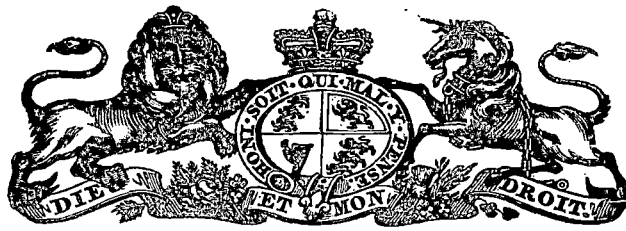


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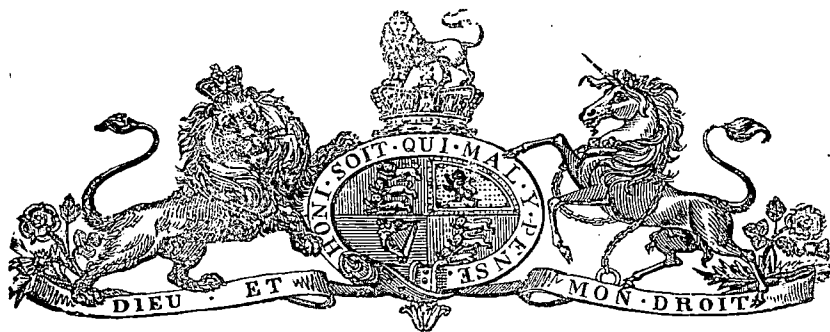
T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

BOAT EXPEDITIONS ROUND TASMANIA,
1815-16 AND 1824:

R E P O R T S.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be
printed, September 29, 1881.



179, Macquarie-street, Hobart, 1st August, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor of submitting to you for perusal two very old but valuable reports of boat expeditions round the entire coast of Tasmania, and which are moreover offered with the view of your sanctioning their publication.

The first of the adventures referred to above was undertaken during the Government of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Davey, which sailed from this port on 12th of December, 1815, and returned, after completing the circuit of this island, on the 30th of January next year, or after an absence of forty-nine days.

I will here say what I desire to explain of the earliest of these voyages before introducing the other.

This expedition was commanded by the late Captain James Kelly, of the mercantile marine of this port, and of whom I may also say, *en passant*, that he was one of the most active, daring, and resolute of the old pioneer class of Tasmania,—a class of men who, as colonists, I hold to have had no superiors.

Of this expedition (though a private one) some account must have been rendered to the Government, though not now accessible to us, for Kelly was not only rewarded with a grant of land, but with certain exclusive privileges also, in consideration of his very important discoveries whilst out,—namely, of Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour,—which were unknown until first seen by him during the last days of 1815.

The first detailed narrative of Kelly's boating experiences was given to the public by himself in the latter years of his useful life, when he handed his "Log" to the editor of the *Courier*, who published it in a series of articles (the first of which appeared on the 3rd of April, 1854) under the general heading of "*Some unrecorded passages in the History of Van Diemen's Land, from a very Old Stager*," which I have carefully copied from that newspaper.

I will here take occasion to say that the "Log" is not only amusing but instructive also, and I think may be profitably reproduced at this moment, when our western coasts are beginning to attract notice on account of valuable minerals which are believed to exist in the still little known districts bordering thereupon, and which will most certainly be visited during the coming summer by many adventurers, to whom the narrative may prove useful by its naming so frequently the various landing-places visited by Kelly's little party when sailing along this very imperfectly surveyed coast sixty-six years ago, and of which I believe it may be truthfully said that they remain almost as rudely delineated at this moment as they were in 1815; for our best charts of both the west and south-west shore lines are of little worth.

Kelly's narrative, besides giving in a very unostentatious manner the details of his important discoveries, &c., is not without considerable ethnological interest, by treating at some length of the habits, practices, and daily occupations of the aboriginal man of Tasmania. These people, whom he met so frequently either in friendship or hostility, he describes very differently from the manner in which they are pictured to us in the apocryphal writings of such men as Colonel Arthur, Melville, Hull, and a host of others, who knew nothing of them in their wild state, nor until their demoralisation had been completed by long captivity and unpardonable neglect. From Kelly's descriptions it will be seen that the men of the tribes which he encountered almost daily were rather a fine set of fellows, and not the miserable semi-abortions of the class of writers named above. Several of the men whom he saw were much above the average height of our own people, perfect in physique, and as they proved themselves to be, even to the last hour of their existence as a people, in a high degree pugnacious.*

* When Robinson's people met the last uncaptured tribe, of *eight persons only*, this sorely diminished band was even then on a war expedition against the whites.

In confirmation of Kelly's account, I shall here take leave to digress to shew how the primitive man of the country appeared to the few who really saw him in his own encampments or in his daily wanderings in the woods, or directly after his capture and consignment to the islands of Bass' Straits, such as Knopwood, Robinson, Strzelecki, and the only witness who is still living who knew them in the times that I speak of—Mr. Alexander M'Kay.

Knopwood, in his recently published journal of 1804, thus writes of the first natives met by Collins' people (13. 2. '04) seventeen of whom they saw wandering near the Pipe-clay Lagoon: "The men were well made, entirely naked, &c." Robinson, after a protracted sojourn with the tribes of the western districts, and with whom he travelled a thousand miles in 1830, says (after enticing them into captivity): "They are a fine race of people, and not the miserable race that some have represented (or rather misrepresented) the aboriginal of Van Diemen's Land to be. They are equal, if not superior, to many Europeans. The most fallacious reports have been circulated to their prejudice. I have not yet, in my long walk round the island and through the interior, met with the degenerate race that some have represented the aboriginal to be." Elsewhere he speaks of their intellectual endowments and capacity for instruction most favorably; while his old and still living associate, Mr. M'Kay, in a hundred conversations with myself, has ever described them as the reverse of a degraded race, though, like all uninstructed people, excessively superstitious, and very prone, when at their camp fires of nights, to talk of *their* devil, and tell hobgoblin stories to each other, until they were afraid to move an inch. Robinson says they seldom slept after midnight, but passed the remaining hours of darkness either in conversation or such vociferous singing that he himself never got a wink of sleep after they woke up; their favorite songs, he says, being those in which they recounted their assaults on, and their fights with the whites.

Strzelecki, who visited them in the early days of their captivity on the islands, and while still under the guidance of Robinson, or those immediate successors of his who took example from him, writes thus of our blacks:—"Compared with the negro, he is swifter in his movements and in his gait more graceful. His agility, adroitness, and flexibility when running, climbing, or stalking his prey are fully displayed; and when beheld in the posture of striking or throwing his spear, his attitude leaves nothing to be desired in point of manly grace."

Of Mr. Kelly himself I may say, for the information of those who were not acquainted with him, that he was a native of New South Wales, and born in the town of Parramatta on the 24th December, 1791. His parents are represented to me as very poor persons, and that he had almost reached adolescence without any book education; and whatever he got of it afterwards was in the fashion of many another of the self-made class of men, namely, picked up by himself in such intervals as he could snatch from the daily toil he went through in youth and early manhood. But with a head "full of brains," as we say in familiar discourse, he quickly mastered reading, writing, and arithmetic, and those other studies required in the profession he had chosen, namely, the mercantile marine. A man of his mental capacity and acquisitions was soon raised from the humble office of cabin-boy, firstly to the post of commander, and next to the ownership of several ships, half a dozen farms, and a good estate in Hobart Town itself.

He was very little more than a child when he first went to sea, and after a voyage or two was apprenticed to a Captain Siddons, with whom he served several years, sometimes in whaling and sealing enterprises, and sometimes in the Indian trade. His apprenticeship completed, he settled in Tasmania, and the first ship he commanded was, I believe, the *Sophia*, of which the late Mr. Birch was the owner. This vessel was sometimes employed in the whale and seal fisheries, or in ordinary trade with Sydney or barter with New Zealand. It was in the last-named of these places, and about twenty months after his famous boat expedition round Tasmania, that he was nearly cut off by a horde of savages when ashore with part of his crew at Port Daniel. In the desperate hand-to-hand encounter that followed, against vastly superior numbers, he lost three of his people, and with great difficulty regained the *Sophia*, from the deck of which he was doomed to see his men (one of whom was his brother-in-law) "cut limb from limb and carried away by the savages"—for some cannibal festival it may be believed. This outrage occurred on the 17th November, 1817, and of which there is a lengthy account in the *Hobart Town Gazette* of the 28th of March following.

In reference to this skirmish I should have said that the party had no other arms when surprised than a billhook that Kelly carried, and with which he covered the retreat of the rest as well as he could; and his own escape out of the scuffle seems to confirm the old adage that "fortune favours the brave;" for, though foremost in the fight, he reached his boat with no other mishap to himself than a spear wound in his left hand.

About eight months after the above told disaster he was in the wars again. This time he lay with his vessel—the *Sophia*—in Sydney harbour; but on the day when he was called on to defend her, he was temporarily absent on a visit to his relatives in Parramatta. But even here some inkling of the intention of a large party of convicts to cut her out and run off with her reached him, and he hastened back, and was just in time to prevent her seizure. On this occasion, as on many others, the daring character of the man shone out very conspicuously; for after a savage encounter against

a very superior force for the possession of the brig, he beat them to pieces, or, as the *Gazette* of the 18th July, 1818, has it, "he peppered them well." For this brilliant service he was presented with a handsome testimonial by the mercantile community of Sydney.

Soon after the above described action he settled down permanently in Hobart Town, where he had already a house, built by himself in 1815, and still known as the "Rock House," close by the old Palladio bridge, in Campbell-street.

On the 18th of May, 1819, Kelly received the appointment of harbour master and pilot for the Derwent, which he held for many years; and it was chiefly during this time that he accumulated the very considerable property he once possessed, but which, in his declining years, slipped piecemeal from his hands; and he died, in rather necessitous circumstances, on the 20th April, 1859, when in his 68th year,—or, as it is improperly inscribed on his monument, the 66th.

There was something rather remarkable in the death of the brave old sailor, which was quite a sudden one; for like Crabbe's "noble peasant," Ashford,—

"He fell expiring at his cottage gate;"

or, more properly, in Argyle-street, when returning homewards after making some arrangements for the funeral of a very near relative just then dead, when he dropped on the pavement, and, in the language of Scripture, "spake no more for ever;" and a day or so after was carried to the same vault, and at the same moment, with the remains of the relative which he was preparing to follow when he dropped.

I omitted to mention that some time about 1814 he was married to Miss Elizabeth Griffiths, of Sydney, and that several of the offspring of this union still survive.

Of Captain James Hobbs' journal I may say it is an instructive one. The original, which I was permitted to copy many a year since, is deposited in the office of the Colonial Secretary; for his boat voyage round the island in 1824 being a Governmental enterprise, the record of it necessarily became an official record. It gives a great deal of information about the bays, landing-places, &c. of the long line of coast he traversed: but written, as it is, in the demure and formal language of official composition, it is less amusing than the more lively narrative of Kelly. For myself, I will say that I wish he had confined his observations to the coast, or have said less of the soils within them; for though once a settler on a pretty large scale, he does not seem to have been a good judge of land. Mr. Hobbs was formerly in the Royal Navy, and came hither with Colonel Collins in 1804. He was once wharfinger of this port. He died rather lately I believe, at St. Kilda, Victoria, at an advanced age, having been born at Salt Ash, Cornwall, on the 8th April, 1792.

I remain,
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

J. E. CALDER.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

SOME UNRECORDED PASSAGES IN THE HISTORY OF VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

FROM A VERY OLD STAGER.

AT a time when the Australian colonies are commanding general attention throughout the European world—when the efforts of Tasmanian colonists are directed to the development of the extensive resources of their adopted country, and more particularly as the search for auriferous metals is being prosecuted upon her coasts—the series of fragments which we are about to lay at intervals before our readers in connection with the early history of the colony may prove acceptable.

We trust that this attempt to preserve some record of early colonial progress may prove instructive and entertaining; that we shall awaken none but welcome reminiscences to the old established settlers, and become the medium of conveying to the “sons of the soil” some knowledge of facts which should be as familiar as “household words.”

And in this introductory notice it may not be out of place, without seeking to detract from the spirit of research displayed by a Sydney contemporary, to refer to a local paragraph, which we reprinted on Saturday, and which sets down the late Mrs. Teale as the second born white Australian native, and the first who lived to maturity. We believe there is a mistake in that assertion, for the two first white children born in New South Wales were boys—the first of whom, Andrew Rope, lived until he was 25 years of age, and was bound apprentice to Mr. Henry, not Mr. Joseph Cable, on the 24th January, 1804, Mr. Cable then being in partnership with Mr. James Underwood, as shipowners, their place of business being situate in George-street, near the King's Wharf. The second born was the son of James Ruse, who was the first man who served out his time as a prisoner under Governor Phillip, and obtained a grant of land for good conduct during servitude. Mr. H. Cable was the first man who set his foot on the shore with Governor Phillip's party, was appointed by Governor Hunter to the gaolership of Sydney Gaol, and realised a considerable competency before his decease, in the shipping business.

To revert to our undertaking, and without regard to the order of time, we have thought it best to begin with a narrative of the

FIRST DISCOVERY OF PORT DAVEY AND MACQUARIE HARBOUR, BY CAPT. JAMES KELLY;

and in so doing shall give a lengthened abstract from the Log.

Starting of the Expedition.—Attacked by the Natives at Recherche.—Friendly reception at the Southward.—Round the South West Cape.—Discovery of Port Davey.—Loads of Crawfish.—Christmas Day.

On the 12th December, 1815, James Kelly sailed from Hobart Town in a small sized open five-oared whale-boat to examine the then unknown west coast of Van Diemen's Land, accompanied by the following named four men as the crew:—John Griffiths, a native of the colony*; George Briggs, ditto; William Jones, European; Thomas Toombs,† ditto.

On the 13th we attempted to haul the boat up on the south side of Recherche Bay, but were prevented by a large body of natives giving us a tremendous volley of stones and spears. We were obliged to retreat to the north side of the bay and haul up for the night.

On the morning of the 14th, launched and proceeded round the south coast of Van Diemen's Land, with a fresh breeze at the south east. At sunset the same evening hauled up in a small sandy bay to the northward of the De Witt's Isles. There we had a friendly reception from a large number of natives. We made them a few presents, consisting of sugar and biscuits. * * They seemed, however, to behave as if at a rejoicing on account of seeing their new visitors. They did not seem hostile, as they brought down their women and children to see us, a token which shows friendship amongst these savages. At dusk they took their leave of us, and pointed to a small rising hill about a mile distant, signifying that they intended to sleep there. We thought it was only a “decoy” to put us off our guard; but we kept a good watch during the night in case of an attack, but we saw no more of them.

* In 1815 Tasmania was incorporated with New South Wales, and was part of that colony.

† This man had been a noted bushranger, and arrived as a prisoner in the *Calcutta*. Toombs' Lake, in the County of Glamorgan, was called after him.

At daylight of the 15th we launched and proceeded to the westward towards the South West Cape. About noon we put into a bay about eight or nine miles to the eastward of South West Cape, which was named New Harbour, but on sounding found it very shoal, and only fit for small vessels, although looking well to the eye after getting inside. We remained in this place only two or three hours, and then proceeded on to the westward. At sunset hauled up on a small low island, about four miles eastward of South West Cape, where we remained for the night. This is a good boat harbour, being only separated by a boat passage from the mainland, with a good stream of fresh water, and plenty of wood.

On the morning of the 16th, launched and steered to the westward. At noon rounded the South West Cape, distant about a quarter of a mile, with a fair wind at south east, and steered along the shore to the north west. In the evening hauled up on a small grassy island for the night, about seven miles to the north west of the Cape. This island nearly joins the main, separated only by a small boat passage, and not a good boat harbour.

At daylight of the 17th, launched and steered along the shore to the north west. At noon entered a large inlet, which was named Port Davey,* in honor of the then Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land. In the evening we hauled up on a low sandy point, three miles up the north side of the harbour, where we remained the night inside a thick scrub. We cleared away about two rods of rich ground, and sowed a quantity of garden seeds: this was named Garden Point in consequence. We remained in the harbour three days, the 18th, 19th, and 20th, sounding and making a sketch of its extent. The eastern arm was named Bathurst Harbour, in honor of Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies. The inner west point of Port Davey was named Point Lucy, in honor of Miss Davey, daughter of the Lieutenant-Governor. During our stay in this place we caught a great quantity of wild fowl, black swans, ducks, and teal, with plenty of eels and fish.

On the 21st of December we took our departure, with a light breeze at east, from Port Davey, and steered along the coast to the northward. In the evening we landed on a low grassy island, about five miles to the southward of Low Rocky Point, and also close to the mainland. Here we fell in with two aborigines: they seemed very much alarmed at seeing us. They were above six feet high, their stomachs very large, legs and arms very thin; and they seemed as if they were nearly starved. We gave them two black swans, of which we had a good stock in the boat. They seemed delighted with the present. On landing on the island we had intended to have remained the night; but, fearing there were more of them on the island, it was thought best to leave it, which we did, and hauled up for the night in a small creek, half a mile to the southward of Low Rocky Point. This was named Crawfish Creek in consequence of the immense number of crawfish that lay at the water's edge. There were above three tons in one heap. They appeared to have been gathered the day previous, which must have been done by the natives.

On the morning of the 22nd, launched and steered along the land to the northward; at sunset hauled up in a snug cove near High Rocky Point. On the 23rd and 24th a heavy swell rolling in from the westward, which prevented us from proceeding.

25th December, Christmas Day. Strong gales from the westward, and a heavy sea heaving into the cove. This day we had a "glorious feed" for dinner—two black swans; one roasted (stuck up), the other was made into a sea-pie—a three-decker, in a large iron pot,—a first-rate Christmas dinner on the west coast of Van Diemen's Land. After dinner we named the cove "Christmas Cove," by throwing a glass of brandy into the salt water, and giving three hearty cheers upon the occasion.

Continuation of the Log.—Discovery of Macquarie Harbour.—Bad weather.—Another interview with the Natives.—Round Cape Grim.—Threatening rencontre.

On the 26th December the gale abated. On the 27th, in the morning, we launched with a light breeze from the southward, and proceeded along the shore to the northward. In the forenoon the wind freshened and blew strong at S.S.E. We ran close along shore until the evening, when we hauled up on a small sandy beach inside some high rocks that lie a little distance from the shore, and about six miles to the southward of a fine harbour (afterwards discovered, and called Macquarie Harbour). At noon this day we passed Point Hibbs close to, and examined it. On the morning of the 28th launched. Weather calm. Pulled along shore to the northward. At noon rounded a projecting point which opened to an inlet to the south east. We found a strong current running out, which induced the belief that there must be a large river in the south-east direction.

The whole face of the coast was on fire,—a lucky circumstance for us. The smoke was so thick we could not see a hundred yards ahead of the boat. On pulling into the "Narrows"† at the small entrance island, we heard a large number of natives shouting and making a great noise, as if

* Port Davey discovered, 17th December, 1815.

† Macquarie Harbour discovered, 28th December, 1815.

they were hunting kangaroo. It was highly fortunate the smoke was thick; for, had the natives seen the boat pass through the narrow entrance, it is possible they would have killed every person on board by discharging, in their usual way, volleys of spears and stones. In the afternoon the smoke cleared off a little, and we found ourselves in a large sheet of water near a small island, where we landed, and found plenty of black swans on their nests, and plenty of eggs. We remained for the night upon the island, thus keeping safe from the natives.

On the 29th the morning was clear: we could see nearly all over the harbour. The island was named Elizabeth Island, in honor of Mrs. Gordon, the lady of James Gordon, Esq., of Pittwater. The harbour was named "Macquarie Harbour," in honor of the then Governor of New South Wales. We launched and pulled to a point on the south shore, nearly opposite the island, where we caught about a dozen fat black swans to eat. We had four of our stock left that we had brought from Port Davey. After obtaining a fresh supply, we restored those four to liberty in Macquarie Harbour, and named the point Liberty Point in consequence. At sunset we hauled up on an island about 25 miles up the harbour, which was named Sarah Island, in honor of Mrs. Birch, wife of Thomas William Birch, Esq., of Hobart Town.

On the morning of the 30th, launched and proceeded further up the harbour, until we came to the mouth of a fresh-water river. Made a sketch of it, and named it the "Gordon River,"* in honor of Mr. Gordon, of Pittwater, who had kindly lent the boat for this particular trip of discovery.

This day we proceeded up an inlet to the southward of Gordon River, which was named Birch's Inlet, in honor of Mr. Birch. On the 31st we went round Macquarie Harbour, made a sketch of it, and found it to be a bar harbour only for vessels of light depth of water. We also found Huon pine growing on the banks of the harbour.†

On the morning of the 1st of January, 1816, we left Macquarie Harbour with a fresh breeze at south east. This day we ran a long distance to the N.W., having a strong fair wind. At 8 p.m. attempted to get into a river, which was named the "Retreat River," being nearly lost on the bar in a heavy surf. During the night it blew a strong gale from the southward. We were obliged to heave the boat to by a raft made of the oars, with about fifty-five fathoms of rope, where she lay very snug during the night,—the men taking it in turns to attend to the steerage to keep the boat end on to the sea. Having a good tarpaulin, that covered the boat all over, she lay very dry. At daylight on the morning of the 2nd of January, hauled the raft in, set the reefed lug, and steered in for the west point of Van Diemen's Land, with a heavy sea running. As we neared the shore we had to pass through heavy tide-rips,—the tide running to the southward against the wind making it more dangerous. We got within 500 yards of the shore; the boat was pooped by a heavy sea that filled her to the "thwarts;" and, had it not been for the precaution taken before we left Hobarton, namely, having three good buckets slung with lanyards and fastened to the "thwarts," for the purpose of baling the boat on such an emergency, we must all have been lost. However, by the quick use of the buckets the boat was soon baled out, and we got under the lee of a point, and landed on a small sandy beach. Hauled the boat up, and began to examine our clothes, blankets, provisions, and arms, all of which were wet and nearly useless. Fortunately the ammunition was in a small box in the stern of the boat; it was water-tight, and preserved it, otherwise we should have been seriously inconvenienced.

We now thought we were safe so far, and had just got a large fire made to dry ourselves, when, to our great astonishment, we were accosted by six huge men, black natives, each of them above six feet high and very stout made. Their faces were greased and blacked. They had each one spear in their right hands, and two in their left. They were quite naked, and appeared quite ready for war or mischief. Our men were greatly alarmed, and called out "What was to be done?" It was thought best to make gestures to them to come closer to us. They were standing behind a low thick scrub, and did not seem inclined to come any nearer. Our arms all wet, and no means of defending ourselves, we were indeed in a very perplexing situation.

Fortune, who favours the brave, was still on our side. We had nine or ten black swans and a large wombat in the boat, that we had brought from Macquarie Harbour as fresh provisions. On our showing them one of our swans they seemed delighted, and came nearer to the boat. After they came out of the scrub we saw more of their war implements, as each of them had a spear between the great toe of each of their feet, dragging them along the ground. We suppose they had never seen a white man before. It was thought best to try to barter with them for their spears, so that if we got possession of them they could not hurt us. We luckily succeeded by giving them four swans and the wombat for them all. They appeared very much pleased with the bargain they had made, and went away holding up one hand each as a sign of friendship. We saw no more of them during the evening. A great number of smokes were made along the coast, which we believed were intended as signals to the tribes.

* Gordon River discovered, 30th December, 1815.

† Mr. Kelly was subsequently allowed, for a short time, the exclusive privilege—upon account of the discovery—of getting pine from Macquarie Harbour.

We remained on the beach that night, and drying our arms brought them into firing order, keeping—apprehensive of another visit from the natives—inconstant watch. On examining our bread, flour, tea, sugar, &c. we found it nearly all spoiled, and we were consequently obliged to go on “short allowance.”

On the morning of the 3rd January, at daylight, we launched and proceeded to the northward towards Cape Grim. It was nearly calm during the day, with a heavy swell from the westward. We had to pull nearly the whole day. In the evening, hauled up in a small nook about nine miles to the southward of Cape Grim.

On the morning of the 4th, launched and stood to the northward, with a light breeze at south east. About noon rounded Cape Grim. We passed between two conical rocks which lie near the Cape, and we were nearly filled in a tide rip going through. We pulled along the shore to the eastward until we came to the south end of the largest Hunter's Island. We landed on the point opposite to the mainland on a large plot of pebble stones, to boil our kettle and take a rest. There were a great many fires along the shore, and we kept the boat and arms ready in case of an attack from the natives. Toombs and Jones were left to take care of the boat and to have the arms in readiness. We had just lighted a fire, when we perceived a large body of natives, at least 50 in number, standing on the edge of the bush about 50 yards from us. They were all armed with spears and waddies. We immediately brought the arms from the boat, and put ourselves into a state of defence. They began to advance slowly towards us near the fire. We held up our pieces, and made signs to them not to come any closer. They held up their spears in return, accompanying their movements with loud laughing. They jeered at us, as if they thought we were afraid of their formidable band. We thought it desirable to retreat to the boat, when suddenly they laid down their weapons in the edge of the bush, and each holding up both hands as if they did not mean any mischief, at the same time making signs to us to lay down our arms, which we did to satisfy them; for if we had retreated quickly to the boat, it was probable they would have killed every one of us before we could have got out of range of their spears.

We left Mr. Kelly and his small exploring party in a very perplexing situation, there being every probability of their getting into the hands of the Philistines, and take up the narrative from that point, merely adding, with respect to the river named the Retreat River, referred to yesterday, that it is better known as the “Pieman's,” in consequence of three convicts having absconded from Macquarie Harbour shortly after the formation of the penal settlement at that place. One of these men, named Pearce, who was in the habit of selling pies about the streets of Hobart Town, had been sent to Macquarie Harbour under sentence for selling *unwholesome* meat made into pies. The late Mr. James Lucas, the pilot, was sent in search of these runaways, then filling the situation of pilot at that place. He came up with Pearce on the south bank of the river; he was alone, and endeavouring to make a raft to cross the river. Mr. Lucas told him he should take him back to the settlement. * * * * * This river has been known since that period as Pieman's River, being so named by Mr. Lucas. * * *

Arrival of a Chief.—Hostilities.—Mr. Kelly disperses them.—Extraordinary Leap.—Attack on the Natives' Commissariat.—Arrival at George Town.—Taken into Custody.

The natives then began to come to us, one by one, holding up their hands to shew they had no weapons, but we kept a good look-out that they had no spears between their toes, as on a former occasion. They had none. There were twenty-two came to the fire. We made signs to them that no more should be allowed to come. Upon that being understood, two others came from the bush together. One of them seemed to be a chief, a stout, good-looking man, about six feet high, and apparently 30 years of age; the other an old man, about six feet seven inches high, with scarcely a bit of flesh on his bones. When the chief came, he ordered them all to sit down on the ground, which they did, and formed a sort of circle round the fire. The chief ordered the old man to dance and sing, as if to amuse us, which he did, making ugly faces, and putting himself into most singular attitudes. While the old man was engaged in his dancing and singing, we found it was only to divert our attention from what the chief and his men were doing. He ordered them to gather pebble-stones about the size of hen's eggs, and put them between their legs as they sat, for the purpose, as we apprehended, of making an attack. Our men began to get alarmed, expecting some mischief would be done. We planned it that we would give them a few swans, and get off as well as we could. Briggs brought two swans from the boat, one under each arm. When the chief saw them he rushed at Briggs to take the swans from him, but did not succeed. He then ordered his men to give us a volley of stones, which they did, he giving the time in most beautiful order, swinging his arms three times, and at each swing calling “Yah! yah! yah!” and a severe volley it was. I had a large pair of duelling pistols in my pocket, loaded with two balls each, and seeing there was no alternative I fired amongst them, which dispersed them; the other I fired after them as they

ran away. Two of them dragged Briggs along the ground a little distance to get the swans from him, but were not successful. The chief and his men ran into the bush, and were quickly out of sight. On looking round after they had all scampered we found the 6 feet 7 inches gentleman lying on his back on the ground. We thought, of course, he was dead, but on turning him over to examine his wounds, found he had not a blemish on him. His pulse was going at 130. It must have been the reports of the pistols which frightened him. We set him on his feet to see if he could walk; he opened his eyes and trembled very much. We led him a few feet towards the bush; he stood up straight, looked round him, and took one jump towards the scrub—the next leap he was out of sight. As soon as he was lost to our view, the hills around echoed with shouts of joy from the voices of men, women, and children. We measured the first jump the old man took—it was exactly eleven feet;* but the second must have been more, for they were more like the jumps of a kangaroo than a man.

We found several marks of blood on the stones in the direction that the natives ran away when the pistols were fired. Some of them were most probably wounded. We then got into our boat. Just as we were pulling away we received a large volley of stones and spears from the natives. One spear went through the side of the boat, but luckily no one was hurt. We landed on a small rock, covered with birds. They were laying, and we got six bucketfuls of eggs—a good supply.

This seemed to offend the natives, as a number of women came down on a point of rocks and abused us very much for taking their eggs. We pulled to a small island three miles to the north east, one of the Hunter's Islands, where we hauled up for the night.

On the 5th, at daylight, we launched with a strong breeze from the westward, and ran along the shore all day to the eastward. At sunset hauled up on a pebbly beach about forty miles from Circular Head. The 8th.—Strong breezes from the westward. At daylight launched, and ran along shore to the eastward. This day ran a long distance. At sunset arrived at what was called the first "Western River."† We hauled up for the night.

9th.—At daylight launched, wind north west, and steered towards Port Dalrymple. At noon arrived at George Town. On landing at the wharf, were hailed by a man like a soldier, "Who are you? What boat is that?" Before we had time to answer, eight men rushed from behind an old building with muskets and fixed bayonets in their hands, crying, "If you move we will kill every man of you." One of them seemed to be an officer; he had a double-barrelled gun in his hand; and the rest, a ruffian-like mob they were, were all dressed in kangaroo skin. The officer said, "Have you any arms in the boat?" The answer was "Yes, plenty." He ordered a sergeant to handcuff us all, and hand the arms out of the boat. The men were handcuffed two and two as they got out of the boat, but the captain had the honour of being handcuffed by himself.

Are mistaken for Bushrangers.—The explanation, and its results.—Departure.—Waterhouse Island.—The Natives again.

Narrowly escaped from the rude treatment of the gigantic aborigines, the exploring party, the progress of whose boating we have up to this time recorded, find themselves in the centre of another hobble. We left them handcuffed at George Town.

When we were out (continues the narrative) of the boat, standing on the wharf, the officer thus addressed us: "Now my lads, what have you to say for yourselves? I have been a long time looking for you, and have got you at last. You are the colleagues of Michael Howe the bushranger, and if you do not give me all the information where I can find Howe and his party, I will send you all to Hobart Town in double irons." I told him we knew nothing of Howe, and that we were on a voyage of discovery round the West Coast of Van Diemen's Land. He laughed at this, saying—"This story won't do for me." I then recognised him to be Major Stuart, of the 46th Regiment, then Commandant of Launceston. I put my hand into my waistcoat pocket to find the key of the ammunition-box, where our port clearance was kept, when the Major in a flurry shouted "Sergeant, mind, he is putting his hand in his pocket." I supposed the gallant Major thought I meant to take out a pistol and shoot him. The sergeant seized my hand and enquired what I was going to do? I replied, "Here is the key of the ammunition-box, wherefrom you can gain all the information you require."

The sergeant unlocked the box, and took out the ammunition, the journal, and the port clearance, which he handed to the Major. The latter was a printed document, filled up in the usual form, and to the following effect:—

* Eleven yards in the original, but which is obviously either a misprint or mistake in copying.

† This river has since been called Port Sorell.

Commandant's Office, Military Barracks, Hobart Town.

THESE are to certify to all whom it may concern, that the boat *Elizabeth*, commanded by Mr. James Kelly, was cleared out for the West Coast of Van Diemen's Land, on a voyage of discovery, after having paid the accustomed dues.

Given under my hand this 11th day of December, 1815,—in the absence of the Lieutenant-Governor,

WM. NAIRN,* *Captain, 46th Regiment, Commandant.*

(The names of the crew were written on the margin of the clearance.)

When the Major received the clearance from the sergeant, he turned round and walked a few paces, seeming to examine it very minutely. In a few minutes he returned, and said, "How long have you been from Hobart Town?" Answer, "From the date of that clearance." "Have you seen any military parties in search of bushrangers?" "Not any." "Have you seen any boats or vessels on the coast?" "Not any." "When you left Hobart Town were you aware that bushrangers were out?" "Yes." "Where was the Lieutenant-Governor?" "It was said he was gone to the Lakes." After asking several more questions he ordered the handcuffs to be taken off. The order was obeyed. Major Stuart: "Which of you is the person in charge of this boat?" Mr. Kelly said he was the person. "Are you," inquired the Major, "the person who was master of the brig *Sophia* some time ago?" Being answered in the affirmative, he asked if Mr. Kelly had ever seen him before, and was told he had, frequently; he had dined with him at Mr. Birch's, The Castle, Hobart Town. All this time the Major had the clearance in his hand, and appeared as if he scarcely believed it. "Is it usual," he said, "at Hobart Town to give clearances such as this to open boats going round the coast?" Mr. Kelly replied that it was, and had always been since martial law commenced in the island. He called the men's names over one by one from the clearance, and asked them a host of questions, evidently showing his suspicions were not fully allayed.

The Major: "Now, Mr. Kelly, are you quite sure you know who I am?" "Oh yes! I cannot mistake you; you are Major Stuart, of the 46th Regiment." He then said: "Mr. Kelly, I am quite satisfied who you are; give me your hand. I am very sorry for what has happened, but had it not been for the port clearance I could not have believed but you were an associate of Michael Howe. However, you must come up to the Government Cottage and accept a knife and fork and bed at my quarters while you remain at George Town. Sergeant, you will haul Mr. Kelly's boat up to the barracks; let the oars, &c., with the arms, be secured in the guardhouse, and let his men live with the soldiers; give them plenty to eat, and grog, but don't let them get drunk."

Here was a change in the state of affairs! Mr. Kelly, who had but a brief moment previous been a prisoner in handcuffs, now dining with the Major, and sharing a bottle of his best wine. After dinner the Major informed Mr. Kelly that he had only returned to George Town the day previous; that he had been out with a strong party of military for the past six weeks in search of Howe and his party, but had heard nothing of them, and that he had received information that Howe intended to lie in wait at the entrance of the Tamar to capture a boat or vessel, so as to enable him to make his escape across the Straits to the coast of New Holland.†

Mr. Kelly spent the night at the Major's quarters, having a good night's sleep on a first-rate bed,—something like a novelty, when he had been sleeping by a fire in the open air for twenty-five nights previous. He awoke in the morning naturally very much refreshed. His men were also well housed and bedded, and refreshed in the barracks.

The journal continues:—

January 10th.—We remained this day at George Town, Mr. Kelly still remaining under the hospitable Major's roof. During the day he ordered the sergeant to issue from the public store as much provisions, such as flour, tea, sugar, beef, pork, spirits, &c. as we thought proper to require. He also remarked that the men's bedding and clothing were not sufficient for such a voyage as we were on, and he ordered the storekeeper (the sergeant) to issue to each a pair of blankets and a suit of slops. This being, as he considered, all public property, Mr. Kelly offered to give a draft on Hobart Town for the whole amount of the supplies we had received, but the Major refused. "What you are doing," he said, "is for the public good, and for the good of the colony; I will account to the Government for all." In the evening we were all ready for a start next morning, but staid another night to partake of the Major's hospitality. He prepared a despatch, addressed to the Lieutenant-Governor, informing him what he had done with Mr. Kelly, and that Mr. Kelly had offered his services, in the event of his falling in with Howe and his party, to return to George Town or proceed to Hobart Town, as might be most convenient, to inform the Government of

* The Commandant was father of W. E. Nairn, Esq., now Deputy-Comptroller of Convicts.

† This search after Howe commenced almost directly after his robbery of Mr. D. Rose, Port Dalrymple, 7th November, 1815. Howe reappeared eleven days afterwards at Mr. T. Hayes', Bagdad.—(*Bent's Life of Howe.*)

Howe's position. Mr. Kelly was also required, in the event of coming into contact with the bushrangers, to destroy the despatch for fear of it falling into Howe's hands.*

11th January, 1816.—All this day it blew a strong gale from the northward, and prevented us from launching, but got our boat out and gear in good order to start the first fair wind.

12th January.—After partaking of a good early breakfast with the Major, and having taken leave and expressed our thanks, we launched, with a fine breeze from the westward, and were soon clear of Port Dalrymple. We steered along the coast to the eastward, and in the evening hauled up on Waterhouse Island, where we remained the night. Before we landed a smoke was seen on the main land opposite the island, which we at first thought might have been Howe and his party, but with the glass we perceived it was a large mob of natives walking on the beach.

It appears from the subsequent portion of the journal of the expedition that Mr. Kelly's party landed among the aborigines; and some curious particulars will be gathered as to the habits and customs of a race now almost extinct.

Continuation of the Log.—Land at Ringarooma.—Lamanbunganah.—Aboriginal Press Gang.—The Treaty.—Sealing.—Tolobunganah.

13th January.—Launched at daylight with a fine breeze from the westward and clear weather, and ran along the shore to the eastward. At noon landed on Ringarooma Point. Here we suddenly fell in with a large "mob" of natives, who, upon their first appearance, seemed hostile, but on seeing Briggs, whom they knew particularly well, the chief, whose name was Lamanbunganah, seemed delighted at the interview, and told him he was at war with his brother, Tolobunganah, a most powerful chief, and then on the coast near Eddystone Point. Tolobunganah was also one of Briggs' acquaintances. Briggs had left two wives and five children upon the islands during his absence at Hobart Town, and had taken this trip round the West Coast thinking he might fall in with some of his black relations near Cape Portland. One of his wives was a daughter of the chief Lamanbunganah, whom we had just fallen in with; and he generally called his father-in-law "Laman" for shortness. The chief made enquiry after his daughter, and was told that she and her children were safe over at Cape Barren. Laman said he knew that, for he saw her smokes every day.† After some further discourse Laman asked Briggs if he had any firearms in the boat. Briggs replied that we were well armed. Laman said he was glad of that, as he had heard that five or six white men, well armed, were with his brother, Tolobunganah, at Eddystone Point, and that they intended to come and attack his (Laman's) tribe and kill them all. He entreated Briggs to join him, so that they could go and meet them and fight it out. Briggs, of course, declined, telling him that he had no control over the boat, and that Mr. Kelly could not agree to any such proposal. At this Laman seemed greatly dissatisfied, and told Briggs, in a very hostile tone, that he had often before gone with him to fight other tribes when he (Briggs) wanted women. Laman gave a loud "coo-ee," and in two minutes we were surrounded by above fifty natives. Laman said to Briggs, "Now we will force you to go with us and fight 'Tolo,'" meaning the chief, his brother. We suspected, as a matter of course, that the white men spoken of were Howe and his party; and upon Briggs asking whether they had a boat, Laman said "No."

We now got very much alarmed at the dangerous situation we were in, and as an excuse Briggs told Laman that he would go over to Cape Barren and fetch Briggs' wife; that we would also get five or six of the sealers to join us with plenty of firearms, and come over and fight Tolobunganah. Laman was much pleased with this assurance, and enquired when we would go? Briggs replied that we would start directly, sleep the night at Swan Island, and go on the following morning to Cape Barren, and return in three days. Laman and all his men were well satisfied with this arrangement, and the boat was launched. We pulled to Swan Island, highly gratified at an escape from Lamanbunganah's impressment. Had we stoutly refused his proposal to aid him in his campaign he would have killed every man of us, as it was impossible we could have stood against such a number of natives.

Briggs had been employed as a sealer in the Islands of Bass's Straits for many years previously, and had acquired the native language of the north-east coast of Van Diemen's Land fluently, in consequence of his having gone over from the island to Cape Portland to barter for kangaroo skins with the natives, as also to purchase the young grown-up native females to keep them as their wives, whom they employed, as they were wonderfully dexterous in hunting kangaroo and catching seals.

* It was not often at this period that the Government could hold communication between Hobart Town and George Town, in consequence of Howe's formidable position in the bush. He repeatedly sent threatening letters to the Lieutenant-Governor, telling him "he should open all his despatches, and if the armed messengers who conveyed them were soldiers he would hang them up by the heels to a tree, &c., and leave them hanging as he would a kangaroo." He also wrote to say he would serve the Governor or any of his officers in the same way, but more particularly Mr. Humphrey, the Police Magistrate, whom he termed his "bitter enemy."

† We have already stated that the Tasmanian aborigines seemed to have a means of telegraphic communication by smokes.

The custom of the sealers in the straits was that every man should have from two to five of these native women for their own use and benefit, and to select any of them they thought proper to cohabit with as their wives; and a large number of children had been born in consequence of these unions—a fine, active, and hardy race. The males were good boatmen, kangaroo hunters, and sealers; the women extraordinarily clever assistants to them. They were generally very good looking, and of a light copper colour.

14th January.—Launched from Swan Island with a moderate breeze at north west, and steered along the shore to the south east. Soon after leaving the island we saw smokes on the shore, and saw natives walking along the beach, whom we supposed to be Laman and his tribe. They shouted and made signals to us to come on shore, but we took no heed of them, having had such a narrow escape the day before. Just before sunset we hauled up on King George's Island or Rocks, on a small sandy beach, not wishing to give a chance to Mr. Tolobunganah to serve us as Mr. Lamanbunganah had done the day before, and while we were on the island we were safe from their attacks. Here we found a number of seals lying on the rocks basking in the sun, but having no salt with us to cure the skins we thought it useless to kill them.

On the following day, 15th January, the wind set in from the south-east, and fine weather. We thought it needless to idle with a foul wind, and being provided with knives, steels, and clubs, and being all old hands at sealing into the bargain, we commenced killing and "finching" the skins from the bodies, and stretching them out upon the grass with wooden pegs. They were dried in the sun, and in one day became perfectly cured. This day we killed and pegged out thirty skins.

On the following day, 16th January, we killed, flinched, and pegged out twenty-five seal skins. Wind southerly, and fine weather. Several smokes on the shore opposite the island, and a large number of natives on the beach. Caught this day ten young Cape Barren geese, which afforded us fresh meat, and, with a little of Major Stuart's fine pork, we fared sumptuously.

17th January.—Wind south east, and fine weather. Found the seals getting shy of coming up on the rocks; we therefore gave them a rest, as it would not do to storm them only at low water. At noon launched the boat and went over to see the natives, and took with us four seal carcasses, which had been skinned, and four young "pups," about three weeks old, alive.

We did not go closer to the beach than musket-shot for fear of being surprised by a shot from Howe's party. Briggs stood up in the boat and called out to the natives in their own language to come to the water side. They seemed shy until he told them who he was, when an old man rushed up to his middle in water. Briggs called to him to swim to the boat, which he did, and we hauled him in. It turned out to be the old chief, Tolobunganah.

Tolobunganah.—Trading with the Aborigines.—Lady Passengers.—Sealing.

Tolobunganah was overjoyed at seeing Briggs, and enquired if he had seen his brother Laman, which Briggs denied. Tolo asked where we came from, and was told from Cape Barren, by way of Swan Island. Tolo said he knew that, for he had seen us come from there. We then pulled a little distance along the beach to a small rock that lay about fifty yards from the shore. Tolobunganah stood up in the boat and called to the natives. About twenty of them came down to the water side; they all knew Briggs, and seemed glad to see him. We made Tolo a present of the four dead seals and the live pups, at which he seemed highly gratified. Immediately after they had obtained the seals, six women came down, each with a dead kangaroo on her shoulders. Tolo ordered them to be brought to the boat, and said we must receive them in exchange for the seals we had given to them—that they had no more kangaroo, but to-morrow they would catch plenty. Tolo seemed anxious that we should come on shore, but we declined, telling the natives that we did not wish to come in contact with the six white men they had seen. Tolo asked if we were afraid of them. Briggs replied in the negative,—that they were bad men, but we wanted to know whereabouts they were.

We felt obliged to make use of these equivocations to extract all the friendly information we could from the aborigines relative to Howe and his party, as we were still of opinion, more especially as the information we had received from Lamanbunganah led us to expect that they were close at hand, but the natives assured us that they were gone a long distance to the southward, towards St. Patrick's Head. We took leave of Tolo and his followers in the evening, telling them that we should come over next day and bring them a further supply of seals, a promise which seemed to delight them very much. They informed us in return that if we brought them plenty of seals, they would supply us with plenty of kangaroo and skins to barter. The wind being fair, we ran over to the island, hauled the boat up, and had a good kangaroo steamer for supper, the first which we had been able to cook during the voyage.

16th* January, 1816.—At daylight, being low water, there were a good number of seals on the rocks; we stormed them and killed twenty, which we skinned and pegged out to dry. The weather was very fine, wind from the south east. Found the fresh water on the island getting short and very brackish. Launched the boat and put our three water kegs into her, with a view of getting the natives to fill them with fresh water. We also put into the boat twenty of the seals' carcasses to barter for kangaroo skins, and took six young pups alive as presents. Early in the morning smokes were made on the beach inviting us to come over according to promise.

On arriving at the beach did not see one native, which made us suspect something was the matter. We waited about half an hour, when Tolobunganah made his appearance on the beach; we called to him to come to the rock where he had been the day previous, and he complied with our request. We asked him why he did not join us when we first arrived, and he informed us that all the tribe were in the bush hunting kangaroo and getting skins, but they would return shortly. We still entertained a suspicion that Howe was with them, but Tolo assured us he was not. We told him we wanted our kegs filled with fresh water, and that we would buy all the kangaroo skins he had. In about twenty minutes the whole tribe came down on the beach; there were about two hundred men, women, and children, and at least fifty dogs. On seeing them approach we pulled the boat out a little from the shore, leaving Tolo on the rock. We got out our arms and examined them to see if they were in firing order, and afterwards held up three or four seals' carcasses, and acquainted the natives we wished to trade for kangaroo skins. Tolo ordered ten women to go into the water each loaded with kangaroo skins and flesh. We gave them in return the carcasses, and they carried them to their tribe, returning immediately to the boat with more skins as payment. We then requested Tolo to fill our kegs with fresh water, which he did, but we would not let them take more than one keg at a time, for fear they would not bring them all back again. Tolo seemed much displeased at this evident want of confidence.

The natives asked if we would bring over more seals on the following day. Briggs informed them that they were getting scarce and shy of being caught. Tolo considered that we had better take some women over to the island to assist in catching them, as they were very dexterous at sealing. This course being agreed on, Tolo ordered six stout women into the boat. They obeyed with alacrity, evidently delighted with the prospects of the trip. The wind being fair, we ran over to the island, hauled the boat up, and pegged out the kangaroo skins to dry. The women, perceiving some seals on the outer rocks, were anxious to commence operations.

Briggs having been on the islands on Bass' Straits a long time, was perfectly acquainted with their mode of sealing. A very singular mode it is, and is thus described :—

The Female Sealers.—A Native Supper.—The Dance.—Departure.—Arrival in the Derwent, and conclusion of the Diary.

We gave, says the journal of the exploring party, the women each a club that we had used to kill the seals with. They went to the water's edge and wet themselves all over their heads and bodies, which operation they said would keep the seals from smelling them as they walked along the rocks. They were very cautious not to go to windward of them, as they said "a seal would sooner believe his nose than his eyes when a man or woman came near him." The women all walked into the water in couples, and swam to three rocks about fifty yards from the shore. There were about nine or ten seals upon each rock, lying apparently asleep. Two women went to each rock with their clubs in hand, crept closely up to a seal each, and lay down with their clubs alongside. Some of the seals lifted their heads up to inspect their new visitors and smell them. The seals scratched themselves and lay down again.

The women went through the same motions as the seal, holding up their left elbow and scratching themselves with their left hand, taking and keeping the club firm in their right ready for the attack. The seals seemed very cautious, now and then lifting up their heads and looking round, scratching themselves as before and lying down again; the women still imitating every movement as nearly as possible. After they had lain upon the rocks for nearly an hour, the sea occasionally washing over them (as they were quite naked, we could not tell the meaning of their remaining so long) all of a sudden the women rose up on their seats, their clubs lifted up at arms length, each struck a seal on the nose and killed him; in an instant they all jumped up as if by magic and killed one more each. After giving the seals several blows on the head, and securing them, they commenced laughing aloud and began dancing. They each dragged a seal into the water, and swam with it to the rock upon which we were standing, and then went back and brought another each, making twelve seals, the skins of which were worth one pound each in Hobart Town. This was not a bad beginning for the black ladies, who now ascended to the top of a small hill, and made smokes as signals to the natives on the main that they had taken some seals. The smokes were soon answered by smokes on the beach. We skinned the seals and pegged them out to dry. The

* This date is correctly copied, but I suppose it is a misprint and should be the 18th.

women then commenced to cook their supper, each cutting a shoulder off the young seals weighing three or four pounds. They simply threw them on the fire to cook, and when about half done commenced devouring them, and rubbed the oil on their skins, remarking that they had had a glorious meal.

19th January, 1816.—At daylight, having low water, the women recommenced their sealing labours. They would not allow us to come near them until they had killed all that could be got on the beach. They killed twenty-six before breakfast. The weather being fine, the wind south east, the remainder of the day was passed in catching and skinning seals, the work being principally done by the women.

20th January.—At sunrise smokes were made on the main; the women said they were signals for us to go over. We were employed until noon killing and skinning; the women swimming to the outer rocks, as the seals were getting very shy. We succeeded in getting 16 skins. In the evening launched the boat and went over to the main; took two of the women, and loaded the boat with the carcasses of the seals we had skinned. On arrival at the beach we found Tolobunganah there. The two women told him what we had done. He was delighted to see the boat's freight, and told us he had plenty of kangaroo and skins to give us in payment for the seals. We threw the seals into the water, and the women dragged them to the beach. Tolo ordered the tribe to take them all into the bush. In a few minutes they returned with ten dead kangaroos and about ninety skins. Tolo enquired how long we should want the women? We told him about two or three days, as the seals were getting scarce, and we should not stay longer. He directed the two women to return with us, and stop as long as we required them. The wind being from the westward, we ran over to the island and hauled the boat up. The four women we left on the island informed us that during our absence they had caught six seals.

21st January.—During the day fresh breezes at south west and fine weather; employed drying and packing the skins in bundles for a start. * * * *

22nd January.—During the day the wind blew strong from the eastward, and thick weather. * * * *

23rd January.—The first part of the day fresh breezes from the southward and fine weather. The women killed five seals on the rocks. At noon loaded the boat with carcasses and took them over to the main. On our arrival at the beach Tolo and his tribe came down. They had a few dead kangaroos and about fifty skins; they were very much pleased to see the boat loaded with dead seals. We threw them out of the boat. Tolo ordered them to be put in a heap upon the beach. Briggs informed Tolo that we should start to-morrow from the island, and we should now take leave of them, at which the women all began to cry; in fact, the whole assembly seemed full of sorrow at our leaving them. Tolo asked Briggs not to go away until they had a dance. The whole mob of them—about three hundred in number—formed a line in three divisions, the men and women forming two of them, and the children another. Tolobunganah then gave the signal to commence the dance, and it was a most singular one. The women in the centre division began a song, and joining their hands, formed a circle, dancing round the heap of dead seals. They then threw themselves upon the ground, putting themselves into the most grotesque attitudes, beating the lower parts of their bodies with their hands, and kicking the sand over each other with their feet. The loud laughter of the men and children evidenced their gratification with the sport; and the women having sat down, the children went through a similar dance. The men then commenced a sort of sham fight with spears and waddies, dancing afterwards round the heap of seals, and sticking their spears into them as if they were killing them. This game lasted about an hour. Tolo then informed us that the dance was over. He asked Briggs where we were going, and was informed we were bound for Cape Barren, and Briggs requested him if he saw the white men (Howe and his party) to tell them we had gone thither. This was intended to deceive them in case they should attempt to waylay us on our way to Hobart Town. The wind being fair, we ran over to the island, hauled the boat up, and began to pack our skins, ready for a start next morning if the wind and weather should permit.

24th January.—At sunrise, the wind north east and fine weather, launched the boat, got all the skins, provisions, &c. into her. After breakfast, started with a fine breeze at north, and steered along shore to the southward. The natives made three smokes to say "Good-bye."

We found after leaving King George's Island and Rocks we had been there nine days, and had procured 122 seal skins and 246 kangaroo skins from the natives, the value of which was £180 at Hobart Town. We ran to the southward until sunset, when we hauled up for the night on a small sandy beach to the southward of the Bay of Fires.

25th January, 1816.—Throughout the day strong breezes from the westward. At sunrise launched and stood along shore to the southward under the reefed lug. In the evening squally with rain. Hauled up on a small beach under St. Patrick's Head for the night.

26th January.—All this day strong breezes from W.S.W. At sunrise launched and pulled along shore to the southward, a heavy swell setting from the southward in the afternoon. Hauled up in Waubs' Boat Harbour. A heavy surf half filled the boat on landing, and wet all the skins.

27th January.—All this day fresh gales at south west. Employed drying the skins and cleaning the arms. In the evening a small party of natives came along the beach close to us, but on seeing our number returned to the bush.

28th January.—All this day light breezes at north west and fine weather. At daylight launched and stood along shore to the southward; at noon passed Wine Glass Bay; wind light; pulling along shore to the southward. At sunset hauled up for the night on the north side of Schouten Island, in a boat harbour. Saw a large number of natives on the island, and kept a watch during the night for fear of an attack.

29th January.—At daylight a fine breeze from the northward; launched and stood round the west end of the island. At 8 A.M. landed on the White Rock in Oyster Bay, and killed six seals. Put their skins into the boat and made sail to the southward. Saw several natives on Maria Island. They ran along the beach calling to us to go ashore, but we declined. In the evening hauled up in an inlet near East Bay Neck, and began to carry our things over the isthmus, ready to haul the boat over next morning.

30th January, 1816.—At daylight hauled the boat over East Bay Neck. Got all things into her, and made sail for Hobart Town with a fine breeze from the northward. At noon passed Iron Pot Island and entered the Derwent. At 4 P.M. arrived at Hobart Town, discharged our boat, and hauled her up.

"This day," says Captain Kelly's log, "finishes our voyage of discovery round Van Diemen's Land, having been forty-nine days absent, without meeting with any accident or danger further than what is contained in this journal," which we have seen properly authenticated by the name of the writer, one of the oldest Australian natives, JAMES KELLY.



MR. J. HOBBS' BOAT VOYAGE ROUND TASMANIA IN 1824.

COPIED FROM HIS ORIGINAL REPORT.

Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, 10th September, 1824.

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions of his Honor the late Lieut.-Governor Sorell, I have the honor of stating that I left Hobart Town on the 5th February ultimo, on a tour of discovery round Van Diemen's Land, with two boats and 12 convicts (whose sentences are for life), and arrived on the 7th at Esperance Bay, which I found to be an excellent harbour. The most secure anchorage and best passage into it is on the south side of a large island,* where vessels of any tonnage may lie. Up the river, which enters the bay on the south-west side, are some of the finest stringy-bark trees I ever saw; they could be easily brought down by boats. The country about is covered with most impenetrable scrub; the mountains high and barren.† From this place I proceeded to Southport, and went up the river as far as the boats could go, four and a half miles; then travelled by land, endeavouring to ascend one of the mountains to ascertain if there was any good land to the westward of the river Huon. The brush was so very thick, the small spaces (whereon timber was not growing) so covered with water and rushes, that I found it impossible to succeed without great loss of time. I travelled several miles under the foot of the mountains, which are very high, during the whole of this time, consisting of the greatest part of a day. I never saw a blade of grass. Such are the "beautiful plains and clear hills" described by a settler‡ who went to inhabit them.

As we were getting breakfast at the mouth of Southport, the natives appeared on the opposite side. Our numbers, I apprehend, deterred them from giving us a reception similar to that which a few fishermen had experienced the day before, by the natives throwing a great many spears into their boat as they passed. Fortunately none of them struck the men, who were three in number.

From Southport to Recherche Bay the country throughout is like that I have just mentioned, presenting an indescribable barrenness. Recherche Bay is a good harbour, particularly on the south side, where a ship may lie in four fathoms, sandy bottom, sheltered entirely from the sea. Fish in this part are very numerous, and of the best kind. This is well calculated for a fishing station, and is not at too great a distance to supply Hobart Town regularly with fish. At the southern extremity of the harbour is an inlet which has sufficient water for a boat for nearly two miles in a south 20° west direction. Thence I proceeded into the bay at the head of South Cape, where I was detained for ten days by excessively bad weather, which gave me an opportunity of examining a substance much like, if not exactly, good *coal and slate*, specimens of which are presented for your Honor's inspection. Immense cliffs, from fifty to one hundred feet in height, extend their rugged fronts for nearly a mile along the sea, which breaks against them with great violence. In the highest of these I observed three different strata of coal extending in a line perfectly horizontal, all on beds of sandstone. The first stratum is close to the water's edge, about five feet over the surface, and probably five feet more under it. The next stratum, about two feet thick, is separated from this by a body of sandstone at least eight feet thick. The upper stratum is in the same manner placed on sandstone, and is about the same thickness as the second. The external parts of the smaller cliffs appear to be composed of slate, presenting generally a rotten appearance, and indicating a mixture of coal and slate crumbling together. It is not improbable that coal may be inside of these cliffs. Should this ever become an object of public utility, which is not unlikely from the increasing scarcity of firewood about Hobart Town, its conveyance overland can in the most easy manner be effected by making a road over a range of scarcely a mile and a half of sandy land, in some places flat, in others moderately elevated into hillocks, stretching to a point of a hill which terminates in a plain. From this hill it would be necessary to cut a canal for about half a mile through a swampy flat to a rivulet which runs into the inlet before described when speaking of Recherche Bay. By means of this canal (which could not be very expensive), and clearing the rivulet of dead trees, &c., an easy passage would be secured for boats sufficiently large speedily to convey the coal to Recherche Bay, where vessels of any burthen can with perfect security take in their cargoes. The coal may be thus safely forwarded, whereas its carriage in any other way out of South Cape Bay is entirely prevented by the heaviness of the surf and the want of shelter for vessels.

* Hope Island, 60 or 70 acres.

† Hobbs was never on the mountain range he speaks of—the Adamson Range—or he would have seen some good forest land even pretty high up the mountain. Mount Adamson, according to Sprent, is 4017 feet high.

‡ He means Major Honnar, who once settled here. I am not so sure that these plains thus contemptuously spoken of are so very bad as Hobbs represents them to be. It is true that the chief herbage is only button-grass, but there is some useful herbage besides, and when I was here in 1865 there were about 100 head of cattle on them. These plains, according to my rough estimate, cover about 7000 acres, and not a little of their soil is a rich black earth, but requires draining, and then after a year or two it would grow fast enough. The plains extend all the way from the head of Southport to Recherche Bay.

According to the second article of my instructions, I paid particular attention to the supposed river between the South and South West Capes, which I reached on the 18th February. On surveying its mouth, I found it was quite impossible to enter with the boats; at that time we hauled them upon the beach until the sea had sufficiently abated to admit of an entrance. I went with a party of men to travel inland by the river side, but found it quite impracticable to do so in any other way than by walking in the water, generally up to the middle. In this manner we proceeded for three miles. Finding there was no alteration in the closeness of the scrub, we were obliged to return, wading through the river in the same way we had advanced. This was one of the most miserable nights I ever endured, exposed as we were to a very heavy fall of rain, which poured incessantly upon us, and to a south-west gale. Most of the men on this occasion lost their shoes, and, to increase the misfortune, their repeated falls in the river caused the ammunition which they had carried on this journey to be so much damaged as to be rendered useless. The weather continued in this state until the 24th February, when the sea moderated a little. With much difficulty we got the small whaleboat through the surf into the mouth of the river, with the loss of three oars, at which time the boat was nearly filled with water.

From the situation of the high mountains on both sides of the river, I had every reason to believe that it extended a long way into the interior; but great was my mortification, after the loss of so much time, with the risk of the people's lives in entering this supposed river, and the increased danger they would be in while getting out of it, when I discovered it to be nothing more than a large lagoon or basin, situate inland four miles in a N.W. direction, and about two and a half in breadth, principally consisting of salt water! A narrow deep fresh-water river empties itself into this basin. I was not able to get the boat more than five or six miles up this river, on account of the dead trees with which the passage was choked. The swamps on each side, together with the thickness of the timber, prevented me from making any examination of the adjacent mountains.

On the 27th I got the boat through the surf out of the river, in doing which she filled, and her stern-post was broken off. As soon as she was again repaired, our course was directed to a bay opposite the large Maatswyker's Islands, to remain for a favourable opportunity to examine whether there was any place of shelter for vessels. After making several attempts to get over, we at last succeeded on the 2nd March. For the sake of those employed under me I shall mention in detail the events of this day by transcribing them *verbatim* from my log-book:—"At daylight left the boat harbour, the wind at W.N.W., with rain, to make another attempt to get over to the islands. When we had nearly done so, the wind suddenly in a squall shifted round to south, and notwithstanding everything was instantly let go, it nearly overset the boat; had it done so we no doubt must have every soul perished. From the very high sea which was running the little boat could not have been of much assistance, especially as she was far to leeward. This was a moment of trial! I have sincere pleasure in stating that every man in the boat did his duty, without evincing the slightest discomposure." We put back again, to remain for more moderate weather. In the afternoon it cleared up, and we put out again. Arrived at 5 p.m. at the islands which lay at the S.W. end, distance one and a half miles from the large one. They form an excellent shelter from the wind between south and west; but the back swell which rolls in from the S.E. would drive a vessel over her anchor, and endanger her masts by getting broadside on to the swell between the squalls.

The country to this place from Recherche Bay appears totally unfit for any purpose useful to civilised man, being nothing but very high mountains, covered to the summit with impervious brush. It is to be observed that close to this part, in longitude 146° 30', commences a distinct and remarkable difference, as well as what grows upon the mountains as in the appearance of their surfaces. All to the eastward are, as I have before observed, covered to the top* with impassable brushwood; while all to the N.W., as far as the River,† are perfectly barren, white-topped, rocky mountains, as can be seen from the Table Mountain, near Hobart Town.‡

From the islands we went to a harbour which is, as yet, not named, four miles to the eastward of South West Cape. It is quite safe from all winds, and is the only port of shelter between Recherche Bay and Port Davey. The high rocks which are off its west point, and the natural breakwater formed by other high rocks in the mouth of the harbour, make it a place of material importance for any vessel wishing to make a passage to the westward securely from bad weather. To the commanders of both the government vessels I have communicated my observations on the coast, and informed them of the very great utility I think there is in preferring and making use of this harbour instead of running back to Recherche Bay, as in most cases they might be at Macquarie Harbour by the time they get to the South West Cape from Recherche Bay. Near the harbour the natives appeared on the beach, and wished to be taken over to the small island which I was upon; but, being fully acquainted with their treachery, I would not send a boat, more parti-

* Not quite. The forest grows high up them, but their summits are mostly bare. I think the mountain called the Peaked Hill is an exception.

† In the original some one has filled up the blank with the word "Pieman" in pencil.

‡ He means Mount Wellington, formerly called the Table Mountain.

cularly as they were on a high rock, and would therefore have had full power over the boat's crew. They then went away for that evening, and appeared at daylight next morning in a large body, armed with spears, presenting a formidable appearance.

Having left this harbour, I succeeded in getting round the South West Cape, and arrived at Port Davey on the 15th March, after repeated trials to make it during a period of twelve days.

Port Davey and the surrounding land, as is stated in my instructions, being so well known to the surveyors, I merely remained there for a good opportunity to proceed to the northward. Had I not been so short of provisions I would have gone up Port Davey River in search of the forest from which the logs of Huon pine come that are borne down by the current, and picked up as drift wood are carried to Hobart Town by the colonial craft. I regret this circumstance the more, as it would be greatly desirable to know the real situation of this forest, lest the pine should fail at Macquarie Harbour.

On the 21st March the gale abated, but only for a few hours—enough to permit me to get five miles on my journey—when it came on as hard as ever, and compelled me to take shelter upon an island, where we could not even get shell-fish to eat. At this place I cut my boat down, in hope that she would pull better. A fair wind was what we had never enjoyed for more than an hour. The people began to get very weak during the five days we were detained here.

Point Hibbs, next marked out for observation, will not, in my opinion, answer as a place of safe anchorage, being so much exposed to the north-west winds, and the very great danger likely to attend a vessel getting out should the wind blow from that quarter.

Nothing more of any moment transpired until I arrived at Macquarie Harbour, on the 28th of March (twelve days beyond the time for which I had provisions), after nearly two months of the most boisterous weather. My large boat was rendered totally unsafe from her keel being broken, and the small one was much injured. I received every assistance from Lieut. Wright, the Commandant at this settlement, who furnished me with another boat, and had the small one repaired. While I was here I made two excursions into the country, one to the Dagular Range and another to Mount Sorell. From the former nothing appeared but one mountain towering over another. From the view I had from the highest part of Mount Sorell I am perfectly satisfied that there is not more than twenty miles of a mountainous country in an easterly direction. Plains might be entered by passing over the south corner of the large lake, and keeping in sight a high table mountain, laid down on the chart as near Macquarie Harbour. When I read the account of Pearce, (the runaway from this settlement, lately executed for the murder and eating of some of his companions), of his travels to the High Plains, I was still more confirmed in this opinion. James Carretts, who was with me, relates that he was upon these plains many years ago, when Mr. Beamont returned and could not find the way: this is the good land which Carretts mentioned to Capt. Montagu. The land about Macquarie Harbour is like that at Port Davey, and in most parts along the coast, totally useless. Its appearance is just as if the tide had fresh gone out. I think that if a line were drawn from the head of the River Huon to Macquarie Harbour there would not be found five acres of fertile soil to the southward of it. The timber in this quarter is too well known to need any remark from me.

On the proposed breakwater, which I have examined and reported, I beg leave to add a few remarks to those already laid before your Honor. I am fully satisfied that a very unfavourable opinion, amounting almost to prejudice, exists in the minds of commanders of the government vessels and the pilot, Mr. Lucas, against building a breakwater to the rock. The question appears to me to stand thus:—

First. Supposing all the hands employed at it could be spared at Macquarie Harbour, how long would it take to build the breakwater to the rock? Abundance of stone being at hand within a few yards of the spot, with a very large body of rock nearly overhanging it, I am of opinion that the breakwater could be made in six months.

Second. What shelter would it afford? As much or more than is to be found in most roadsteads.

Third. How long would one of the government vessels be then delayed to take in her cargo of timber? Except in the worst weather, three or four days.

With respect to stopping up either of the passages at the mouth of the harbour, it is to be considered that the north side is perhaps one hundred yards wide, consisting of sand, having a deep narrow channel near the island. The water is principally shallow, with the exception of this channel, which I think could be only stopped up by sinking one vessel or more full of heavy stones. From the apparent depth of the sand, and a heavy sea that rolls in, it is likely that piles could not be made fast. The south side is much more narrow, and is the main channel, but the water is, I am informed, from fourteen to twenty fathoms deep.* Considering, with what I have already had the honor to state, the immense time it would take to complete either the one or the other of these passages, and then the probability that it would not answer the desired end to make a channel through

* This must be when inside, as the water at the mouth is only about 9 feet.

the bar, or to shift it farther out, I am of opinion that, should anything be attempted, the break-water to the rock is the most preferable; especially as the chances of being driven on shore from this place are not more than what generally attend a seafaring life. My experience being mostly in nautical affairs, I have confined myself to a statement of the impressions on my mind on this subject, without pretending to be directed in my judgment by a knowledge of the sciences.

After having made the necessary examinations, I proceeded to River* (on the 10th of April), which is in latitude $41^{\circ} 40' 13''$ south. The mouth of it, as Mr. Lucas has represented, is totally unsafe to approach, even with a boat, from the very heavy swell that invariably rolls in upon the bar; and, in fact, all along this part of the coast there is as much sea in fine weather as there is upon the east coast in a gale of wind. I landed a mile south of the river, and was obliged to carry one of the boats into it. I proceeded up eighteen miles before I met anything to impede my progress, when I arrived at numerous falls, and hauled the boat over them. This is as far as any boat can go. The falls are twenty-one in number. This river runs from a swampy plain about Mount Hemskirk.† Its banks abound with pine of the very best quality, also lightwood and myrtle. At some distance towards its source is a very clear hill, from the top of which I had a full view of the country round. Notwithstanding the very dangerous entrance, it still is practicable to get timber thence should it become scarce at Macquarie Harbour. The land about is sterile, but not so much so as all to the southward of it. Being anxious to know if such land did exist north of this river, as has been represented, I sent Carretts, accompanied by two men, to examine the land, and travel as far as Cape Grim, while I proceeded along the coast with the boat.

Near the West Point, on the south side, there is a river in latitude $41^{\circ} 3'$, similar to River,‡ with a bar mouth, and the entrance equally dangerous. Endeavouring to go into it, the boat was filled, and we were nearly all lost; however, we got on shore with her, carried her along the beach into the river, and then went up fifteen miles to the falls. The water, like the River,‡ is deep and salt up to the first falls at this season. This river runs from the low country around Mount Norfolk. The timber here consists of very fine stringy-bark, gums, and a few lightwood trees. The soil is barren, and little fit for any purpose, with exception of a few patches, nearly a mile inland, of light sandy soil, covered with grass.

The point of land called Cape Grim is composed of light sandy soil, with good grass and fern in parts, but not in such quantity as to be of much use. At this point I took in Carretts, whose report perfectly coincided with what I had seen myself, that the land from River to Cape Grim is wholly unfit for any agricultural purposes, except in very small spots, not extending a mile from the sea coast.

From this, I sent a boat in charge of Robert Blackwell on the 2nd May, to Port Dalrymple, with a runaway convict from Macquarie Harbour, whom I had picked up at West Point on the 23rd April.

The inlet called Robinson's Passage is dry, in parts, from the main to the Sandy Island, at low-water spring tides. Under the south-east point of the island there is good anchorage in three fathoms, as is pointed out in Flinders' chart. Here are extensive sand-flats, caused by the meeting of the tides which set round Van Diemen's Land. Circular Head and the neck of land adjoining is about three miles long, the narrowest place is half a mile broad; the soil is all of the best quality. Several clear spaces, from about twenty to fifty acres, are here to be found. The other parts are thickly timbered with lofty gums and stringy-bark trees§ as they can well grow together. Water is extremely scarce here; I found some, with difficulty, in a large lagoon, almost entirely dried up by the unusual dryness of the weather. I found no fresh-water stream on either side of Circular Head. From reports I had heard I expected to find a river two miles south of the Head, but it turned out to be a bar-mouth lagoon, which has only three feet on it at low water, but is deep when inside the sandspit; in fact it is a chain of lagoons, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, a link of salt-water ponds, round to Rocky Cape, commencing seven miles west of Circular Head.

The anchorage in the bay cannot be better described than it is in Flinders' chart. Bring the head to bear north, and anchor in any water desired. This would make a most excellent estate for one or two persons with capital, who would engage in the whale and seal fisheries in addition to agricultural pursuits. Seine fish is to be caught in great abundance. The country from Circular Head to Port Sorell is very mountainous and barren. That quantity of good land which was expected about the north-west part of the Island is not to be found. I did not think that making a pass|| hence to Port Dalrymple would be of any benefit, particularly as I should have had to return to the boat had I effected it, which would have occupied a very considerable time. However, I consider the waterside is most likely to be the best road, as the natives travel that way and keep it burnt. The interior of Port Sorell I did not examine, as I merely stopped to ascertain if the report of

* The blank in the original is filled up with the word "Pieman" in pencil.

† Mount Heemskirk.

‡ The blank in the original marked "Pieman" in pencil.

§ Probably "as close."

|| Probably passage, (overland trip.)

there being no bar was correct. It is only a day's walk from Port Dalrymple, and a place much frequented by boats. If there is any good land there, it cannot be more than six miles in extent, for between the second Western River* and Port Sorell there is a rocky mountain,† which appeared to me as high as the Table Mountain at Hobart Town, indicating by its barren aspect the state of the country around it. The Port itself is merely a large lagoon or inlet, having four feet at low water neap tide, but inside it has fifteen or twenty near its mouth.

On my arrival at George Town, on the 20th May, Colonel Cameron was extremely kind, and ordered everything I wished for. I cannot express how much I am indebted to him for his politeness and attention while I remained at George Town, as well as to Commandant Wright while I was at Macquarie Harbour.

The boats being repaired and painted, I left George Town on the 31st May, and proceeded to Piper's River, which is only a lagoon or inlet, dry inside, as well as at the mouth at low water. It has two considerable fresh-water streams which empty themselves into it, one at south-west and the other at the south-east side. Between these rivulets is an extent of excellent pasture, moderately elevated, of about six miles square. It is well calculated to afford grazing for sheep and cattle, and the road to George Town, though principally barren soil, is by no means difficult. I travelled thence under the foot of the mountains opposite Waterhouse Island, and returned to the boat by keeping near the waterside. The plains on this part of the coast are from six to twenty miles inland. A great number of extensive marshes are to be found on them, producing very fine rushes and good grass; but the intervening spaces between the marshes are poor sand and gravel, covered by a bitter weed and thick scrub. These marshes would make good summer feed, but are too wet in the rainy seasons. Near the sea coast for two miles inland numerous small steep sandy hills are met, covered with a quantity of good grass. Among these hills are large fresh-water lagoons, frequented by innumerable ducks. In this space, from Piper's River to Waterhouse Island, are three very large fresh-water rivulets; and inland, near their banks and in the neighbourhood, are patches of excellent soil, which can be better described on the chart than in this general report. This same kind of low country continues, with a chain of marshes, now dry, running one into the other, nearly all producing good grass growing among small rushes. The space between the marshes is nothing but pebble-stones and sand. I have no doubt that these rushes contain a sufficient quantity of nutriment for cattle to fatten on, after they shall have used them twelve or eighteen months.

On the 20th June I arrived at one of the the finest fresh-water rivers I ever saw in this part of the country,—near Cape Portland. Thence I went to the top of a high mountain, which gave me a view of nearly the whole of the country I had been travelling over for the last 18 days, and round to the mountains which came down to the sea-side at St. Helen's Point, on the east coast. This river, like all the others I have visited, has a bar-mouth, and scarcely water sufficient for a boat at low tide; but when inside there is plenty for good-sized vessels, and would admit them over the bar at high water. Its banks are high, and open into exceedingly fine land. Flats extend from it on both sides for a considerable distance, and are about five miles in length, without hardly a tree. This land produces the greatest abundance of the best grass, together with the plantain leaf, of which sheep are so fond. It appears to me that there are some thousands acres of this flat fine land; but beyond it the soil seems to be all of the same poor nature I have before related. I could not here, in any part, see the slightest trace of floods having at any time taken place. This river must be well supplied, for at this time (June), when we have been so many months without rain, the water is perfectly fresh a mile from its mouth. This, and another river, run from behind a high saddle mountain which is somewhat to the northward of the Break-of-Day Plains. My opinion is, that a road might be found through the opening which shows itself on the east side of the mountain.

On the south side of Cape Portland there are two islands, which, together with a deep sandy bay on the main, form a very good roadstead. There is a clear passage between them and the main land, and regular soundings of four, five, and six fathoms, sandy bottom. The land about Cape Portland is more fit for grazing than cultivation. It commences from the point abreast the southern island, and takes a sweep round opposite to Swan Island and a creek, which is called by the sealers Little Muscle Row.‡ In a great measure it is surrounded by a tier of moderately elevated barren hills. Its greatest extent from Cape Portland is not more than five miles. The land is, in general, of the best sort, thickly covered with a sward of excellent grass, having extensive marshes and small she-oak hills. The timber on this part is almost entirely she-oak. Water is scarce; but I think it might be had in abundance by opening a creek that was once running into the bay, but is now stopped up, or by sinking in the marshes. There are several large saltwater lagoons hereabout. Should this spot be considered of such consequence as to be chosen for a settlement, it will have the advantage of the river last mentioned (which is only six miles distant), and of a good road over a sandy beach.

Great Muscle Row, situate at the extremity of Cape Naturalist, is an extensive basin (in which are large quantities of swans and ducks), which has a fresh-water river running into it, and appears to take its rise from the saddle mountain before mentioned.

*The Mersey.

† Roland's Repulse, between the Mersey and Forth Rivers.

‡ I follow Hobbs' spelling of the name of this stream.

Having now travelled all over the low country (and as far through the mountains as was practicable without delaying too long) from Piper's River, from which the mountains run in a direction nearly semi-circular to the south part of the Bay of Fires, I take leave to remark that I found the land within this circle to consist generally of plains from 25 to 6 miles in extent from the coast, eight-tenths of which is apparently unfit for agricultural purposes. The mountains are very high, mostly covered to the top with heavy timber and thick brush. Being on one occasion inside the second range of mountains, I measured the smallest of a cluster of trees, which was 43 feet in circumference and high in proportion.

On the 3rd July I sounded the bar at Geordy's River* at low water; nine feet was the least I could find. The bar is thirty yards broad, and steep too, on the outside to five and seven fathoms. When over the bar, between the two sandspits, there is twelve and fifteen feet, and in some places close to the north shore eighteen feet, where vessels may ride free from danger. Should this place be settled, any of the colonial vessels might with tolerable safety in most weather approach the bar. It is only exposed to the wind between north and east, and should it blow from that quarter, they might find shelter under St. Helen's Island, which is but a few miles to the southward. The interior of this part I did not examine (or the adjoining land), as it had been previously surveyed by Mr. Scott.

The country seems to be nearly entirely mountains, from whose appearance I do not think there is any vast extent of good land. How far the Break-of-day Plains go to the northward I do not know, but should they be parallel with Geordy's River I think it probable that a pass might be found into them about the Saddle Mountain; at all events, the distance from one part of the plains down to the sea coast at St. Patrick's Head is only four or five miles, over a good bridle road, and thence to Geordy's River is twelve miles. This road is quite sufficient for the purpose of driving cattle or sheep, and all other supplies may be sent by water. About St. Patrick's Head there appears to be three or four thousand acres of good pasture land, the road just alluded to passing through it. Unless a vessel take the advantage of fine weather and come to an anchor on the coast, as is done in many parts of the world where there are no harbours, it would be difficult to send in supplies, except by a boat into the rivulet near the Head. Proceeding to the Schootens (along the coast), I observed it very mountainous, and apparently not fit for the purposes either of agriculture or grazing.

The Bay Thouin affords good shelter for small vessels that cannot make a passage to the Schootens in a southerly gale.

Of all the other parts of the coast from Oyster Bay to the River Derwent, the anchorage and soil are too well known to call for any remark from me.

On the 10th July I returned to Hobart Town, after an absence of five months and five days, and am happy to add that all my men are safe and well.

I beg leave to observe that I have given the necessary information to the Colonial Surveyors, so that a chart may be prepared of the various parts of the coast and interior referred to in this letter; and I doubt not that the same will be forwarded to your Honor without delay.

This report should have been made sooner had I not been (with my boat's crew) for the last month in pursuit of the bushrangers.

Having thus endeavoured to fulfil as much as possible the intentions of the Government, there remains for me only to express a hope that my humble though anxious efforts may be deemed acceptable.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your Honor's most obedient Servant,

J. HOBBS.

His Honor Lieutenant-Governor ARTHUR.

NAMES of the 12 men who accompanied Mr. Hobbs, (from another letter, 10th October, 1824):—Thomas Morgan, John Bell, James Jackson, Robert Blackwell, John Hitchcock, Robert Hounslow or Onslow, Samuel Sutcliffe, Michael Sullivan, Thomas Coulsell, George Corkett, William Temple, John Barnett. †

* George's River, formerly called Geordy's River, probably after a small coast craft of that name, which was well known in the early years of the colony, owned by Mr. Denis M'Carty.

† Carretts not in the list, probably a free man, as all the rest were prisoners and received tickets-of-leave for this service.