

(No. 107.)



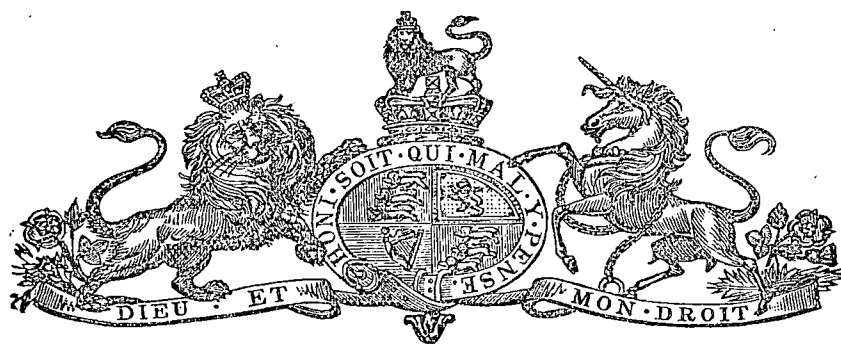
1889.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

THE FRENCH IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, AND
THE FIRST SETTLEMENT AT THE DERWENT:

BY JAMES B. WALKER.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

As the subject of the present Paper may appear to be scarcely within the scope of the objects of the Royal Society, it seems proper to state briefly the occasion of its being written and submitted to the consideration of the Fellows.

Some two years ago, the Tasmanian Government—of which the Hon. James Wilson Agnew, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Society, was Premier—following the good example set by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and New Zealand, directed search to be made in the English State Record Office for papers relating to the settlement and early history of this Colony. The idea originated in a suggestion from Mr. James Bonwick, F.R.G.S., the well-known writer on the Tasmanian Aborigines, who had been employed for years on similar work for various Colonial Governments, and to him the task was entrusted by Dr. Agnew. Mr. Bonwick searched, not only the Record Office, but the papers of the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, the Privy Council, and the British Museum, and discovered and copied a large mass of documents relating to the early days of Tasmania. In the early part of this year, these copies, extending over some 640 folio pages, were received in Hobart, and the present Premier—the Hon. Philip Oakley Fysh—obligingly allowed me to peruse them. I found them to be of great interest. They threw quite a new light on the causes which led to the first occupation of this Island; gave a complete history of Bowen's first settlement at Risdon Cove; and supplied materials for other hitherto unwritten chapters of Tasmanian history. Upon informing Mr. Fysh of the result of my examination, he entered warmly into my proposal to put before the public in a narrative form the information acquired, and placed the documents at my disposal for that purpose. It is at Mr. Fysh's suggestion that this first paper on the subject is now submitted to the Royal Society. The introductory sketch of the operations of the French in Tasmania has been compiled from the original published narratives of the expeditions. Some history of preceding events seemed necessary for a proper understanding of the transactions referred to in the documents under notice. My object has been, not to give a history of the discovery and early exploration of our island, but merely such an outline of the rivalries of the French and English in these seas as would suffice for a better apprehension of the motives which prompted the first occupation of the Derwent.

The story of the first settlement of Tasmania, and of Lieutenant Bowen's little colony at Risdon Cove, has never yet been told, so far as I can discover. West, Fenton, and other authors give meagre, inaccurate, and contradictory particulars. No writer records even the date of Bowen's landing. Mr. Bonwick's researches now, for the first time, enable us to give this missing first chapter of Tasmanian history.

I.—THE FRENCH IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

The Cambridge Professor of Modern History, in a recent remarkable book, has shown that the great English event of the 18th century, indeed, the greatest fact of modern English History, has been the expansion of England into lands beyond the seas—the foundation and growth of a Greater Britain. Professor Seeley holds that the great hundred years' struggle between England and France, lasting from the time of Louis XIV. to the days of Napoleon, was, in the main, a duel between the two nations for the possession of the New World. Even in the English conquest of India the Professor traces, not so much the ambition of conquest and the lust of empire, as fear of the French and rivalry with them. By the close of the last century the issue of the strife was no

longer doubtful. In India, Wellesley had annihilated French influence, and was rapidly consolidating the English dominion. France had lost for ever her finest possessions in America, though she on her side had dealt us a return blow in assisting to tear from England her North American Colonies.

But the struggle was not over, and it was destined to yield yet wider triumphs for the English race. The very humiliation which France had helped to inflict on her rival was to prove a potent factor in the further expansion of "Greater Britain." It is probably no exaggeration to say that it is to the hostility of France, and her action in America, that we owe in no small measure the British colonisation of Australia—a work which must ever stand as the most momentous event of our century.

Expansion of
England, 140.

The secession of her North American provinces had well nigh left England without a colonial empire. Englishmen straightway set themselves to search for a compensation for their lost possessions, and to find a new outlet for their energies and for their surplus population. And a new world lay ready to their hand. As David Livingstone, in our own days, has called into existence a new realm in the dark continent of Africa, so in the days of our great grandfathers, the genius of Captain Cook, England's greatest circumnavigator, had opened up a new realm in the unknown and mysterious seas of the South. But in these Southern seas, as formerly in America and India, England and France were, and indeed still are, rivals. In exploration each nation can boast of distinguished names. The English navigators, Anson, Vancouver, Cook, Furneaux, and Flinders, had active competitors in the Frenchmen, Bougainville, Marion, Surville, La Pérouse, D'Entrecasteaux, and Baudin. Nor were the English the first to entertain the design of colonising the new lands. So far back as the year 1756, an eminent and learned French advocate, M. le President Charles de Brosses, in his *Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes*, had strongly urged upon the Government of France the wisdom of establishing a French colony in the South Seas. In the work cited, the author passes in review the relative advantages of various portions of the Southern world, and concludes that some part of Australasia* offers the best prospect for settlement, the country being favourable, and access easy, with Pondicherry as a base of operations.† He rejects New Zealand and Van Diemen's Land as too remote; and after hesitating for a while over Quiros' Terre du St. Esprit (the coast between Cooktown and Townsville), finally inclines to New Britain as the most suitable locality. With a sagacious foresight, since amply justified by events, he declares that any colony planted in these regions would hold Ariadne's clew for the whole Southern world. From such a centre, every part of this new realm could in time be explored and conquered, from the Equator to the Antarctic Circle. He elaborately discusses the best means of forming such a settlement, and recommends that after its first establishment a certain number of convicts, male and female, should be sent to it every year to supply the necessary labour, and to be in time transformed from a danger and burden to the State into industrious and useful citizens.‡ Still further to strengthen the new colony, he would deport to it, as free citizens, numbers of foundlings, who are in a sense the property of the State which has reared them, and can therefore dispose of them at its pleasure. He warns his countrymen against the danger of waiting until some other nation had proved the practicability of a colony by trying the experiment; for when once any nation has gained a foothold it will not suffer another to share the territory to which it has thus acquired a right by conquest.§ Although various discovery expeditions were despatched from France to the South Seas after the days of De Brosses, the President's warning remained unheeded. France missed her opportunity, and it was left to England to take the first step, and found a new empire in these southern seas, from which—justifying the Frenchman's forecast—she did not scruple from the very first preemptorily to warn off all intruders.

It was probably due to the fact of the coincidence of Captain Cook's discoveries with the loss of the American colonies, quite as much as to her naval supremacy, that England chanced to be beforehand with her rival. It takes an effort of imagination to realise the New World which Cook revealed, and how he opened up to men's minds the possibilities and promise of the new field for enterprise. Until his time, New Holland—for as yet Australia was not||—had been little more than a geographical expression. Parts of the Northern and Western coasts, and one ominous Bay of Storms at the South, were laid down more or less vaguely on the maps from the reports of Dutch navigators of the preceding century, and those old and infrequent voyagers had brought back only reports of forbidding shores and desolate territory. The right to these dreary coasts was conceded without dispute to the Dutch, for it was a land that no man desired. The English had no part in its discovery. One Englishman, indeed, and one only—William Dampier—had touched on the Western coast in the year 1688, had found a barren sandy soil, inhabited by wretched savages, with no redeeming advantage, and had left it gladly, thinking it the most miserable spot on the face of the earth. Such was the state of affairs when Cook appeared on the scene. In 1770, on his return from the observation of the Transit of Venus at Tahiti, and in pursuance of instructions

* De Brosses was President of the Parliament of Dijon. To him we owe the invention of the name *Australasia*. *Nav. aux Terres Aust.*, i., 80. † *Ibid.*, ii., 337, et seq. ‡ *Ibid.*, i., 28, et seq. § *Ibid.*, ii., 408.

|| Quiros (1606) named his discovery *Australia del Espiritu Santo*, in honor of Philip of Austria. Purchas, in his English translation of Quiros' voyage (1625) called it *Australia Incognita*—(See Petherick's *Bibliography of Australasia*). Dairymple, in his *Collection of Voyages* (1770) suggests the name, and Flinders revived it in the Introduction to his *Voyage to Terra Australis*, 1814, p. iii.

to try to solve the mystery of the great South Land, the *Endeavour*, after rediscovering and surveying the islands of New Zealand, sailed west till the eastern shore of New Holland was sighted. Cook explored the coast from Cape Howe to Cape York; landed at Botany Bay, hoisted the English flag, took possession of the country in the name of King George, and returned home to report the existence of a fine and fertile territory in a temperate climate, well suited for English settlers. At home the growth of feeling in favour of a milder penal code had rendered it necessary to devise some scheme for disposing of criminals, and Pitt and the English Government resolved to choose Botany Bay as the field for a project which should relieve English difficulties, and lay the foundation of a new colony. The first fleet sailed from England, and in January, 1788, Governor Phillip planted the first settlement in New Holland, substantially on the lines indicated in detail by the French President more than a quarter of a century before.

But the French had never ceased to turn longing eyes towards the new Southern world. If the mind of France had not been so fully occupied in the desperate effort to maintain her naval power against the English in other seas, it is quite possible that to her, and not to England, would have fallen the dominion of Australia. And, probably, suspicion of French designs had its effect in hastening English action. Already, in 1785, the French Government had despatched the celebrated La Pérouse with an expedition to circumnavigate the world, and explore the coasts of New Holland, doubtless with some more or less definite design of settlement. When, on the 26th January, 1788, La Pérouse, with his ships, the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe*, sailed into Botany Bay, he found an English fleet at anchor there, having arrived five days before him. Governor Phillip had just left the Bay in the *Supply* to find in Port Jackson a more suitable site for a town; and on the very day La Pérouse's ships came to an anchor the city of Sydney was founded. The French remained in Botany Bay for six weeks, the English and they maintaining a friendly and pleasant intercourse. Collins says that the French were very unfavourably impressed with the prospects of the settlement, the officers having been heard to declare that in their whole voyage they had never found so poor a country, or such wretched people as the natives of New South Wales. On the 10th March La Pérouse sailed from New South Wales to vanish into space—the mystery which shrouded his fate not being solved until nearly 40 years had elapsed.

Collins' New South Wales, i., 4.

Ibid., i., 20.

The English foothold on the Australian continent was now securely established, and disregarding the western half, to which the Dutch were still considered as having a title—something like their present title to Western New Guinea—England, by solemn proclamation, formally laid claim to the whole eastern territory from Cape York to the extreme South Cape of Van Diemen's Land, and as far west as the 135th degree of east longitude.

Still France did not relinquish her dreams of colonisation, but seemed to cherish the idea of disputing with her great rival her exclusive possession of the new territories. There is reason to think that the French designs, if ever distinctly formulated, pointed to the southern extremity of Van Diemen's Land as the locality for a settlement. The *Terre de Diémen* and the *Baie des Tempêtes* exercised a particular fascination over successive French navigators, and excited the attention of the French Government. It was a spot known only for a forbidding rock-bound coast, washed by an angry sea, and lashed by perpetual tempests. For more than a century after its discovery by Abel Tasman in 1642 no European had invaded its solitudes, until on the 4th March, 1772, the French navigator, Marion du Fresne, anchored his ships, the *Mascarin* and the *Castries*, in the Frederic Hendric Bay of Tasman*. He remained there six days, landed, and attempted to establish intercourse with the natives, the attempt resulting in an encounter in which the first Tasmanian aborigine fell under the fire of European muskets. After Marion, the English navigators Furneaux (1773) Cook (1777), Cox (1789), and Bligh (1788 and 1792) paid passing visits to Adventure Bay; but it was a Frenchman, again, who made the first survey of the approaches to the Derwent. The instructions to La Pérouse in 1785 had directed him to explore this, the extreme southern point of New Holland; and the last letter written by him from Botany Bay, on 7 February, 1788, notes his intention to proceed there before his return,—an intention there is some reason to believe he executed†. The exploration was made four years later by Admiral Bruny D'Entrecasteaux, Commander of the expedition sent out by the National Assembly in 1791 to search for the missing navigator. It was to Storm Bay that his ships, the *Recherche* and *Esperance*, first directed their course from the Cape of Good Hope. The autumn of 1792 was far advanced before the French Admiral sighted the basaltic cliffs of Van Diemen's Land. Through an error of his pilot, Raoul, he missed Adventure Bay, which he had intended to make, and on 21st April cast anchor at the entrance of the inlet afterwards known to the English as Storm Bay Passage, but which now more fittingly bears the name of D'Entrecasteaux Channel, after its discoverer. Recherche Bay, close at hand, offered a safe and commodious harbour for the ships; and here they remained for a month, their boats exploring and surveying the channel and the various inlets on the coast, while the scientific men journeyed inland,

La Perouse, Voy., i., 120. *Ibid.*, iv., 203.

* This is not the Frederick Henry Bay of the colonists, but that marked on the maps as Marion Bay, on the East Coast.

† Bent's Almanac for 1827 states that in the year 1809 Captain Bunker, of the ship *Venus*, found, buried on the shore of Adventure Bay, a bottle containing letters from La Pérouse dated one month after his leaving Port Jackson. In the year 1826 Captain Peter Dillon discovered traces of La Pérouse's expedition at Vanikoro, in the Santa Cruz Group.

made observations, collected specimens of natural history, and revelled in the examination of a new flora and fauna. The natives, at first timid and distrustful, were soon conciliated, and showed themselves most friendly to the Europeans. On the 17th May the ships entered the Channel, and the French viewed with astonishment the extent of the harbours which unfolded themselves to their delighted gaze, affording a secure shelter spacious enough to contain easily the combined fleet of all the maritime powers of Europe. After a fortnight employed in examining the Channel, the Admiral sailed out of the Passage into Storm Bay, rounded the Pillar, and proceeded to New Caledonia. In the summer of the following year he returned to Van Diemen's Land, and spent another five weeks in the Channel (21 January to 28 February, 1793). During this second stay the French completed the surveys which they had begun in the preceding autumn, explored Norfolk Bay and Frederick Henry Bay (Baie du Nord), and ascended 20 miles up the Derwent, which they named Rivière du Nord. Flinders, with his usual generous recognition of the work of previous navigators, says of the charts of Beautems Beaupré, the hydrographer of the expedition, that "they contain some of the finest specimens of marine surveying perhaps ever made in a new country." Labillardière, the naturalist and historian of the expedition, devotes more than 160 pages of his work to a description of the Terre de Diémen. He speaks with enthusiasm of the country and its productions, of the magnificent forests of blue-gum and other timber, of its soil and fertility, and of the amiability of its peaceful inhabitants, and dilates with pardonable pride and satisfaction on the grandeur and extent of the harbours which French enterprise had discovered in this hitherto dreaded coast. The lengthened stay of D'Entrecasteaux, the minute and elaborate nature of his surveys, and the space his historian devotes to a description of the country and its advantages, indicate some further object than mere geographical research. The names which stud our southern coast, and are familiar in our mouths as household words,—Bruny Island, D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Recherche Bay, Port Esperance, River Huon, Cape Raoul, and others,—stand a perpetual monument to the memory of the French navigators.

Flinders' Voy.,
Intro., p. 93.

Labillardière,
Voyage à la
recherche de La
Pérouse, i., pp.
116-194, and i. p.
428—ii., p. 80.

And now, at length, English explorers appear upon the scene. In 1794, Lieut. John Hayes, of the Indian navy, was despatched from India in the ships *Duke of Clarence* and *Duchess* on a voyage of discovery, including the exploration of the coasts of Van Diemen's Land. He sailed up the Rivière du Nord—which he re-christened the Derwent—as far as Herdsman's Cove. As the admirable charts of D'Entrecasteaux were unknown to the English until long years after, it was on Hayes' sketch that subsequent visitors had to rely, and in many cases the names he gave have been substituted for those given by the French.

Flinders' Intro.,
p. 94.

In December, 1797, the adventurous Bass, leaving Port Jackson in an open whaleboat, had solved the vexed problem of the strait which bears the name and immortalises the intrepid daring of its discoverer; and late in the year 1798, Bass and Flinders, in the *Norfolk*, a little sloop of 25 tons, sailed through Bass' Strait, explored Port Dalrymple, circumnavigated Tasmania, and made a careful examination and survey of the Derwent and its approaches and neighbourhood.

On the 19th October, 1800, when Bonaparte was First Consul, an expedition, consisting of two ships, the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*, sailed out of Havre, amidst great demonstrations, for a voyage of discovery round the world. Commodore Baudin, in the *Géographe*, was chief of the expedition; Captain Hamelin commanded the *Naturaliste*. Although fierce war was raging at the time between the two nations, the English Admiralty granted a passport or safe conduct to Baudin, on the ground that scientific expeditions should be exempt from hostilities. Notwithstanding these courtesies of the English Government to the French commander, it was shrewdly suspected that the real design of the expedition was to spy out the state of the English possessions in New Holland, and, if practicable, hoist the standard of Bonaparte at some convenient point of the coast and establish a French colony. Certain it is that Baudin's instructions—afterwards published in Péron's account of the voyage—give colour to the belief. They direct the captain to proceed direct from the Mauritius to the southern point of the Terre de Diémen, double the South Cape, carefully examine the Canal D'Entrecasteaux in every part, ascend all the rivers in this portion of the island as far as they were navigable, explore all the eastern coast, carefully survey Banks' Straits, sail through Bass' Strait, and after exploring Hunter's Islands, proceed to the continent of New Holland and search for the great strait which was supposed to separate the eastern part occupied by the English, from the western portion claimed by the Dutch. All this certainly looks very like some further object than geographical discovery. The French expedition doubtless stirred the English to renewed activity, and through the influence of Sir Joseph Banks, Earl Spencer (then at the head of the Admiralty) consented, early in 1801, to despatch the *Investigator*, a sloop of 334 tons, to make a complete survey of the coast of New Holland. The command was given to Lieut. Matthew Flinders, who had already distinguished himself by some daring explorations in company with Dr. George Bass: and amply did he justify his appointment. The ship's complement was 88 persons, amongst whom served, as a midshipman, John Franklin, afterwards destined, as Sir John Franklin, to become the Governor of Tasmania, and to die in solving the problem of the North-West Passage. The *Investigator* sailed from Spithead on the 18th July, 1801, and sighted Cape Leeuwin on 6th December following. Meantime Commodore Baudin, deviating from his instructions, had gone to the western coast of Australia, and it was not until the 13th January, 1802, that he sighted the De Witts Islands (known to our fishermen as "The Witches"), off the south coast of this island. The French commander anchored next day off Partridge Island,

Edinburgh,
Rev., Aug., 1810.
Rusden's Disc. of
Port Phillip, p. 3.

Péron, i., p. 5.

Flinders, i., p. 4.

Ibid., p. 15.

Péron, i., p. 215.

in the Channel; remained there until the 17th February—36 days; occupied the warm summer season in making a very complete examination and survey of the Channel, the River Huon and Port Cygnet, Frederick Henry and Norfolk Bays, and exploring the Derwent carefully nearly as far as Bridgewater. The French had many interviews with the natives, doing everything in their power to conciliate them, and with complete success. Péron, the naturalist, who wrote the history of the expedition, devotes nearly 100 pages of his first volume to Van Diemen's Land. He gives a glowing description of the beauty and capabilities of the country, and a poetical and highly-coloured picture of the kindness and good qualities of the aborigines. On leaving Storm Bay the Frenchmen sailed for the east coast; they examined Maria Island, visited the Schoutens and Freycinet's Peninsula, and surveyed the remainder of the coast until they reached Banks' Strait. Here the ships were separated by a storm. The *Naturaliste* surveyed Banks' Strait, and explored the Hunter Islands and other islands in Bass' Strait; and the *Géographe* sailed for the south coast of New Holland—or, as Baudin christened it, Napoleon Land—to search for the channel which was supposed to divide New Holland. The French expedition had surveyed the whole coast-line of Van Diemen's Land, with the exception of the west coast from Capè Grim to Port Davey. Péron, i., pp. 218-260.

On the 8th April, 1802, the ships of Baudin and Flinders met off Kangaroo Island. Flinders states that Baudin was communicative of his discoveries in Van Diemen's Land, and declares that he, on his part, furnished the French commander with every information as to his own explorations of the coast, and gave him directions for his guidance. Péron, in his brief notice of the interview between the two commanders, simply remarks that Flinders showed great reserve on the subject of his own operations. The object of this suppression of facts by the Frenchman will appear later on. Flinders, i., p. 169.

On the 25th April, 1802, Captain Hamelin, in the *Naturaliste*, arrived off Port Jackson. His provisions were exhausted, his crew prostrated by scurvy. He was in urgent need of succour. Yet he approached Port Jackson with many misgivings. War, so far as he knew, was raging in all its bitterness and fury between France and England, and though he bore a safe conduct from the Admiralty, he fully anticipated that he would not be allowed to enter the Port, or, if he was, that the aid he so much needed would be refused him. But his doubts were soon dispelled, for, as he says, they were instantly welcomed by the English with magnanimous generosity. Not only were all the resources of the country placed at the disposal of the French captain, but the most distinguished houses of the colony were thrown open to his officers, and during the whole time they remained they "experienced that delicate and affectionate hospitality which is equally honorable to those who confer it and to those who are its objects." The news of the Peace of Amiens (proclaimed 27 March, 1802,) which reached Sydney a short time later, though it made intercourse more pleasant, "could not," Péron says, "increase the kindness which the English displayed towards us." A fortnight later (May 9) Flinders, who had completed a thorough survey of the South Coast, arrived at Port Jackson in the *Investigator*. Ibid., p. 302.

Baudin, in the *Géographe*, had been some six weeks on the South coast of New Holland, rediscovering and renaming the discoveries already made by Flinders. His crew were suffering terribly from scurvy, and his officers urged his going to Port Jackson to recruit. Whether the Commodore doubted the nature of his reception, or whether the attractions of the Terre de Diémen proved irresistible, does not appear, but Baudin disregarded their protests, and to their intense chagrin, though winter was fast approaching, headed his ship for the cold and stormy south, and on 20th May once more cast anchor in Adventure Bay. The state of his ship's company, however, was such that after only two days' stay he was obliged to give orders to sail for Sydney. Baffled by contrary winds, battered by violent storms, with a crew unable, from illness, to handle the ship, it took him a whole month to make the passage. On the 20th June the *Géographe* approached the heads of Port Jackson. Not only were they apprehensive respecting the fate of the *Naturaliste*, and as to the nature of their own reception, but the condition of the crew was most deplorable. Flinders says "it was grievous to see the miserable condition to which both officers and crew were reduced by scurvy, there being, according to the Commander's account, out of 170 men not more than 12 capable of doing their duty." Péron quotes the Commander's journal as stating that but four of the crew, including a midshipman, were able to keep the deck, and he adds there was not one on board who was free from the disease. Many had died, and the surgeon, M. Taillefer, gives a horrible description of the sufferings of the survivors.* In fact, on arriving off Port Jackson the *Géographe* was unable to make the harbour, until Governor King had sent the *Investigator's* boat with a number of hands to work the vessel into port. It is hardly necessary to say that the distressed Frenchmen were received with the greatest kindness. The numerous sick were removed to the Colonial Flinders, i., p. 230.

* The scurvy was at this period the scourge of the naval and mercantile marine, and especially of discovery expeditions. Vancouver attributes the high position England had attained, in a great degree, to the attention her captains paid to naval hygiene. The French discovery crews always suffered terribly from want of proper precautions, and from Péron's account Baudin's ships were miserably victualled, and their commander culpably indifferent to the health of his men. Out of 23 scientific men who left France in the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste* only three returned to their country. Out of 219 men who sailed with D'Entrecasteaux, 89 died before the ships returned to Mauritius. The French voyages of discovery were singularly fatal to their commanders. Besides La Pérouse, who perished with all his ship's company, not one of the commanders who visited Tasmania lived to return to his native country. Marion du Fresne was killed at New Zealand. Admiral D'Entrecasteaux died at sea off the Admiralty Isles, and his second in command, Huon Kermadec, at New Caledonia. Baudin himself died at Mauritius on the voyage home. Péron, i., p. 340.

Hospital, and tenderly cared for by the English surgeons. Whatever they had need of that the place could furnish was placed at their disposal, and the Governor gave the Commander an unlimited credit at the Public Treasury to enable him to revictual and refit, and also purchase a third vessel. More than this: the Colony was at the time in great want of fresh provisions, floods on the Hawkesbury having destroyed the wheat harvest, salt meat was exceedingly scarce, and fresh meat almost unprocurable; yet so soon as the strangers' necessities were known, Government oxen were killed, and by a common consent the ration of wheat issued to garrison and inhabitants, including the Governor and officers, was reduced one-half, so that the scurvy-stricken crew might not want what was so essential for their recovery. This statement is made on the authority of a letter written by Baudin himself. Both he and Péron handsomely acknowledge the kindness they received, and exhaust their phrases in describing the affectionate and obliging care of Governor King and his unexampled conduct, the courtesy and unremitting attention of the inhabitants, the generosity of the Government, the absolute freedom accorded to their movements, and the sentiments of gratitude which these kindnesses inspired.

Péron, p. 377.

Flinders Voy.,
p. 399.

I have dwelt particularly on these incidents, not only because it is matter of pardonable pride to record how chivalrously Englishmen can behave towards an enemy in distress, but because of the striking contrast which the aid and courtesies extended to the Frenchmen by Governor King and the English colonists offer to the treatment Flinders experienced from the Governor of a French Colony within little more than a year of the arrival of Baudin's expedition at Sydney. In December, 1803, on his way to England in the little *Cumberland*, Flinders was obliged to put into Mauritius in distress; when, in spite of his safe conduct from the French Admiralty, his ship was seized as a prize, he himself subjected to close imprisonment, his papers and charts confiscated, and when, after three years, tardy orders for his release came from France, he was detained on one pretext or another until 1810, six years and a half after his seizure. In the meantime the narrative of Baudin's voyage was published in Paris, all mention of Flinders' explorations being suppressed, and the credit of his discoveries being claimed by the French for themselves. In Sydney, at any rate, the French officers had made no pretensions to priority of discovery, for Flinders tells us that Lieut. Freycinet (the joint editor of the history of the voyage), remarked to him, in Governor King's house—"Captain, if we had not been kept so long picking up shells and collecting butterflies at Van Diemen's Land, you would not have discovered the South Coast [of New Holland] before us;" and Flinders, in Péron's presence, showed his chart to Baudin and pointed out the limits of his discovery. Flinders generously acquits Péron of blame in the matter, and says that he believes his candour to have been equal to his acknowledged abilities, and that what he wrote was from overruling authority, and smote him to the heart. He attributes the suppressions in Péron's work, and his own treatment, to the secret instructions of the French Government, and possibly to have "been intended as the forerunner of a claim to the possession of the countries so said to have been first discovered by French navigators."

Ibid., ii., p. 470.

II. THE FIRST SETTLEMENT AT THE DERWENT.

The foregoing sketch of the operations of the French navigators in these waters will, I think, have made it pretty plain that the French Government entertained serious designs of planting a colony at the first convenient opportunity somewhere in Tasmania, presumably in the neighbourhood of the Derwent. How disastrous to the English colonies in Australia the successful accomplishment of such a design would have been we can partly appreciate from our recent experience of the trouble and vexation caused to the Australians by the existence of a French penal settlement even so far removed from our shores as New Caledonia.

The following particulars of the circumstances which were the immediate occasion of the English occupation of Van Diemen's Land are drawn almost wholly from unpublished documents preserved in the English State Record Office, and which I have already referred to as having been lately copied by Mr. Bonwick for the Tasmanian Government. They will show that the colonisation of Tasmania was not an isolated or chance event, but one link of a chain,—a ripple in the great current of influence which has been shaping English and European history.

On the 18th November, 1802, after a six months' stay, the two French ships sailed out of Port Jackson for Bass' Straits. The *Naturaliste* was intended to take home the sick, leaving the *Géographe* to complete her voyage of discovery alone. Governor King had not been without misgivings respecting the movements of the French, and had given expression to them in a despatch to Lord Hobart written a few days before; but his suspicions only proceeded from the circumstance of the long time they were engaged in surveying at Storm Bay Passage. Moreover, the recent discovery of Bass' Straits, by proving Van Diemen's Land to be an island, had given rise to a new cause for apprehension, since it might now be fairly contended that the island could not form part of the territory of New South Wales, and that the English, having no prior right of discovery, could not make good their claim, while the French expeditions by their explorations and surveys had established a superior title. But a few hours after the French ships were out of sight, a piece of gossip reached the Governor's ears which fairly startled him out of his equanimity. This was a report that some of the French officers had stated, in conversation with Lieut.-Colonel Paterson and

King to Hobart,
23 Nov. 1802, p.
33.

Ibid.

others, possibly in a convivial moment, that a principal object of their voyage was to fix on a place at Van Diemen's Land for a settlement. The alarmed Governor sent off forthwith to Colonel Paterson for more precise information, and the answer he received, on that same Tuesday morning on which the ships had sailed, more than confirmed his worst fears. Not only had the talk among the French officers been so general that the Colonel could not understand how it was that the Governor had not heard of it, but one of the officers had sent Paterson a chart, and had pointed out the very spot selected—the place where they and D'Entrecasteaux also had spent so much time—the Baie du Nord [now known as Frederick Henry Bay], in Storm Bay Passage, or, as the French called it, Le Canal D'Entrecasteaux. King, of course, knew very well that Baudin could, at most, take formal possession, for, with his small and sickly crew, and without stores or provisions, he had not the means to found a colony. There was no immediate danger on that score, but he did not know what recommendations might have been sent to the French Government, or how soon a properly equipped expedition might be on its way from France to plant a settlement, and, being a man of action, accustomed to act promptly and on his own responsibility, without waiting for instructions that might be twelve months in reaching him, he proceeded forthwith to take steps to prevent an invasion of His Majesty's territory of New South Wales, of which territory he was the guardian. His first difficulty was to find a ship. The naval strength at the command of the Governor of New South Wales was not large. His Majesty's ships in these seas were few in number, small, and often unseaworthy, and there was a constant difficulty in finding vessels that could be spared for any special service. Of those under his orders the *Buffalo* was essential at Port Jackson, the *Lady Nelson* was off north with Flinders, the *Porpoise*, the only other king's ship, was away at Tahiti salting pork for the necessities of the colony. But there was in Port Jackson a little armed schooner called the *Cumberland*, which had been built at Sydney a few years before for the purpose of pursuing runaways. She was only 29 tons burden, it is true, but she would do to check-mate French designs. This little craft was therefore hastily prepared for sea, a crew was selected, Lieut. Chas. Robbins, master's mate of H.M.S. *Buffalo*, was put in command, and in four days she was ready to sail. Robbins received several sets of instructions, indicating the uncertainty into which the Governor was thrown. His general instructions required him to proceed without loss of time to Storm Bay Passage,—“the dominion of which, and all Van Diemen's Land, being,” says King, “within the limits of His Majesty's territory and my government,”—and to fix on the most eligible places in Frederick Henry Bay and the River Derwent, agreeable to the separate instructions on that head. If, however, Robbins met with southerly or westerly winds, he was to go to King's Island and Port Phillip, for the examination and survey of which places he had separate instructions, and afterwards proceed to Storm Bay Passage. He was to hoist the English flag whenever on shore, placing a guard at each place, who were to turn up the ground and sow seeds. As the *Porpoise* was intended to follow with soldiers and settlers immediately on her return from Tahiti, he was to keep the King's colours flying to indicate the intended settlement. Captain Robbins was also charged with a letter from King to the French commander, if he should happen to overtake him in Bass' Straits; and he received very precise instructions respecting the action he was to take to assert English rights if the French ventured to infringe them. Having his preparations made and his little vessel ready for sea, King sat down to report to Lord Hobart the position of affairs. He tells the Secretary for War* that, on hearing Colonel Paterson's report, he had lost no time in expediting the *Cumberland*, armed colonial schooner; that she was on the point of sailing, and that, from the arrangements he had made, His Majesty's claim to the threatened part of this territory could not be disputed; for, whatever might be in contemplation, it could not be performed by Baudin in his present condition; it was only necessary to guard against any action of the French Government which Baudin might have recommended. It was his intention, therefore, when the *Porpoise* arrived from Tahiti, to despatch her with a small establishment to the most eligible spot at Storm Bay Passage, and also with one for Port Phillip or King's Island.

Paterson to King, 18 Nov. 1802, p. 81.

King's Orders to Robbins, 22 Nov. 1802, p. 65-72.

p. 65-72.
p. 78.

The *Cumberland* sailed the same day (23rd November). She had on board Mr. Charles Grimes† (Acting Surveyor-General), M'Callum (the surgeon), Jas. Flemming (the gardener), and three marines; with the crew, 17 persons. In the journal‡ kept by Flemming, the gardener, who was sent to report on the soil and productions of the almost unknown regions to which they were going, we have a chronicle of their proceedings.§ They had a quick run of two days to Cape Howe, but, baffled by contrary winds and calms, were nine days more in reaching Kent's Group, and it was not until the 8th December—a fortnight after leaving Port Jackson—that they made Sea Elephant Bay, on the east coast of King's Island. Here they found the French ships lying at anchor, and at 5 o'clock on that summer evening the little *Cumberland* dropped anchor alongside them. The *Naturaliste* was on the point of sailing for France. Captain Robbins boarded the *Géographe*, announced his mission, and delivered to the Commadore the Governor's letter. It was short, and friendly in tone. King begins by remarking that his intention to send a vessel to the southward to fix on a place for a settlement was already known to Baudin himself. He then mentions the report that had led to the departure of this vessel being hastened, and goes on to say that, while wholly

Flemming's Journal.

* The Secretary for War was also at that time Minister for the Colonies.

† Grimes was one of the first, if not the first, to cross Tasmania from north to south.—See Flinders' Chart, 1807.

‡ Flemming's Journal was disinterred from the Records in the Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, by Mr. J. J. Shillinglaw, in 1877, and was printed in that gentleman's “Historical Records of Port Phillip.” Melbourne, 1879.

§ *Ibid*, pp. 15-30.

disbelieving that the French commander had any thought of such a design as had been imputed to him, yet it seemed but proper that he should be informed of the rumour, and of the orders the captain of the *Cumberland* had received in consequence. The version of the Governor's letter given by Péron in his history of the expedition represents it as couched in more forcible and less conciliatory terms. Péron says that hardly had they anchored at King's Island when the little schooner *Cumberland* arrived from Port Jackson, bringing Surveyor-General Grimes, who had been sent by Governor King to make a declaration, as singular in its form as it was remarkable in its object. "A report having reached me," wrote Mr. King to our Commander, "that you entertain a design of leaving some people either at Diemen's Land or on the south-west coast of New South Wales, to found a French Colony there, I deem it my duty to declare to you, Monsieur le Commandant, that by virtue of the proclamation of 1788, whereby England formally took possession, all these countries form an integral part of the British Empire, and that you cannot occupy any part of them without breaking the friendly relations which have been so recently re-established between the two nations. I will not even attempt to conceal from you that such is the nature of my positive instructions on this point that it will be my duty to oppose by every means in my power the execution of the design you are supposed to have in view. Accordingly, H.M.S. *Cumberland* has received orders not to leave you until the officer in command of her is convinced that your proceedings are wholly unconnected with any attempt at invasion of the British territory in these parts."* With King's own copy of his letter before us† we can hardly accept Péron's version as accurate. Probably, while professing to give the letter textually, he really relied on his memory, and interwove the substance of the English Captain's verbal communications to the Commodore. It is sufficiently clear, however, that Robbins, with the downrightness of a sailor, had left nothing doubtful or ambiguous with respect to the object of his mission. During the week after the arrival of the *Cumberland* and the delivery of the despatches, the representatives of the two nations fraternised and interchanged hospitalities on the disputed shores of King's Island. The French meanwhile set up an observatory on land, and pitched their tents near the beach. Perhaps it was this proceeding that confirmed Robbins' suspicions, or perhaps the French Commander would not give him the assurances he wanted; at all events, before the end of the week the Englishman made up his mind that the time for decisive action had come; so on the 14th he made a formal landing in full view of the Frenchmen, marched his little party to the rear of the tents, hoisted His Majesty's colours on a large tree, posted at the foot of the tree his guard of three marines with loaded muskets, fired three volleys, gave three cheers, and took formal possession of the island in the name of King George. This defiant assertion of British claims by a handful of English sailors in the teeth of ten times their number of traditional enemies, might well have wounded the vanity of people less susceptible than Frenchmen; and we need not therefore wonder that we hear of no more mutual hospitalities. Péron remarks that "such proceedings may probably seem childish to people unacquainted with the English policy, but to the statesman such formalities have a more important and serious aspect. By these repeated public declarations England continually aims at strengthening her claim, and establishing her rights in a positive fashion, and uses these pretexts to repel, even by force of arms, all nations who may desire to form settlements in these lands."‡ Péron must often have recalled to mind the warning of the President of the Parliament of Dijon half a century before, and reflected with some bitterness how amply the prophecy had been fulfilled.

The French Commander's answer to Governor King's letter is worthy of notice as showing that the French had by no means relinquished their claim to a share of Australian territory. His letter is dated from the *Géographe*, and bears date the 3rd of the month Nivose, in the 11th year of the French Republic (23rd December, 1802). He tells King that the arrival of the *Cumberland*, and especially the letter which the Governor had done him the honour to write, would have surprised him if Mr. Robbins had not, by his conduct, made clear to him the true motive of the expedition which had been despatched after him in such headlong haste. "But perhaps," says the Commodore,

* Péron's Voyage, 2nd ed., vol. 3, p. 11; and see Appendix B.

† See Appendix B.

‡ The high-handed and exclusive policy of the English is a frequent topic of complaint in Péron's work. Thus, he relates that two days after leaving Port Jackson they fell in with a schooner, on board of which was a M. Coxwell from the Isle of France, who had accompanied another Frenchman, Lecorre, on a sealing cruise to Bass' Straits in the *Enterprise*, of Bordeaux. He goes on to explain that while other nations had been indifferent to the importance of New Holland, England had in 1788 despatched a fleet thither and founded a Colony, and had, without remark from European statesmen, taken possession of half the Continent. Emboldened by the silence of other Governments, the British Government had published the instructions to Governor Phillip claiming the country from Cape York to the South Cape (lat. 10° to 43° S.), and as far to the West as the 135th parallel, besides all the islands in the Pacific, and had established a policy of exclusion of other nations from the fisheries. So that on the arrival of the *Enterprise*, Governor King, although peace had been declared, warned Lecorre off the coast under a threat of seizing his vessel, and though he finally allowed the Frenchmen to fish at the Two Sisters, it was only on the condition that he should undertake not to enter Bass' Straits, and that no vessels in future would be allowed even so much indulgence. Lecorre's vessel was wrecked at the Two Sisters, and he himself and two-thirds of his crew perished. Péron says it is plain that the intentions of the English Government are so hostile that it will be dangerous for other speculators to venture into these waters. (Péron's Voyage, 2nd ed., vol. 3, p. 3.)

Governor King, in a despatch to the Admiralty (9th May, 1803), states his intention of restricting seal fishing by foreigners; and in another despatch to Lord Hobart, referring to Lecorre's vessel, remarks with some satisfaction that the French schooner had been wrecked at the Cape Barren Islands, "which may stop more adventurers from that quarter."

"after all it may have come too late, for several days before the gentleman who commands it thought proper to hoist his flag above our tents, we had taken care to place in four prominent parts of this island—which I intend shall continue to bear your name—proofs sufficient to show the priority of our visit." He then declares that the report—of which they suspected Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp to have been the author—was entirely without foundation, and he does not believe that his officers or scientific men had by their conduct given any ground for it. "But," he concludes, "in any case, you ought to have been perfectly certain that if the French Government had given me orders to establish myself in any place, either at the north or at the south of Diemen's Land—discovered by Abel Tasman—I should have done so without keeping it a secret from you."*

A week after the date of his letter to King (31st December), Baudin sailed from King's Island for the Gulf of Carpentaria, and from thence made his way to Mauritius, where he died. Surveyor-General Grimes and Flemming spent some six weeks in a thorough exploration of King's Island.† Their report of the island as a place for settlement was unfavourable. They then proceeded in the *Cumberland* to Port Phillip, where they remained six weeks, Grimes making an accurate survey of the Port both by sea and land, discovering the River Yarra, and bringing away a more favourable impression of the country, but, as King says, with no very promising hopes that either that place or King's Island would ever be found an eligible place for an agricultural settlement. On leaving Port Phillip, Robbins sailed direct for Port Jackson, where he arrived on 7th March, having been absent about three months and a half. It does not appear why he did not fulfil the rest of his instructions and go on to Storm Bay Passage. Perhaps, having seen the French ships sail away to the westward and fairly off the English premises, he conceived the danger to be at an end. King, at any rate, was perfectly satisfied, and writes to the Admiralty that Robbins had conducted the service entrusted to him very much to his satisfaction, and remarks that "making the French Commander acquainted with my intention of settling Van Diemen's Land was all I sought by this voyage."

King to Hobart
9 May, 1803.
p. 77, &c.
Flemming's
Journal, p. 19.

King to Nepean,
9 May, 1803.‡

The fear that the French might yet make a descent on Van Diemen's Land still weighed on King's mind. As we have seen, before the *Cumberland* sailed he had determined to send the *Porpoise*, on her arrival from Tahiti, to make a settlement. The return of Robbins with unfavourable reports of King's Island and Port Phillip had satisfied him that neither of those places was adapted for settlement, and he once more fixed his attention on the point which, now that Baudin had left Bass' Straits, appeared to be most threatened. He therefore resolved to limit his action to Storm Bay Passage, and immediately took steps to carry out his resolution.

He reported his intention to the Admiralty, and says in his despatch, "My reasons for making this settlement are the necessity there appears of preventing the French gaining a footing on the east side of these islands; to divide the convicts; to secure another place for obtaining timber with any other natural productions that may be discovered and found useful; the advantages that may be expected by raising grain; and to promote the seal fishery."

King to Nepean,
9 May, 1803, p. 70.

There is no doubt that Governor King was in perfect accord with the Home Government in his apprehension of French designs, and in his policy of anticipating them by occupying important points "for political reasons."‡

Already, in January of this very year the Authorities in Downing-street had determined to form a settlement at Port Phillip, and had selected Lieut.-Col. David Collins to be its Lieutenant-Governor, and the date corresponds with the communications that King had made to the English Government with respect to Baudin's expedition.

Five months later (24th June, 1803), in consequence of King's despatch of 23 November, 1802, informing the Admiralty of the report that the French were about to colonise Van Diemen's Land, Lord Hobart instructed the Governor to remove part of the establishment at Norfolk Island to Port Dalrymple, "the advantageous position of which, upon the southern coast of Van Diemen's Land and near the eastern entrance of Bass' Straits, renders it, in a political view, peculiarly necessary that a settlement should be formed there." The amusing confusion of localities does not say much for the state of geographical knowledge at Downing-street, but the anxiety of the Government to anticipate French action is very clearly indicated.

See Memo. of
May 18, 1803,
p. 424.

Hobart to King,
24 June, 1803,
p. 429. §

The Governor's mind was now firmly made up to establish a colony at the Derwent, but some months were yet to elapse before he could carry out his plans. One of his difficulties had been to find, out of the slender establishment at Port Jackson, a competent officer to whom he could entrust

* See Appendix B for Baudin's letter.

† The island was in those days a favourite resort of sealers. Péron says that when they reached Sea Elephant Bay the beach was covered with sea elephants, their brown colour making them strikingly visible on the white strand, where they lay like great black rocks. At the approach of the French some of the animals plunged into the sea, roaring frightfully, while others remained motionless on the sand gazing on their visitors with a placid and indifferent air. In the same year Captain Campbell, of the *Snow Harrington*, at New Year's Island, on the western side of King's Island, in 10 weeks (19th March to 27th May) killed 600 sea elephants and 4300 seals.

‡ See Professor Seeley on Napoleon's intentions in the war that ensued on the rupture of the Peace of Amiens 18th May, 1803. Exp. of England, p. 34.

the command of the intended settlement. The arrival of H.M.S. *Glatton* at Sydney, in March, 1803, relieved him from this embarrassment. There was on board the *Glatton* a Lieutenant who had made several voyages to the colony, and so far back as 1792 had been engaged in conveying cattle and provisions from Bengal to New South Wales in the *Atlantic* storeship, at a time of great scarcity*. He was a son of Commissioner Bowen,† and we have King's testimony that he came of a family various members of which, including his father, had distinguished themselves in the navy during the French wars. Peace had now been declared, and Lieut. John Bowen saw little prospect of speedy promotion. When, therefore, the Governor spoke of the difficulty he was in through not being able to find a man competent to take charge of the Derwent establishment, it occurred to Bowen that here was a chance for him to earn a claim to notice as the founder of a new colony, and so possibly win a promotion he could hardly hope for as a junior lieutenant in time of peace. He obtained Captain Colnett's permission, and offered his services to the Governor. King was glad to accept them, and on 28th March, 1803, he issued a Commission in which, after premising that it had become necessary to establish His Majesty's right to Van Diemen's Land, within the limits of the territory of New South Wales, he directed Lieut. John Bowen to proceed in H.M. armed tender *Lady Nelson* to choose a suitable place for an establishment, and appointed him Commandant and Superintendent of the settlement. The more detailed instructions to the new Commandant, bearing the same date as the commission, direct him to proceed in H.M. armed vessel *Porpoise*, or *Lady Nelson* tender, with the people and stores for a settlement, and fix on a proper spot in the Derwent, about Risdon's Cove; to begin immediately to clear ground and sow wheat and other crops; and to furnish full reports on the soil, timber, capabilities, and productions of the country. He was to have six months' provisions; was to employ the convicts in labour for the public good; to hold religious services every Sunday; and to enforce a due observance of religion and good order. No trade or intercourse was to be allowed with any ships touching at the port. Arrangements were to be made for laying out a town, building fortifications, and appropriating land for cultivation on the public account. The free settlers who accompanied him, in consideration of their being the first to volunteer, were to have a location of 200 acres for each family, and be allowed rations, the labour of two convicts each for 18 months, and such corn, seeds, and other stock as could be spared. Bowen also received sealed orders with respect to any French ships which might arrive; he was to inform them of His Majesty's right to the whole of Van Diemen's Land, and was to repel any attempt to form a settlement,—if possible, without recourse to hostile measures.

King to Hobart,
20 December,
1804, p. 125.
Bowen to King,
16 Nov. 1804,
p. 127.

Order 28 March,
1803, p. 85.

Instructions, 28
March, 1803,
p. 86.

Order 1 May,
1803, p. 90. King
to Collins,
30 Sept. 1804,
p. 389.

King to Hobart,
7 Aug. 1803, p. 91,
King to Palmer,
29 Sept. 1804,
p. 113.
Flinders, ii., 96,
as to *L. Nelson*.
Ibid, ii., 276,
as to *Porpoise*.
Flinders, ii., 276.
Ibid, ii., 297.
Ibid, 299.

King to Hobart,
7 Aug. 1803,
p. 91.

Another three months elapsed after Bowen had received his Commission before King had vessels at his disposal which he could spare for the service. It was not until the 30th June, 1803, that at last the *Porpoise* and *Lady Nelson* sailed from Port Jackson with the Commandant and people and stores for the Derwent. Yet even then the attempt was destined to be thwarted for a time. Both ships were much out of repair and sadly leaky, and on leaving Port Jackson they met with such strong head winds that they were compelled to give up all idea of proceeding on their voyage, and put back to the harbour, arriving on the 4th July. The *Porpoise* was now required to take Flinders to England, and after undergoing repairs, she sailed on 10th August, only to be lost a week afterwards, in company with the *Cuto*, on Wreck Reef, to the north of Rockhampton (Lat. 22° 11' S.). King forthwith ordered the Colonial vessel *Francis* to be fitted out to accompany the *Lady Nelson* on a second attempt, and wrote to Lord Hobart that he hoped these ships would complete the service, which he deemed the more essential from the inclination the French had shown to keep up a correspondence with Port Jackson.

In those days the exigencies of the service compelled Governors to take whatever offered to aid them in accomplishing their plans. Many were the missions of relief or mail despatch that were entrusted to whalers, or even American sealers, and their remuneration was sometimes odd enough. Thus, on one occasion Governor King desired Governor Collins to pay for the despatches sent to him by a sealing sloop going to King's Island, by giving the skipper 30 empty salt-meat casks—surely as odd a postage as ever was paid. And it must be admitted that at times the Yankees fleeced the Britishers handsomely for the humane help they afforded—for a consideration.

Let us be thankful that it was not a Yankee sealing schooner that carried the first Governor of Tasmania to the seat of his Government, but a British whaler, which turned up at the right moment—the *Albion*, 326 tons—whose skipper, Captain Ebor Bunker, was afterwards well known at the Derwent Settlement in early times.‡

On the 31st August, 1803, the *Albion* and *Lady Nelson* set sail from Port Jackson. The *Lady Nelson* took the bulk of the people and stores. She was a brig of 60 tons burden, and had been originally sent out in 1800 under the command of Lieutenant Grant to explore the newly

* So Mr. Bonwick, who gives an extract of a letter from Bowen to the Under-Secretary of State, dated from the storeship *Atlantic*, March 1792; Collins, however, gives the name of the Admiralty Agent on board the *Atlantic* as Richard Bowen. Collins, New South Wales, i., 174.

† Jorgensen's Shred of Autobiography in Ross' Almanac, 1835.

‡ In 1809, when in the ship *Venus*, he put into Adventure Bay, and there found a bottle containing the last letters of the unfortunate La Pérouse. And his name is yet perpetuated on a tombstone at Crayfish Point, near Hobart, which records that under it lies buried James Batchelor, Second Officer of the ship *Venus*, commanded by E. Bunker, and that he died 28th January, 1810.

discovered Bass' Straits. A little while before she had been employed as a tender to Flinders' vessel, the *Investigator*, on the survey of the coast within the Great Barrier Reef. She was commanded by Acting Lieutenant C. G. Curtoys, and had for Chief Officer the redoubtable Dane, Jorgen Jorgensen, the conqueror of Iceland. The same plan of colonisation with convicts and a few free settlers that had obtained in the planting of the settlement at Port Jackson 15 years before, and in settling Norfolk Island in 1788 by King himself, was followed in this little offshoot from the parent colony. Governor Bowen's Civil Establishment consisted of three persons, including himself. His subordinates were Dr. Jacob Mountgarret, Surgeon of the *Glatton*, as Medical Officer, and Mr Wilson as Storekeeper. His military force consisted of one lance corporal and 7 privates of the New South Wales Corps. There were 21 male and 3 female convicts. Three free settlers accompanied the party—Birt, who took his wife; Clark, a stonemason; and another whose name is not given, who was made overseer of convicts. Three other free persons, a man and two women, also obtained leave to try their fortunes in the new settlement. Thus the whole colony consisted of 49 persons, of whom 13 were women and children. They took about six months' provisions and some live stock—viz., 10 head of cattle and about 50 sheep—while the Governor had the only horse, and the settlers a few goats, pigs, and fowls.

King to Hobart,
9 May, 1803,
p. 77.
p. 96.
Bowen's return,
27 Sept. 1803,
p. 103.

The *Albion* and *Lady Nelson* put to sea on the 31st August; but Governor Bowen was invariably unlucky at sea, and on the second day of their voyage they encountered a heavy gale, which obliged the *Albion* to heave-to, and cost them heavy losses among the live stock. Then it fell calm, for which, however, Captain Bunker found consolation by catching three sperm whales. The *Albion* had a reputation for fast sailing—having made the passage from Spithead to Port Jackson in the then unprecedented time of 108 days—but, baffled by light unfavourable winds, she did not make Storm Bay until the tenth day out. Even then she was two days beating up the river against head winds, so that it was not until Sunday, the 12th September, 1803, that, passing along the lonely and thickly wooded banks of the Derwent, the *Albion*, with the first Governor of Tasmania on board, came to an anchor in Risdon Cove. Here they found the *Lady Nelson* already lying at anchor, having arrived five days before, on the 7th September.

Bowen to King,
20 Sept. 1803,
p. 97.

I have searched in vain hitherto in printed accounts for the correct date of Bowen's settlement. The dates given vary from June to August, but I think we may henceforth consider it settled, on the authority of official documents, that the birthday of Tasmania was Tuesday, the 7th day of September, 1803.

Here I must pause. On a future occasion I hope to be able to draw further on the store of material which has been provided by the wise liberality of the Government, and to give some particulars of the history of Bowen's abortive colony at Risdon, and of Collins' settlement at Sullivan's Cove.

APPENDIX A.

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTS COPIED BY MR. BONWICK FOR THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT.

1. British Museum Discovery Papers; viz.—Farneaux, in the <i>Adventure</i> , 1773; Grant, in the <i>Lady Nelson</i> , 1800; Flinders to Sir J. Banks, 1802; Sealers in Bass' Straits, 1802; Exploration of River Huon, 1804.....	59 pages.
2. Despatches relating to supposed French designs on Australia; especially the proceedings of Baudin's Expedition, and the measures taken by Governor King to anticipate the French in forming a Settlement in Van Diemen's Land, 1802-3...	25 pages.
3. The Bowen Papers—First Settlement at Risdon Cove, 1803.....	48 pages.
4. The Collins Papers—Settlement of Hobart Town, 1804	300 pages.
5. Exploration of Port Dalrymple and River Tamar—Settlement at York Town under Colonel Paterson, 1804	124 pages.
6. The Bass Papers.....	44 pages.
7. Papers on the Aborigines	37 pages.

APPENDIX B.

GOVERNOR KING'S LETTER TO COMMODORE BAUDIN.

(From the copy in the Record Office, London.)

Sydney, November 23rd, 1802.

SIR,

YOU will be surprised to see a vessel so soon after you. You know my intention of sending a vessel to the southward to fix on a place for a Settlement, but this has been hastened by a report communicated to me soon after your departure—"that the French intended to settle in Storm Bay Passage, somewhere about what is now called Frederick Hendrick Bay, and that it was recommended by you to the Republic," as a proof of which a chart pointing out the situation (Baye du Nord) was, as Colonel Paterson informs me, given him a short time before you sailed by a gentleman of your ship.

You will easily imagine that if any information of that kind had reached me before your departure I should have requested an explanation; but, as I knew nothing of it, and at present totally disbelieving anything of the kind ever being thought of, I consider it but proper to give you this information. In case the *Cumberland* should fall in with your ships, the Commander of that vessel has my directions to communicate to you the orders he is under.

Myself and family join in the kindest good wishes for your health, and shall long remember the pleasure we enjoyed in your society. We request you will offer our good wishes to Captain Hamelin and all your officers.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

PHILIP GIDLEY KING.

To Commodore BAUDIN, Commander-in-Chief
of the French Expedition of Discoveries.

PÉRON'S VERSION OF THE ABOVE LETTER.

[*"Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes."* 2^e édition. Tome 3^{me}, p. 11.]

"Le bruit s'étant répandu—écrivait M. King à notre commandant—que votre projet est de laisser quelques hommes, soit à la terre de Diémen, soit à la côte sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Galles, pour y jeter les fondemens d'une colonie françoise, je crois devoir vous déclarer, monsieur le Commandant, qu'en vertu de l'acte de prise de possession de 1788, solennellement proclamé par l'Angleterre, toutes ces contrées font partie intégrante de l'empire britannique, et que vous ne sauriez en occuper aucun point sans briser les liens de l'amitié qui vient si récemment d'être rétablie entre les deux nations. Je ne chercherai pas même à vous dissimuler que telle est la nature de mes instructions particulières à cet égard, que je dois m'opposer, par tous les moyens qui sont en mon pouvoir, à l'exécution du projet qu'on vous suppose; en conséquence, le navire de Sa Majesté le *Cumberland* a reçu l'ordre de ne vous quitter qu'au moment où l'officier qui le commande aura la certitude que vos opérations sont étrangères à toute espèce d'envahissement du territoire britannique dans ces parages . . ."

COMMODORE BAUDIN'S REPLY TO GOVERNOR KING.

[From the copy in the Record Office, London.]

À Bord de la Corvette le Géographe, Isle King, le 3^{me} Nivose, an 11^{me}.
[23 December, 1802.]

Le Commandant en Chef l'Expédition de Découvertes
À Monsieur le Gouverneur King au Port Jackson.

MONSIEUR LE GOUVERNEUR,

L'arrivée du *Cumberland* m'auroit surpris par le contenu de la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire, si Mr. Roben qui le commande n'avoit par sa conduite fait connoître le véritable motif pour lequel il a été si précipitamment expédié; mais peut-être est il venu trop tard, car, plusieurs jours avant qu'il arbora sur nos tentes son pavillon, nous avions laissé dans les quatre points principaux de l'Isle à laquelle je conserve votre nom des preuves de l'époque où nous l'avons visitée.*

L'histoire qu'on vous à fait, et dont on soupçonne Mr. Kemp, Capitaine Régiment de la Nouvelle-Galles du Sud, être l'auteur, est sans fondement. Je ne crois pas non plus que les officiers et naturaliste qui sont à bord puissent y avoir donné lieu par leur discours, mais dans tous les cas vous deviez être bien persuadé que si le Gouvernement françois m'avait donné ordre de m'arrêter quelque part au Nord ou au Sud de la terre de Diémen découverte par Abel Tasman j'y aurais resté, et sans vous en faire un secret.

* Governor King has written in the margin:—"If Monsieur Baudin insinuates any claim from this visit—the island was first discovered in 1798 by Mr. Reed in the *Martha*, afterwards seen by Mr. Black in the *Harbinger*, and surveyed by Mr. Murray in February, 1802."

Le dix-sept le *Naturaliste* a mis à la voile et doit se rendre en droiture en France.

Malgré toutes mes recherches avant le départ il s'est trouvé trois hommes cachés à bord du *Géographe* ; cinq autres étoient sur le *Naturaliste*, et trois sur le bâtiment Américain la *Fanny* dont le mauvais temps nous a séparé. J'ai, comme nous en étions convenus, mis sur l'Isle King les huit hommes qui nous concernoient,* on leur a donné un peu de pain et quelques vêtements ; vous trouverez cy-joint leurs noms ou du moins ceux qu'ils ont donnés.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec la plus parfaite consideration,

Monsieur Le Gouverneur,
Votre Serviteur,

N. BAUDIN.

[Mr. Chapman, Colonial Secretary, certified the foregoing as a true copy of the original letter.]

* King notes :—" Most of these found means to go on board the *Géographe* before she left the island."