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**(THE AUSTRALIAN SECTION)**

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VOYAGES  
OF THE  
ADVENTURE  
AND  
BEAGLE.

VOL. III.

DARWIN.

COLBURN

LONDON

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VOYAGES  
OF THE  
ADVENTURE AND BEAGLE.

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NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
**SURVEYING VOYAGES**  
OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS  
ADVENTURE AND BEAGLE,  
BETWEEN  
THE YEARS 1826 AND 1836,  
DESCRIBING THEIR  
EXAMINATION OF THE SOUTHERN SHORES  
OF  
**SOUTH AMERICA,**  
AND  
THE BEAGLE'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE GLOBE.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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LONDON :  
HENRY COLBURN, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

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1839.

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WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, LONDON.

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VOLUME III.

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**JOURNAL AND REMARKS.**

1832-1836.

BY

**CHARLES DARWIN, ESQ., M.A.**

SEC. GEOL. SOC.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Sydney — Prosperity — Excursion to Bathurst — Aspect of woods — Party of Natives — Gradual extinction of aborigines — Blue Mountains — Weatherboard — View of a grand gulf-like valley — Sheep farm — Lion-ant — Bathurst, general civility of lower orders — State of society — Van Diemen's Land — Hobart Town — Aborigines all banished — Mount Wellington — King George's Sound — Cheerless aspect of country — Bald Head, calcareous casts like branches of trees — Party of natives — Leave Australia.

### AUSTRALIA.

JANUARY 12TH, 1836 — Early in the morning, a light air carried us towards the entrance of Port Jackson. Instead of beholding a verdant country scattered over with fine houses: a straight line of yellowish cliff brought to our minds the coast of Patagonia. A solitary lighthouse, built of white stone, alone told us we were near a great and populous city. Having entered the harbour, it appeared fine and spacious; but the level country, showing on the cliff-formed shores bare and horizontal strata of sandstone, was covered by woods of thin scrubby trees, that bespoke useless sterility. Proceeding further inland, the country improved; beautiful villas and nice cottages were here and there scattered along the beach. In the distance stone houses, two and three stories high, and windmills, standing on the edge of a bank, pointed out to us the neighbourhood of the capital of Australia.

At last we anchored within Sydney Cove. We found the little basin occupied by many large ships, and surrounded by warehouses. In the evening I walked through the town, and returned full of admiration at the whole scene. It is a most magnificent testimony to the power of the British nation. Here, in a less promising country, scores of years have effected many times more, than the same number of centuries have done in South America. My first feeling

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was to congratulate myself that I was born an Englishman. Upon seeing more of the town afterwards, perhaps my admiration fell a little; but yet it is a fine town; the streets are regular, broad, clean, and kept in excellent order; the houses are of a good size, and the shops well furnished. It may be faithfully compared to the large suburbs, which stretch out from London and a few other great towns in England: but not even near London or Birmingham is there an appearance of such rapid growth. The number of large houses just finished and others building was truly surprising; nevertheless, every one complained of the high rents and difficulty in procuring a house. In the streets, gigs, phaetons, and carriages with livery servants, were driving about; and of the latter, many were extremely well equipped. Coming from South America, where in the towns every man of property is known, no one thing surprised me more than not being able to ascertain readily to whom this or that carriage belonged.

Many of the older residents say, that formerly they knew every face in the colony, but now that in a morning's ride it is a chance if they know one. Sydney has a population of twenty-three thousand, and is rapidly increasing: it must contain much wealth. It appears that a man of business can hardly fail to make a large fortune. I saw on all sides fine houses,—one built from the profits of steam-vessels,—another from building, and so on. An auctioneer, who was a convict, it is said, intends to return home, and will take with him 100,000 pounds. Another

has an income so large that scarcely any body ventures to guess at it—the least sum assigned being fifteen thousand a year. But the two crowning facts are,—first, that the public revenue has increased 60,000*l.* during this last year; and secondly, that less than an acre of land within the town of Sydney sold for 8000*l.* sterling.

I hired a man and two horses to take me to Bathurst; a village about one hundred and twenty miles in the interior, and the centre of a great pastoral district. By this means I hoped to get a general idea of the appearance of the

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country. On the morning of the 16th (January) I set out on my excursion. The first stage took us to Paramatta, a small country-town, the second to Sydney in importance. The roads were excellent, and made upon the MacAdam principle: whinstone having been brought for the purpose from the distance of several miles. The road appeared much frequented by all sorts of carriages; and I met two stage-coaches. In all these respects there was a close resemblance to England; perhaps the number of alehouses was here in excess. The iron gangs, or parties of convicts, who have here committed some trifling offence, appeared the least like England; they were working in chains, under the charge of sentries with loaded arms. The power, which the government possesses, by means of forced labour, of at once opening good roads throughout the country, has been, I believe, one main cause of the early prosperity of this colony.

I slept at night at a very comfortable inn at Emu ferry, thirty-five miles from Sydney, and near the ascent of the Blue Mountains. This line of road is the most frequented, and has been longest inhabited of any in the colony. The whole land is enclosed with high railings, for the farmers have not succeeded in rearing hedges. There are many substantial houses and good cottages scattered about; but although considerable pieces of land are under cultivation, the greater part yet remains as when first discovered. Making allowances for the cleared parts, the country here resembled all that I saw during the ten succeeding days.

The extreme uniformity of the vegetation is the most remarkable feature in the landscape of the greater part of New South Wales. Every where we have an open woodland; the ground being partially covered with a very thin pasture. The trees nearly all belong to one family; and mostly have the surface of their leaves placed in a vertical, instead of as in Europe, a nearly horizontal position: the foliage is scanty, and of a peculiar, pale green tint, without any gloss. Hence the woods appear light and shadowless: this,

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although a loss of comfort to the traveller under the scorching rays of summer, is of importance to the farmer, as it allows grass to grow where it otherwise could not. The leaves are not shed periodically: this character appears common to the entire southern hemisphere, namely, South America, Australia, and the Cape of Good Hope. The inhabitants of this hemisphere and of the intertropical regions, thus lose perhaps one of the most glorious, though to our eyes common, spectacles in the world,—the first bursting into full foliage of the leafless tree. They may, however, say that we pay dearly for our spectacle, by having the land covered with mere naked skeletons for so many months. This is too true; but our senses thus acquire a keen relish for the exquisite green of the spring, which the eyes of those living within the tropics, sated during the long year with the gorgeous productions of those glowing climates, can never experience. The greater number of the trees, with the exception of some of the blue gums, do not attain a large size; but they grow tall and tolerably straight, and stand well apart. The bark of some falls annually, or hangs dead in long shreds, which swing about with the wind; and hence the woods appear desolate and untidy. Nowhere is there an

appearance of verdure, but rather that of arid sterility. I cannot imagine a more complete contrast in every respect than between the forests of Valdivia, or Chiloe, and the woods of Australia.

Although this colony flourishes so remarkably, the appearance of infertility is to a certain degree real. The soil without doubt is good, but there is so great a deficiency both of rain and running water, that it cannot produce much. The agricultural crops, and often those in gardens, are estimated to fail once in three years; and this has even happened on successive years. Hence the colony cannot supply itself with the bread and vegetables, which its inhabitants consume. It is essentially pastoral, and chiefly so for sheep, and not the larger quadrupeds. The alluvial land near Emu ferry was some of the best cultivated which I saw; and certainly the scenery on the banks of the

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Nepean, bounded to the west by the Blue Mountains, was pleasing even to the eye of a person thinking of England.

At sunset, a party of a score of the black aborigines passed by, each carrying, in their accustomed manner, a bundle of spears and other weapons. By giving a leading young man a shilling, they were easily detained, and threw their spears for my amusement. They were all partly clothed, and several could speak a little English; their countenances were goodhumoured and pleasant; and they appeared far from being such utterly degraded beings as they are usually represented. In their own arts they are admirable: a cap being fixed at thirty yards distance, they transfixed it with a spear, delivered by the throwing stick, with the rapidity of an arrow from the bow of a practised archer. In tracking animals or men they show most wonderful sagacity; and I heard of several of their remarks which manifested considerable acuteness. They will not, however, cultivate the ground, or build houses and remain stationary, or even take the trouble of tending a flock of sheep when given to them. On the whole they appear to me to stand some few degrees higher in the scale of civilization than the Fuegians.

It is very curious thus to see in the midst of a civilized people, a set of harmless savages wandering about without knowing where they shall sleep at night, and gaining their livelihood by hunting in the woods. As the white man has travelled onwards, he has spread over the country belonging to several tribes. These, although thus enclosed by one common people, keep up their ancient distinctions, and sometimes go to war with each other. In an engagement which took place lately, the two parties most singularly chose the centre of the village of Bathurst, for the field of battle. This was of service to the defeated side, for the runaway warriors took refuge in the barracks.

The number of aborigines is rapidly decreasing. In my whole ride, with the exception of some boys brought up in the houses, I saw only one other party; these were rather

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more numerous than the first, and not so well clothed. This decrease, no doubt, must be partly owing to the introduction of spirits, to European diseases (even the milder ones of which, as the measles,\* prove very destructive), and to the gradual extinction of the wild animals. It is said that numbers of their children invariably perish in very early infancy from the effects of their wandering life. As the difficulty of procuring food increases, so must their wandering habits; and hence the population, without any apparent deaths from famine, is repressed in a manner extremely sudden compared to what happens in civilized countries, where the father may add to his labour, without destroying his offspring.

Besides these several evident causes of destruction, there appears to be some more mysterious agency generally at work. Wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal. We may look to the wide extent of the Americas, Polynesia, the Cape of Good Hope, and Australia, and we shall find the same result. Nor is it the white man alone, that thus acts the destroyer; the Polynesian of Malay extraction has in parts of the East Indian archipelago, thus driven before him the dark-coloured native. The varieties of man seem to act on each other; in the same way as different species of animals—the stronger always extirpating the weaker. It was melancholy at New Zealand to hear the fine energetic natives saying, they knew the land was doomed to pass from their children. Every one has heard of the inexplicable reduction of the population in the beautiful and healthy island of Tahiti since the date of Captain Cook's voyages: although in that case we might have expected it would have been otherwise; for infanticide, which formerly

\* It is remarkable how the same disease is modified in different climates. At the little island of St. Helena, the introduction of scarlet fever is dreaded as a plague. In some countries, foreigners and natives are as differently affected by certain contagious disorders, as if they had been different animals; of which fact some instances have occurred in Chile; and, according to Humboldt, in Mexico. (Polit. Essay on Kingdom of New Spain, vol. iv.)

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prevailed to so extraordinary a degree, has ceased, and the murderous wars have become less frequent.

The Rev. J. Williams, in his interesting work,\* says, that the first intercourse between natives and Europeans, "is invariably attended with the introduction of fever, dysentery, or some other disease, which carries off numbers of the people." Again he affirms, "It is certainly a fact, which cannot be controverted, that most of the diseases which have raged in the islands during my residence there, have been introduced by ships;† and what renders this fact remarkable is, that there might be no appearance of disease among the crew of the ship, which conveyed this destructive importation." This statement is not quite so extraordinary as it at first appears; for several cases are on record of the most malignant fevers having broken out, although the parties themselves, who were the cause, were not affected. In the early part of the reign of George III., a prisoner who had been confined in a dungeon, was taken in a coach with four constables before a magistrate; and, although the man himself was not ill, the four constables died from a short putrid fever; but the contagion extended to no others.

\* Narrative of Missionary Enterprise, p. 282.

† Captain Beechey (chap. iv., vol. i.) states that the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island, are firmly convinced that after the arrival of every ship they suffer cutaneous and other disorders. Captain Beechey attributes this to the change of diet during the time of the visit. Dr. Macculloch (Western Isles, vol. ii., p. 32) says, "It is asserted, that on the arrival of a stranger (at St. Kilda) all the inhabitants, in the common phraseology, catch a cold." Dr. Macculloch considers the whole case, although often previously affirmed, as ludicrous. He adds, however, that "the question was put by us to the inhabitants who unanimously agreed in the story." In Vancouver's Voyage, there is a somewhat similar statement with respect to Otaheite: nor are these (as I believe) the only instances. Humboldt (Polit. Essay on King. of New Spain, vol. iv.) says, that the great epidemics at Panama and Callao are "marked" by the arrival of ships from Chile, because the people from that temperate region, first experience the fatal effects of the torrid zones. I may add, that I have heard it stated in Shropshire, that sheep, which have been imported from vessels, although themselves in a healthy condition, if placed in the same fold with others, frequently produce sickness in the flock.

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From these facts it would almost appear as if, the effluvia of one set of men shut up for some time together, was poisonous when inhaled by others (and perhaps more so, if the men be of different races). Mysterious as this circumstance appears to be, it is not more surprising than that the body of one's fellow-creature, directly after death, and before putrefaction has commenced, should often be of so deleterious a quality, that the mere puncture from an instrument used in its dissection should prove fatal.

JANUARY 17TH.—Early in the morning we passed the Nepean in a ferry-boat. The river, although at this spot both broad and deep, had a very small body of running water. Having crossed a low piece of land on the opposite side, we reached the slope of the Blue Mountains. The ascent is not steep, the road having been cut with much care on the side of a sandstone cliff. At no great elevation an almost level plain extends, which, rising imperceptibly to the westward, at last attains a height of more than three thousand feet. From so grand a title as Blue Mountains, and from their absolute altitude, I expected to have seen a bold chain of mountains crossing the country; but instead of this, a sloping plain presents merely an inconsiderable front to the low land of the coast. From this first slope, the view of the extensive woodland to the eastward, was striking, and the surrounding trees grew bold and lofty. But when once on the sandstone platform, the scenery becomes exceedingly monotonous; each side of the road is bordered by scrubby trees of the never-failing Eucalyptus family; and with the exception of two or three small inns, there are no houses, or cultivated land: the road, moreover, is solitary; the most frequent object being a bullock-waggon, piled up with bales of wool.

In the middle of the day we baited our horses at a little inn, called the Weatherboard. The country here is elevated 2800 feet above the sea. About a mile and a half from this place, there is a view exceedingly well worth visiting. By following down a little valley and its tiny rill of water, an

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immense gulf is unexpectedly seen through the trees which border the pathway, at the depth of perhaps 1500 feet. Walking on a few yards one stands on the brink of a vast precipice, and below is the grand bay or gulf (for I know not what other name to give it), thickly covered with forest. The point of view is situated as if at the head of a bay, the line of cliff diverging on each side, and showing headland behind headland, as on a bold sea-coast. These cliffs are composed of horizontal strata of whitish sandstone; and so absolutely vertical are they, that in many places, a person standing on the edge, and throwing down a stone, can see it strike the trees in the abyss below. So unbroken is the line, that it is said, in order to reach the foot of the waterfall, formed by this little stream, it is necessary to go a distance of sixteen miles round. About five miles distant in front, another line of cliff extends, which thus appears completely to encircle the valley; and hence the name of bay is justified, as applied to this grand amphitheatrical depression. If we imagine a winding harbour, with its deep water surrounded by bold cliff-like shores, laid dry, and a forest sprung up on its sandy bottom, we should then have the appearance and structure here exhibited. This kind of view was to me quite novel, and extremely magnificent.

In the evening, we reached the Blackheath. The sandstone plateau has here attained the elevation of 3400 feet; and is covered, as before, with the same kind of scrubby wood. From the road there were occasional glimpses into a profound valley, of the same character as the one described; but from the steepness and depth of its sides, the bottom was scarcely ever to be seen. The Blackheath is a very comfortable inn, kept by an old soldier; and it reminded me

of the small inns in North Wales. I was surprised to find that here, at the distance of more than seventy miles from Sydney, fifteen beds could be made up for travellers.

JANUARY 18TH.—Very early in the morning, I walked about three miles to see Govett's Leap: a view of a similar but even perhaps more stupendous character than that near

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the Weatherboard. So early in the day the gulf was filled with a thin blue haze, which, although destroying the general effect, added to the apparent depth at which the forest was stretched below the country on which we were standing. Soon after leaving the Blackheath, we descended from the sandstone platform by the pass of Mount Victoria. To effect this pass, an enormous quantity of stone has been cut through; the design, and its manner of execution, would have been worthy of any line of road in England,—even that of Holyhead. We now entered upon a country less elevated by nearly a thousand feet, and consisting of granite. With the change of rock, the vegetation improved; the trees were both finer, and stood further apart; and the pasture between them was a little greener, and more plentiful.

At Hassan's Walls, I left the high road, and made a short detour to a farm called Walerawang; to the superintendent of which, I had a letter of introduction from the owner in Sydney. Mr. Browne had the kindness to ask me to stay the ensuing day, which I had much pleasure in doing. This place offers an example of one of the large farming, or rather sheep-grazing, establishments of the colony. Cattle and horses are, however, in this case, rather more numerous than usual, owing to some of the valleys being swampy, and producing a coarser pasture. The sheep were 15,000 in number, of which the greater part were feeding under the care of different shepherds, on unoccupied ground, at the distance of more than a hundred miles, and beyond the limits of the colony. Mr. Browne had just finished, this day, the last of the shearing of seven thousand sheep; the rest being sheared in another place. I believe the profit of the average produce of wool from 15,000 sheep, would be more than 5000*l.* sterling. Two or three flat pieces of ground near the house were cleared and cultivated with corn, which the harvest men were now reaping; but no more wheat is sown than sufficient for the annual support of the labourers employed on the establishment. The usual number of assigned convict servants here is about

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forty, but at the present time there were rather more. Although the farm was well stocked with every requisite, there was an apparent absence of comfort; and not even a single woman resided here. The sunset of a fine day will generally cast an air of happy contentment on any scene; but here, at this retired farm-house, the brightest tints on the surrounding woods could not make me forget that forty hardened, profligate men, were ceasing from their daily labours, like the slaves from Africa, yet without their just claim for compassion.

Early on the next morning, Mr. Archer, the joint superintendent, had the kindness to take me out Kangaroo-hunting. We continued riding the greater part of the day, but had very bad sport, not seeing a kangaroo, or even a wild dog. The greyhounds pursued a kangaroo rat into a hollow tree, out of which we dragged it: it is an animal as big as a rabbit, but with the figure of a kangaroo. A few years since, this country abounded with wild animals; but now the emu is banished to a long distance, and the kangaroo is become scarce; to both, the English greyhound is utterly destructive. It may be long before these animals are altogether exterminated, but their doom is fixed. The natives are always anxious to borrow the dogs from the farm-houses: the use of them, the offal when an animal is killed, and milk from the cows, are the peace-offerings of the settlers, who push further and further towards the interior.

The thoughtless aboriginal, blinded by these trifling advantages, is delighted at the approach of the white man, who seems predestined to inherit the country of his children.

Although having bad sport, we enjoyed a pleasant ride. The woodland is generally so open that a person on horseback can gallop through it. It is traversed by a few flat-bottomed valleys, which are green and free from trees: in such spots the scenery was like that of a park, and pretty. In the whole country I scarcely saw a place without the marks of fire; whether these had been more or less recent—whether the stumps were more or less black, was the greatest change which varied the uniformity, so wearisome to the

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traveller's eye. In these woods there are not many birds; I saw, however, some large flocks of the white cockatoo feeding in a corn-field, and a few most beautiful parrots; crows like our jackdaws were not uncommon, and another bird something like the magpie. The English have not been very particular in giving names to the productions of Australia; trees of one genus (*Casuarina*) are called oaks for no one reason that I can discover, without it is that there is no one point of resemblance. Some quadrupeds are called tigers and hyenas, simply because they are carnivorous, and so on in many other cases.

In the dusk of the evening I took a stroll along a chain of ponds, which in this dry country represented the course of a river, and had the good fortune to see several of the famous Platypus, or *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus*. They were diving and playing about the surface of the water, but showed so little of their bodies that they might easily have been mistaken for water-rats. Mr. Browne shot one: certainly it is a most extraordinary animal; the stuffed specimens do not at all give a good idea of the recent appearance of its head and beak; the latter becoming hard and contracted.

A little time before this I had been lying on a sunny bank, and was reflecting on the strange character of the animals of this country as compared with the rest of the world. An unbeliever in every thing beyond his own reason might exclaim, "Two distinct Creators must have been at work; their object, however, has been the same, and certainly the end in each case is complete." While thus thinking, I observed the hollow conical pitfall of the lion-ant: first a fly fell down the treacherous slope and immediately disappeared; then came a large but unwary ant; its struggles to escape being very violent, those curious little jets of sand, described by Kirby \* as being flirited by the insects tail, were promptly directed against the expected

\* Kirby's Entomology, vol. i., p. 425. The Australian pitfall is only about half the size of the one made by the European species.

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victim. But the ant enjoyed a better fate than the fly, and escaped the fatal jaws which lay concealed at the base of the conical hollow. There can be no doubt but that this predacious larva belongs to the same genus with the European kind, though to a different species. Now what would the sceptic say to this? Would any two workmen ever have hit upon so beautiful, so simple, and yet so artificial a contrivance? It cannot be thought so: one Hand has surely worked throughout the universe.

JANUARY 20TH.—A long day's ride to Bathurst. Before joining the high road we followed a mere path through the forest; and the country, with the exception of a few squatters' huts, was very solitary. A "squatter" is a freed, or "ticket of leave" man, who builds a hut with bark on unoccupied ground, buys or steals a few animals, sells spirits without a licence, receives stolen goods,—and so at last becomes rich and turns farmer: he is the horror of all his honest

neighbours. A "crawler" is an assigned convict, who runs away, and lives how he can, by labour and petty theft. The "bush ranger" is an open villain, who subsists by highway robbery and plunder: generally he is desperate, and will sooner be killed than taken alive. In the country it is necessary to understand these three names, for they are in common use.

This day we experienced the sirocco-like wind of Australia, which comes from the parched deserts of the interior. Clouds of dust were travelling in every direction; and the wind felt like that which has passed over a fire. I afterwards heard that the thermometer out of doors stood at 119°, and in a room in a closed house at 96°. In the afternoon we came in view of the downs of Bathurst. These undulating, but nearly level plains are very remarkable in this country, from being absolutely destitute of a single tree. They support only a very thin brown pasture. We rode some miles across this kind of country, and then reached the township of Bathurst, which is seated in the middle of what may be called either a very broad valley or narrow plain.

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Bathurst has a singular and not very inviting appearance. Groups of small houses and a few large ones are scattered rather thickly over two or three miles of a bare country, which is divided into numerous fields by lines of rails. A good many gentlemen live in the neighbourhood, and some possess very comfortable houses. A hideous little red brick church stands by itself on a hill; and barracks and government buildings occupy the centre of the township. I was told not to form too bad an opinion of the country by judging from that on the road-side, nor too good a one from Bathurst; in this latter respect I did not feel myself in the least danger of being prejudiced. It must be confessed that the season had been one of great drought, and that the country did not wear a favourable aspect; although I understand it was incomparably worse two or three months before. The secret of the rapidly growing prosperity of Bathurst is, that the brown pasture which appears to the stranger's eye so wretched is excellent for sheep-grazing.

The town stands on the banks of the Macquarie: this is one of the rivers whose waters flow into the vast and scarcely known interior. The line of watershed, which divides the inland streams from those of the coast, has an elevation of about 3000 feet (Bathurst is 2200), and runs in a north and south direction at the distance of about eighty or a hundred miles from the sea-side. The Macquarie figures in the map as a respectable river, and is the largest of those that drain this part of the inland slope; yet to my surprise I found it a mere chain of ponds, separated from each other by spaces almost dry. Generally a small stream is running, and sometimes there are high and impetuous floods. Scanty as the supply of the water is throughout this district, it becomes still scantier further inland.

JANUARY 22D.—I commenced my return, and followed a new road, called Lockyer's Line, in which the country is rather more hilly and picturesque. This was a long day's ride; and the house where I wished to sleep was some way off the road, and not easily found. I met on this, and in-

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deed on all other occasions, a very general and ready civility among the lower orders; which, when one considers what they are, and what they have been, would scarcely have been expected. The farm where I passed the night was owned by two young men who had only lately come out, and were beginning a settler's life. The total want of almost every comfort was not very attractive; but future and certain prosperity was before their eyes, and that not far distant.

The next day we passed through large tracts of country in flames, volumes of smoke sweeping across the road. Before noon we joined our former track, and ascended Mount Victoria. I slept at the Weatherboard, and before dark took another walk to the amphitheatre. On the road to Sydney I spent a very pleasant evening with Captain King at Dunheved : and thus ended my little excursion in the colony of New South Wales.

Before arriving here the three things which interested me most were,—the state of society amongst the higher classes, the condition of the convicts, and the degree of attractio<sup>n</sup> sufficient to induce persons to emigrate. Of course, after so very short a visit one's opinion is worth scarcely any thing; but it is as difficult not to form some opinion, as it is to form a correct judgment. On the whole, from what I heard, more than from what I saw, I was disappointed in the state of society. The whole community is rancorously divided into parties on almost every subject. Among those, who from their station in life ought to be the best, many live in such open profligacy, that respectable people cannot associate with them. There is much jealousy between the children of the rich emancipist and the free settlers; the former being pleased to consider honest men as interlopers. The whole population, poor and rich, are bent on acquiring wealth; amongst the higher orders wool and sheep-grazing form the constant subject of conversation. The very low ebb of literature is strongly marked by the emptiness of the booksellers' shops; for they are inferior even to those in the smaller country-towns of England.

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There are many serious drawbacks to the comforts of families; the chief of which, perhaps, is being surrounded by convict servants. How thoroughly odious to every feeling to be waited on by a man, who the day before, perhaps, was flogged, from your representation, for some trifling misdemeanor. The female servants are of course much worse; hence children learn the vilest expressions, and it is fortunate if not equally vile ideas.

On the other hand, the capital of a person without any trouble on his part, produces him treble interest to what it will in England; and with care he is sure to grow rich. The luxuries of life are in abundance and very little dearer, and most articles of food cheaper, than in England. The climate is splendid and quite healthy; but to my mind its charms are lost by the uninviting aspect of the country. Settlers possess a great advantage in finding their sons of service, when very young. At the age of from sixteen to twenty they frequently take charge of distant farming stations; this, however, must happen at the expense of their boys associating entirely with convict servants. I am not aware that the tone of society has assumed any peculiar character; but with such habits, and without intellectual pursuits, it can hardly fail to deteriorate. My opinion is such, that nothing but rather severe necessity should compel me to emigrate.

The rapid prosperity and future prospects of this colony are to me, not understanding these subjects, very puzzling. The two main exports are wool and whale-oil; and to both of these productions there is a limit. The country is totally unfit for canals; therefore there is a line not very distant, beyond which the land carriage of wool will not repay the expense of shearing and tending sheep. Pasture every where is so thin, that settlers have already pushed far into the interior : moreover the country further inland becomes extremely poor. I have before said that agriculture can never succeed on a very extended scale; therefore so far as I can see, Australia must ultimately depend upon being the centre of commerce for the southern hemisphere, and perhaps on

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her future manufactories. Possessing coal, she always has the moving power at hand. From the habitable country extending along the coast, and from her English extraction she is sure to be a maritime nation. I formerly imagined that Australia would rise to be as grand and powerful a country as North America; but now it appears to me such future grandeur is rather problematical.

With respect to the state of the convicts, I had still fewer opportunities of judging than on other points. The first question is, whether their condition is at all one of punishment: no one will maintain that it is a very severe one. This, however, I suppose is of little consequence as long as it continues to be an object of dread to criminals at home. The corporeal wants of the convicts are tolerably well supplied; their prospect of future liberty and comfort is not distant, and after good conduct certain. A "ticket of leave," which, as long as a man keeps clear of suspicion as well as of crime, makes him free within a certain district, is given upon good conduct after years proportional to the length of the sentence. For life, eight years is the time of probation; for seven years, four, &c. Yet with all this, and overlooking the previous imprisonment and wretched passage out, I believe the years of assignment are passed away with discontent and unhappiness. As an intelligent man remarked to me, the convicts know no pleasure beyond sensuality, and in this they are not gratified. The enormous bribe which government possesses in offering free pardons, together with the deep horror of the secluded penal settlements, destroys confidence between the convicts, and so prevents crime. As to a sense of shame, such a feeling does not appear to be known, and of this I witnessed some very singular proofs. Though it is a curious fact, I was universally told, that the character of the convict population is one of arrant cowardice: not unfrequently some become desperate and quite indifferent of life, yet a plan requiring cool or continued courage is seldom put into execution. The worst feature in the whole case is, that although there

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exists what may be called a legal reform, and comparatively little which the law can touch is committed, yet that any moral reform should take place appears to be quite out of the question. I was assured by well-informed people, that a man who should try to improve, could not while living with other assigned servants :—his life would be one of intolerable misery and persecution. Nor must the contamination of the convict ships and prisons both here and in England be forgotten. On the whole, as a place of punishment the object is scarcely gained; as a real system of reform it has failed, as perhaps would every other plan : but as a means of making men outwardly honest,—of converting vagabonds most useless in one hemisphere into active citizens of another, and thus giving birth to a new and splendid country—a grand centre of civilization—it has succeeded to a degree perhaps unparalleled in history.

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#### VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

JANUARY 30TH.—The Beagle sailed for Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land. On the 5th of February, after a six days' passage, of which the first part was fine, and the latter very cold and squally, we entered the mouth of Storm Bay: the weather justified this awful name. The bay should rather be called an estuary, for it receives at its head the waters of the Derwent. Near the mouth there are some extensive basaltic platforms; but higher up, the land becomes mountainous and is covered by a light wood. The lower parts of the hills which skirt the bay are cleared; and the bright yellow fields of corn, and dark green ones of potatoes appeared very luxuriant. Late in the evening we anchored in the snug cove, on the shores of which

stands the capital of Tasmania, as Van Diemen's Land is now called. The first aspect of the place was very inferior to that of Sydney; the latter might be called a city, this only a town.

In the morning I walked on shore. The streets are fine

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and broad; but the houses rather scattered: the shops appeared good. The town stands at the base of Mount Wellington, a mountain, 3100 feet high, but of very little picturesque beauty: from this source, however, it receives a good supply of water. Round the cove there are some fine warehouses, and on one side a small fort. Coming from the Spanish settlements, where such magnificent care has generally been paid to the fortifications, the means of defence in these colonies appeared very contemptible. Comparing the town to Sydney, I was chiefly struck with the comparative fewness of the large houses, either built or building. This circumstance must indicate that fewer people are gaining large fortunes. The growth, however, of small houses has been most abundant; and the vast number of little red brick dwellings, scattered on the hill behind the town, sadly destroys its picturesque appearance. Hobart Town, from the census of this year, contained 13,826 inhabitants, and the whole of Tasmania 36,505.

All the aborigines have been removed to an island in Bass's Straits, so that Van Diemen's Land enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population. This most cruel step seems to have been quite unavoidable, as the only means of stopping a fearful succession of robberies, burnings, and murders, committed by the blacks; but which sooner or later must have ended in their utter destruction. I fear there is no doubt that this train of evil and its consequences, originated in the infamous conduct of some of our countrymen. Thirty years is a short period, in which to have banished the last aboriginal from his native island,—and that island nearly as large as Ireland. I do not know a more striking instance of the comparative rate of increase of a civilized over a savage people.

The correspondence to show the necessity of this step, which took place between the government at home and that of Van Diemen's Land, is very interesting: it is published in an appendix to Bischoff's History of Van Diemen's Land. Although numbers of natives were shot and taken prisoners in the skirmishing which was going on at intervals

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for several years; nothing seems fully to have impressed them with the idea of our overwhelming power, until the whole island, in 1830, was put under martial law, and by proclamation the whole population desired to assist in one great attempt to secure the entire race. The plan adopted was nearly similar to that of the great hunting-matches in India: a line reaching across the island was formed, with the intention of driving the natives into a *cul-de-sac* on Tasman's peninsula. The attempt failed; the natives, having tied up their dogs, stole during one night through the lines. This is far from surprising, when their practised senses, and accustomed manner of crawling after wild animals is considered. I have been assured that they can conceal themselves on almost bare ground, in a manner which until witnessed is scarcely credible. The country is every where scattered over with blackened stumps, and the dusky natives are easily mistaken for these objects. I have heard of a trial between a party of Englishmen and a native who stood in full view on the side of a bare hill. If the Englishmen closed their eyes for scarcely more than a second, he would squat down, and then they were never able to distinguish the man from the surrounding stumps. But to return to the hunting-match; the natives understanding this kind of warfare, were terribly alarmed, for they at once perceived the power and numbers of the whites. Shortly afterwards a party of thirteen belonging to two tribes came in; and, conscious of their unprotected condition, delivered

themselves up in despair. Subsequently by the intrepid exertions of Mr. Robinson, an active and benevolent man, who fearlessly visited by himself the most hostile of the natives, the whole were induced to act in a similar manner. They were then removed to Gun Carriage Island, where food and clothes were provided them. I fear from what I heard at Hobart Town, that they are very far from being contented: some even think the race will soon become extinct.

The Beagle staid here ten days, and in this time I made several pleasant little excursions, chiefly with the object of

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examining the geological structure of the immediate neighbourhood. The main points of interest consist, first in the presence of certain basaltic rocks which evidently have flowed as lava; secondly, in some great unstratified masses of greenstone; thirdly, in proofs of an exceedingly small rise of the land; fourthly, in some ancient fossiliferous strata, probably of the age of the Silurian system of Europe; and lastly, in a solitary and superficial patch of yellowish limestone or travertin, which contains numerous impressions of leaves of trees and plants, not now existing. It is not improbable that this one small quarry, includes the only remaining record of the vegetation of Van Diemen's Land during one former epoch.

Mr. Frankland, the surveyor-general, was kind enough to give me much interesting information, and to take me several pleasant rides. The climate here is damper than in New South Wales, and hence the land is more fertile. Agriculture flourishes here: the cultivated fields looked well, and the gardens abounded with thriving vegetables and fruit-trees. Some of the farm-houses, situated in retired spots, had a very tempting appearance. The general aspect of the vegetation is similar to that of Australia: perhaps it is a little more green and cheerful; and the pasture between the trees rather more abundant. One day I took a long walk on the side of the bay opposite to the town: I crossed in a steam-boat, two of which are constantly plying backwards and forwards. The machinery of one of these vessels was entirely manufactured in this colony, which, from its very foundation then numbered only three-and-thirty years! If I was obliged to emigrate, I think I would choose this place in preference to Sydney: the climate and aspect of the country alone would almost determine me. Moreover, I suspect society is here on a pleasanter footing; certainly it is free from the contamination of rich convicts, and the dissensions consequent on the existence of two classes of wealthy residents. The colony appeared extremely well governed; the streets at night being kept even more orderly than those of an English town.

On another day I ascended Mount Wellington; I took

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with me a guide, for I failed in a first attempt, from the thickness of the wood. My guide, however, was a stupid fellow, and conducted us to the southern and damp side of the mountain, where the vegetation was very luxuriant, and the labour of the ascent, from the number of rotten trunks, almost as great as on a mountain in Tierra del Fuego or in Chiloe. It cost us five and a half hours of hard climbing before we reached the summit. In many parts the gum-trees grew to a great size, and the whole composed a noble forest. In some of the dampest ravines, tree-ferns flourished in an extraordinary manner; I saw one which must have been, at least, twenty feet high to the base of the fronds, and was in girth exactly six feet. The foliage of these trees, forming so many most elegant parasols, created a gloomy shade, like that of the first hour of night. The summit of the mountain is broad and flat, and is composed of huge angular masses of naked greenstone. Its elevation is 3100 feet above the level of the sea. The day was splendidly clear, and we enjoyed a most extensive view; to the northward

the country appeared a mass of wooded mountains, of about the same elevation and tame outline with the one on which we were standing; to the south, the outline of the broken land and water, forming many intricate bays, was mapped with clearness before us. After staying some hours on the summit, we found a better way to descend, but did not reach the Beagle till eight o'clock, after a severe day's work.

FEBRUARY 17TH.—The Beagle sailed from Tasmania, and, on the 6th of the ensuing month, reached King George's Sound, situated near the S.W. corner of Australia. We staid there eight days; and I do not remember, since leaving England, having passed a more dull, uninteresting time. The country, viewed from an eminence, appears a woody plain, with here and there rounded and partly bare hills of granite protruding. One day I went out with a party, in hopes of seeing a kangaroo hunt, and walked over a good many miles of country. Every where we found the soil sandy, and very poor; it either supported a coarse vegetation of thin,

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low brushwood and wiry grass, or a forest of stunted trees. The scenery resembled the elevated sandstone platform of the Blue Mountains; the Casuarina (a tree somewhat resembling a Scotch fir) is, however, here in greater number, as the Eucalyptus is in rather less. In the open parts there were many grass-trees;—a plant which, in appearance, has some affinity with the palm; but, instead of being surmounted by a crown of noble fronds, it can boast merely of a tuft of coarse grass. The general bright green colour of the brushwood and other plants, viewed from a distance, seemed to bespeak fertility. A single walk, however, will quite dispel such an illusion; and he who thinks with me, will never wish to walk again in so uninviting a country.

One day I accompanied Captain FitzRoy to Bald Head; the place mentioned by so many navigators, where some imagined they saw coral, and others petrified trees, standing in the position in which they grew. According to our view, the rock was formed by the wind heaping up calcareous sand, during which process, branches and roots of trees, and land-shells were enclosed; the mass being afterward consolidated by the percolation of rain-water. When the wood had decayed, lime was washed into the cylindrical cavities, and became hard, sometimes even like that in a stalactite. The weather is now wearing away the softer rock, and in consequence the casts of roots and branches project above the surface: their resemblance to the stumps of a dead shrubbery was so exact, that, before touching them, we were sometimes at a loss to know which were composed of wood, and which of calcareous matter.

A large tribe of natives, called the White Cockatoo men, happened to pay the town a visit while we were there. These men, as well as those of the tribe belonging to King George's Sound, being tempted by the offer of some tubs of rice and sugar, were persuaded to hold a "corrobery," or great dancing-party. As soon as it grew dark, small fires were lighted, and the men commenced their toilet, which consisted in painting themselves white in spots and lines. As soon as all was ready, large fires were kept blazing,

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round which the women and children were collected as spectators; the Cockatoo and King George's men formed two distinct parties, and danced generally in answer to each other. The dancing consisted in the whole set running either sideways or in Indian file, into an open space, and stamping the ground with great force as they marched together. Their heavy footsteps were accompanied by a kind of grunt, and, by beating their clubs and weapons, and various other gesticulations, such as extending their arms, and wriggling their bodies. It was a most rude, barbarous scene, and, to our ideas, without any sort of meaning; but we observed that the women and children watched the whole proceeding with the greatest pleasure.

Perhaps these dances originally represented some scenes, such as wars and victories; there was one called the Emu dance, in which each man extended his arm in a bent manner, so as to imitate the neck of that bird. In another dance, one man took off the movements of a kangaroo grazing in the woods, whilst a second crawled up, and pretended to spear him. When both tribes mingled in the dance, the ground trembled with the heaviness of their steps, and the air resounded with their wild cries. Every one appeared in high spirits, and the group of nearly naked figures, viewed by the light of the blazing fires, all moving in hideous harmony, formed a perfect representation of a festival amongst the lowest barbarians. In Tierra del Fuego, we have beheld many curious scenes in savage life, but never, I think, one where the natives were in such high spirits, and so perfectly at their ease. After the dancing was over, the whole party formed a great circle on the ground, and the boiled rice and sugar was distributed, to the delight of all.

After several tedious delays from clouded weather, on the 14th of March, we gladly stood out of King George's Sound on our course to Keeling Island. Farewell, Australia! you are a rising infant and doubtless some day will reign a great princess in the south: but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect. I leave your shores without sorrow or regret.

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