

(Swan River. Vol. 7)

(H)

Garden Island,  
Cockburn Sound,  
Western Australia.  
Mar. 18, 1830.

Dear Sir,

The only way in which I  
can show the feelings of gratitude which  
I must ever entertain for your kindness,  
and friendship for me, - is I apprehend,  
by my occasionally forwarding a plain  
statement of facts, which may lead  
you, - if you do me the Honor to place any  
value upon my opinions, and observations  
to a more intimate acquaintance, with  
this land of promise of which so much  
has been said, and so much unfortunately  
expected. - In order to  
make what I have to say intelligible  
I have to request, that you will do  
me the favor to excuse my writing after  
my own fashion, and I must rely entirely,  
upon your liberality, if the observations I  
make, do not meet your approbation, or accord  
with your views, and opinions of this  
Country. The public dispatches will have  
acquainted you with The arrival of the  
Parmelia, on the Western Coast of Australia  
on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, - of the sticking of  
the Ship on a line of shoals lying  
between Cockburn Sound, and Gages  
Roads on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June and of our

ultimate

ultimate landing upon Garden Island, formerly the Buache of the French. Soon after the ship struck, it became evident, that she must be immediately lighten'd, to save her from being totally wreck'd, and I was requested by the Governor, to land upon the nearest point of the Island of Carnac, in charge of Stores, and the families of the Artificers. I did so, and had twenty eight souls on shore from the Tuesday, until the following Saturday. Not having any communication with the Ship, we subsisted almost entirely upon salt beef, and biscuit, - our table service consisting of one knife, and one drinking mug for the whole party. M.<sup>rs</sup> Morgan, and my daughter were on shore, and I am happy to say, that altho' obliged to sleep upon the ground night, after night, exposed to an incessant rain, together with all the other extraordinary nocturnal disturbances of a new Country they set a very good face upon the adventure; and succeeded in bringing off the female part of the establishment, in good health and discipline, "a consummation devoutly to be wish'd" - but very little expected by me, without their aid, and assistance.

This little affair of five days, has given me the credit of being the first family Settler, in Western Australia.

Carnac



Carnac Island - on which we were of necessity located is about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  Miles long, by  $\frac{3}{4}$  Miles wide, lying parallel with the Main Land, or nearly due North, and South, forming by the Settlement end of it, - the Northern Shore of the entrance into Cockburn Sound. If the Colony is considered of any importance, I apprehend a lighthouse must be erected upon this end of the Island, and a battery near it, would be another very desirable object in the event of a War. The entrance is at present a very dangerous one, full of rocks, breakers and innumerable shoals, - On the 7<sup>th</sup> June the first party landed upon Garden Island, to commence operations for the winter, I left the Ship with my family on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and soon found myself fully occupied, - having not only my business duties to attend to, but personally to prepare a shelter for myself, and family during the ensuing winter, the whole of the establishment being left to provide for themselves, or sleep in the bush, - as they were best able.

The sufferings of our families from that time, until Nov<sup>r</sup> and the destruction of property, were greater by many hundred degrees, than I ever anticipated, or ever before witnessed.

I confess I was somewhat personally annoy'd that it should be so, - because, I had strongly urged in London, and at the Cape, - the necessity of having a liberal supply of Camp equipage, thinking it my duty to do so, in the situation I hold.

A temporary canvass Storehouse having been erected, - Garden Island, has now become my permanent residence, altho' all the rest of the Officers have left it, since September last.

It is of course very solitary, as the only persons upon it besides my own family, - are the Clerk and the Cooper attach'd to my Department. The former is a M.<sup>r</sup> Shilton who you were kind enough to send out here, in consequence of D.<sup>r</sup> Bennett's application he tells me. He has twenty five Pounds p.<sup>r</sup> annum salary, - and his ration only costs him thirty six, - and if taken in full as previous to 31.<sup>st</sup> December, - it will cost him more than Forty.

Garden Island - is about 8 miles long, and 2½ miles wide, - how such a name could ever have been given to it officially, does indeed astonish me. It is one continuation of sand - from one end to the other.

Soil. For a few weeks during the winter, a few of the lighter vegetables may be grown upon it, and it is true, that it has already produced a winter crop of short straw'd barley and oats, but during the rest of the year, it is totally useless.

Artificial hand watering is useless, because the well water is generally either more or less very strongly impregnated with salt, - and very hard, - whereas it



it is now well understood by Gardeners, that for plants, the water cannot be too soft. As a temporary rendezvous, the Island may prove useful, as there are spars upon it, suited to building huts, and a sort of brushwood, which makes a tolerable thatch. We have also, the red leg'd pidgeon or quail, and the bush Kangaroo, or Wallebee. ————— Of the ——— GEOLOGY of the Country I cannot say much, there is a sort of sand stone, having the appearance of petrification, but anything like a regular formation, or staatum, by which the geological history of this Country may be read, I have never yet seen, either upon the Islands, or upon the Main. I hear it is different nearer to King George's Sound, and I hear that the range of hills lying before me, call'd the Darling, - are granite, but I confess I have heard so much, and seen so little to corroborate what I have heard, of this wonderful Country, that I generally prefer depending upon the evidence of my own senses, however imperfect they may be, than upon the speculative nonsense of other people. Cockburn Sound, - is a splendid Harbour, and it will be at all times secure from storms, and tempests, and the enemy, when a few fighting arrangements are made for its defence, and for securing a safe entrance for Ships of War, and  
heavy

heavy burthen, - If it can be made available for line of Battle Ships, it will be an anchorage of the very first national importance, particularly in the event of a War with France, and America united.

Gages Roads, - is a very different place, safe generally during the Summer, but one of the last in the world for a Seaman during the winter. I fear it is by this time at the very bottom of Lloyds list, and I apprehend much injury to the interests of our infant Colony, - from the high premiums which will be, - for some time to come - exacted, upon Ships touching at, or bound for Swan River.

The Main land opposite, or Eastern Coast of the Sound, - is it seems granted to M<sup>r</sup>. Peel, who arrived here in the Gilmore, in about January last. I do not envy but pity him, - It is, with the exception of a few lagoons &c. a mere desert of unprofitable sand, - totally unfit for agricultural, or pastoral purposes, viz - for carrying on these operations with effect, - and with anything like an adequate return.

Opposite to where I live, and near to what is call'd Woodman's Point, a new Town has been laid out, - to be called Clarence and as it will be a convenient shipping place, for the Canning district, it may very possibly become a trading hamlet of considerable repute.



I have taken a grant of 3000 Acres upon the Canning River, - a tenth of which may be consider'd very fair land, some of it, as good as any I ever saw in my life, - the other  $\frac{9}{10}$  are not worth even the walking over, - altho' the timber may possibly prove valuable, - I like the localities of the grant, and consider that I did not make a bad choice, when I decided upon it.

I shall be situated about 8 miles from Perth, the present seat of Government, - about 12 from Fremantle, at the entrance of the Swan, - and the same distance from Clarence in Cockburn Sound, - My examination of the Country before I determined on the Spot, - occupied me about three weeks, during which time I am sorry to be obliged to say, that I past over more totally worthless sand, - for it is a farce to call it land, than I did in three years, - in all North America. Having during the last six years, had a great deal of experience in farming Matters, and having purchased my practical knowledge pretty dearly, - I may be allow'd a right to form an opinion on the subject, - and it is with sorrow that I now state to you, that such is the fact. The farmer, and the botanist, it ought at all times to be remembered, - are very different people, - and in nine cases out of ten, the latter is no more capable of giving a correct opinion upon how far a large tract of Country, can be made available to farming

farming purposes, - than the former would be, to discuss the merits, and character of an extraordinary shrub, or very beautiful flower.

The Natives are a miserable race of animals, - moving upon two legs, - They are considered human beings, but I regret to say, that the link which connects them with the brute, is at all times, - very painfully perceptible. Looking back as I cannot help doing, to my old friends the Mohawks &c. &c. - the aboriginies of this Country, sink at once as it were, - from the Man to the Monkey. We have hitherto been on very good terms with them, but within the last month, they have carried off - it is supposed, one of the Settlers children, a boy about 4 years old, who is still missing, and I fear they have taken him over the Mountains.

One or two Natives have since been wounded by the Settlers as a retaliation, and this folly may probably lead to unpleasant consequences. If at any time, it should be necessary to make an example, however painful, - it must be done in a different way, - officially and effectually, without the least qualms of conscience in the matter, so that a repetition of the same punishment may never again be necessary.

All hands, Men, Women and Children, go entirely naked. They are much more careful of their Women, than is at all necessary, in my opinion, - for of  
all



(sic)  
 all the specimens of ever saw of Natures  
 handy work in that way, - these stand N<sup>o</sup>. 1,  
 at the bottom of the List. I have seen  
 several North American squaws that I should  
 have had no objection to have taken "for  
 better for worse" and with whom I think I  
 could have led a very respectable sort of an  
 Indian life, - but I confess I cannot pretend  
 to so much gallantry &c. &c. in this quarter.

The Country appears to be very  
 thinly peopled, - the largest party seen,  
 amounted to about 80, and a great many of  
 them were old acquaintance. They are very  
 great thieves, and if possible - greater  
 mimics, - they will pronounce words, and  
 even sentences with the greatest accuracy,  
 after only once hearing them, and altho'  
 this looks like an effort of intellect,  
 a short acquaintance I am sorry to say,  
 very soon shows it to be entirely mechanical.  
 They appear to have a terrible dread of our  
 goats, and horses, and express the greatest  
 admiration at the docility, and sagacity of  
 our dogs, - I had the satisfaction to highly  
 amuse a party of them the other day, - I took  
 a rough but rapid sketch of rather an old  
 acquaintance amongst them, and the expression  
 of wonder - as I formed his eye, his nose, his  
 mouth, - and run out the outline of a Man, was  
 most amusing. Having put a spear over  
 his shoulder, and a native dog at his  
 heels, -

life admiration. The botanist may sit, and admire the numerous shrubs, and heels, - the entertainment was complete. The Climate, is as fine, as it can be in any part of the world, - it is in fact the only part of the representations in favor of this Country, - which is borne out by the truth, and the reality. The only complaint prevalent is dissenter<sup>y</sup> and this will always be the case, where wells are imperfectly made, not walled up, and the water naturally bad from the nature of the stratum thro' which it runs. Time, and industry alone, can effect a change in such matters.

On Garden Island it is miserable stuff for every purpose and there is not even one, single, solitary spring, above the surface, or that when found can be made available to irrigating the better order of sand, in order to force a change from its original character. Altho' this is the case I would much rather, as a Government Officer, live upon this Island than upon the Main land, as we have a more temperate climate in summer, and no Muskitoes.

The Swan & Canning Rivers are useful to the Colony, and may be made much more so, but after traversing the magnificent Rivers of North America, leading as they do, thro' hundreds of miles of good land, - these miserable estuaries surrounded by splendid poverty, cannot excite anything like



like admiration. The botanist may sit, and admire, the numerous shrubs, and very beautiful flowers, - but the farmer will be straining his eyes out in search of land, - and the sailor - for a straight forward, unimpeded navigation.

The bar at the entrance from Gages roads is now pretty well known, in the summer it is by no means a dangerous one but in winter, from there being only 6 feet water upon it, with a heavy swell, it is impassable for loaded boats.

Rottenest Island lying to the Northward, & Eastward of Swan River will I think, if this is ever an established Government Station, - become valuable. The sand upon it, is somewhat better than it is upon Garden Island, and as a fishing station, it possesses several advantages. In the shape of

General Observations I shall add very little. You will of course hear many reports of this Country, its soil, climate, and capabilities for the support of a large body of people. The sum up of my observations are that, - the soil is generally too light, poor, and totally worthless, for it ever to be a great agricultural, or grazing Country - and the strips, and patches of good land, too much detached from each other - ever to support anything like a people.

On

On the borders of the Swan and the Canning River, - a few Settlers, comparatively speaking, - may be located, - then must come a district of nearly thirty miles unoccupied, - then a few more Settlers upon the Murray, - and then, on again over forty miles of sand, - to the Preston, and the Collie, where our new station is form'd, - and so on to the end of the Chapter, - King George's Sound. Of course, this being the case, if a greater number of people are settled or brought into this Country, than the cultivatable land will provide for, - the surplus must be fed artificially for Cash, - until some more valuable commodity can be grown, - as a staple produce than wheat, and barley - for instance indigo, rice, or opium, - and then, - when this can be done, and necessity has obliged the large proprietors to improve parts of their immense ranges of sand, - there will be no farther difficulty.

The Colony will move on, having reached its manhood as it were, - into wealth, and importance, as other Countries have already done, under similar circumstances, - as respects the ratio of years however, it will be as one to ten when compared with the new Countries, in the United States, & in British North America. Its local position with Java, Batavia, the Cape, the East Indies, and all the ports, and places in this quarter of the globe - is most

now appears to be very good excellent  
I understand a good Harbour, - which might  
be easily defended. Mr Ross, and Mr Barr  
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abundance. His Majesty's Ship Success,



excellent, - and giving up the idea of its being a fine Country for our extensive emigration, and allowing it to appear in its own real character, - it is in my opinion a territory well worthy of the care, and protection of His Majesty's Government.

You may not be aware - and such information is sometimes useful, - that Surabai in the Island of Java, - & in the direct route from this Country to India, is the best Port in those seas, - for ships in distress to run for. Our late Ship the Parmelia, - was hove down there in December and the Master who has since return'd, describes it, to be a place, where everything can be had for refitting a vessel after an accident, and one that ought to be better known than it is - for its facilities, - to seamen in general.

The Cocoa Islands have latterly excited some interest here - they lay about 1600 miles from this Coast, and in I should think, about 12S. They may perhaps in time, become our half way house to India, and a desirable spot for a few farming Emigrants, and men of business connected with the Pepper trade. To the Government they might be valuable as a check upon the American trading influence in that quarter, - which just now appears to be very great, - there is I understand a good harbour, - which might be easily defended. Mr Ross, and a Mr Hare the two settlers upon these Islands, have every description of agricultural produce in abundance. His Majesty's Ship Success,

Capt.

Capt. W.C. Jervoice, unfortunately went on shore in making this harbour - (Cockburn Sound) - in December last, and had it not been for the extraordinary exertions of her Officers, and Men - some of the most active, and efficient, I ever saw, she must have been totally wrecked. They are preparing to heave her down, but I think she has broke her back. H.M.S. Cruizer, Capt.<sup>n</sup> Colpoys has been detained by Captain Jervoice to assist in her repairs, and there is one of the finest little bays, or coves in the world for the purpose - in Mangles Bay, at the S. extremity of the Island. I have omitted to observe that the Southern entrance to the Sound is impassible to every description of craft, drawing more than 8 feet water. The Channel is about two miles wide.

The Governor has just return'd in the Eagle hired schooner from an excursion to Port Leauchenault in Geographé Bay where a new station, or post has been established, I do not know what the report is, as the Schooner only past this Island a few hours since for Gage's Roads. I will not intrude my Private affairs upon you, but it is necessary that I should say something about them, in order that you may be aware exactly how I stand, after all the good you have done me since I first turn'd myself round in life, to see which was the best course - for me to steer. I am therefore obliged to say  
that



that I have no cause to be grateful to the Governor, and that I have no inclination to write down, and pretend a sentiment to you, - which I do not really feel. The situation of Civil Storekeeper does not appear to be understood by him, and I have acted rather as Storehouseman, than anything else, ever since I have been in the Colony. I may say the duties have been exactly those of a Purser's Steward, in the absence of the Purser, - and nothing but my commission in the service, and my knowledge of most of the Naval & Military Officers who have visited this place, makes it one jot more respectable.

On the contrary side - my responsibilities are great, my stations very much detach'd, and the assistance I have had - very ineffective, in spite of every remonstrance, and request.

I have in consequence been exceedingly anxious for the result, but am happy to say that my general account at the end of 1829 was better than I expected. At that time the supply of the Naval Rations at 1/- each ration, - to the Colonial Establishment, was discontinued, - and the same ration now costs 2/3 - viz - if one of our artificers with a large family, or myself for instance with a small one - took these rations daily, - 3/- were stop'd from his daily pay of 6/6 - the same three rations now costing

costing him 6/9 - leaving him on the article of food only 3<sup>d</sup> per day in debt. This is an arrangement which of course affects us all, - particularly as every description of food is as it always is, in a new Country, - immoderately high.

Excepting to the Secretary no lodging money is allow'd altho' we are obliged to build our own houses, and this without the least reference - as to how far, an outlay of this sort may be convenient. One room I am in fact obliged to appropriate for an Office. Labour is of course excessively high, - the most worthless demanding, and receiving 4/- per day for the mere operation of chopping wood for the fires, and carrying water. These expenses are serious to all, but more particularly to those on detach'd stations, who like myself are obliged to show some sort of kindness, and hospitality to Emigrants, and others, who may visit us. With reference to my observations as to my duties as Storekeeper, I beg leave to add that contracts are advertised, made, and executed, and the first intimation I have of them, - is being call'd upon to sign the necessary vouchers, - thus throwing upon me the responsibility for the purchases &c. of others, which ought to rest solely with me, - subject of course to the orders, and controul of the Governor.

Stores



Stores are brought from England, landed, and stored, for instance from the Wanstead, - no official communication is made to me on the subject, - the ship sails, and the first business like communication I have - comes from the Captain requesting me at the very last moment to forward him home to England - duplicate receipts, - in order that should those he has already received from some other person, of whom I know nothing officially - be objected to - mine may be satisfactory to the Board, to which he has to render his accounts. Having learnt that it is easier to remove a small difficulty, than a large one, - and being by no means disposed to be made a mere convenience of, - I have been obliged to explain my views on these subjects to the Governor, - preferring the very unpleasant chance of a difference with him, - to the still more unpleasant prospect of incurring the displeasure of the Home Government. When I had the Honor of an interview with you at the Colonial Office, - you did me the favor to cause a communication to be made to the Navy Victualling, and Ordnance Boards, stating my having been appointed Storekeeper to the Colony, - but from the hurried way in which we were obliged to leave London immediately after, - neither the Governor, or Captain Dance as the stationary naval

Commanding

Commanding Officer, - received any communication on the subject, - so that altho' - in fact, I have the same charge of Naval Stores from the Ships of War, - as if I were acting for the Board, - I cannot do so officially - even for a few months, or even weeks, - no orders, or wish, having been express'd to that effect.

I have had charge of the Success's stores the last four Months nearly and shall continue to have the care of them most probably for four, or five months longer. I know not if this will be considered as a claim for remuneration, - but I must apply to the Board at the end of the year, on the subject. I will not attempt to apologise for so long a Letter, but will rather trust to your considering it, as an effort to express some sort of acknowledgement for your Kindness in remembering me in December 1828, and on all former occasions. I am endeavouring to make a collection of seeds, and purpose forwarding to you, such as I am inform'd will flourish in England. The Shells are very poor, - but a few of the smaller size are pretty, and perhaps worthy of a place, in your Cabinet, - or they may serve to add to the collection of a friend. I shall endeavor to forward them by Captain Jervoice and will at the same time communicate any farther news of this Country that I think may be acceptable.

M<sup>r</sup>. Archdeacon Scott late of New South  
Wales



(Swan River. Vol. 7)

Presented.

Western Australia.

Wales is a passenger with him, - and both I believe, are very good friends of mine, - Captain Jervoice I know intimately, and have received a great deal of very friendly attention from him. Should you see our friend M<sup>r</sup>. Lockwood of Croydon I beg you will do me the favor to make my respects to him. I write to as few people in England just now as possible, and shall continue to observe the same silence, until the views of the Home Government respecting this Colony, are decidedly known, - with the same idea, - I never discuss Colonial questions with the Emigrants, (altho' I have stated my opinions without disguise to you) - I have other matters to attend to, - and have no inclination to enter upon them. Until the sailing of the Success, - I have now only to add my respectful, and grateful thanks, and very best wishes for your health, and happiness and I have the Honor to be Dear Sir &c. &c.

J. Morgan.

To

R.W. Hay Esq<sup>r</sup>.

&amp;c. &amp;c. &amp;c.