconis') which is found serviceable in medicine, particularly in dysenteric complaints, where it has sometimes succeeded, when all other preparations have failed. To blunt its acrid qualities, it is usual to combine it with opiates.

The nature of the soil is various. That immediately round Sydney Cove is sandy, with here and there a stratum of clay. From the sand we have yet been able to draw very little; but there seems no reason to doubt, that many large tracts of land around us will bring to perfection whatever shall be sown in them. To give this matter a fair trial, some practical farmers capable of such an undertaking should be sent out; for the spots we have chosen for experiments in agriculture, in which we can scarce be supposed adepts, have hitherto but ill repaid our toil, which may be imputable to our having chosen such as are unfavourable for our purpose.

Except from the size of the trees, the difficulties of clearing the land are not numerous, underwood being rarely found, though the country is not absolutely without it. Of the natural meadows which Mr. Cook mentions near Botany Bay, we can give no account; none such exist about Port Jackson. Grass, however, grows in every place but the swamps with the greatest vigour and luxuriance, though it is not of the finest quality, and is found to agree better with horses and cows than sheep. A few wild fruits are sometimes procured, among which is the small purple apple mentioned by Cook, and a fruit which has the appearance of a grape, though in taste more like a green gooseberry, being excessively sour: probably were it meliorated by cultivation, it would become more palatable.

Fresh water, as I have said before, is found but in inconsiderable quantities. For the common purposes of life there is generally enough; but we know of no stream in the country capable of turning a mill: and the remark made by Mr. Anderson, of the dryness of the country round Adventure Bay, extends without exception to every part of it which we have penetrated.

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Previous to leaving England I remember to have frequently heard it asserted, that the discovery of mines was one of the secondary objects of the expedition. Perhaps there are mines; but as no person competent to form a decision is to be found among us, I wish no one to adopt an idea, that I mean to impress him with such a belief, when I state, that individuals, whose judgements are not despicable, are willing to think favourably of this conjecture, from specimens of ore seen in many of the stones picked up here. I cannot quit this subject without regretting, that some one capable of throwing a better light on it, is not in the colony. Nor can I help being equally concerned, that an experienced botanist was not sent out, for the purpose of collecting and describing the rare and beautiful plants with which the country abounds. Indeed, we flattered ourselves, when at the Cape of Good Hope, that Mason, the King's botanical gardener, who was employed there in collecting for the royal nursery at Kew, would have joined us, but it seems his orders and engagements prevented him from quitting that beaten track, to enter on this scene of novelty and variety.

To the naturalist this country holds out many invitations. Birds, though not remarkably numerous, are in great variety, and of the most exquisite beauty of plumage, among which are the cockatoo, lory, and parroquet; but the bird which principally claims attention is, a species of ostrich, approaching nearer to the emu of South America than any other we know of. One of them was shot, at a considerable distance, with a single ball, by a convict employed for that purpose by the Governor; its weight, when complete, was seventy pounds, and its length from the end of the toe to the tip of the beak, seven feet two inches, though there was reason to believe it had not attained its full growth. On dissection many anatomical singularities were observed: the gall-bladder was remarkably large, the liver not bigger than that of a barn-door fowl, and after the strictest search no gizzard could be found; the legs, which were of a vast length, were covered with thick, strong scales, plainly indicating the animal to be formed for living amidst deserts; and the foot differed from an ostrich's by forming a triangle, instead of being cloven.

Goldsmith, whose account of the emu is the only one I can refer to, says, "that it is covered from the back and rump with long feathers, which fall backward, and cover the anus; these feathers are grey on the back, and white on the belly." The wings are so small as hardly to deserve the name, and are unfurnished with those beautiful ornaments which adorn the wings of the ostrich: all the feathers are extremely coarse, but the construction of them deserves notice—they grow in pairs from a single shaft, a singularity which the author I have quoted has omitted to remark. It may be presumed, that these birds are not very scarce, as several have been seen, some of them immensely large, but they are so wild, as to make shooting them a matter of great difficulty. Though incapable of flying, they run with such swiftness, that our fleetest greyhounds are left far behind in every attempt to catch them. The flesh was eaten, and tasted like beef.

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Besides the emu, many birds of prodigious size have been seen, which promise to increase the number of those described by naturalists, whenever we shall be fortunate enough to obtain them; but among these the bat of the Endeavour River is not to be found. In the woods are various little songsters, whose notes are equally sweet and plaintive.

Of quadrupeds, except the kangaroo, I have little to say. The few met with are almost invariably of the opossum tribe, but even these do not abound. To beasts of prey we are utter strangers, nor have we yet any cause to believe that they exist in the country. And happy it is for us that they do not, as their presence would deprive us of the only fresh meals the settlement affords, the flesh of the kangaroo. This singular animal is already known in Europe by the drawing and description of Mr. Cook. To the drawing nothing can be objected but the position of the claws of the hinder leg, which are mixed together like those of a dog, whereas no such indistinctness is to be found in the animal I am describing. It was the Chevalier De Perrouse who pointed out this to me, while we were comparing a kangaroo with the plate, which, as he justly observed, is correct enough to give the world in general a good idea of the animal, but not sufficiently accurate for the man of science.

Of the natural history of the kangaroo we are still very ignorant. We may, however, venture to pronounce this animal, a new species of opossum, the female being furnished with a bag, in which the young is contained; and in which the teats are found. These last are only two in number, a strong presumptive proof, had we no other evidence, that the kangaroo brings forth rarely more than one at a birth. But this is settled beyond a doubt, from more than a dozen females having been killed, which had invariably but one formed in the pouch. Notwithstanding this, the animal may be looked on as prolific, from the early age it begins to breed at, kangaroos with young having been taken of not more than thirty pounds weight; and there is room to believe that when at their utmost growth, they weigh not less than one hundred and fifty pounds. A male of one hundred and thirty pounds weight has been killed, whose dimensions were as follows:

Feet.	Inches.		
Extreme length	7	3	
Ditt of the tail	3	4 1/2	
Ditto of the hinder legs	3	2	
Ditto of the fore paws	1	7 1/2	
Circumference of the tail of the root	1	5	

After this perhaps I shall hardly be credited, when I affirm that the kangaroo on being brought forth is not larger than an English mouse. It is, however, in my power to speak positively on this head, as I have seen more than one instance of it.

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In running, this animal confines himself entirely to his hinder, legs, which are possessed with an extraordinary muscular power. Their speed is very great, though not in general quite equal to that of a greyhound; but when the greyhounds are so fortunate as to seize them, they are incapable of retaining their hold, from the amazing struggles of the animal. The bound of the kangaroo, when not hard pressed, has been measured, and found to exceed twenty feet.

At what time of the year they copulate, and in what manner, we know not: the testicles of the male are placed contrary to the usual order of nature.

When young the kangaroo eats tender and well flavoured, tasting like veal, but the old ones are more tough and stringy than bullbeef. They are not carnivorous, and subsist altogether on particular flowers and grass. Their bleat is mournful, and very different from that of any other animal: it is, however, seldom heard but in the young ones.

Fish, which our sanguine hopes led us to expect in great quantities, do not abound. In summer they are tolerably plentiful, but for some months past very few have been taken. Botany Bay in this respect exceeds Port Jackson. The French once caught near two thousand fish in one day, of a species of grouper, to which, from the form of a bone in the head resembling a helmet, we have given the name of light horseman. To this may be added bass, mullets, skait, soles, leather-jackets, and many other species, all so good in their kind, as to double our regret at their not being more numerous. Sharks of an enormous size are found here. One of these was caught by the people on board the Sirius, which measured at the shoulders six feet and a half in circumference. His liver yielded twenty-four gallons of oil; and in his stomach was found the head of a shark, which had been thrown overboard from the same ship. The Indians, probably from having felt the effects of their voracious fury, testify the utmost horror on seeing these terrible fish.

Venomous animals and reptiles are rarely seen. Large snakes beautifully variegated have been killed, but of the effect of their bites we are happily ignorant. Insects, though numerous, are by no means, even in summer, so troublesome as I have found them in America, the West Indies, and other countries.

The climate is undoubtedly very desirable to live in. In summer the heats are usually moderated by the sea breeze, which sets in early; and in winter the degree of cold is so slight as to occasion no inconvenience; once or twice we have had hoar frosts and hail, but no appearance of snow. The thermometer has never risen beyond 84, nor fallen lower than 35, in general it stood in the beginning of February at between 78 and 74 at noon. Nor is the temperature of the air less healthy than pleasant. Those dreadful putrid fevers by which new countries are so often ravaged, are unknown to us: and excepting a slight diarrhoea, which prevailed soon after we had landed, and was fatal in very few instances, we are strangers to epidemic diseases.

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On the whole, (thunder storms in the hot months excepted) I know not any climate equal to this I write in. Ere we had been a fortnight on shore we experienced some storms of thunder accompanied with rain, than which nothing can be conceived more violent and tremendous, and their repetition for several days, joined to the damage they did, by killing several of our sheep, led us to draw presages of an unpleasant nature. Happily, however, for many months we have escaped any similar visitations.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Progress made in the Settlement; and the Situation of Affairs at the Time of the Ship, which conveys this Account, sailing for England.

For the purpose of expediting the public work, the male convicts have been divided into gangs, over each of which a person, selected from among themselves, is placed. It is to be regretted that Government did not take this matter into consideration before we left England, and appoint proper persons with reasonable salaries to execute the office of overseers; as the consequence of our present imperfect plan is such, as to defeat in a great measure the purposes for which the prisoners were sent out. The female convicts have hitherto lived in a state of total idleness; except a few who are kept at work in making pegs for tiles, and picking up shells for burning into lime. For the last time I repeat, that the behaviour of all classes of these people since our arrival in the settlement has been better than could, I think, have been expected from them.

Temporary wooden storehouses covered with thatch or shingles, in which the cargoes of all the ships have been lodged, are completed; and an hospital is erected. Barracks for the military are considerably advanced; and little huts to serve, until something more permanent can be finished, have been raised on all sides. Notwithstanding this the encampments of the marines and convicts are still kept up; and to secure their owners from the coldness of the nights, are covered in with bushes, and thatched over.

The plan of a town I have already said is marked out. And as freestone of an excellent quality abounds, one requisite towards the completion of it is attained. Only two houses of stone are yet begun, which are intended for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. One of the greatest impediments we meet with is a want of limestone, of which no signs appear. Clay for making bricks is in plenty, and a considerable quantity of them burned and ready for use.

In enumerating the public buildings I find I have been so remiss as to omit an observatory, which is erected at a small distance from the encampments. It is nearly completed, and when fitted up with the telescopes and other astronomical instruments sent out by the Board of Longitude, will afford a desirable retreat from the listlessness of a camp evening at Port Jackson. One of the principal reasons which

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induced the Board to grant this apparatus was, for the purpose of enabling Lieutenant Dawes, of the marines, (to whose care it is intrusted) to make observations on a comet which is shortly expected to appear in the southern hemisphere. The latitude of the observatory, from the result of more than three hundred observations, is fixed at 33 deg 52 min 30 sec south, and the longitude at 151 deg 16 min 30 sec east of Greenwich. The latitude of the south head which forms the entrance of the harbour, 33 deg 51 min, and that of the north head opposite to it at 33 deg 49 min 45 sec south.

Since landing here our military force has suffered a diminution of only three persons, a serjeant and two privates. Of the convicts fifty-four have perished, including the executions. Amidst the causes of this mortality, excessive toil and a scarcity of food are not to be numbered, as the reader will easily conceive, when informed, that they have the same allowance of provisions as every officer and soldier in the garrison; and are indulged by being exempted from labour every Saturday afternoon and Sunday. On the latter of those days they are expected to attend divine service, which is performed either within one of the storehouses, or under a great tree in the open air, until a church can be built.

Amidst our public labours, that no fortified post, or place of security, is yet begun, may be a matter of surprise. Were an emergency in the night to happen, it is not easy to say what might not take place before troops, scattered about in an extensive encampment, could be formed, so as to act. An event that happened a few evenings since may, perhaps, be the means of forwarding this necessary work. In the dead of night the centinels on the eastern side of the cove were alarmed by the voices of the Indians, talking near their posts. The soldiers on this occasion acted with their usual firmness, and without creating a disturbance, acquainted the officer of the guard with the circumstance, who immediately took every precaution to prevent an attack, and at the same time gave orders that no molestation, while they continued peaceable, should be offered them. From the darkness of the night, and the distance they kept at, it was not easy to ascertain their number, but from the sound of the voices and other circumstances, it was calculated at near thirty. To their intentions in honouring us with this visit (the only one we have had from them in the last five months) we are strangers, though most probably it was either with a view to pilfer, or to ascertain in what security we slept, and the precautions we used in the night. When the bells of the ships in the harbour struck the hour of the night, and the centinels called out on their posts "All's well," they observed a dead silence, and continued it for some minutes, though talking with the greatest earnestness and vociferation but the moment before. After having remained a considerable time they departed without interchanging a syllable with our people.



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CHAPTER XVII.

Some Thoughts on the Advantages which may arise to the Mother Country from forming the Colony.

The author of these sheets would subject himself to the charge of presumption, were he to aim at developing the intentions of Government in forming this settlement. But without giving offence, or incurring reproach, he hopes his opinion on the probability of advantage to be drawn from hence by Great Britain, may be fairly made known.

If only a receptacle for convicts be intended, this place stands unequalled from the situation, extent, and nature of the country. When viewed in a commercial light, I fear its insignificance will appear very striking. The New Zealand hemp, of which so many sanguine expectations were formed, is not a native of the soil; and Norfolk Island, where we made sure to find this article, is also without it. So that the scheme of being able to assist the East Indies with naval stores, in case of a war, must fall to the ground, both from this deficiency, and the quality of the timber growing here. Were it indeed possible to transport that of Norfolk Island, its value would be found very great, but the difficulty, from the surf, I am well informed, is so insuperable as to forbid the attempt. Lord Howe Island, discovered by Lieut. Ball, though an inestimable acquisition to our colony, produces little else than the mountain cabbage tree.

Should a sufficient military force be sent out to those employed in cultivating the ground, I see no room to doubt, that in the course of a few years, the country will be able to yield grain enough for the support of its new possessors. But to effect this, our present limits must be greatly extended, which will require detachments of troops not to be spared from the present establishment. And admitting the position, the parent country will still have to supply us for a much longer time with every other necessary of life. For after what we have seen, the idea of being soon able to breed cattle sufficient for our consumption, must appear chimerical and absurd. From all which it is evident, that should Great Britain neglect to send out regular supplies, the most fatal consequences will ensue.

Speculators who may feel inclined to try their fortunes here, will do well to weigh what I have said. If golden dreams of commerce and wealth flatter their imaginations, disappointment will follow: the remoteness of situation, productions of the country, and want of connection with other parts of the world, justify me in the assertion. But to men of small property, unambitious of trade, and wishing for retirement, I think the continent of New South Wales not without inducements. One of this description, with letters of recommendation, and a sufficient capital (after having provided for his passage hither) to furnish him with an assortment of tools for clearing land, agricultural and domestic purposes; possessed also of a few household utensils, a cow, a few sheep and breeding sows, would, I am of opinion, with proper protection and encouragement,



succeed in obtaining a comfortable livelihood, were he well assured before he quitted his native country, that a provision for him until he might be settled, should be secured; and that a grant of land on his arrival would be allotted him.

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That this adventurer, if of a persevering character and competent knowledge, might in the course of ten years bring matters into such a train as to render himself comfortable and independent, I think highly probable. The superfluities of his farm would enable him to purchase European commodities from the masters of ships, which will arrive on Government account, sufficient to supply his wants. But beyond this he ought not to reckon, for admitting that he might meet with success in raising tobacco, rice, indigo, or vineyards (for which last I think the soil and climate admirably adapted), the distance of a mart to vend them at, would make the expense of transportation so excessive, as to cut off all hopes of a reasonable profit; nor can there be consumers enough here to take them off his hands, for so great a length of time to come, as I shall not be at the trouble of computing.

Should then any one, induced by this account, emigrate hither, let him, before he quits England, provide all his wearing apparel for himself, family, and servants; his furniture, tools of every kind, and implements of husbandry (among which a plough need not be included, as we make use of the hoe), for he will touch at no place where they can be purchased to advantage. If his sheep and hogs are English also, it will be better. For wines, spirits, tobacco, sugar, coffee, tea, rice, poultry, and many other articles, he may venture to rely on at Teneriffe or Madeira, the Brazils and Cape of Good Hope. It will not be his interest to draw bills on his voyage out, as the exchange of money will be found invariably against him, and a large discount also deducted. Drafts on the place he is to touch at, or cash (dollars if possible) will best answer his end.

To men of desperate fortune and the lowest classes of the people, unless they can procure a passage as indented servants, similar to the custom practised of emigrating to America, this part of the world offers no temptation: for it can hardly be supposed, that Government will be fond of maintaining them here until they can be settled, and without such support they must starve.

Of the Governor's instructions and intentions relative to the disposal of the convicts, when the term of their transportation shall be expired, I am ignorant. They will then be free men, and at liberty, I apprehend, either to settle in the country, or to return to Europe. The former will be attended with some public expense; and the latter, except in particular cases, will be difficult to accomplish, from the numberless causes which prevent a frequent communication between England and this continent.

POSTSCRIPT

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, New South Wales.

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October 1st, 1788. Little material has occurred in this colony since the departure of the ships for England, on the 14th July last. On the 20th of that month His Majesty's ship Supply, Captain Ball, sailed for Norfolk Island, and returned on the 26th August. Our accounts from thence are more favourable than were expected. The soil proves admirably adapted to produce all kinds of grain, and European vegetables. But the discovery which constitutes its value is the New Zealand flax, plants of which are found growing in every part of the island in the utmost luxuriance and abundance. This will, beyond doubt, appear strange to the reader after what has been related in the former part of my work: and in future, let the credit of the testimony be as high as it may, I shall never without diffidence and hesitation presume to contradict the narrations of Mr. Cook. The truth is, that those sent to settle and explore the island knew not the form in which the plant grows, and were unfurnished with every particular which could lead to a knowledge of it. Unaccountable as this may sound, it is, nevertheless, incontestably true. Captain Ball brought away with him several specimens for inspection, and, on trial, by some flax-dressers among us, the threads produced from them, though coarse, are pronounced to be stronger, more likely to be durable, and fitter for every purpose of manufacturing cordage, than any they ever before dressed.

Every research has been made by those on the island to find a landing-place, whence it might be practicable to ship off the timber growing there, but hitherto none has been discovered. A plan, however, for making one has been laid before the Governor, and is at present under consideration, though (in the opinion of many here) it is not such an one as will be found to answer the end proposed.

Lieut. King and his little garrison were well when the 'Supply' left them: but I am sorry to add, that, from casualties, their number is already five less than it originally was. A ship from hence is ready to sail with an increase of force, besides many convicts for the purpose of sawing up timber, and turning the flax-plant to advantage.

So much for Norfolk. In Port Jackson all is quiet and stupid as could be wished. We generally hear the lie of the day as soon as the beating of the Reveille announces the return of it; find it contradicted by breakfast time; and pursue a second through all its varieties, until night, welcome as to a lover, gives us to sleep and dream ourselves transported to happier climes.

Let me not, however, neglect telling you the little news which presents itself. All descriptions of men enjoy the highest state of health; and the convicts continue to behave extremely well. A gang of one hundred of them, guarded by a captain, two subalterns and 20 marines, is about to be sent up to the head of the harbour, at the distance of 3 leagues, in a westerly direction, from Sydney Cove,

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for the purpose of establishing a settlement there. The convicts are to be employed in putting the land around into cultivation, as it appears to be of a more promising nature than that near the encampment. Indeed this last hitherto succeeds but very indifferently, though I do not yet despair, that when good seeds can be procured, our toil will be better rewarded. But as this is an event at a distance, and in itself very precarious, Governor Phillip has determined on procuring a supply of flour and other necessaries from the Cape of Good Hope, as our stock on hand is found to be, on examination, not quite so ample as had been reckoned upon. To execute this purpose his Excellency has ordered the Sirius to prepare for the voyage; by which conveyance the opportunity of writing to you is afforded me. It was at first intended to dispatch the Sirius to some of the neighbouring islands (the Friendly or Society) in the Pacific Ocean, to procure stock there, but the uselessness of the scheme, joined to the situation of matters here, has, happily for us, prevented its being put into execution.